

## **Jack Phillips (JP)**

7/1983

Interviewer Ren Speer

*We're sitting here with Jack Phillips at Clarkson College in Potsdam, New York. Jack is a former Yankee, former Pittsburgh Pirate, former Detroit Tiger and now a baseball coach at Clarkson. Jack has been telling me about his pre-Yankee days in the minor leagues and working his way up to signing a pro contract. OK, Jack.*

JP- Well, ah, Ren, I came to Clarkson only because it was a school where another boy played football here at Clarkson and he told the baseball coach who was also the assistant football coach about me and after hitting a few home runs and playing baseball outside of Buffalo, New York. At that time, college boys were in two divisions. It was university division and college division. That was the origin of the word "major" in those days. Nowadays, they have three divisions so that division III schools, which we are here at Clarkson now, we're division I hockey, and we get athletic grants made. In division II, they can also get some athletic grants made. In division III, there is no such thing as athletic grants so this is a situation in those days where we could get it and it was of help then as it is now. Anyway, he told Hank Hodge about me and Hank was interested and had me come up to Watertown where he was running a summer baseball club and it was called the Watertown Collegians. And the Collegians were made up of boys that the Yankees were interested in and that were still in college. That was the reason that I met Mr. Hodge and my father took me up to Watertown and he met Mr. Hodge and Hank told my father that they'd like to have me come to Clarkson. My father, he liked the way Hank talked and he said, "I'll tell you what I'll do, my boy will be up to Clarkson in September but in the meantime," he says, I just graduated from high school that spring, "I'll give him enough money to stay here for two weeks and when he's out of money why you can ship him back home to me in Buffalo. He'll hitchhike home if he's going to Clarkson." Well, as it so happened, there wasn't an opening in the ballclub at that time. So, I stayed there and I worked out with the club. Frankie Shea, all these boys on the club and boys from Georgetown and ex-pro ballplayers. And I just didn't think much of it because I wanted to play, I just dressed, I'd get in uniform. I'd taking hitting practice. I'd take infield practice. I'd go through all the routines then I'd have to get dressed and go sit up in the stands. But, I was learning something about baseball and being around this type of baseball and you played all of the admission games against the Colored Yankees, the Homestead Grays, the Baltimore Elites, the Mohawk Giants and things of that nature and so some of those fellows that played at that time like Cheek Davis and Satchel Paige, were later on in pro ball, were there also. But anyway, I stayed there for two week and I'm all run out of money and I'm ready to hitchhike home and that night I was getting ready to leave and Dutch Boeschel (?), who played pro ball and was a difficult boy, and I was just getting ready to leave and he says, "Where you going?" and I says, "I'm getting ready to leave, I'm out of dough." He says, "I'll take care of your room tonight, at the YMCA, it's fifty cents a night," and he says, "I'll take care of that." So, I stayed that night and the first baseman breaks his arm and I stayed there for the rest of the year and I came up at Clarkson and I signed a contract with the Yankees. On that ballclub, Frankie Shea signed with the Yankees and I signed with the Yankees and in those days you could do things that you can't now. Like when you have the draft. In those days you could come up a week or two at a time and you end up...

*You take the best offer!*

JP- You take the best offer and in those days, why it was OK for you to take a little money as a bonus at the end when you had a desire to go to college. You'd get so much and then you could sign a pro contract. But, you couldn't sign before that. So, it was an option type of deal. So, anyway, on that ballclub that I ended up on when I became a freshman at Clarkson that year was Frankie Shea. He and I went to spring training in '44 together. And then, I was drafted into the Navy and then when I got out of the Navy in 1947, Frankie Shea and I were together.

*Did the Yankees have their spring training camp in St. Petersburg then?*

JP- No. In 1944 you couldn't go over the Mason-Dixon Line.

*Oh, yeah, yeah, that's right. I was stationed at Fort Dix at the time and the Dodgers and the Giants played there. I remember, the war years, you couldn't go.*

JP- We had our spring training in '44 at Atlantic City. When the weather wasn't good, when you couldn't go outside, we worked out inside in the Armory. We played the Brooklyn Dodgers in an exhibition game in Trenton, New Jersey. We played them at Bear Mountain. We played the Giants up in Lakehurst. As long as it wasn't below the Mississippi, we played the Athletics down in Frederick, Maryland. But anyway, that was the year that Emerson and I were together and then in '47 I signed my first contract and Emerson was sold and then the first break, and then Frankie had the real good year with the Yankees in '47 and he won two ballgames in the World Series and tried to blow another, but he couldn't make it. And that was a seven game series against the Dodgers that year. But I've always felt that Mr. Hodge, Hank Hodge, he had put more boys into the Yankee organization into pro ball than any college at that time.

*This was a bit unusual for Martinez, a small college, let's face it, it's not too well known. Sometimes the better known colleges like today, we're going to get at this a little bit later but if you're from Southern California or Arizona State, North Carolina, and a few others, it's pretty easy to get recognition because they challenge each other for the championship each year. In a small college, I think that you have to be a little bit better in order to get recognized.*

JP- Well, this is true. See, Ithaca College and Lemoyne are two of your better schools in New York State. They are practically the two best schools in New York as far as I'm concerned as far as NCAA recognition and ECAC recognition comes. And ends up in the World Series, the College World Series. They go into the eastern regional practically every year and Ithaca College is in our conference. In our conference, we have RIT, we have RPI, we have Ithaca, St. Lawrence, Elkins, all schools of similar attendance. In fact, we became the independent college athletic associations that we are.

OK.

JP- Ithaca, they'd just eat us up. They annually, practically have won the baseball championship every year that they've been in.

*Let's just jump to your minor league days and just give us a description of the various teams that you came up with, and played with, on your way to the Yankees.*

JP- Well, like I say, by coming to Clarkson and playing summer ball, instead on not going to college and going right into professional ball, I played summer ball and at that time we had Class D/C/B/A, Double A, and Major Leagues, no Triple A. I felt and my father felt that a college education was a must, to a certain extent. Pro ball could come after your education. But, during

the summer I played a type of ball, a caliber of ball that I had been playing, which was going to get an opportunity to play, that would save me from playing a couple of years in the minor leagues. Because, I got the same experience and played against such teams as the Colored Yankees, the Baltimore Elites, the Brooklyn Royal Giants and the Mohawk Giants and the teams of that nature. All exhibition games. I'm playing against major leaguers at that time. And getting experience. And learning baseball the Yankee Way. You could say that I am not a Yankee lover. I was traded by them, but I do respect and know why they were winners for so many years, because they taught you how to play ball. You were in demand to a certain extent because you were taught to play ball. To me, there's winning and there's losing baseball.

*Now, on your way to the Yankees, you went through the Newark door as most did and there were some great Newark teams. I know. How were the Newark teams that you played on?*

JP- Well, I'll start with one fellow by the name of Yogi Berra. Yogi and I both came together in Norfolk, which was a Class B team in the Piedmont League. And, in Durham, North Carolina, Rex Barney was a pitcher down in that league. There was a lot of ballplayers that graduated from that league. Hamner was a shortstop at Richmond, which was in the Piedmont League at that time. All those teams. Then in '44, after the year at Norfolk, we ended up winning the playoffs. We didn't win the pennant. We were out of it. It was a six-team league. We were out of fourth place with a playoff berth. We were out of there by about eighteen games. We won thirty out of our last thirty two games we won to go into the playoffs and we won the playoff. And, that was a big thrill because we came out with \$46.55 apiece for winning the playoffs! Anyway, Yogi had been there in '44. In 1944, they had been in the war, a lot of the boys were gone and I had been in college and was deferred and I went to spring training with the Yankees in '44 to Atlantic City. And, during the spring training, now they Navy come up and they got me and I spent my last thirty days before I went right into the service, with the Yankees, and went back to New York City, and then with two days left, they sent me to Newark, and then I went into the service. Then, I was just a kid in '46 when I got back out of the service. I reported to Newark and on a club like that was Frankie Shea, Vic Raschi, the club was all the Yankee ballplayers. And Yogi was there. We had Joe Collins was there. Bobby Brown, Dr. Bobby Brown was there. You know. Sherm Lollar. We had quite a ballclub. And we finished off that year and we end up in the playoffs against Montreal and we finished in fourth spot that year. Montreal won the pennant and it was Jackie Robinson's first year in professional ball. And, we got beat in the playoffs and then in '47, I went to spring training.

*Now, '47 was your first year on the Yankee club. Being a young ballplayer, I know that this is a dream, probably of every ballplayer. No matter what club he played on, he probably looked forward to being a Yankee, in those days. Now, I don't know whether that's true now or not. But probably many of them, the ultimate would be to play on the Yankees. Now, here you are, your first year in the major leagues and wind up in the World Series!*

JP- I'll tell you, Ren. From the time I first knew what baseball was, and my father handed it to me and wanted me to throw it to him, I dreamed of being a big league ballplayer. My father dreamed of my being a big league ballplayer. And, of course, in those days, the radio was your best friend and I used to listen to a lot of ball games, but I played ball. I played ball from morning until night. And with that dream in mind. It finally so happened that I met the right people along the way like Hank Hodge, like my high school coach who was the ex-pro ballplayer and principal baseball coach. My father was instrumental. So, all along the line I ran into people that helped me and brought me along, and here I am in the Yankee Stadium. My first time ever with the big league ballclub and I dreamed of being there and then, here I am, I'm involved. I come up in the middle of the year, from Newark, and there were stars like DiMaggio and Rizzuto and Stirnweiss and

Yogi, it was his first year there also. Tommy Henrich, King Kong Keller. My God, these are people that I used to follow in the paper when I was in the minor leagues. When you are in the minor leagues, you go and you look. I was at Norfolk, which is a Class B league. I would immediately grab the papers and see how that first baseman was doing up in Binghamton, which is a Class A league because that's the guy I figured I had to get behind. So, now we go to spring training. That's exactly what spring training with the Yankees was like. It was almost like the Navy chow line. Because...

*And there was a big guy that a lot of people don't associate with the Yankees because he was with the Cardinals and Giants, but they had a big guy there named Johnny Mize to contend with.*

JP- Johnny came along afterwards. You know, that's one of the reasons that the Yankees are so successful. Besides their farm system. Every year, that George Weiss was a pretty shrewd man, and before him was Ed Barrow. They had a knack of knowing what that club needed and the clubs that weren't going anywhere, as far as far as the pennant race was concerned, with a big salary, the Yanks could pick up in July and August. They were big salary people and they could make a trade and there it would be. Like you say, they had Mize.

*And later on they got Johnny Hopp, I think. They were forever doing this. I don't know. Maybe you can tell me. There's just something about the pinstripes that brings out the extra effort or a little more in a guy. I don't know.*

JP- Now that George Steinbrenner has started the Yankee Alumni Association that he started about six or seven years ago, he tried to bring back the tradition and respect to the pinstripes that they had lost from '64 on. They had didn't have the regime going like they had the previous regime going. And, they were on the downturn. And this is when minor league baseball also started taking a downturn. So, that the draft rules in baseball were changed. They started to change. And, he started the Yankee Alumni Association to try to get that tradition and that spirit and that respect and that feeling and that pride back. And, the pride of the Yankees, which was Lou Gehrig, a tremendous picture. All these things. And when you were a Yankee, and this is what I told, from the time I agreed to be a Yankee and after I was even gone from the Yankees, I still respected it and there is something about putting those pinstripes on. Just walking onto the field. If you're a ballplayer, you're a great fan, such as you are, and the first ballgame I saw at Yankee Stadium when I got out of the Navy, I saw Bob Feller pitch a no-hit, no-run game against the Yankees. I saw Bill Bevens, who pitched for the Yankees, throw a two-hitter in that same ballgame. One was a pop ball down third base and the other was a home run by Hayes the catcher and he got beat 1-0 and he threw a two-hitter and Bob Feller threw a no-hitter. Just walking into the Stadium was a thrill.

*It was a thrill for me. The first major league ballgame that I ever saw was a World Series game and it was in Yankee Stadium and I caught a Greyhound bus, as a kid, and saved my money and I had no tickets. I was up at Yankee Stadium at six o'clock in the morning waiting for the gate to open so I could get a bleacher seat. But, the good news, a little bit of rest now Jack, you touched on something about being a Yankee was a little bit different. I'm living in Florida now and so I had the advantage of appearing in a lot of stories and so forth. I remember Harry Walker, when he was managing Pittsburgh, there were a bunch of reporters around him down at Winter Haven, Florida. And, they were asking him a lot of questions about today's ballplayer, and this is when they started growing sideburns and moustaches a little bit. And, Harry said, "Well, I'll tell ya, When we travel we have blazers and they wear a white shirt and tie, grey pants, and a blue blazer with PIRATES. They don't like it but as long as I'm here, that's what they are going to wear." He said, "I'll tell ya, it made a difference." when he was with the Yankees and a lot of people don't*

*associate him as a Yankee. But, he saw this himself and he related an incident. He said, "I don't know what city it was but it was a rainout day and the fellows were sitting around the lobby, in the hotel, and this was in the Joe McCarthy days. When, Joe McCarthy came through, and there was a rookie, and he was slouched down in his chair and he had his feet kinda stuck out in the aisle. And, Joe McCarthy walked by him and just kicked him right in the shins. And he said, "If you're tired, go to your room and take a nap. Remember, you're a Yankee now. And that was being a Yankee." You weren't just a Yankee between the white lines, as they say. You were a Yankee twenty-four hours a day.*

JP- You brought a name up, McCarthy, Marse Joe Buffalo McCarthy. I lived outside of Buffalo and I knew Marse Joe. But, I never knew him personally until I got to spring training in 1944. At that time, like I mentioned, we were down in Atlantic City and I was shortstop and a pitcher in high school. Then, in 1937, I went to Rochester Cardinal tryout camp. The Cardinal camp was held by Branch Rickey in Rochester and my father drove me down there every day of a week-long camp. At that camp, Branch Rickey saw me and I was a shortstop and a pitcher. He saw me and he said, "Give that boy a first basemen's glove." Because he was a God in baseball, because he started the farm system in baseball. And my father and I would sit during lunch period and we'd sit in the stands and have a sandwich. And, Branch Rickey was in the stands that day and I didn't even recognize him. Anyway, here's the story. He sat there and he come over and introduced himself to my father and me and he started telling me my whole baseball history. And, I'm fifteen and sixteen years old at the time. And he's telling me about my large hands and the way I threw the ball and he says "I'll tell you son, I'll get you a first basemen's glove and you go down and you tell them that you're a first baseman." From that time on, and I finished the camp there, now we're on our way back out onto the field after lunch where he'd spoken to me and some kid, the shortstop said, "Hey, do you know who's here today?" "Who do you think is here?" "Branch Rickey." The farm system father of the St. Louis Cardinals and I just got done talking to that right there and from then on I went back to high school and they told me to come back to the St. Louis Cardinals when I got out of high school. Anyway, at Atlantic City I playing shortstop, I'm playing third base. I'm in the outfield. I playing first base and the Cards are playing me all over because there was a lot of holes to fill that had been vacated by the major leaguers that were in the service. So, they wanted to take pictures for the paper. So, Mr. McCarthy, it was always Mr. McCarthy, not Marse or Joe, Mr. McCarthy and he likewise respected you and your name and he was first class and that's why the Yankees always had that reputation. So, I came over to Joe and I said, "Mr. McCarthy, what am I supposed to be anyway, an outfielder, and infielder, a shortstop, a first baseman?" He looked at me and he says, "Well, young man, you might not be any of those." He says, "But, I'll find out what you are and that's what you'll be. Whatever I say you will be." And I say, "No, this is for pictures." "Well, have them take them for them all because you're allowed to be them all." But this is the way he ran his discipline on his ballclub and the Yankees at that time were still the ballclub that when we went into a hotel, whether it was during the season or spring training, you were a coat and tie and you ate in the dining room of the best hotels in the city that you stayed in and all you did was sign your names. You had a feeling of, not superiority, but a feeling of pride. It was the pride that you portrayed by handling yourself and they didn't want you to hamper yourself by saving a few dollars on meals, they wanted you to do whatever you wanted to do by signing your name and likewise, he would be the first one off the train to see his team get off the train. He would be the first on the train to see his team get on the train and the same way in the clubhouse and the same way in the hotel. He also told me that I was going to go into the Navy and he gave me that speech that I have fingertip raincoats that I got out of college with and when I was in spring training in Atlantic City and when it was cold and wet I had to have something to wear. So, I'm already in the Navy and so I'm not going to buy any more clothes. So, I wore that coat when I needed to when it was cold. I get back into New York City for the city series just before the season opener with the Dodgers and the Giants and we're

staying in the Commodore Hotel in the New York City. And I'm down in the hotel lobby with Atlee Donald and Oscar Grimes and others were there in those days and Joe McCarthy sidled up because me and said, "Hey Jack." I said, "Yes, Mr. McCarthy." He says, "Don't let me catch you running around this hotel with that raincoat of yours on. You're in the big leagues now. You've got to act like a Yankee. You've got to eat like a Yankee. You've got to play ball like a Yankee. And that coat belongs in the garbage pail." He was that type of person. He would hit you with a point that he wanted to get across and then he'd make a joke about it and leave you standing there but you got the message. This is the thing. They were the last team to go to sports shirts. They were the last team to...

*Even yet, of course I've sort of abandoned the Yankees as far as the traditional Yankees are concerned because, well I shouldn't say that, I think the Yankees left me. I didn't leave the Yankees. Because, their policies seemed to change in the more recent years. But they still hand on to tradition. They don't have their names on the back of the uniforms and a few things like that. I think that Jack, we could probably talk all day about the Yankees but let's more on to the Pirates now. You went from the Yankees to the Pirates.*

JP- I had hurt my arm. Detroit was after me. There was a lot of ballclubs that were after me and the Yankees in those days, you could be optioned out after three years, and at the end of third year, you could be in the Yankee organization down at the Class B ballclub and you could spend two years there and then the third year they either had to bring you up to a Class C league and then you could be there two more years and the third year they'd have to re-up one more next. You could be in the Yankee organization for nine or ten years and never get to spring training with the Yankees! Anyways, in '47 they optioned me out because they didn't want to lose Steve Souchock. In '48 they sent me off to Kansas City, which was a Yankees farm system, as a shortstop. On that ballclub was Bowers, Kryhoski was the third baseman. Al Rosen was on loan from Cleveland playing at Kansas City. They had a guy by the name guy of Rizzuto. So, anyways I was out there and I came back and in '49 I was a first baseman and I hurt myself in Washington. I was hitting .308. I had played 45 games up until then when I hurt myself. DiMaggio was starting to play center field. We were five and a half games in first place. I'm counting World Series. I'm counting a raise in pay the following year. I'm counting a lot of things and here we are in first place and I'm just getting ready to play. I'd pulled a deltoid muscle in my left arm but I still wasn't right. But, anyway, they had gotten waivers on me in the American League to send me out to get my arm in shape. In the meantime, they'd cooked up a deal. Roy Hamey is now the general manager of the Pittsburgh ballclub. Roy Hamey was also a big man in the Yankee organization for years, so they just decided at Pittsburgh that they would like to have me. They had gotten waivers on me which was \$25,000 waiver price. All waivers. They just waived me out to get my arm in shape. Now in the meantime they sell me to Pittsburgh for \$50,000 and the following year Johnny Hopp came from the Pirates over to the Yankees which was another sleeper deal. Then, I got to Pittsburgh and over there, why Billy Meyer, who had managed me at Newark, he was the manager of the Pirates and I got over there and started splitting the position with George Metkovich. Now, the platoon system of baseball had been started in 1949, by Casey Stengel. I was having a spring training like I've never had before. I'm hitting. I'm getting to believe I've got the job all by myself. I'm a cinch for first base. The sportswriters challenged Dick Kryhoski that played first base at Kansas City the year before. They challenged him to get in there. He was from New Jersey and he could swing that bat pretty good, a left hand hitter and a left handed thrower. I was a right handed hitter and a right handed thrower. So, we were alternating, and they gave him a shot in spring training and they couldn't get him off. Casey said he would bat against right hand pitching. He did that with Bauer and me. He did that with Woodling and Lindell. He started a whole platoon system in baseball and this is where I got over to Pittsburgh then and I went over to Pittsburgh then at the end of '49 . This was in August 6<sup>th</sup>.

My arm is still not right. I finished out the year at Frankfort State. In '50 I went to spring training and I had another fellow there by the name of Metkovich that I was splitting the job with and alternating. And then in 1951 they had a guy there by the name of Mel Kiner, who was a big friend of mine. Now, here I am, Branch Rickey now had come from the Dodger organization, he left the Cardinals, went to the Dodgers, built up their farm system, now he is with the Pirates, a general manager, and you'd look over there and he'd brought this whole front office out there. Here is Mr. Rickey with the Pirates now and now he's got this guy Turner, he's got an outfielder in the minor leagues that he figures is going to hit .300 for a decade and so he brings him up and he moves Kiner and he wants me to teach Kiner how to play first base. That first base job in Pittsburgh is worth seventy five thousand dollars. I taught Kiner how to play first base and he was making seventy thousand and I was making five thousand dollars in the same position! Anyway, he was there for a while. This is where, I was with Pittsburgh, then in '51 and then in '52, why, they started bringing in boys like Tony Bartirome, big-sized ballplayers. Now Pittsburgh had come in and they had signed the O'Brien twins. They signed Groat. They had a lot of fellows so in 1952 I go up...

*Excuse me for just a minute. Before we leave Pittsburgh. Joe Garagiola tells a lot of stories about the Pittsburgh team. It never was a contender during those years. He used to tell about the headaches they gave Billy Meyer. Of course, not many people knew about Joe Garagiola at that time. Now, he's a household word. But, Joe was on the same team as you. Am I right about that?*

JP- Uh-hmm.

*I think Joe tells about a story about two or three men that wound up on third base, or something like that. Now whether or not Joe's stories are all authentic, I don't know. He likes to tell them anyway. But, you had ElRoy Face there at that time, didn't you?*

JP- Ahh, no, ElRoy came the year after I had left. But Joe Garagiola and I roomed together the last year, in '52 when I was shipped out to Hollywood, the Pacific Coast League. Joe was a very humorous, a very likable guy. He was a good ballplayer. He tried to be on that team and it added a lot of color to his broadcasting, because he had first-hand information. The only thing that I was a little teed-off about was that he told me in front of those fellows and some of the things he said were true. So, it's still a little hard to take to ridicule. One of the stories he pulled, and this is one everybody knows especially about. He had me in left field for the Pirates. I did pitch some ball. I pitched against the Boston Braves.

*That was my next question, about your pitching.*

JP- I had played first base. I had played second base a couple of games. I played shortstop a game or two. I played third base and I played some outfield. But Joe failed to realize that he was a part of that ballclub, being as bad as it was. They tried to tell him about it but when he tells, and some of the things he writes was one of the stories he had was that I was supposed to have been an outfielder. A left fielder. He uses my name. Joe and I were quite familiar. I was traveling back and forth. He had good wit and I prided my behavior and I come up with an answer back. He told me a story, I think it was when he had the pre-game going on the Game of the Day, and he started, and he was telling us about some of the Pirates and things like that and he said we had a fellow in left field by the name of Phillips, he says, he thought if you caught the ball on the first bounce it was an out. I take more pride in my playing than that but a lot of the stories he did tell were quite true. Like, you were mentioning about the Pirates. Well, we did. We had that type of ballclub and Johnny Smith, I'll never forget. Chicago was in town and we were getting ready for a game, we were taking batting practice and then we had a clubhouse meeting. Johnny Smith was

with Chicago. Now, we're battling it out with Chicago in an eight team league to see who was going to finish last, you know. And Smith says, "Where are you going?" We said a clubhouse meeting. He says, "Decide who's going to finish last?" And he was pitching that night. But, the Pirates weren't very good. I'll say this to you Ren. When you have an out date and you're in the big leagues and you have to practice the hit-and-run, things are a little exciting. That's what I'm talking about. Being in an organization like the Yankees, that's taken care of down in the minor leagues. Also, when you have fellows, when you're sitting on the bench, and when something bad was happening, an error on the field, or you'd walk a man or something would come up, there was a guy sitting there second guessing every move that was made on the field. Now, these guys must have realized that there are other fellows were sitting on the bench and they were out there on the field. You have a man on second base and nobody out. Runs are important. Both teams are playing hard. You still have a chance if you're one or two runs ahead, then you'd take him out of the ballgame so they wouldn't get a big inning, were they can get into the ballgame by running or sacrificing. Or, if you're at home or on the road and a fellow with a man on second base would pull the ball to left field and try to drive the run in and then the next man would pop up and the next man would fly out and then here's a man on second base and nobody out yet. Now years ago, I learned to play this way. If there was a man on second base with nobody out, you gave yourself up. You got the man to third base so that the next guy could drive him in. The reason you lose because players don't know how to play the game, in my book, and this is why we couldn't get enough of it together to worry about. And, of course, this is just the start of the five thousand dollar minimum in the big leagues. It started in the Player's Association at that time and the minimum was five thousand dollars. Now, there was a lot of guys there who were worried about Kiner making all the money he made that he earned because after the seventh inning in that ballpark, thirty three thousand Forbes Field held, and Kiner would come to bat for the last time in the game, if we were beat or otherwise, then the stands would immediately clear out and there would be nothing left of the ballpark at that point. Kiner was it. But, at the same time, I'd like to say. Pittsburgh was a good baseball town and then they sent out specific information that what Joe said about the Pirates, to a certain extent, there was a lot of humor and a lot of truth to that.

*Well tell me about this one pitching experience You're listed in the Baseball Encyclopedia among the pitchers. I'd like to hear about that.*

JP- When Branch Rickey changed me to a first baseman in 1937, now this is 1950 when he comes from the Dodgers over to run the Pirates, and I'm with the Pirates. When he come to Buffalo, which is my home town, outside of Buffalo, and he came to me on the dais of a big charity dais to speak. He called all of the fellows standing, you've got the shortstop on the ballclub, and so he wanted to see him and talk to him as just a personal interview. Here is Mr. Rickey and this chap in town and wants to have his picture taken with me. He said "No, no pictures. This is just a conference. I'll be talking on nothing. It wouldn't do Jack any good to have my picture taken with me. It wouldn't do me any good to have my picture taken with Jack." He was sort of a funny man. Anyway, he is now in Pittsburgh and I went to Mr. Rickey and when they sent me out to Hollywood, they sent me out as a pitcher, but while I was there, Billy Meyer was still there. He had gone through 13 pitchers in two days against the Boston Braves, a bunch of sore arms. When you're losing, those arms aren't healthy. No one wants to go out there. It was their ERAs, that's what they were worried about. And, I had thrown a lot of batting practice. I threw all the home run hitting contests. I threw it right down the pike and I had a good arm. I was not bad a pitcher. Anyway, we had nobody left and here we are, we're behind in the ballgame ten runs and Billy Meyer knew that I had pitched some before and so we talked about this off and on. I had pitched exhibition games. I led the Western International League in exhibition wins. I'd led the American League in exhibition wins. It was always in exhibition game but never got to... So anyway, here comes a ballgame and we're getting beat badly and Billy looks at me and I was on

the bench and I looked at him and he said, "What do you say?" I said, "OK." So I went down there and warmed up and I came in the fourth inning of the ballgame. Now on that Boston Braves ballclub was Walker Cooper, who was pretty good. There was a guy by the name of Gordon at third base.

*Sid Gordon?*

JP- Sid Gordon, yeah. And Sibbi Sisti at shortstop and they had another fellow on that ballclub by the name of Tommy Holmes. They had a pretty good ballclub. But, anyway I came in the ballgame and I struck out Walker Cooper and Sid Gordon back-to-back. I didn't do badly. And, Bucky Walters, who was their coach and after the ballgame Bucky had made the transition from a third baseman to a pitcher himself, when he was with Cincinnati. After the game he came over and he grabbed me and he said, "I think you can be a pretty good pitcher in the big leagues. You remind me of me an awful lot." So, here comes the Giants. I'm in the bullpen now for the next two nights. So we get in a ballgame and we're one-run behind and it's in the bottom of the ninth inning and we've got a man on second base and I've been warming up in the bullpen and all of a sudden the call comes for the tall guy to come out of the bullpen. I'm all ready and so they bring in Dave Koslo to relieve. So, I pinch hit and I drove in a run from second base to tie up the ballgame. Now, I go to the bench to grab my glove after they get us out to start the tenth inning. "No, Jack, we have another fellow we're going to bring in now." And so that was the end of my pitching career. Again, now I went back to first base and I was alternating again and now here comes Mr. Rickey in spring training and this is where he came over there and now I went to Hollywood and then year, in '52, when I was sent to Hollywood, in spring training, he started using me as a pitcher. In spring training. That was the year he also had Dale Long, a left-handed catcher.

*Dale Long was a...*

JP- No, Branch Rickey was going to change him into a left-handed catcher. In fact, Dale Long had a left-handed catcher's glove. Mr. Rickey had a catcher's glove made for Dale Long and here's Dale with an arm, and a big guy, and he's a left-handed catcher, and you figure throwing left-handed, you'd be against the pitcher. A lot of left-handed hitters go against the pitcher. So, he would have no batter to throw by because there was no left-handed hitters and no right-handed hitters because there was no platoon in baseball. Now, Dale Long is told just at the end of spring training that he's sold from the Pirates to the St. Louis Browns. Mr. Rickey won't let me take that left-handed catcher's glove to St. Louis. Dale wanted to buy that left-handed catcher's glove. Dale wanted to take it with him. Anyhow, this is the story of how I got involved and how I was traded and sent out of Pittsburgh and ended up out in Hollywood.

*A lot of ballplayers that you don't associate with pitching have pitched. I did a little research on this for my own amusement. Ted Williams pitched in the major leagues and he likes to brag about striking out Rudy York. Stan Musial and of course, Stan started out as a pitcher in the minors. I'm trying to think of some others but there are quite a few that you don't normally think of as pitchers. But, they did pitch. Well, Rocky Colavito, of course. He didn't do badly.*

JP- Bob Lemon was a third baseman in the Canadian-American League in the Cleveland organization and they had changed him into a pitcher. There's a Chicago Cubs outfielder that they made him a pitcher because he had a significant arm. He could throw the ball.

*So let's move on now to Detroit.*

JP- OK, I was an All-Star. We won the pennant in '52 in Hollywood, in '53 in Hollywood. In '54, we tied for the pennant with San Diego. In '52 I was an All-Star infielder/outfielder. In fact they created a spot for me on the team because I played so many different positions. In 1953 Bobby Bragan was our manager. I played shortstop practically the whole year. You hear a lot of stories about a lot of these players that were controversial, you hear a lot of stories about managers from different people that have played for him and things of that nature. I don't remember playing for a manager that I didn't like or that I couldn't play ball for. I played for Fred Haney out there in '52 and he went up to the Pirates, obligations that Branch Rickey wanted. And Bobby Bragan comes in and Bobby was a tremendous manager. He played good, smart baseball and I could play and so he says to me, "Did you ever play shortstop?" and I said, "Yeah." He says "OK, you're going to be my shortstop the rest of the year." And I ended up playing shortstop and I was an All-Star and then we win the pennant in '53. In '54 we tied for the pennant and I was the Most Valuable Player in the league that year. So I am now a Most Valuable Player and the Pittsburgh Pirates, Branch Rickey, sold me to the Chicago White Sox for \$35,000 and Jim Baumer, their \$60,000 bonus shortstop came over to Pittsburgh and I went to the Chicago White Sox. That winter I played baseball down in Havana in that winter league that they had down there. I played with Ken Boyer, the Boyer boy, that managed the Cardinals and everybody. Oh, there was nine major leaguers and then Frank "Trader" Lane, who was the Chicago White Sox General Manager, he came down and saw me and asked me how I felt. I hurt my knee that year, earlier in the year and he asked me how my knee was and I said "I feel fine. I'm great. I'm ready to go." And now Bucky Harris is managing Detroit and I played for Bucky in '47 with the Yankees and so now during the winter a trade is cooked up where Leo Cristante, myself, and Ferris Fain came from the Chicago White Sox to the Detroit Tigers. Nieman and Dropo went to the White Sox from Detroit. So that was how I got over to Detroit from the White Sox. I never did dress in a White Sox uniform. I got to Detroit and it was the same way. There was a platoon system and you'd sit there, you'd face a pitcher like Whitey Ford and Tommy Byrne and then you'd sit there for another day or two while the righthanders are going to work and they'd you'd face Herb Score and a few other guys and I'd do a little pinch hitting in between and it was fantastic. The one year I hit .316 and I was 8 for 17 pinch hitting.

*You don't have anything to apologize for. I looked up your total overall major league lifetime batting average is .283. There's nothing wrong with .283. That will get you in the Hall of Fame nowadays.*

JP- I'll tell you. It's amazing Ren when I think about it. In those days if you were a shortstop and you hit under .250 or .240, you were in trouble. If you were a shortstop. And that was the lightest hitting man on the ballclub except for a few guys like Marty Marion and Lou Boudreau who were exceptional shortstops and good hitters. I mean shortstops and second basemen, they were the glove men, and you out here and all of the other holes were filled up pretty well by solid hitters. Now I think about the fellows who are hitting .240 now are stars in the big leagues. They're everyday ballplayers!

*That's right and they are free agents. They are demanding. They're free agents now In your total years experience in the big leagues is there any one event that seems to stand out, any one experience that you remember above your others.*

JP- You know Ren, I've thought this way when you asked me before about my thoughts as a kid and as I come up through baseball in my life to get into the major leagues. Just being in a major league ballpark was an experience for me. Like I mentioned about walking into Yankee Stadium. You go into all these great ballparks with these great ballplayers and having to have had the opportunity when I was with the Yankees. I played with DiMaggio and Henrich and Yogi and

then in Pittsburgh I'm with Kiner and Westlake and Clyde McCullough and Murray Dickson, and fellows like that. And I get to Detroit with Kaline and Gromek and Boone and Kuenn and all these fellows, Frank House, that were just big men. It was a thrill just to be playing with these fellows and being in the park. It was a thrill. Even though I was in a slump or doing badly, I wanted to go to the ballpark.

*It was a thrill to walk into the ballpark.*

JP- That's the way a lot of fellows looked at it years ago.

*I can imagine what it would be like for a ballplayer because as a spectator, the first major league ballgame I ever saw was the World Series game. I walked into Yankee Stadium at ten o'clock in the morning. That was when the gate opened. I got my bleacher seat. And, ballplayers came out, I think around noon, and I remember just being awed by the empty Yankee Stadium. And then pretty soon out came DiMaggio and people like that and Ruffing was still with them and that was before you were with them. It was Gehrig's last year and I was just with goose bumps all over. Just being in Yankee Stadium and seeing these ballplayers I'd heard and read about and never imagined that I'd ever see them. Well, do you have any favorite manager, or any particular manager story?*

JP- Well, no, not necessarily a manager story. But you asked me about my experience in the big leagues and I say that '47 Series was surely an experience, just being in the World Series, and being there in Yankee Stadium with 70,000 people there. And then having the opportunity. I pinch hit in the third game and flied out to left field. I also started the sixth game. George McQuinn had been the renovated first baseman that year and hit .300, over .300 for them, and struck out six times in the Series.

*That was another thing we neglected to mention. I knew about it. It seemed like we'd get the retread first baseman. There was Johnny Mize, Johnny Hopp, and George McQuinn. They all did a good job.*

JP- I think the key though, you mentioned. There was something about it. George McQuinn was in the Yankee organization but then a guy by the name of Gehrig displaced him and so they sold McQuinn to the Browns. He had a tremendous career over there and then he was with the Athletics just the year before and that's what the Yankees got him over there to shore up their position. That's what they did. So anyway, I started the sixth game. Just being there, I was like a fan. I sat there in the dugout.

*How could you concentrate?*

JP- Well, you concentrated pretty good. Like I say, Bucky Harris was our manager and I'll never forget that ballgame. If you remember when Bill Bevens pitched eight and two-thirds no-hit, no-run ball. And, Pete Reiser was the centerfielder in opening day for the Dodgers and then he slipped and pulled his muscle in his leg and so this was Reiser who was sitting on the sidelines after that second game. This is the same series where Gionfriddo make this tremendous catch on DiMaggio. Most people don't know but I think that's the only time that Joe DiMaggio ever showed any emotion on the ball field. All he did was run the bases and never get thrown out. He'd catch fly balls that he made look easy. Other outfielders are diving and going for it and here it is in the World Series and Gionfriddo makes that catch and in that ballgame that Bevens is pitching, he walked a man to first base and Eddie Miksis come in and run. Eddie Miksis stole second base and Rizzuto was quite disturbed on the call. And we were ahead one run. Now Pete

Reiser is going to pitch hit. He had the bad leg but that short porch in old Ebbets Field, right there and Pete Reiser was one of the better hitters in baseball. And Bucky Harris got right up off the bench and there's two outs and a man on second base. The tying run on second base, the winning run at the plate. Pistol Pete Reiser's going to hit and Bucky got up and walked right down to the water cooler and said it's against all the rules of baseball to put that winning run on. He said that this guy can hit that short porch out there. He can hit the ball out of here. He said, "Put him on." Then up comes Cookie. And that first pitch to Cookie was right up in here and he threw it right by him for a strike. Then he missed on one and he got one and one and then he come right back up and only this time he made a mistake and he got a lot over the plate and he hit that ball at that right field fence. And that right field fence had a screen up on top, about thirty-five forty feet up and it was a screen, and then it come down to cement and then down at the bottom it slanted right back toward the infield. And that ball went up there and went by Henrich and it hit that wall and he started chasing that ball around. And Bill Bevens, they put in a runner then, oh, it was Miksis that ran for Pete Reiser, when he had walked, and uh, Bill Bevens went to back up third base at first and by that time here's Henrich and he's chasing that ball down and that man came all the way around and Bill he turned at home plate and didn't know whether to back up home or not and just tucked the glove right in his pocket. He headed right into our third base dugout and right towards the shower. Yogi Berra ends up with the ball at home plate. No play at all and I say, "Hey Yogi, toss me the ball." Yogi says, "Here, take the damn thing, I don't want it." I got that ball signed by Lavagetto and that's one of the cherished memories I got. But that was one of the things and also in that series, you know, you can look in the records, you're great on records and your group, SABR, but I'll tell you my name is not in the record books. You know. But, you know you always have a feeling that you're going to set a record, you're going to make a record. You're going to do something. Now, I helped a lot of fellows like Johnny Sain, like Warren Spahn, like Bob Feller. I helped a lot of fellows get into the record books and the Hall of Fame. But, I'll tell you. That 1947 Series. Vic Lombardi started the sixth ballgame and I had grounded out sharply to second base the first time against him. Now, I come up to bat the second time and the tying run is on second base. We were behind in that ballgame and that was the ballgame that Gionfriddo made the catch on DiMaggio and we got beat that game and went to the seventh game and we won it. Now, the tying runner is on second base and Vic Lombardi is still in the ballgame and I'm going up to home plate. Like I said, there's seventy thousand, there's four thousand *standing* people there. The stadium help seventy thousand people and there's seventy four thousand people there in the '47 Series and I'll tell you, I'm wanting to set a record. So, all of a sudden, Burt Shotton was running the Brooklyn ballclub because that was the year that Leo Durocher had gotten in trouble with the commissioner and he had to go out and rest that summer and so Burt Shotton was running the Brooklyn ballclub. Just I come up to home plate out comes Burt Shotton towards the mound. I had a funny feeling what was going to happen. They were going to bring in a big righthanded pitcher. They were down in the bullpen. He got out there in the mound and they give the big high sign and I didn't want to look at that Bucky Harris in that Yankee dugout!

*Bucky was over there.*

JP- You know it. I'm looking all around in Yankee Stadium and seventy thousand people in Yankee Stadium and I think I was looking for someone from my home town. Marilla, New York or something. I didn't want to look down there. I am waiting for that pitcher to come in and I'm going to hit against him. And I'm going to get that tying run, I'm going to score it! I'm going to knock it in. You remember when you were a kid in school and you can always feel that you were in trouble at home. You could always feel the teacher looking at you right in your back. And I could feel it and so I finally looked over and here's the big righthander warming up and I looked over at the dugout and here's Bucky going like this and so what could I do? He's waving me

towards me and he says, "Jack, I'm going to let Brown pinch hit for you." I said, "Bucky, I can hit this guy." He says, "I know you can probably Jack, but I got a guy who's as qualified to hit against him, too." And it's Dr. Bobby Brown.

*Not then he wasn't Dr. Bobby Brown.*

JP- Well, you can look in the record books. Well anyway, Bobby pinch hit for me and at that time he set a World Series record for pinch hitting and he drove in the tying run there. So, I look at this way. You can look in the books and my name is not there. But, now if I hadn't started that sixth ballgame then he couldn't have pinch hit for me. He set a World Series record. So, my name is not there but I'm responsible for a World Series record!

*You got an assist.*

JP- And there's one other thing. When I was with the Pirates, Harry "The Cat" Brecheen, we were playing the Cardinals. This is the year the Cardinals and the Dodgers are battling nip and tuck. In fact, that year they had the playoff. But, the ballgame is tied. We're in Forbes Field. The bases are loaded. There is one out in the bottom of the ninth inning. They're ahead of us 6 to 3. They bring in Harry "The Cat" Brecheen to relieve. I'm in the bullpen. They call me in to pinch hit. Now, this is late in the season. Every game is so important. We're going nowhere but we are going to decide, to a certain extent, what happens. Well anyway, I pinch hit. Harry "The Cat" threw me a curveball. Now in Forbes Field they had erected Greenberg Gardens for Kiner and Hank Greenberg and they still had it up and it still a pretty good shot. It was a little cyclone fence probably about a ten foot fence and the bullpen was in left-center field. So Musial was playing the outfield and Chuck Diering was playing centerfield for the Cardinals. And he threw me a curveball down and away and I reach out and when I hit it I knew I hit the ball good. With one out, the runners had started to come back to tag up. If they catch the ball, then they're going to advance one base and put the tying run on second base. Well, anyway, the runner is coming back towards first base. I don't notice anything about him coming back to tag up. At the same time, Diering from centerfield is running towards the fence. Musial from left field is running towards the fence and while they're converging on the fence and the ball, all of a sudden, hits the wall, and no one knows where the ball is. At that precise moment up on top of Forbes Field, a photographer had taken a shot and this picture comes out in the paper the following day. But anyway, they finally held the ball up in the bullpen. It was pinch hit grand slam home run that beat the Cardinals in the ballgame. The next day in the paper comes a picture out of the whole field. It shows the outfielders hitting the fence and everything else and it shows the runner coming back to tag up and I had passed him and I'm halfway to second base when that photograph was taken. And actually, when you pass a runner on the basepaths...

*I know...*

JP- But no one was watching any part of that. The umpires were trying to see if the ball if the ball had gone over the fence or where the ball was. It was ironic but that was a big thrill because it helped knock them out of contention. Not in contention, but...

*It happened just recently. As a matter of fact. I believe it was last year. I can't recall but a runner passed another runner. I don't recall who it was but it was well written. I think it was Pittsburgh. Cash, wasn't it.*

JP- Yeah, that's right Now there's one other thing. I don't know if you saw the ballgame yesterday.

No.

JP- Did you hear what happened yesterday?

*Oh, well, yeah, Billy Martin with the pine tar on the bat.*

JP- No, 1949, Connie Mack is still running the Philadelphia Athletics. Alex Kellner is one of their pitchers, a lefthanded pitcher. I'm with the Yankees and I had a bat that I used to take and put linseed oil into it. And then sear it over and put rosin and bake it on and then bone it down to make the surface hard. It was legal, except in those days the same rule applied then that applies now. You can't have any foreign substance on your bat from the trademark on up to the end of the bat. It's got to be all the same color and you can't have any foreign substance or anything like that. Like I say. When you burn that rosin, you take alcohol and you put it on a bunch of cotton and you take and heat the bat. You set that on fire and then you take your rosin bag and pat it on. Then you take and rub it in and that hardened that wood down. You used to get a lot of checks in your bat because of the wood from the seam of the ball and it tended to check. I just hardened it up so it wouldn't check. So anyway, I had hit a home run against Alex Kellner the first time up. Now I come up to bat the next time and Connie is sitting in the dugout with that scorecard that he used to have. He says, "Mr. Umpire, Mr. Umpire." He called the umpire over.

*He couldn't go on the field in civilian clothes.*

JP- That's true. But he called the umpire over and I forget the umpire, who is was now, anyway, he came back over and says to me, "You can't use that bat." I said, "What do you mean. I used it the last time." "You used it the last time but Mr. Mack, he doesn't want you to use it this time again because that bat is discolored from the trademark on up and he said he doesn't want you to use it. In accordance with the rules, I can't allow you to use it." So, I had to get rid of my bat. That's why I was so interested yesterday when George Brett come up and hit the home run. Now that Billy Martin is a shrewd and he called it right off the bat.

*That's right. He would have never mentioned it if he had grounded out. He's been waiting all year for the critical thing. Billy Martin is sharp and I don't care what you say, Billy Martin never takes his eye off of that game. He knows what's going on.*

JP- He is a shrewd manager and when that happened, I could see it coming instantly came back in my mind about Connie Mack sitting there and see and here's another thing that had happened to me you know that I felt pretty good about. A man is going to call a shot like that. When I saw Billy do that and it's the first time Billy has kept pursuing an umpire because he knew he had him dead to right.

*Then he was smart. He didn't object before Brett batted, see. If he had done that he had been waiting and it may have never come this year. But he was waiting for it and that was the moment.*

JP- There's just one other thing that happened to me in the big leagues. I had a lot of wonderful things that happened to me but of not much notoriety. The home run hurt St. Louis that year and a pinch hit home I hit it off of Harry "The Cat" Brecheen. You know I felt quite happy about it. Now, we're in Detroit and I had doubled. We were playing the Yankees. Mantle is playing center field. Steve Gromek is pitching for Detroit and Steve could do a pretty good job on Mantle. He's start him off here and then just go right up the ladder and in tighter all the time and Mantle would chase it. He had just struck Mantle out for the third straight time in the ballgame and Mantle, he

was the last out of the inning. Mickey was out in center field and he is still hitting. He's not ready for the defense yet. I got up and I doubled. I'm on second base and nobody out and the next hitter is Ray Boone. Ray hits a long shot to right-center field. That's a long shot, that's about 438 feet in Tiger Stadium and he went over and caught the ball. Figuring, I was thirty-four, thirty-five years old at the time so he saw me figuring the old man is not going to go to third base, you know. So he gave it that Ya-De-Yah throw back into the infield. And Billy Hitchcock was the third base coach and all I could do was go like this to watch Mantle and he must have slipped, the ball dropped out of his glove. I saw him catch the ball and that's when I tagged up and that's when I left and I just kept right on going all the way from second base on to home plate on Ray Boone's 430-foot fly ball out. And then I wonder what had happened. And this is what had happened. He was still striking out that third time against Gromek and he just gave it that mediocre lob back in and I wasn't the slowest man in the world either and I come all the way. Now, Billy Bruton is playing center field for the Detroit Tigers. He's on second base. Now Billy Bruton is a speed king. He was a fast runner. In fact, he scored thirteen times when Gene Mauch and he played together in the minor leagues and Gene Mauch hit behind Billy Bruton and he scored from first base on the hit-and-run on base hits by Mauch thirteen times in one year. From first base on the hit-and-run. Well, anyway, he's on second base and the same thing goes up. Here is the man tagging up on second base and he tags up on second base and came all the way in to score and they said it's the first time they'd ever seen anything like that on a man scoring on a sacrifice fly from second base. Watch the sportswriters in Detroit! We had an old man by the name of Jack Phillips that did that back years ago.

*Do you know if it's ever been done before, or since?*

JP- I have no idea.

*It would make a great trivia question and I have a trivia book and I like to fool around with trivia and some of these guys I rate, I'll bet if you were to ask that, at one of our SABR meetings, somebody would have come up with the answer. Yes! Jack Phillips.*

JP- Well, I'll tell you. Billy Bruton did it about ten years or more, I don't know how much longer it was after I had done it. See, this was in '56, I think it was. I had never heard of it. You fellows are doing a tremendous job. This trivia they have is amazing and they're getting a lot of interest and finding out a lot of things about the game before. Now there's a big interest. And before, you just took it for granted, just like you're playing the game of baseball.

*The thing is now we're recording it. Do you realize that SABR members through their efforts that most of the Negro Leagues records now have been made. Well, the records, they just weren't kept. Through newspaper accounts and that sort of thing, they have done a great job in restoring or actually compiling for the first time. It was through our efforts, a SABR man, perhaps you read this account. There was some argument about the batting title in 1910, Cobb and Lajoie. And Cobb got the batting title by two percentage points. And through an effort of one of our members who was doing some other research, found a couple of hits that Lajoie made that were never recorded and so Lajoie is recognized by authorities as the batting champion in 1910. But, Bowie Kuhn will not allow the records to be changed because he feels that it's been so long and so much time has passed then why bother. But you know, if a man was sent to prison for a crime that he never did and he spent several years there and they found out evidence that conclusively prove that he was innocent, would they say well, let's just leave him in there. So, we feel that it should be. Well, before the tape runs out, a couple of other questions I want to ask you Jack and then I'll let you go. Have you seen any games on artificial surface and how do you feel about artificial*

*surface? Then, just a word about today's salaries as compared to the salaries when you were playing.*

JP- I've gone up to Montreal quite a bit since that day. I like their club and I have some friends on the club and have seen them play on that artificial surface. I've seen them on TV. But of course, you've got to be in the ballpark to see the surface and then to see the reaction. On TV, it's tough to tell and it's just a common mater-of-fact thing now. On that surface, other than the seam, the way they have it around the bases where you could get a footprint, year ago you had the grass, you could get a bad bounce, you had heel imprints. Your hands today have to be amazingly quick just like to had to years ago. You had to compensate for that little bad hop that you would get off of the natural turf, that would be kicked up by the runner. This surface here, boy when the fellows hit, they take off. But, how it's going to be on the player's, their legs and things like that.

*Well I think that somebody is going to compile some statistics and it's about due now, maybe in a few years. You hear announcers say, "Well that was an artificial surface hit." That goes, it goes BOOM, it's through there. It will get between the third baseman and the shortstop and immediately you'll see them cross and it gets between them. Whereas, you just have a feeling that a couple of bounces on grass and one of would have had it, see.*

JP- Well that's a possibility. Back when the St. Louis Cardinals and the St. Louis Browns were in the same ballpark, you never got a chance to work on that ballfield because there was always the home team, right there. And the Cardinals had a couple of fellows that would slap the ball and bounce like it was on concrete, because it was tufts of grass. That infield was not the best surface to play on because it had been used so much. And they would hit on top of the ball and the ball would hit and every time that ball hit that infield it picked up speed as it was going through the infield. Now, on this surface here, it's so hard down underneath there because it's concrete. But, I'll say this though. On natural grass, with a little moisture in that grass and a nice grass, an outfielder's throw would take and you could put life in that ball. If you threw that ball overhand with a spin coming right straight back, a good overhand throw, that ball would hit the grass and take off because it was spinner and slick. If it was dry and toughed up by then, it would slow the ball down whereas this artificial turf that they have, what's underneath it, it's quick and the fellows have that. But they don't pick up bad bounces. But I notice they don't play much deeper than they used to play when they cut the skin back. Now they have still got the infield outlined because of the speed of the runners and the speed of the ball and even though they are that much harder, then they are going to have trouble throwing them out at first base because they are playing back too far, I don't know. But I would say that I enjoyed playing on natural turf. The only thing I say is the bunting. You see a lot of guys, they just don't play the bunt anymore. Let's face it.

*No, and well, since you mentioned that, it disturbs me, and I've seen some games recently. Well, next to pitching, a pitcher, to me, ought to be able to bunt. I mean he was holding his bat in foul territory trying to bunt the other day and it's just an automatic out. In the old days there were fellows who took pride in their pitching. The Yankees used Red Ruffing as a pinch hitter. Don Newcombe took pride in his hitting. Of course, Rick Farrell. Who's the catcher who was the pitcher? It was one of the Farrell's.*

JP- Wes was the catcher.

*OK, Rick Farrell. And there were many pitchers. Dizzy Dean, nobody loved to have his hits more than Dizzy and he was up there and he dug in and he loved to hit. But, I don't know. They just don't...*

JP- They just don't teach it anymore. The reason that guys like Lemon were winning twenty games a year and got to stay in the ballgame was that they could hit the ball and they could bunt the ball. If a pitcher could bunt the ball, and you'd sacrifice with him every time, and you'd let that next guy drive in that run. Now, they don't practice bunting. They don't practice a lot of things that are the basics of baseball. Now, there is no one that is going to tell me that you can't learn how to bunt on artificial surface. What's the difference? Rizzuto and Stirnweiss used to take a half a swing at the ball and still drive the ball down third base and that third baseman would be playing in the field the ball. And they'd still beat it out. The other question was about the salaries. Well, I tell you. Years ago they used to say that you played the game because you loved the game, that's why you played it. Well, I'll tell you because that's what it was. Because, I never made good money in the big leagues. I was included in that '47 World Series and I got some money in that but that was nothing now compared to what they have in the big leagues. In the playoffs and then the World Series. Sixty four hundred dollars was a big World Series full share depending on the parts you played in. The first four games is what I got credit for. You know, it's the TV, millionaires and everything else going into it.

*Yeah.*

JP- But anyway, I believe that a player should be paid, but it's the other way around. At one time the general manager and the owner had you and they'd sign their stars first and the mediocre ballplayer, the part-time ballplayer, they'd give you something, if you liked it, OK. If you didn't, you'd lump it and they could re-sign you for the same money that you had signed for the year before. Now with the change in your free agent status and all of these things. Now, it's all of these fellows with agents. Everybody's got an agent. Years ago you battled head-to-head. Sometimes your wife would negotiate for you but you still got that contract back and then they would give you something. Well, with the money out today, it's amazing how these fellows and without the lack of minor leagues. It's amazing that these fellows getting paid the money that they're playing for. You gotta get it in a hurry because your major league life is not there. Now, you'll have to be a four-year man to be vested member in their pension plan. Years ago it was a five-year man, 172 days a year to be a vested member in their plan. Now, with the TV millionaires. On top of that now these players, their agent says, "Well, this is what we want." Now they can say if you don't want to pay me that, now if you sign me this year, I've got one more year to go, I'm a free agent next year. So, you better get me now and pay me a lot of money or next year I'm going to try the free agent market or we'll renegotiate for that one year and get an arbitrator and even that arbitration is overboard. How can they expect? No wonder there is no minor leagues because the major league club splits the difference for all their minor league players. All their salaries. It used to cost the Yankees a hundred a fifty thousand dollars a year to have their ballclub in Newark. They got their players out of there. Now, why build your club around a fellow that's going to say to you, "I'm going to leave you next year unless you pay me this much money." The money that is being spent by these fellows and now they play out their free agency and they leave you and now here your nucleus of your team is gone. I think that they should get a fair amount of money but some of these things that they are asking. A million dollars! Now you take this boy Parker from Pittsburgh. He's going to be being paid in the year 2002. He will long be gone out of baseball by then and she's still going to be paid. It used to be in baseball...

*Winfield is the same way.*

JP- Yeah, and this is true but at the same time you used to get paid the following year for what you did the year before. Now, these guys are going to get paid before they even do it, and they are not doing it.

*Yeah. Well, I haven't run any thing on this but from my old memory, these free agents that sign for multi-bucks, as far as I know only one man has done better after he signed that before he signed and he only did it for one year. Pete Rose I think had a little better year after he signed with Philadelphia, but no other free agent who signed for multi-bucks has done better since he signed that he did before he signed. They've gone down hill. They don't have to put out. They really don't have to worry.*

JP-It's a matter of changing clubs. And when you change from one club to another club, depending on the club you're going to, now you're running into a different manager and running into different people that you're playing with.

*A different league, too.*

JP- Now these guys, years ago you used to get to the ballpark quick and put your uniform on because if you didn't somebody else would have it on or you were gone down to the minor leagues. When you had fifty two professional leagues, there was a lot of places. Fellows made a career out of playing. When I managed in the Philadelphia organization, I was turning loose boys so that there was a place for them to play. After a year or two, if they didn't show that much progress, why then they would get rid of them and bring in another boy and try him for a year or two. You're wiping kids out of the profession when they're nineteen, twenty-one years old but they've got full time to start another career somewhere else. Years ago, when you had a lot of ballplayers, fellows would play Double A ball and even Triple A ball as a career. For fifteen years. Now, you're forced out of it and the salaries so I can see these fellows trying to get their salaries up as high. But, I just don't like the idea of a guy handling a man and making millions of dollars off a player by negotiating for it.

*Well, let's get this in before we run out of time. Now you're the baseball coach at Clarkson. Is it difficult for Clarkson players to attract scouts? The reason being that it's a small college and not as widely known as some of the big baseball factories like Arizona and Southern Cal and North Carolina and that sort of thing.*

JP- Well, the only thing is that when a scout goes up and sees that league where Arizona is in or Miami, Florida or wherever they're going, Texas, they see a caliber of ball that is excluding our boys at Clarkson and these other schools that we play here. Education is the primary thing. It is, to a certain degree, for these other people that are playing at Arizona and things like that, and maybe physical education, whatever degree they are working for, but they are concentrated. They are a better, higher caliber class ballplayer playing there because they can give them grant and aid. Here at Clarkson, the only thing I can help with them is financial aid is if he's an excellent student. And, we have some good ballplayers that are excellent students. But, a majority of ballplayers that want to go or try to go professional will go to a school like Ithaca, will go to a school like Emory, where they go give athletic grant and aids and these others, Arizona, and they will get an opportunity to play more games. See, back east here when the NCAA allowed you to play fall ball, because we had a fall season here that went for our overall spring and fall, when they knocked that out, then they took about 20-25 games away from the eastern schools that played fall ball. Now, all we can do...Our season starts here in the spring on April 12<sup>th</sup>. We're done by May 1<sup>st</sup>. We play 24 games, all seven-inning doubleheaders. And, our boys here if they've got an exam to make or they got a test or a paper or anything to do, then we go around the

room that date and they have to stay here and get that exam or whatever. I did have a boy in 1970 by the name of Gary Jongwe (?), who pitched for the Cubs for three years.

*Well, that was my next question. Any going into pro ball, and if so, any made it to the big leagues?*

JP- Well, Gary Jongwe was with the Cubs for three years in spring training and they sent him out and they'd bring him back and so finally he gave it up. So he spent three years in the Cubs roster and would be there for a month or two or three and then be optioned back down. He's the only one. I had some other boys that did have the talent and the scouts here do see us play because we play Ithaca. Every scout now, that if they are scouting for the system, organized ball, they will see and they got to have a card on every kid because if some kid comes out of the high school or college and some team signs him as a free agent instead of through the draft, then somebody isn't doing their job. So they have a card on every kid that is playing baseball in any college. Now they will concentrate on certain kids. Kids here, if they had the time to devote to baseball and would take my experience and my coaching, and they could be looked at, I've had some ballplayers that could be major leaguers. But they come here for an education and they don't have time. They come here and I've had kids come to me and what they call Spit off the Bit. They say, "Coach, I can't keep up my schoolwork and play baseball at the same time."

*Being a farmer, I know what spitting out the bit is.*

JP- So, I say to them, "OK." So, the emphasis is on baseball. Yes, we have pride here. We wear the Yankee pinstripes, too. We have a major league uniform. We do everything first class, the same that they do at a lot of the other colleges like Arizona, except we don't have the programs that they got. But, our boys are and have had some experience and have gone into pro ball but not like those that you're speaking about.

*Well, this young fellow that you mentioned, with the Cubs. Did he ever get into a Cub lineup in the major leagues?*

JP- Oh, yeah, he pitched there. He was with the Cubs in spring training for three years. He was with the club for a month or two and then they'd send him down to the Texas League and he was starting and he was relieving. He never could get his feet set at the same time like this Reuschel boy. Now Reuschel is the one that the Yankees are giving a chance to pitch his way back.

*Yeah, he's down in the minors now.*

JP- He was in the organization and it was between him and Reuschel every year whether he would be there or Reuschel would be there to a certain extent. Reuschel would be established and every year the kid would go to spring training and he'd say, "I got a chance to make it this year." And then well, first thing you know he'd be there for a month and then come cut-down date and down he would go, into the minor leagues, the high minors. And this was the way baseball was run years ago, and like I say, with the minor leagues gone now, and with these fellows, now you wipe a boy out in a year or two. If they had a place to play. The desire is there. I've turned kids loose I know that were going to be Triple A ballplayers anyway. Where does a ballplayer come from. Here, in little northern New York. Clarkson College. Two of us, Frankie Shea played for Hank Todd and I played for Hank Todd and we were both on the '47 Yankees at ole time. Johnny Podres come up from Mineville, New York around here.

*Willoughby is where he was born, the records show. Willoughby was where he was born.*

JP- Well, Mineville is far from there and you had boys from New York State and even with our season the way it is now. We have indoor cages. But they don't have the time to devote here. But we play the game and we play the game the way I feel it should be played.

*So it was on television the night before last from Niagara Falls.*

JP- That's right.

*I can't think of his name now.*

JP- Manning is from Niagara Falls. The centerfielder. There's a lot of boys.

*And a pretty good pitcher comes from that area named Barber.*

JP- And Warren Spahn from Buffalo. Fellows like that and they just played a lot of baseball. The systems are different. And now, if you go to a big league locker room and my god, it's amazing. It's like being in a room in your house. There's a TV. There's a table set there.

*Hair dryers.*

JP- To me, I enjoy going into the clubhouses and seeing some of my old friends who are coaches and they look at me and I say, "Is it much better?" Well, as far as living, everyday it's great. But, as far as what it adds to baseball. Nothing.

*Are you still in contact with any of your old teammates and your old friends?*

JP- Well, Steve Rosner, he used to run a restaurant down and we used to eat there all the time down there in Utica when we went down there on a road trip. I'm still in contact with Frankie Shea now and then who is over in the recreation league over there. I go up to Montreal and I saw Yogi there up in New York City. I went back down to the stadium that they renovated a couple of years ago. It was the first time I had been back since I was with Detroit. I saw Yogi and I see him down in spring training if I go down there, I see him out at the Old Timers and it makes me feel good. Like Monty Basgall, he was with me on the Pirates, he's coaching for LA now. Dallas Green, he's running Chicago. Pat Corrales caught for me, who was just fired by Philadelphia.

*Yeah, in first place.*

JP- He caught for me back in 1962 down in Chattanooga.

*Is that right?*

JP- A lot of the people that I played with and went to school with are announcers and things like that. It makes me feel pretty good. I played major league baseball. I was on a lot of winners in minor league baseball and I take pride in that because in '42 in my first year, we end up in the playoffs. In 1946 I went north and we end up in the playoffs in '46 with the Newark Bears. In 1947 I went to the Yankees in the World Series. In 1949, I'm with the Yankees and I'm sold over to Pittsburgh and that was the year they won the series. In 1952 I am with Los Angeles, with the Hollywood Stars and in '53 we win the pennant in the Pacific Coast League. In '54 we tied for the pennant in the Pacific Coast League. In 1955, I come back to the big leagues. In the latter part of '57 I go out to San Francisco and we win the pennant in '57 in the Pacific Coast League again.

In 1959, I'm with Buffalo and we win the pennant in Buffalo and we went into the playoffs and lose when Deron Johnson hit three home runs against us in the playoffs. But I mean I was on a lot of winners and played the game. (end of interview)

-Transcribed by J. Thomas Hetrick, October, 2006.