

Interview With
CHIEF MEYERS

A One of the things about the old Giants was once a Giant always a Giant. They seemed to have the -- Mr. McGraw installed the spirit there ...

Q You were with Brooklyn for '16 and '17.

A Yes, '16.

Q Not '17?

A No. '17 was -- that ^{was} the time that Mr. Wilson, our President at that time, was going to save the country for democracy, so I had the management of the New Haven Ball Club -- I was out of it in '17, you know, and that's when the bands were playing and everything else -- you want to fight and save the country and all that sort of thing. So I got so I couldn't ~~fit~~ ^{swallow} it and I had the New Haven team and I says -- well, I went down to New York and enlisted in the Marine Corps and I never went back into baseball any more after that.

Q Oh, I thought you were with the Boston Braves for a little bit after that.

A Well, just for a short period after that. Well, they had some old timers on there. Old Cy Young was on the ball club.

Q The Boston team?

A Yes.

Q Is that right.

A He was brought in there by, what's his name, the manager there --

Q Stallings?

A Stallings. George Stallings. Cy Young and the White Sox great spitball pitcher, what's his name --

Q Ed Walsh?

A Walsh. Ed Walsh, Stallings and I all ~~were in~~ ^{quit} Boston where ^{all} we got out of baseball at the same time.

Q Ha, ha.

A So I went down and took the management of the New Haven Ball Club. George Weiss, who now is the President of the Mers, at that time owned the New Haven ball team. Of course when they started waiving the flags and banners and so on -- it was opening day. I think it was, that Miss Russell, Miss Lillian Russell -- she was made an honorary Colonel in the Marine Corps and she dressed accordingly -- she had a -- oh, she was dressed beautifully. Of course, it was improper in those days for a woman to wear trousers and so she had her dress, but looked like she was in the Marine Corps - a Colonel - and she was doing her recruiting ^{duty} ~~duties~~. This was opening day and she looked up in the stands -- there were a

lot of fellows up in the stands and we were down in front and she was making a speech about the war and so on and she finally looked down and she looked at me and she says, "Hello!" She says, "Is that you Chief?" I says, "Yes, ma'am." She went on with her speech, didn't speak to me directly, but went on -- it was about the war. So I got to thinking about it, so that's where I left George Weiss -- I went down to New York and enlisted in the Marine Corps. I don't know whether George has ever forgiven me since, I haven't seen him. That ~~is~~ ^{was} an experience too in the Marine Corps. Of course, I never got very far in it.

Q How long were you in?

A I enlisted for the duration of the war, just the duration of it.

Q How long did you stay -- oh, just --

A Just the duration. After the Armistice was signed I got out of it, but I never went back into baseball any more. Oh, I played a few exhibition games and so on like that but --

Q What did you do?

A Oh, I come out here. I came out ~~in~~ ^{home} and I went into the Indian Service for a while and I was with them, but that was just a -- hardly compensated me for anything. However, I retired from that too.

Q What did you do after the Indian Service?

A Well, I haven't done anything much. I've been retired. I'm just a kid now - 83 years -- total disability from the Marine Corps.

Q Mmm.

A So, that's that. Oh, I can manage to do a few little chores, I don't think there's a lazy bone in my body, however, I've got now so by God, I can't do so much. I like to do little chores around and that sort of thing and keep busy.

Q Well, you look good.

A Well, I ~~try~~ to do a little exercise. I keep moving.

Q Did you grow up in Riverside?

A Yaaa. I grew up in Riverside.

Q Did you grow up in the town.

A Well, it wasn't much of a town ^{there} when I was born. Of course, there is now. However, we lived there in Riverside; I went to school there, ~~An~~ fact all my time until I got started playing baseball, and then I was all over the country.

Q Did -- what did your father do?

A Well, I don't know, he ^{was} gone before I was able to know him.

Q Oh, that's too bad.

A *I was raised by a*
~~There was just my~~ widowed mother.

Q And you went to grammar school and high school too, did you, in Riverside?

A Yes, I had a pretty fair education. In fact, I went East and availed myself of a college education at Dartmouth College. However, I didn't finish, which is one of the regrets of my life.

Q Did you go to Dartmouth?

A I was in the Class of 1909.

Q How long did you go?

A I was there one year *and* a semester.

Q Ah.

A I get -- they still -- you know, Dartmouth is just like the Giants - once a Giant always a Giant - and this ^{is} quoted from Chaucer ^{he said} - once a Dartmouth always a Dartmouth.

Q Ha, ha.

A So you never lose that affection for the ^{old} school regardless, if you just get in there and get a cup of coffee they instill that spirit into you that lasts. Your Dartmouth men are very, very close all over the world - all over the world. They'll never turn you down.

Q Were there many Indians in Riverside when you grew up here?

A Oh, there used to be a ^{Ranch} ~~branch~~ of Rio down there when I

young
was -- but they finally got pushed away to the hills and --

Q You weren't on a reservation of any sort?

A Oh, I was -- I was on one. When I was a young fellow we lived on a reservation for a time and I went to school on the reservation ^{""} when I was young.

Q How did you get started to play baseball? There were so many Indians in baseball in those days. Why was that?

A I got started playing ball because I liked it. That's all, I was just going to school and that way -- and of course when I got out of school ^{why} I started playing baseball professionally.

Q Who signed you first?

A What?

Q Who signed you up first?

A Oh, I wasn't signed up to -- I played pro - you know amateur -- well, it ain't amateur, but I made a living at it you know. It wasn't in national -- it wasn't in organized baseball. I played several years in different places in California, in Arizona. In fact I didn't get into organized baseball until I played in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Q How did that come about --

A The Tri-State League.

Q How did that come about, that you moved from --

A Well, I played in Butte, Montana and from Butte -- well, I played in Los Angeles in organized baseball. In organized baseball in Los Angeles and then from there to Butte, Montana and from Butte, Montana to St. Paul, from St. Paul to the New York Giants.

Q How did you get signed up with your first organized team? Who signed you?

A Well, ~~they~~ I don't know. They never had any scouts in those days, or anything. You're thinking modern. There was nothing like that. You just put yourself in. If you liked to play ball and they saw you, they took you -- that's all. ^{and} You proved yourself. There were no scouts ~~in there~~ when I started ^{to play ball,} ~~out in baseball.~~ The game was not a well thought ^{of} ~~out~~ game like it is today. Now, today there's mostly college men in there and everything and they're admitted to the first class hotels and all that sort of thing. We were just a second class citizen or even worse.

Q Is that right?

A Sure, in the early days, yes. You weren't admitted to hotels. that is first class hotels. Mr. McGraw is the one who started that. He's the one that paid the price ^{and} ~~for~~ even more than the price to get his ball team in to be respected. He's the one that started that.

Q I didn't know that.

A ^{Prior to} ~~at~~ that time baseball was a rowdy game. It ^{wasn't well} ~~was~~ thought of. ^{It was}

one ball right after another
curve ball ... curve ball ... slow ball ...
This + that ... in + out ... fast
ball in high

Like the sailors in Boston in the park, in the common, no sailors allowed. We were in that class. Ha!

Q Were you a pretty tough bunch?

A Well, you had to have guts or you wouldn't stay there, that's all there ^{was} ~~is~~ to that, even on your own ball team. ^{yes.} I don't know -- we had old pitchers like Joe McGinnity who'd go out there and pitch two games in an afternoon. And ~~in these days~~ if they took a pitcher ^{in those days} ~~out~~ it was a disgrace. Nowadays you can look at the pitcher out there and he's holding the ball looking back at the bullpen, it's so obvious that he wants to get out that the manager has got a bullpen full of pitchers. That's nowadays. I'm not saying anything disparaging against the athletes. The athletes are just as good and just as fast now as they were in those days, in fact they're faster, I think. But -- and they've got the equipment which we didn't have. It's just like, for example, the pole vaulters, why you know, ^{why} ^{just} it's like Sunny Jim, high over the fence he goes -- he just boosts over. But in those days, of course, we didn't have anything -- even the gloves -- now the gloves are similar to a lacrosse net -- you just catch the ball in the net, ~~you don't aim~~ ~~none of these really~~ ^{nowadays} everything is so spectacular in a way -- I can't visualize the way nowadays it's like -- they strike out -- 100 strikeouts, 150 strikeouts.

Q Un huh.

A Gosh! As old Al Smith used to say there in New York, ~~let's~~ ^{we'll} take a look at the record and you'll find out that I ^{'d} only ~~struck~~ ^{struck} out two or three times a season.

Q Really?

A Well, it's a matter of record, if you'll hunt it up. We didn't strike out. ~~We~~ hit the ball. Here they are, you know, a little bit of thin-handled bat -- there's a bat of mine over there in the corner. You just try and lift it.

Q Is this one that -- oh --

A A modern ball player wouldn't have nothing to do with that bat.

Q This is one of the bats you used?

A That's my bat, yes.

Q How heavy is this?

A I don't know.

Q Must be about 48 ounces.

A 48 I guess, or better than that. Nowadays, they got it ~~whipped~~ ^{whipped}. There's a bat over there that belonged to Babe Ruth.

Q Really?

A Yeah. In his day, he had his pretty good hefty bat. There's Babe Ruth's signature on the bat.

Q Un huh. Yours is heavier.

A Oh, yeah, but I can't hardly -- I can't handle the bat now. I can't handle that bat. It's too heavy for me. We didn't -- couldn't -- oh, there was a couple of guys that -- one in particular that I have to give credit ^{to.} He'd strike me out once in a while. Old Grover Cleveland Alexander. Boy, he had stuff, ~~Don't~~ think he didn't. I hit agin Walter Johnson in exhibition games, and he never struck me out.

Q Is that right? Could you see the ball when --

A Why, absolutely so. I see the ball. When you're batting, you don't wait. You're in motion, and when the pitcher -- when that ball leaves his hand, you're in motion yourself. You're with it. But I'm telling you, that Walter could buzz it by you. He sure could. He was wonderful. He was the fastest man I ever saw in baseball. I've hit against Rube Waddell in exhibition games.

Q He was faster than Rube Waddell -- Walter Johnson was faster than Rube Waddell?

A Oh, yes. Yeah, but Rube had the control.

Q Was Walter Johnson faster than Joe Wood in 1912?

A Well, I hit against Joe Wood in 1912. Yes.

Q Joe was pretty fast, then?

A Well, Joe was fast, but I hit one back at him and broke his hand. ^{at least split it so he couldn't pitch.} They took him out of the ball game in the World Series.

He never was any good after that. Came back
later as an outfielder. He was a pretty good hitter,
you know. A line drive, right back at him --

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Bam! Bam! He had speed, but I
had a good ~~the~~ eye in those
days,
too.

Hit it rightback at him - hit his bare hand. He was bleeding, and
he couldn't pitch anymore. They took him out. You got to be mov-
ing. You have to be moving when that ball comes in. Of course,
if it comes in where you are, all right, but if it doesn't, why
it's just too bad.

Q How did you get to be -- move up to the Giants?

A Well, I was sold to the Giants out of St. Paul.

Q You were always a catcher, by the way, weren't ^{you} --

A Always a catcher, yeah.

Q And when you went up to the Giants, they had Bressner^hhan,
didn't they?

A Yeah. Bressner^ahan was there.

Q How did they treat you, a rookie coming up?

A Well, you couldn't -- I don't like to say this, but I
was a -- in those days, when I was young, I was a foreigner. I
didn't belong. I was an Indian. These guys of Irish and Dutch
descent, we don't have those fellows in here any more much, they're
not many of those people anymore -- They're all Polinski -- you
know. You see a lot of Scandanavian names in there, and oh different --
even Italian boys, ^{are getting out of} ~~who get in~~ the game, you see? And the Irish ones,
and so on, But in those days, those tough babies - oh, you know,
they didn't consider a youngster at all. He was in there after his
job. That's the only way they looked at a youngster. I remember

when I broke in with the Harrisburg club, they had a whole lot of old timers on there, and Luc^{ia}er, the catcher, he got hurt, ~~his~~ finger, and couldn't catch, and Schreiber, another catcher, he got hurt, an old timer, and the manager told me to put the stuff on, and I did, and the pitcher was pitching out there, and gee, I wish I could think of his name, this old distracted *globe* of mine -- pardon my Shakespeare -- doesn't work. This pitcher was a spitball pitcher, and the first ball he pitched, he hit me right in the belly with it, because I'd called for a fast ball, and he threw me a spitter. He crossed me up all the way. There I was, a young fellow behind the bat being crossed up, and so I didn't say nothing anymore about it, and come up the next inning, and I didn't give him any signs at all, because I was on my own then ^{+ I could catch him} I wasn't expecting anything. He says, "What's the matter ~~you're~~ not giving any signs?" I says, "What's the use. You go ahead and pitch." ^{and I caught him.} And when it come time to bat, I had no bat. We used to carry a bat in those days. I got a bat bag now, yet. Carried a bat and a suit and uniform and everything. We didn't have -- we had no ^{we weren't pampered pets like they are today --} you know, so I had no bat, and Billy Hamilton was the manager. You remember him?

Q Yeah.

A So, it came my ^{turn} ~~time~~ to bat, and there ^{were} ~~was~~ a couple of men on bases, too, and I went to pick up a bat, and some guy says, "Hey,

Busher, drop that bat!" So, I looked at the manager, and I says, "I haven't got any bat," I said, just like that. Well, he went over there and grabbed a bat and handed it to me. I had no choice of bat or anything. ^{But} Well, I went up to bat -- well, the first ball was kinda high and inside ^{at} ~~hit~~ the old head, kinda ^{famed} ~~turned~~ me down, you know. But, ~~you know~~, I figured ^{it, I figured} it'd be like that. ~~He~~ It was tough. However, on the next pitch ^I hit one into the Susquehanna River, and won the ball game, and the papers come out and gave me credit for it, and these two fellows couldn't get back into the game yet, for a while, and I had a different pitcher that really gave me the signs and shook his head off, and didn't make a -- you know, I knew what was coming, and the next day, I . . . dig ^{And that's a matter of record.} up the old papers there, at the Harrisburg club in the Tri State League. ^{you can see that in the . . .}

Q What year was that?

A 1906, I think it was.

Q That was your first club in organized baseball?

A That's right, that's when I came down and quit Dartmouth. Came down to play baseball.

Q Who got you to quit Dartmouth. I mean, that must have --

A That is the regret of my life. I regret it to this day.

Q How did that happen?

A Oh, I had to go down. Well, it was the summer, you know.

I went down there. I was recommended to play summer baseball and I was ineligible anyhow for baseball at Dartmouth, because I'd already played professional baseball. So, I went down there to make a little money, but in the meantime^{""} I was recommended down there by our coach - can't think of his name now^{...} However, -- I went down there and played for this -- in the summer, and when the season was over and it was time to get back to college, prior to that, my mother was very sick out here in California, and I got a wire from my brother stating ^{That} (she wanted me back, so I left there. That was the unfortunate thing for me, but mother carried on for quite some time. I^t was too late to go back to Dartmouth, and that was the unfortunate period. Of course, I stayed, and then -- well, there was nothing else to do but go on with baseball. From there, I went to the Los Angeles ball team and so on and kept right on going -- ^{however,} ~~oh,~~ I have no regrets about that. It's -- I made good at that, you know, in a way.

Q When you were -- the first -- the very first spring training with the Giants - how did you feel going up to the big leagues the first time?

A Well, I --

Q 1909 --

A 1908.

Q 1908.

A That's right. Oh, I went along. It was all right --

Q Did you think you'd make the giants?

A Well, I always had confidence in myself. I never did --
I always thought I was good enough for anybody, as far as that
goes. I always -- I never belittled myself in baseball. ~~I didn't~~
~~care~~

Q Even though they had Roger Bressnerhan^a at the time?

A Well, oh yes, I knew that.

Q He was the best catcher in baseball at the time.

A I know he was.

Q Sure.

A But, I didn't --

Q And here you were, kid going up there -- a kid going up
there at that time. Weren't you frightened?

A Well, I'll tell you, this is -- Bressnerhan^a, when I went
up there -- it was 1909 when I got a chance -- well, I was up
there. I could hit in those days. Of course, I was quite old at
the time, you know. See, I started playing ball when Dewey took
Manila.

Q Is that right? Are you just saying that, or is that true?

A Yeah, I started playing in the minor, you know, in the
bushes.

Q In 1898?

*I got up there too late
In 1914 I was practically through...
I was 34 yrs old. In 1916 I
was 36. If I'd only gotten
up there with McBraw
when I was a young
fellow I'd have
maybe made that
Hall of Fame.
I wasn't up 10
yrs, so I'm
ruled out.*

A Yeah --

Q I'll be darned.

A I never got up there until I was 28 years of age.

Q Oh, really?

A Yeah. 1909 I was at spring training with -- I was 29.

I had to exaggerate a little bit about my age. When I went up there, I took off a couple of years, but that didn't help. I played those -- in '16, '17, I was 37, and I wasn't too old for the Marine Corps either when they took me there. They was glad to have me there.

Q You didn't come up to the majors until you were 28.

A That's right.

Q Wow, that was a -- that's --

A And I didn't do spring training -- I was sold with Markward, and Markward came up from Minneapolis -- Indianapolis -- Indianapolis, not Minneapolis -- and I come up from St. Paul, and some other guy came up from some other American Association club - the three of us were all sold for \$48,000. They paid six for me, and eleven for Markward and there was some others that went up there - the whole schmear that was taken up to the big league amounted to \$48,000. Now, they give a guy who don't know the way *in* to the ball park a \$100,000 to come up and play. Oh, that's a shame. You know, they take a novice -- why, there's no business

in the world -- they take a novice -- they hire a man, you know, unless he's had some training or something else, you know. Oh, that rule is terrible. It's wasted a lot of baseball money, good money. Baseball people ^{ought to} ~~would rather~~ have -- well, I don't know, they're supposed to have a lot of brains, but I don't believe I'd want to do that if I was up there - pay a man \$100,000 who didn't know the way into the ball park.

Q Yeah. They called Rube the \$11,000 lemon for a few years, didn't they?

A Boy, but he was good. Don't think he wasn't. But the best lefthander I ever caught was old Nap ^{Rucker.} ~~Walker~~. There was a -- he didn't have the personality, he didn't sell himself out there on the field, or anything, you know. He had no, like the Hall of Famer, that young fellow, ~~Ben~~ ^a Moranville - 250 hitter for Christ's sake -- pardon my language on that ^{thing} -- and goes up and makes the Hall of Fame ^{because he's a good clown.} . . . oh, I saw him when he broke in.

Q Did you?

A Yeah, yeah, I was with McGraw, Mr. McGraw at that time, and he come down, and he was -- we were playing in Boston, and Cy Young was pitching, I think -- oh, no, Shore. Shore was pitching.

Q Ernie Shore?

A Yeah -- he was a young fellow at that time, and I think

we got eleven runs off of him, you know, and this Moranville was sitting on the bench, and McGraw passed by, and he says, "Put him in there," he said. You know, he was kidding, kidding ^{Stallings} -- madder ^{Stallings was} than a deuce, you know. "Put him in," he says, you know, kidding him about the kid, and ^{allways} Storrs got mad and he put him in there, you know, and I was so surprised to see that kid work. He caught it right in his ~~belly~~ belly you know, and everything seemed to break for him there. I think he got three hits and, oh, he fielded out there like, oh, why, he was just a rabbit out there, and they named him rabbit after that, you know, but he stayed in there twenty years, and he was a wonderful ^{clown} fellow, but he never made any great record, and he was a good fielder, but

Q Great drinker, too.

A Huh?

Q A great drinker.

A Oh, he was, you know, he was -- he was what they call good copy for Damon Runyon and ^{Bozeman Bulger and} Grant --

Q What was the name of that writer that covered the Giants for all those years --

A Who?

Q Sam Crane.

A Sam Crane, yeah. He was always good copy for those fellows, and all of them, you know, they're different, you know, there was

always a story -- that's where, as I say, Nap ^Rrucker never got the credit for being the great pitcher that he was. There was a man ought to be in the Hall of Fame. He had the stuff - control and everything. Of course, he never had that individuality that ~~he~~ could sell himself. Like ^a DiMaggio, gee, there's a fellow, just merely walk on the field, you could see, his attitude on the field. They'd give him a hand for striking out.

Q Yeah. What kind of a guy was Rube Mark^{ju}ward when he first came up? Was he copy --

A Well, Mark^{ju}ward was a -- you know, he didn't know the league or anything, and he -- of course, he was a kind of nervous fellow. ^{But} He finally found himself, and he had the stuff, and control. Control is the main thing today in baseball. Of course, you've got to have some stuff with it.

Q Did you catch Rube Mark^{ju}ward when he won the ^{19 straight.} ~~19 series?~~

A He pitched 19 straight ball games in the National League, and I caught most of them, everyone of them, practically.

Q He almost won twenty straight, didn't he?

A Yeah, Oh, he did win twenty. They never give him credit for it. In those days, why, the ~~whole~~ ^{home} score^R-- why, he played for the home team. Nowadays it's different. It's legitimate now, the same way with everything else, and I don't know. The only honest people they had in baseball ~~was~~ ^{were} the umpires in those days. That's

right.

Q You were an honest man.

A Well, I never got put out of a ball game but once in my life, and that was old Big Hank -- Hank O'Day. One day, I got to needling him there. You know, he's the one that made the decision that lost us the ball game in 1908, the Series, which was on a technicality that didn't even count in those days -- don't mean anything today, when you come right down to it. The New York ball club won that pennant!

Q Were you there then?

A Yeah, I was there, but I didn't play.

Q Did you see what happened?

A Why, sure.

Q Could you describe it to me?

A Oh -- they never did get the ball --

Q Merkle was on first, wasn't he?

A Merkle was on first, and ^{Bridwell} ~~Brizzol~~ hit the ball ^{I think} -- oh, I can't recall it right now. McCormick had scored from first - from third rather. It was a base hit, But Merkle didn't go to second base. He didn't touch second. There's no question about that, but --

Q Why not?

A But ^{Evers went and} got a ball, he didn't get the ball because McGinnity was out there, and he ^{got} ~~had~~ the ball and threw it into the

stands.

Q You saw him throw it in the stands?

A Yeah, the ball was thrown into the stands. Then they got another ball, and of course, they got O'Day to rule on the thing, and that was a ~~technicality~~ technicality, of course. He was supposed to go down and touch second, complete the play, and of course, Chicago beat 'em in a playoff, and that's what I was saying about the -- Hank O'Day - we were always mad~~d~~ at him because he cost us, cost the ball club -- of course, I had no interest in it. I was just there, that's all, and --

Q You didn't play much that year?

A ^{oh no,} ~~Well,~~ I wasn't even -- just visiting, you might say. Didn't even -- because I was sold. I belonged to the club. I was sold in 1908, but I never got into any games until 1909, and that was mostly exhibition games then, and I never -- let's see, it was 1910 when Bressner^a ~~er~~ ^{had the opportunity} wanted to go to the St. Louis ball club to take the management down there, and McGraw, Mr. McGraw, didn't want to let him go, because there was quite a lot of baseball left in Roger yet, but I had proven myself to such an extent that Mr. Bressner^a ~~er~~ boosted me. He said, "What more do you want?" He says, "There's that Indian. He's a finished catcher," which I was at that time, because I'd been catching all these years, but he says, "What more do you want? Look at him. He can hit.

He pleaded with McGraw,
Let me go." And finally, McGraw let him go to St. Louis, but he didn't do so well down there. I don't know, but it was through his instrumentality that I got to catching first string for the New York Giants. And, God rest his soul, ^{Mr.} McGraw worked me to a -- to a frazzle, you might say.

Q Did you like him?

A Oh, we held him in high esteem. We respected him in every way, because, I'll tell you, Mr. McGraw - his ball team never lost a game. He lost it, not his players. Of course, there's -- errors of judgment. That was taboo with him. He wouldn't take any -- but, errors. He often said, errors is part of the game. If there wasn't errors, the game would be perfect, and nobody would come out to see us. But he says, "Don't make too many of them, or else you won't be here." Well, no, we held him in high esteem. You'll find that any old New Yorker - they're all gone now, mostly. My dear old friend, the second baseman, is still alive, Larry Doyle, up there at Saranac, and ^{Fred} ~~Jack~~ Snodgrass and --

Q Rube?

A Rube. Rube is still ^{on deck.} ~~around, and Dick,~~ Darned few others, that I played with.

Q They all liked McGraw and respected him --

A They all respected him. They always called him Mr. McGraw. They still held him in high esteem.

Q Nobody called him Mugsy?

A Well, he didn't like that. No, he didn't -- that was a sore spot with him.

Q What about behind his back?

A But we respected him because he -- because no one could come around and second-guess him about his ball players, because you had a fight on your hand right now. He fought for his ball players. You couldn't go around and say ^{why that} Meyers so and so - nothing doing with him. You had a fight on your hand right now. He protected his ball players at all times, and he didn't alibi, and you couldn't - oh, how he hated lies. Don't ever come in with some alibi. That didn't go with him. Nope. He loved the truth, and you come with the truth, and just like I said ^{...} one time, a young ball player come around second base, and he missed it, and the second baseman called for the ball. It was the winning run. He come in and scored, and the umpire called him out. Mr. McGraw says to him, he says, "What's the matter, didn't you touch that base?" He says, "I stepped right on it." ^{McGraw} ~~He~~ says, "You know something. That'll cost you \$100 ^{...} for stepping on that base." He says, "Any time that man out there said you didn't step on it, you didn't step on it." He says, "They don't call that play any other way. That's the only way they can call it. You missed the base, and don't lie to me." ^{And} ~~So~~ that was McGraw. Oh, he was a great man - he

was a great man, a wonderful man in every way. *Charitable*

Q How was Robby as a manager?

A Oh, he was just a good old soul and everything. In fact, we had a ball club that was all old fellows, like ~~Dor~~^{aw}~~bert~~^R and Wheat and all of us who was all on their last legs, the whole ball team. There was only one ball player on the ball club, outside of Hy Murray and Casey Stengel - they were the only young ones. All of us -- Casey was the life of the party and everything and kept us old timers pepped up, you know. I always maintained that Casey won another pennant over there. Of course, Robby was the manager, but he kept us guys on our toes, and we never had any signals. Everybody knew baseball. We just outsmarted the National League that year in 1916, with that old crippled up ball club, and in fact, you might say, figuratively, they just had to wrap us up in bandages and take us out to play the World Series. We were all done.

Q Yeah. You had a lot of old pitchers on that team?

A Oh, yes, we had, but gee, we had pretty good pitching. Yes, old Big Bill ~~Clifford~~^{Pfeffer} and Markward and Jack Coombs^b and --

Q Did you ever see Willie Keeler play?

A Oh, yes, yes.

Q You did? Was he that good, as they say?

A You betcha he was. Yep.

Q He really was?

A He really was. You're darned right. Yeah . . . take McGraw for instance. Those fellows were up there at the plate, and they put in the foul strike rule. They fouled off a hundred balls.

Q Really?

A Why sure. They set there and foul 'em off all day.

Q I'll be darned.

A Yeah. McGraw was a hitter. He hit way over 300 for nine years, straight, until he got hurt. He got crippled, you know, with that spike by the same guy that spiked me in the American Association, Harley. They come into you in those days. They didn't, you know, they didn't fool around. You really got spiked if you got in the way.

Q Who were the good catchers of your time, the real good ones?

A Well, Bressner^ohan, Johnny Kling. Archer, I think Archer was a great catcher but he wasn't a hitter.

Q What about Gibson?

A Yeah. Gibson was a good catcher. Yeah.

Q Did you know him?

A Yeah, oh yes. He was with Pittsburgh. Of course, you know him as opposition. Yeah.

Q Who had the best arm of the bunch? Do you know, or did they all have good arms?

A Oh, the best throwing arm was Archer of Chicago. He was very, very accurate and fast and, of course, ^{Kling} ~~Kling~~ was a better hitter than he was, but Archer was the best throwing catcher. He really could throw.

Q Who was the smartest?

A Well, I don't know. Well, if you had pitchers like Brown and Math^{ew}~~ew~~son, you didn't have to be smart behind there. Now, take for instance Math^{ew}~~ew~~son. I don't think he ever walked a man, that is from being wild, that is no control. I don't believe he ever walked a man in his life. The only time he ever walked anybody was ~~for~~ expedience, ~~this fellow is~~ pitching too fine to him, you know, and not letting him get a good ball, but there was never a time that he couldn't throw that ball over the plate.

Q Who called the game? Math^{ew}~~ew~~son or you?

A I'd call it. But if he don't feel right about it, ^{why} he shakes his head.

Q Did he often shake you off?

A No. Matty never shook me off.

Q What was Matty like?

A Well, I don't know. He was -- in those days, he was bothered so by the public that he was very distant. He was hard

to get acquainted with, but among his teammates, he was strictly a team man. If you made an error or anything behind him, or anything of that sort, he'd come and pat you on the back and say, you know -- he didn't do like some of the pitchers today and get ~~stiff~~ ^{surly} about it and one thing and another. We loved to play for him. We'd ~~work~~ ^{break} our necks for that guy. He never, you know, he knew - just like McGraw. There's errors to be made -- it's human to err, and we make them out there, but don't make any boneheads, you know, you might say. ~~There's~~ ^{That is,} errors of judgment and throwing the ball to the wrong place, and things of that sort. That ~~do~~ don't go. And Matty was -- oh, he had exceptional control. Sixty-nine innings without a walk.

Q What was he like as a person?

A Oh, wonderful character. Lovely character. ~~Gentleman~~ ^{Gentle} in every way.

Q I understood he was a very, very good checker player.

A Oh, ~~see~~ ^{si,} that's what made him a great pitcher, his wonderful retentive memory. Any time you hit a ball hard off of him, you never got another one there.

Q Is that right?

A ^{you know,} Those fellows back there, they thought, they used their head in baseball a whole lot. They talked baseball, morning, noon and night. McGraw could tell you ~~who called~~ ^{recall} games eight and nine

and ten years old - where the ball was hit to and so on and so on. The smartest man we had on the club was the bonehead, Mr. Merkel. Mr. McGraw never consulted anybody on the ball club in the case of strategy or anything of that sort. He never asked Matty - he never asked me or anybody else on the ball team. He's say, "Fred, what do you think of this?" What a misnomer - one of the smartest men in baseball. Fred Merkel.

Q Isn't that interesting?

A Isn't that something. It shows what the newspapers can do to you.

Q That's unbelievable --

A Yes, it's the truth. Never consulted anyone. He'd say, "Fred, what do you think of this," *on such and such a play.*

Q I get the feeling that baseball was more of a matter of intelligence --

A *Absolutely*
~~Could be~~ so, and they practice that now --

Q More than it is today.

A Well, baseball, of course, is improving. I think it's getting better. It's all -- I don't belittle the players nowadays. The athletes are just as clever and just as smart in every way, but they're all businessmen. They've got outside interests, and everybody -- *has* ~~has~~ got his nest all feathered and everything else. Us guys, we just played for the love of it. I never asked for a raise in

salary all the time I was there, and I don't believe Matty ever did. Yep, the only one we ever on was ^{back a little bit and} . . . ~~whenever he'd~~ try to get a raise and quit was old Mike ^{Donlin} ~~Donnelly~~. Mike was the only one -- went out and went into vaudeville with Mable ^{Hitz} ~~Go~~ for a year --

Q Mark^{qu}ward was in vaudeville a little bit, too, wasn't he?

A Yeah, Markward never got any great amount of money. Did he ever tell you what he got?

Q I think he said the highest he ever got was \$7,000.

A \$7,000. Six or seven

Q The highest he ever got.

A That's right. That's what I thought it was. Six --

Q Fred Snodgrass said that Matty never got more than eight.

A That's right.

Q -- if he got that much, Fred said.

A Yeah, I know. He never got any more, and he was glad to pitch it. He loved it. He loved baseball, yep, but he was ready when he went in there. He took care of himself.

Q I understand that with checkers, he played four or five people all at once.

A Yeah, he'd play two or three of them at a time. We never permitted any cards - gambling, you know, in the Polo Grounds. ^{McGraw} ~~The~~ ~~low~~ didn't permit it.

Q You mean, nobody played poker?

A No.

Q What?

A We never played any poker or anything of that sort.

Q Never?

A So -- ~~they~~^{he} put a ban on it -- so we played checkers or dominoes, and -- at the Polo Grounds, you had to report in the morning at ten o'clock. They played daytimes in those days, you know. No night games. And you'd report at ten o'clock in the morning, and then we'd go out and have our workout, and the games weren't called at the Polo Grounds until around ^{4 o'clock,} ~~11:00~~ that was on account of Wall Street, in those days, you know. They never -- the market ~~wouldn't~~^{didn't} stop until it was three o'clock, and they're way downtown. They'd get on that elevated train and, oh, four or five trainloads would come up there at a time. They'd come -- two or three thousand would come up from Wall Street, all good fans. They held the game at four o'clock for those people, because in those days, you know, they didn't draw like they do nowadays.

Q The games were over so much quicker then --

A Oh, well, they played ball in them days. You could take a pitcher nowadays, why, he, ~~he~~^{hah} -- he wastes more time out there you know, ~~pitching~~^{fixing} his cap and rubbing his chin and wiping himself off, scratching ~~around~~^{The ground} with his feet and everything, you know, they waste ~~and~~ an hour or so every day. We played -- always played a game of

ball in less than two hours--never ^{longer.} better. Two hours was a long game, really was a long game. We played a lot of games in an hour and a half. I played a game in an hour and -- not an hour, but I mean 58 minutes, one time.

Q Wow.

A Yeah, they didn't -- the pitcher pitched and that's that. You know, you get in there, and if the umpire's hustling him -- no, nowadays, usually a pitcher will pull up his pants and do this and wipe his brow and wipe his head off and pull his nose and, gee, he's got more darned mannerisms out there, you know, and well, if he ~~will~~ stand^s still for a few minutes and tries to kill time that way, the umpire will call him, but if he's in motion and he looks around at the outfield and here, and then he ^{stares} ~~stares~~ down there, you know. Lotta bull. You know, he's afraid to throw the ball. You know, they seem to be afraid to throw the darned ball, and he'll turn around and look at the bullpen ^{to} ~~and~~ see if he can't get some help. You know, you can see it. It's so obvious. They all -- of the -- course, the radio is on there, the television, and they -- oh, even the umpires want to get into the act nowadays. Everybody's in there. They get interviewed, you know, I guess they get good money for that, too. They all have agents, and so on. Gee whiz. Money! By gosh, those guys -- some of these guys are getting more dough than I could -- well, I wouldn't permit 'em to

spit in my glove, because, you know, for dough. Oh, I'm not belittling them. They're good, But, they're smart. They believe ⁱⁿ ~~of~~ staying in the game and getting the money, and they get it, too. Oh -- well, why not? Why shouldn't they, [?] ~~get the money?~~ ^{We were just dumb eggs. We played for nothing.} We didn't get the money.....So that was the attitude in the old days. ~~He~~ ^{Conniskey,} ~~Konisky~~ the great sport - he paid the newspapers a whole lot. He didn't pay his ball players. Connie Mack. Cheapest man in baseball. Clark Griffith. Jeeze. They had no, you know, they tried to organize baseball in those days, but they couldn't -- what's his name? Tried to get us into a fraternity. The ball player ^{s themselves} ~~himself~~ didn't care about it, you know. They just wanted to play ball. My top was \$6,000. Matty was eight, around there. We never got anything until Babe come in there, and then the crowds come in, and when the Yankees built those -- and when the crowds come in, you could see. When the ball players play to 50,000 and ~~Caruso~~ ^{Caruso} playing to 5,000 - the comparison there is, ^{obvious,} ~~you know,~~ so somebody's getting that dough, and now, of course, Uncle Sam is a very strict. Well, I don't like to refer to him -- but our thieving government, but by golly, they ^{ill} take everything you got, and these fellows - 10¢ on a dollar. It ain't fair. However, the government's gotta be run because I'll tell you, there's nothing like supporting the world and neglecting us poor Indians around here.

Q Why were there so many Indians in baseball back then?

Chief Sokalexis - Chief Bender - Jim Thorp --

A Yeah, Jim Thorp --

Q -- yourself.

A Jim Thorp. There was a great athlete, a wonderful athlete. ^{Yes, he} He was an Adonis. He was built like a Greek god. By gosh -- boy, he had -- I roomed with him, you know, when he come back from the Olympics in 1912.

Q He never could hit, could he?

A Oh, yes, he hit 300.

Q Did he? Why didn't he ~~xxxxx~~ stick?

A Well, I don't know why. Jim was -- his deportment wasn't any too good, ever since he come back from the ^{Olympics} -- they took those trophies away from him. I know, when he come in - one time he come in early in the morning and woke me up. He says, "You know, Chief, the King of Sweden gave me those trophies, and the guy that finished second wouldn't take them." And that broke his heart. He never got over that, and that started him to drinking. He was never a drinking man, as I knew him, prior to that. That is, I never knew him at Carlisle or anything, because I never went there. However, I knew people who knew him prior to that time when he was a great athlete in football and everything. Prior to that he didn't drink. Couldn't very well and be, you know, do what he did do, conceded so by all the experts in the world as one of the greatest athletes that

ever lived, ^{by} ~~be~~ every expert in the game as the greatest that ever lived. They may top his record, somebody. You always get topped, you know, but in his day, there were --

Q Did you know Chief Sokalexis?

A I didn't know ^{him.} ~~^~~ He was from Old Town, Maine. I never knew him.

Q Chief Bender did you know?

A Oh, yes, I knew Charlie quite well. Oh, yes, he was ^{a white} ~~^~~ ^{Earth} ~~^~~ from around Minnesota.

Q The Indian was ⁱⁿ ~~at~~ a position of a minority group in those days?

A Oh, yes. ^{It's that way} ~~^~~ they are yet.

Q Yeah.

A ~~Definitely~~ ^{yes,} ~~^~~ yes, they're a minority group. You can't -- nowadays, you can't ridicule an Irishman on the radio, you can't ridicule a Jew, and you can't hardly ridicule a Negro, but they can kill us every night on the radio, and they shoot us down, and they make everything out of us all the time, and that's one reason I don't look at anything but a ball game on the -- outside of the news -- on the television. I like ^{the} ~~^~~ the ball games and the news, and after the news, why, then comes the killing. They're just shooting one another down, and -- well, I say brainwashing all the children we got to kill their fathers and mothers. That's what that's doing.

Q This is a violent country isn't it?

A Well, it's made them so. We never had that when I was a youngster, of course, anything to teach us the crime, ~~xx~~ teach you how to steal, and the things that they have on there, teach the youngsters to -- I think it's an awful bad example. I don't know why they shouldn't have some more control over it and teach people the good things of life. We don't. Boy, all around, we see 'em sneaking around and kill^{ing} us Indians - that's all they do.

It would be funny if it wasn't so sad.

Q This country is a country in which there's a great deal of killing and violence all the time.

A Well, yes, sir, it's always -- I don't know --

Q It's what we call civilization.

A Those things I don't like to talk about. I know them, I see them, but -- and nowadays, the kids, you know -- in the old days, we had a saying - if anything was honest and upright, we'd say it was on the square. They've even turned that word around where it means you're -- belittle^{ing} ~~you~~ - your're nothing - you don't belong. Square deal is no more. You're ^a square. Where do they get that stuff anyhow? It's not -- you can't believe it. It doesn't make sense, that is to me. I guess, I don't know -- I guess I'm an old square in the new sense, now. *From when the shake of a hand was your word + your*

* * *

. . . anything about protecting their country, saving their country or anything of that sort. There's no patriotism. The flag

honest

can pass by ~~and~~ they don't even hang out a flag. There's only two people on this street that hangs out a flag. That's myself and this neighbor next door. I don't know whether he does it because I hang mine out, or --

Q I want to ask you about that famous Snodgrass incident. That 1912 World Series game.

A Well, I'll tell you. That's -- that was just a bald and simple error. That's all. Mr. McGraw or anybody on the ~~club~~ club never censored Fred Snodgrass. Fred Snodgrass was another gentleman, a very fine fellow, proven so throughout his life. We hold him in high esteem, and everybody on the club did, but he wasn't a DiMaggio on the field. He had a different attitude. He played the game for all its worth, but when we -- when he walked on the field, he had an antagonistic attitude to the fans, you know, and they were after him. He created that environment. He ~~didn't~~ ^{isn't} like -- like Joe Dimaggio on the field, and you'd say they idolize him, the very way he walks on the field. He don't have to play ball. Well, Snodgrass was out there, and he'd, you know, he had that antagonistic -- you know, the fans were after him all the time.

Q Was it fans, or was it newspaper men?

A Well, I guess the newspaper men were influenced by that attitude.

Q Maybe it worked the other way. Maybe the newspaper men

influenced the fans?

A Oh, yes, sure, yeah. Oh, yeah.

Q In other words, if he didn't get along with the newspaper men, they could turn the fans against him?

A Oh, easy. Easy, yep. No, there never was a finer gentleman than Fred Snodgrass.

Q They always claimed that was a \$100,000 muff. Did his muff lose that series, really?

A Well, the game would have been over --

Q Yeah, but then right after that, what about that pop fly --

A Well, there's another thing. That was the most unfortunate thing that happened to Fred Merkel. Now, that pop fly, foul, fell in the coach's box, mind you, and it was high enough for anybody -- I give it the old college try, and Matty went over there and we went together, and Fred Merkel was standing there, and ~~M~~Matty says to me, "Where's Fred?" And I looked at him, and he was still standing there. There was no sun at that time to bother him, but that foul dropped in the coach's box, and I says, "Well, jeeze, what happened? Why didn't Fred come and pick that -- all he had to do was walk over there and catch that ball," ^{so} ~~because~~ when Matty went back in the box, why, the next ball pitched, why, Speaker hit it for a base hit to win the ball game, and Matty says, "Well, I guess, I don't know what happened, but I think Fred ~~handed~~

had a lapse of memory," which he did. He had a lapse of memory right there, because there was no other way to ^{explain it,} ~~way~~ ^{it,} because there never was a more loyal guy in the world.

Q Did Matty call for the ball?

A No.

Q Did Matty ask you to take it?

A No. We just give it the old college try, to back up ^{more than anything} -- you know, and Fred never moved. Never moved. The ^{Boston} bench was calling, you know. The bench called Matty. The bench called me. That's where the confusion started. Maybe that confused ^{him.} ~~it.~~ ~~But~~ ~~then he says~~ "But I don't think Fred would listen to that." See, the Boston bench was right there, you know, close to it, and they probably called -- I could hear 'em hollering, you know, and they probably ^{hollered} -- "Look out, Fred," or something ^{like that.} They coached him off of it, see?

Q Yeah.

A That could have been -- that would have been the ^{play} ~~place~~, because we couldn't -- we -- I don't think Matty could have got it.

Q And it was too far for you?

A It was too far for me. I just went down backing up, more than anything else. Anything that, you know, may occur, which a catcher ordinarily does, you know, even on throws from the infield, ^{he} goes down there. That's all. That's -- he might have been coached

off of the thing b y, you know -- Matty said he must have had a lapse of memory or something -- that's all the excuse we ever had for it, but that was a possible thing, that he was, you know, afraid of a collision there with these fellows hollering, you know. Well, they do that, you know. That's part of the game.

Q That was the series with the Red Sox, wasn't it?

A Yep.

Q Isn't that the series that Joe W^ord won three games?

A Yeah. That's the one I hit back and knocked him out of the ballgame.

Q Yeah. In 19 -- the year before that, when you won your first pennant, 1911 --

A Yeah.

Q -- that's the year Baker hit those two homeruns?

A Yeah.

Q First, he hit one off Mar^{qu}ward.

A Mar^{qu}ward and then Matty.

Q Yeah. They say that Matty and Mar^{qu}ward got a little annoyed at each other after that. Is that right?

A No. No. No, that wasn't it. It was the smartness, the Philadelphia ^{ball club} ~~Bulletin~~ -- they knew what Mar^{qu}ward pitched. They knew what Matty pitched. They were calling - they were hitting for signals, you know? They were stealing signals. ~~Not~~ off of me,

because Mr. McGraw came to me, and said, "What are they doing?" I said, "They're getting them someplace." And he says, "Who's getting them?" I said, "That fellow on third base, that Harry Davis. That coach on third base, he's calling them. When he says it's all right, it's a fast ball, I can call for anything at all, and he'll call it." So, he says, "They're getting them off of you." I says "No. They're not getting them off ^{of} me. Be- cause I went to Mathieson and told him ^{you} ~~to~~ pitch whatever ^{you} ~~he~~ wants to pitch." I says, "I'll catch you without signals." I says, "I'm not going to give any signals." And still the guy was hollering "All right!" for the fast ball.

- Q Against both Mathieson ^{ew} and Mar ^{gr} ~~ward~~?
- A Yeah, he was getting them off the pitcher.
- Q Against both pitchers?
- A Yep, yep. *He was smart.*
- Q You didn't get in the 1913 World Series, did you?
- A Yeah. Oh, I was hurt. I got hurt.
- Q In the series you got hurt?
- A Yeah, over in Philadelphia.
- Q What happened?
- A Finger. Split it right open.
- Q The first game?
- A Yeah. First game.

Q You won the pennant in 1911 - you won it in 1912, '13, you were second in 1914 - then what happened the next year, 1915, when you ended up eighth? What happened there?

A That was a funny deal. A little dissension got into the club - dissension. Some of ^{them} ~~it~~ didn't know it, and some ^{of them} did. Well, ^{it} they came to me, I knew it. I knew there was dissension there, and it happened to be that -- the women, the wives. Mr. John Foster had the women all sitting in ^a ~~the~~ box to themselves, and when hubby made an error, or hubby did something out there that wasn't right, Mrs. so and so would say to this one -- you know how women will fight among themselves, and they were fighting up there, and they ^{happened} ~~had~~ to be sitting -- if they'd have sat them apart. Well, that stuff got down in the club house, and some of the fellows that had wives sitting up in that box together, why, they wouldn't speak to one another. 191⁵. Finished absolutely last, ~~1915~~, the female species ^{is the} ~~is~~ deadlier of the two.

Q Well, something similar happened in 1916. 1916 the Dodgers won the pennant. In 1917, they ended seventh. Same thing?

A 1916 they won the pennant.

Q Yeah. 1917 the ended seventh.

A Well, I wasn't there. *Probably they did. Probably,*

~~Q Oh. According to the old Indian proverb,~~ ^{the} the same thing did happen.

A Well, after that, the women never sat together anymore.

Q Oh, yeah?

A I don't believe it's customary now. I don't know; I don't know how they sit now, but I think they've got out, and they don't sit them together, you know. Of course, they -- a hubby can do no wrong. Oh, you know that. They just -- and there the one who, you know, a women's actions - they don't have to talk, they can make it so darned disparaging that they come home and tell their hubby about it, and he don't like to talk, and pretty soon, maybe some word comes up, and it's not a team anymore -- it's not a team anymore. That's the whole story. You can't -- you gotta have -- that old word harmony has gotta be there. That wins pennants.

Q You said the best left-handed ~~pitcher~~ pitcher you ever saw was Nap ^RTrucker?

A I think he was about the best I ever caught. He was one of the smartest fellows in there, and stuff, I caught him when he was through.

Q Who was the best righthanded pitcher you ever saw?

A Oh, Matty. There's no comparison with any of them that I know of, as a righthander.

Q Even Grover Cleveland?

A Grover - I never caught him, but he was hard to hit, I know that.

Q Do you think he was a better pitcher than Matty, or
~~XXXXX~~ Matty was better?

A No, I don't think he was any better. I never hit against
Matty. Yeah, ^{matty} ~~he~~ had the stuff, too. But, I caught him. It's ~~now~~
a matter of record. All during the time that Bressner^ahan caught
him, my record with him was far superior to Bressner^ahan's. That's
a matter for - as Al Smith says - ^{take a look} ~~to make you look~~ at the record.

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