

INTERVIEW WITH GEORGE MC BRIDE

Yep, I played during the years when Cobb was in his prime, and I was a shortstop. But I never had any trouble with Cobb. Got ~~the glove~~ it in the glove and threw it down to the base. That's all. Went over to Detroit with him as a coach, for a few years, after I got through playing with Washington. Some say he ~~is~~ was a dirty ballplayer, but I say he was a good hard ballplayer. Well, he was popular with some and unpopular with others. Players, that is. There are some who didn't like him, but you ~~is~~ know he was a ballplayer's ballplayer. He hustled out there. I think he was as fast as anybody, from home to home. I mean, all the way around. Good strong arm. Baserunner...oh, boy. He'd steal on those pitchers.

Clyde Moran (?) was on the team too. They were great friends, he and Cobb. Both come from the South. Moran had a nickname: Zed. He'd say, Zed, I'm going to beat that record. And he did too, ~~in~~ '96. That Wills gets on base quite often, too.

Course I played with Honus Wagner, too. He was a great ballplayer. He was what you'd call an awkward, fast, great ballplayer! He had everything. Good legs, big hands. Cobb was a different type. Cobb was a harder ballplayer than Wagner. I think Cobb was the best I ever saw, really. Course Ruth was another type. He was a great pitcher. I hit against him, and he was a great pitcher. Great ballplayer. Could make a first baseman out of Ruth. When he first come up, he was just a great big boy. They soon saw that if they could cput him in there every day he'd be hitting every day. Great pitcher and a great hitter.

Well the way I started....see the American League wasn't organized out here, so I went out, as a youngster to South Dakota. Our season closed out there a little early. 1901. So I come back home here and a fellow named Waite Conroy played shortstop. He'd sprained his ankle a day or two before I got home. Well, when the newspaper people found out that I was back from South Dakota, they called up and said bring your glove and shoes and your underwear to the ballpark...might be a chance for you to play today! Well, I went out there and sat in the bleachers right behind first base and so he called me in and said, you're going to play today...shortstop. Well, I guess the rules were different in those days, cause I wasn't on the roster, and I didn't even have a contract, and

I was a thirdbaseman. But they played me that day at shortstop.

Tne, of course I signed up and played a game or two till the end of the season, 1901. Now in those days baseball wasn't as respectable as it is now. It was and it wasn't. They didn't have the organization they have now. They'd have maybe one or two college man on a team. Always did stay at the best hotels, though, travelled in the best way, too.

In '51, we had a 50th Anniversary party for the American League. Got all the different players to go down to Boston for it. All the American League players got an invitation. Twenty-nine charter members of the American League....no, I guess all but 10 of them are dead: Connie Mack, Cy Young, Hughie Duffy, fellows like that...all gone.

Now Hughie Duffy managed out here in the Western League following the American League team in the American Association. Let's see 1902. Milwaukee club was transferred to St. Louis in 1901 and the first transfer of a big league club was the Braves transferred here in '53! Course the old Milwaukee club wasn't the Braves, but the Brewers. Milwaukee Brewers, American Association. I played right here ~~where~~ where I was born and raised. But I'd say all in all that baseball was a pretty respectable thing to do. It was the aim of all the youngsets to go to the big league, you know. Course, salary didn't mean a thing. Got \$150 a month, not bad money

for those days, you know. Oh, you got the same money you'd get today, all right, just not as much of it! (ha, ha, ha, ho, ho, ho)

After 1901 I went back to the minors for a few years. Made the rounds a little bit: Milwaukee, Kansas City, St. Joe, and then 1905 Pittsburgh bought me. I'd shifted to shortstop by then.

Took Honus Wagner's job...at least that's why I went up. So they played me as a utility man till they traded me to St. Louis and then to Kansas City.

Now, I had a funny incident with Joe Cronin. Joe was with Pittsburgh and I'd gone to Kansas City. He was supposed to be a bad fielding short stop, but what looked like a promising hitter. I went from Kansas City to Washington and he went from Kansas City to Washington. Well, a scout had been looking at Cronin for Griffith and finally got to talking to Joe and signed him up. Well he telephones Griff and tells him he signed Cronin. What, that ~~xxx~~ seive? He says, that fellow can't field! He says, he isn't even hitting too well. So Joe went back up there, married his daughter, hit real well, and Griff sold him for, supposed to be, \$250,000!

Now, I never improved my hitting too much. But I could field all right, I guess. I stayed a long while in one city. Fans get tired looking at one fellow, you know. Seeing the same face!

Walter Johnson came in the fall of '07 and I came in the fall of '08. Fourteen years later, I had quit baseball and he had left there to manage Newark. I'd come back to Wisconsin here. So I got a wire from Walter, "Would you like to come out here to Newark and help out?" Well I didn't answer the first telegram, but I got another from him and so I finally went over to help Walt. In '28. Poor fellow, he was taken sick that spring. See, Bucky Harris was wearing his welcome out down in Washington and Griff sent word to see if Walter would come back to Washington to manage. That's what Walter did.

Yep, during Walter Johnson's greatest years, I played shortstop behind him. I think he was the greatest pitcher that I ever saw. And he was just as nice a man as he was a pitcher. Never heard him swear. When he got mad, maybe he'd say: Gracious Sakes Alive! That was when he was really high and really cussing! But it's true that he didn't like to hit anybody. He didn't like them to hang over the bag like a lot of them do. Over the plate, like Cobb did and Frank Robinson does. Saw him pitch those four games in three days, over at the old Highlanders, in 1908. Pitched three shutouts in three playing days. Course there was a Sunday in between, but still, that's something. 12 hits in the four games! Just a kid, too.

His curve ball was never too much, you know. There was a period

of about two years where Street (?) would ~~xxx~~ n't ever call for that curve. Learned to throw a change-up. Threw almost all fast balls. Amazing too, for such a young fellow to come right to the big leagues with the control that he had. Had it from the beginning. Managed him one year, you know. He was a great boy. If they were all like Walter Johnson, a manager would ~~h~~ have any trouble at all.

Ainsmith and Jackie Street and John Henry (graduate of Amherst) all good catchers on that team. Germany Schaeffer and Nick Altrock were there. Nick was pitching. Played with him in the Association in 1902. That was when he was just starting. Went up to the Red Sox and then to the White Sox. Character. He was a great fielding pitcher.

I never did much in the off season. ~~He~~ My dad had a clothing store here and I used to help him out a bit.

Course in those days, you played for one or two runs, more than you do now. Course we had the spitball and the emory ball. Stole more bases in those days. Relied on stolen bases. And we weren't told when to steal. Had to rely on own own strategy, so to sapek. Course there's things they do now that we couldn't do. I can't really say that we thought more or that we were better. I think you have more good ballplayers now. Got more ballplayers altogether.

Well they were rough on ~~some~~ rookies, but I never had any trouble. Cobb had a lot of trouble. He fought them back, though. If you come up cocky like, why they'd get on you all right. But I know that when I come up to that Washington, club I was well received and for the 12 or 14 years Walter and I were there, why we'd always receive the rookies and try to help them out. I guess I can't say that they helped me as much as they could, I guess, but, see I'd come up and been down and got my bumps and been around so, I sure wasn't cocky like.

We had Chick Gandil for several years. Tough. But he was with us three or four years and I always found him a pretty good sort of chap. See Felsh and Jackson were.....were victims of circumstances. But Grandil. Course it broke Cicotte's heart. Very sad happening.

You know even if you were a rough or tough character in those days, to play in the big leagues was an education for you. You'd meet nice people, travel all over. It was an education.

Jake Stall, Manager of the White Sox, and Griff was our manager at Washington. Well he tried to create a little excitement. Two of the best pitchers of those times. Smokey Joe Wood and Walter Johnson. Wood beat Johnson, one to nothing. Very highly publicized. Crowd was right up to the baselines. Had mounted police to come in and keep them back

back as far as they could. Hits were few. I remember because I got a two-base hit which was considered something. Yep. They beat Johnson one to nothing. Smokey Joe was going for his six in a row and Johnson had already gotten sixteen in a row and his streak was ended. In those days, you know, to fill up a park in those days like that was something. Yes. Very highly publicized.

Joe Cotillion was my first manager. He was a real character. Was an umpire, you know. Course managers left you alone much more then than they do now. Now its 2 - 0 and 3- 1 and you're told what to do with the bat! Those days they didn't go that a-tall. Sometimes now it's 3 and 1 and I see them busting away with a man on scoring position!

Joe Judge was a very underrated ballplayers. Now, he was a little man. Always hit 300, and he was fast, good fielder!. Hal Chase was one of the few first basemen that played the deep first base. He would play away and still be able to get back to that base. He'd catch that ball on the run and ~~oh~~ oh, you saw a lot of one hand playing. Oh, he was good. Course now, that's all they do, that one handing. But Chase played first base with a littly tiny glove. Bigger than what we wore, but tiny. Sisler was another great first baseman. Saw him ~~play~~ play third base one day. Last day of the season, last two innings, he went over and played third base. Left

handed third baseman!

Milan was a great player. I remember once we played an exhibition game. The outfield was Cobb, Speaker and Milan. Three center fielders. One of the best center fielders I ever saw was Milan. See, Speaker could play a shot and cover a lot of territory. Got a better jump, I guess. Yeah, Spoke was a great hitter. You know, he didn't seem to arrive until late in his years.

See I was pretty fortunate. My investments in the stock market have taken care of me pretty well. Never did any more in baseball after 1920. See, I'll be 84 in November.

See, Cobb, when he was a manager, he had a theory of his own for everything. Knew as much baseball as anyone. It's an exception when a great ballplayer makes a great manager, too. Course, I didn't like managing too much. See, I was captain of that team down there in Washington for 12 years! In 1920, I was Griff's coach and utility man. Played 8 or 10 games. Griff went scouting, you know, and I managed the team the last month or two in '20. Had to go in there and play a few times, too. Now, Charile Dressen, funny little guy, he'd go from team to team to team. But, see I wasn't married when I was in baseball and I guess those fellows, well they liked the game and it was more or less of a necessity to keep playing

or keep in it someway.

No, i have no regrets in baseball. In fact, I think that even though I never had a college education, that I met people and gained a lot of ~~xxxxxx~~ knowledge and, as I said before, I think baseball was a good education for me. Well, the fall of the year came, and you were glad to get home, but when the spring of the year came, why you ~~xxxxxx~~ were glad to get out and start spring training.

Yes, I played the players differently according to the pitch and the speed. I could play way back at short, you know. Always had a good arm, too.