

**ORAL HISTORY T-0067**  
**INTERVIEW WITH BILL DRAKE**  
**INTERVIEWED BY DR. CHARLES KORR AND DR. STEVEN HAUSE**  
**NEGRO BASEBALL LEAGUE PROJECT**  
**DECEMBER 8, 1971**

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KORR: I think probably the easiest thing to do would be for you to just sketch in a little bit to start with—how long you played, where you played, when you got started—we want to keep the questions down to a minimum and just give you a chance.

DRAKE: Well, I started in 1914 with a ball club called the Tennessee Rats. I played one season with them, and I joined a ball club called All Nations. We traveled in our own private car, about fifteen ball players of different nationalities—a Jap, an Indian, a Hawaiian, two Negroes, and some whites, and it was called All Nations. I played in 1915 with them, and in '16, I came here to play with the Giants. So I played with the Giants until 1922, and I was traded to Kansas City, and I played with the Kansas City Monarchs. At that time, they was just about like the old Yankees. I played with them until '26, and after that I went to Memphis, Detroit, Indianapolis. That was about the biggest teams that I played with, and I played with other mid-west teams like Springfield, Illinois and Tennessee. In the winter months, why, I generally go to California and played with a team called the Los Angeles White Sox. We played eight big league ball players in the winter. So I was born in Sedalia, Missouri, June 8, 1895. I'm going on 77 years. So I spent practically about eighteen years, I would say, playing professional baseball for what you might call a "living". Some was good and some was bad, but that's my early days in baseball so if there's anything you'd like to know, why I might be able to tell you if you ask. me.

HAUSE: What memories do you most enjoy in your playing experiences?

DRAKE: That's hard to pinpoint, because I have some. very fond memories, I recall we used to barn-storm with the Monarchs, and we'd go out in the small towns in Iowa, and we would take our tents and we would put them up and we would sleep in those tents. And we'd go to those restaurants and eat in the days, and in the evening we'd go fish, and we had just a, dandy good time. I imagine you can have a better time in big cities like New York, Chicago.

KORR: Did the Monarchs play most of their games in Kansas City, or did you barn storm?

DRAKE: No, we played—when I first went to the Monarchs in '22^ they had an agreement with the Blues. The Blues were in the American Association at that time. And they devised a schedule, the Monarchs had an equal amount of games to play there as the Blues. So we played all our home games in Kansas City.

KORR: What about the away games, was there actually a league schedule?

DRAKE: A league, yeah, we had a league. We formed a league in '20. We had members, the Chicago Americans, the Detroit Stars, Indianapolis ABC's, Birmingham Black Bears, and Memphis Red Sox. Then after that, in '23 they organized an eastern league, and they raided the West, the baseball players went East, some of them . I had offered to go on to Hilldale, but I wouldn't leave.

KORR: I remember teams coming through the East like the Homestead Grays and the Indianapolis Clowns, were they in the league, too?

DRAKE: Well, the Homestead Grays were in the Eastern League. The Indianapolis Clowns just played what you might say, exhibition baseball. I knew the Clowns, in fact, a friend of mine, an old teammate of mine was a member, Oscar Charleston. Did you ever hear of Charleston?

KORR: Yes.

DRAKE: One of the world's best. Charleston played with the Giants in '21. Our ball club was good enough to play the Cardinals. We played the Cardinals in some barn-storming games at the end of the season.

KORR: This is the Monarchs?

DRAKE: No, the old St. Louis Giants.

KORR: How did you do in so far as ...?

DRAKE: We played eight ballgames, and we won three out of them, wasn't too bad.

HAUSE: Are those the Cardinal teams that Hornsby was on?

DRAKE: Hornsby didn't play, he just come out, frank like and say, "I won't play those Negroes here." Other than that, why, Jess Haynes and Clemens, and Thornare and Doc Levan, McHenry and all the other regulars played eight.

HAUSE: So there wasn't too much of a problem with too many people who wouldn't play, just a few.

DRAKE: Hornsby.

HAUSE: Just Hornsby.

KORR: What about the Cardinal loners?

DRAKE: Well, you couldn't say they were bad because the schedule they played, they played us and we played them in Sportsman's Park. And you know at that time Negroes didn't go in the grandstand of Sportsman's Park. You know that.

HAUSE: I remember when I first came to St. Louis looking about the pavilion and wondering what it was for.

DRAKE: Well, the pavilion, Negroes sat in the pavilion and in the bleachers.

HAUSE: You could sit in the bleachers as well? I thought it was just the pavilion.

DRAKE: No, the bleachers. The only colored who sat in the grandstand was when I was a knothole gang and those was kids, they would sit back around the forty and...

KORR: What about other ball players besides Hornsby, you must have barn stormed against some or...?

DRAKE: Yeah, I barn-stormed against Ruth, the two Meusel brothers. And that's all we played on, of course, is ex-big-league ball players, We could play wonderful baseball out there. And Ruth was one of the finest men that ever I met. I know Ruth chewed tobacco. We were playing in Kansas City and Meusel, Bob Meusel, and Ruth. came through there and they played with the local white club giving an exhibition of long distance hitting. Bob Meusel would give an exhibition of long distance throwing. And\_\_\_\_\_would throw it to the back field, and I said, "Ruth, give me a chew of tobacco." He chewed tobacco and I chewed tobacco, so he pulled his plug out, and I hit it and he hit it and he put it back in his pocket so I couldn't say anything about Ruth, really he was a pleasant fellow. But Hornsby wouldn't play against the Negroes^ that's hearsay back in those days, but he didn't play.

KORR: Some of the big league players that you played exhibitions against, was it a question of respecting you as a ball player?

DRAKE: They absolutely gave me all the Consideration in the world. I never had any trouble with any of them, b»g league ball players, so far as being nasty I never... and I played against one of the greatest old managers in baseball, Casey Stengle. I played ball against Stengle and he wasn't snotty. See, ball players are a little different people, they don't discriminate like some people do.

KORR: Do you think the same thing would have happened though if you had tried to play in one of the major leagues? They could afford to be nice because you weren't any danger to them.

DRAKE: Well, doctor, I'll tell you. I played on a white ball club, several white ball clubs in North Dakota and I remember one time I played on a ball club named Andy Guilo, he was athletic director at the University at Grand Forks. And at the time we had a Negro catcher, we had to take an old battery boy from here, and I never will forget, we went into a little restaurant at Minot, North Dakota to eat. And I don't know whether they was Japs or Greeks that operated this restaurant, hut anyway Guilo would always run interference for Sam and I. He'd always stay with us, and if there was any embarrassment, why he would block it but we never had any trouble. In fact, on the road I had a roommate and he was a white boy. Now that's semi-pro baseball^ I believe the same thing would exist among big league baseball. Robinson never had any trouble with the players, I think it was the fans that got him, all the ribbing he got. I know those players, they didn't put no black cat on the field, it was the spectators that did that. And I been more respected up North, of course I never played much baseball in the South. Most of my baseball was in Wisconsin, Iowa, Kansas, some in Kentucky, and East, a lot East, Mississippi and Alabama. I played in Birmingham, Alabama,

but it's a lot different playing baseball in the South than in the East or West.

KORR: Did you go down on the Cuban, Dominican circuit, too?

DRAKE: No, I didn't go.

HAUSE: Did you ever want to, or did you ever try to?

DRAKE: I was afraid to go. I had a pretty bad habit of throwing at players, and that was one thing they didn't tolerate in Cuba. If you hit a ball player over there, they'd put you in jail over there. I was afraid to go down there, because I had a lot of trouble:, I hit several if those Cubans, and I think they were laying for me to go to Cuba, but I never would go. And I wouldn't go to Florida. They had two hotels in Florida, one named the Breakers and Ponciana, and they used to have ball players to come down there in the winter. They used to have odd jobs like passing around orange juice and things like that. They had a ball club for the guests which was real nice. Ball players made real nice money down there, West Palm Beach, Florida, but I wouldn't go there because I heard so much and so many funny things about the South. I didn't care to go down there. In the late years I made a trip South. I had a professional basketball team in the late years, and I played most of the Negro colleges in the South like Morehouse. I think they have five schools there in Atlanta, five colleges, four or five I played in Atlanta. Then we went on over and played Tuskegee, of course we come in contact with nothing but Negroes. I didn't have any trouble, but I never cared to travel South.

HAUSE: Was there any attempt to get black players into white leagues?

DRAKE: No.

HAUSE: There was never any consideration of that?

DRAKE: No. There was several Negroes who played on white teams in Iowa and Minnesota and the Dakotas.

HAUSE: Was there any desire for the Negro stars to prove themselves in the other league?

DRAKE: Well, I wouldn't say that. At that time there was a thing about the big leagues: if there was a good job and a man had the opportunity he would take it. Now that opportunity wasn't extended to every Negro ball player. They only wanted good pitchers, and that's what they would hire, our battery, and the rest of the ball players might be local talent. As for a desire, to tell you the truth, I never thought the day would come when a Negro would be playing in organized baseball, because we always been exploited to the extent that the white man was the best ball player. See, that was my belief, that he was the best ball player because that's all you heard, but I found out that that's not so, he's not the best ball player. He's a good ball player, you got good ball players among the white and you got good ball players among the Negroes. I began to realize late that Negroes are much better ball players than they thought they would be. I know I used to star up in North Dakota, but I was playing against satellite ball players. I wasn't playing against professional baseball players.

KORR: What about the exhibitions you talked about in California? You were able to hold your own out there against...?

DRAKE: We played the Lakers, we played the Kansas City Blues, that's a good ball club. It was a member of the American Association. Do you recall when they had the American Association? Just like the international League, the International League and the American Association used to play a post game series, too. We beat the Blues five out of six ball games, but then we never played any more. And the next year, Louisville won it, and I think a fellow by the name of Hickey was president of the league, and he would sanction anything.

HAUSE: When you beat the best team in the American Association, didn't that make you think that probably you were good enough to play...?

DRAKE: We didn't pay any attention, we just beat a ball club, we never thought about it, at least I never thought about—I know back in those days, there was no such thing that we played with the Blues or those teams, of course we got a lot of recognition from the fellows. We talked with those boys, they'd come right over and chat with you and tell you what a good ball player, I've had a lot of white ball players say to me, "It's a shame your black," meaning if I was white, I'd be playing up there, too.

KORR: I guess whenever anybody asks questions about Negro baseball, they sooner or later get around to asking questions about Satchel Page or Josh Gibson...?

DRAKE: I met Satchel in 1926. I judged Satchel to be about 17 years of age he was with a ball club called the Chattanooga Look-Outs and I was with the Memphis Red Socks. Well, I didn't pay much attention to Satchel, he was just a big, ole tall boy: I know he could throw hard. And then a couple years later, he came to St. Louis with Birmingham, and I was told how hard he could throw, but he was pretty wild. So that's when I first met Satchel in '26, but I never played on a ball club with him other than All Nations, not the All Nations but I mean the Kansas City Monarchs. The Kansas City Monarchs used to send out a pitcher, like if they were going to play a real hard game, they'd send Rogan up one week, maybe they'd send me up the next week. But that's when I met Satchel, but I think Satchel, when he started to play with Cleve, I think that's when he made his fame. Although I'm pretty sure he played with the

Grays, the Homestead Grays but he's a colorful fellow. He should have been a comedian instead of a ball player. HAUSE: Were there better pitchers, in your opinion, than Satchel Page in the Negro leagues?

DRAKE: No, no, any time a man can throw I'd say 35, or 32 pitches out of 35 for a strike, no. I've seen the best, from Joe Williams to Slim Jones, all of those, and in my book, he's tops.

KORR: Did you get to see much big league baseball after you quit playing yourself?

DRAKE: Yes.

KORR: How would you compare Page when he was in his prime with the top pitchers in organized baseball?

DRAKE: How would I compare them?

KORR: yes.

DRAKE: Right up there with them. I haven't seen no big league pitcher that could do any more than Page could do. Remember Page was around 35 years old when he went to the big leagues, an average ball player is through at 35, and he didn't do bad in the big leagues at 35. What do you think. would happen if he went there at 25? The first big league pitcher I seen that I thought a good deal of was Rube Marquardt and he pitched for the old Giants, the New York Giants. He won 19 straight ball games, of, course, everybody knows that, it's written in history. He. was a southpaw, and you had some great white pitchers, Walter Johnson, and Christie Matheson all those fellows, they were great ball players, But to give Satchel the same break that they got, no telling how good he was^ because those fellows, had the best of umpires and we'd like to get any call a man out of, the grandstand to be umpire\* that didn't know a ball, that didn't know the strike zone. And where we'd go we'd have a different ball to pitch. In Kansas City they had a sporting goods house they called Smeltzers' they made baseballs, we used a Smeltzer ball, Chicago used a Wilson ball. All those different towns had different balls to use. Some of the baseballs would be larger than the others. No telling how good a ball player Satchel would have been if he had got to the big leagues earlier. After the ball game he got a rub down. We didn't get a rub down, half the time we didn't get a shower. Those boys in the East sometimes play three, four ball games a day, play ball games out in the bush, ride 50 or 60 miles and play that evening. When you get that medical care, why, it's different. This fellow Wilkerson, Satchel he said had a bad stomach. Wilkerson, he's the first man that come out with what they called "masons" and Satchel went with him to Chicago. I don't know quite the inside of it, but Abe Saperstein knew the fellow that owned the Globetrotters, sold his contract. Satchel as I said pitched individual baseball. He pitched here maybe for a thousand dollars and he'd go over there and pitch a ball game. In fact, I guess Satchel made more money playing baseball than any other Negro. I couldn't put him any place with Robinson, those fellows are hundred thousand dollar men, but in my time, he made a lot of money.

HAUSE: Did the average ball player make enough money to call it a good job?

DRAKE: According to your times, yes. When I first came here to play baseball, you could get the best room in town for \$2.50 a week. You could get a steak for 25cents a T-bone steak, and if you ate what you call soul food, black-eye peas and that kind of stuff, it was 15 cents, hash was 15 or 20 cents with biscuits, I come here in 1916 and I was getting a hundred dollars a month, why, that was a fortune according to what a dollar was worth back in those days.

HAUSE: So sometimes the Negro league players could stay in the best hotels...?

DRAKE: Well, we stayed in the best hotels. Now I can only tell you my experience. I played for an awful good man, J.R. Wilkerson, he's a white fellow who owned the Monarchs, and when we'd leave Kansas City going to Chicago or someplace, we always had tourist, coach, we could sleep. We stopped at the best of Negro hotels and we ate in the best Negro restaurants. But now you couldn't put all those teams on the same par with the Monarchs, cause I remember I played with a ball club in Nashville, Tennessee, and they didn't allow as much expense money as the Monarchs. Food wasn't as high in the South as it is in the West and in the North. But frankly speaking, the Monarchs lived awfully good.

HAUSE: Do you remember any kind of press announcements, any kind of newspaper coverage that you would have ever gotten the way the white teams do?

DRAKE: Well, here's what would happen. They always give you a write-up in the late years we always had a score keeper, and they would send that box score to the press, and they would publish it in the morning paper. I've had some nice write-ups from white papers. I remember in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, I pitched a no-hit game there, an awful nice write-up. But so far as we having a press agent or something like that, no, we didn't have anything like that. The only news about us is what some man has voluntarily wrote about our ball team.

HAUSE: In other words, the black athlete had to do something really exemplary even to get in the newspapers.

DRAKE: That's right,

KORR: What about the really first class organizations like the Monarchs, did people think of you competing against the Blues? Did people follow you? Did you have the same kinds of fans that would come out to your games all the time and newspaper coverage as the Blues would have?

DRAKE: That was a wonderful reaction, for the Blues to play the Monarchs, it was just something exciting, and the crowds were wonderful. I can't recall now exactly what we did make out of that series, but when we played a team like the Blues, we were off salary. We played what we called "cold" playing, you get a certain percentage of the gate receipts, and they would run maybe a hundred or so dollars. But everybody was up in arms about us playing the Blues and we beat the Blues. But it never happened, we never played them any more. Of course we had a man who could make better contact: Wilkerson could make better contact than maybe Foster or some of those Negro managers or owners could. I don't know that a man could be any better than Wilkerson when they divided a season with him. If the Monarchs were playing 176 games, they divided it, half of them went to the Monarchs, and half of them went to the Blues. So he made wonderful contact.

KORR: In Kansas City, did you have your own fans? For instance, where the big ball players of the Monarchs were they the kids heroes in the black neighborhood in the same way as the white ball player would be?

DRAKE: You sometimes couldn't hardly get to the ball park because of those kids all over you.

KORR: They knew who you were?

DRAKE: Yes, they knew who you were, and that follows you everywhere. I used to go to a ball park in North Dakota, and sometimes it would be five or ten minutes before I could get my paraphernalia, one kid would have my glove, one kid would have my shoes, you just couldn't carry your equipment. They'd take it away from you and bring it to the ball park. They just idolized those ball players, see.

HAUSE: You mentioned before that you pitched a no—hit game one time. What other accomplishments in your career did you get most pleasure out of? Do you keep records for example, that you won twenty games in a year?

DRAKE: No, we didn't keep any, there's no record kept of the Negro ball players unless you kept it yourself. We used to kid each other, somebody would say, "Look at him, he's carrying his batting average on his cuff." No, we didn't keep no averages. No one else kept any. There's no where that you can write, there's no paper in the United States that you can write and find out what year I was born and when I started playing baseball. There's no record kept of that.

HAUSE: So which success did you remember then? Things like no-hit games or striking out somebody at the plate?

DRAKE: Yes, I remember I pitched two no-hit games in my career, and then I remember one time I struck out twenty men. Those things you don't forget.

HAUSE: Twenty men, I don't think so.

DRAKE: You don't forget it, see. But they were ball players, but they wasn't big league ball players, but they had on a uniform and they was coming up there to bat. You get that credit right on. I'm sorry I didn't keep a lot of my clippings and things, but moving around and traveling around you lose a lot of them. I didn't keep them, I know you'd appreciate reading some of those things.

HAUSE: We'd make copies of it, that's what we'd do.

DRAKE: Yeah.

KORR: Do you, I know it's a tough question, but do you remember how you felt when you heard about Robinson being signed?

DRAKE: No, I didn't have no reaction^ I was somewhat surprised. I know way back years and years ago, they had a Negro that McGraw tried to pass off as an Indian, that's back in 1912. But that was the first time I heard of anything of that nature, and I know back in 1907, Rube Foss had a good ball club. He played the Cubs, the Chicago Cubs in exhibition game. But I didn't have too much reaction about it, because I was surprised that Jackie made the big leagues. When I seen Jackie with the Monarchs playing short stop, I remarked I didn't think he'd make it in the big league as a short stop which he didn't, because I thought he had some bad knees. I didn't think, the way he went after the ball...of course playing short stop and second base is two different jobs, and he turned out to be a whole average of what second base is supposed to be. And he was more Hornsby's type than any ball player I've seen in fielding, cause Hornsby was a man that could throw across his chest, see, like that and complete a double play. A lot of ball players can't do that, Robinson could do that. Course Robinson brought something to the big leagues that they hadn't been doing, do you recall a man rounding third base and Robinson threw away and picked off two or three of them? He did that. The fundamentals in baseball haven't changed that much. Just like I was telling that gentleman over there (Licata) coming out here about the different pitches and things. They renamed them like the slider, I don't know whether the slider is a curve ball, a half curve or



what. We had a drop ball, what we'd call a "drop" ball, we had a fast ball which was a inshoot back in those days. Of course we could cheat a little bit, because we could use an emery ball or a spit ball. But now, you can't use those. You can't add to a ball, you can't take anything away from it. Now you take an "emery" ball, we used to use an "emery ball: pitchers that could use them would put emery paper on the belt lining, pull up the pants like that, they hid the ball, rough the ball up, make a little spot on the ball about like that, and you could hold that ball sideways. You hold the emery part up and if you throw a sidearm it would break down, and if you reverse it and hold it down, it would break up. But if you hold the emery on this side and throw it over-handed it would break over here, and reverse it and put the emery on this side, it would break that way. You could break an emery ball four different ways. They done away with the emery ball and the spit ball in the big leagues. We had several Negroes that could throw a spit and good emery ball pitches. In fact we did a little cheating and it was allowed. We had what they called a "half balk" baseball which you couldn't get by with in big league baseball, there's no such thing as a half balk, you either balk or you don't balk.

HAUSE: What were you're best pitches?

DRAKE: A curve ball was my best pitch. It was a pitch I used more effectively because if I had three and two on a man I would throw a curve ball. On two balls and no strikes, I would throw a curve ball because I had awfully good control. We used to call with two balls on Johnny Peakson, you'd be foolish to throw the man a fast ball with two balls and no strikes cause he's set for that, see? I really believe those old time ball players tried to out-think the ball players more so than they do today, that's just my personal opinion.

KORR: Who would you look at now, the kind of ball players now and say, there's the kind of guy I would have liked to play with or that remind you of the guys you've played with, anybody in particular?

DRAKE: Yeah.

KORR: Maury Wills or Lou Brock?

DRAKE: They're both exciting ball players, both exciting ball players. Well, I'd like to be a Maury Wills if I was an in-fielder: I'd like to be able to steal a hundred bases. If I was a pitcher, I'd like to be like this boy, McClain backbone of Detroit, win thirty ball games. Yeah, I would like that. There's a lot of ball players that I wish I could have accomplished the feats they did.

KORR: You talked earlier that Robinson would have been McGraw's type of ball player. Is there anybody else now that would have been your type of ball player thirty years ago? Who really could have played your type of game?

DRAKE: You mean thirty years ago that I being a Negro that I believe Z could have played in the big league?

KORR: No, I mean players now that remind you of guys that you played against, like Robinson would have reminded you of one of McGraw's ball players.

DRAKE: Well, I never saw much of the Giants. I seen the Giants play, but that's a pretty tough comparison. Doctor, it's been so long. When you get to talking back fifty years, forty-five or fifty years your memory is not as good as it had been. But I seen a ball player, I've seen some hundred ball players or so, good, scrapping^ fighting, ball players. I always did like a cocky ball player, I did. I always did like a scrappy ball player, a fighting ball player, that's what I like, my kind of ball player cause I was scrappy, I was chesty. I was a chesty ball player. Now you take this Boy Bill he's a good ball player, but he wasn't chesty. He's just a good ball player, if you never said anything to him, why he would never say anything to you. But he was an awful good ball player. Robinson, I think Robinson was a good, chesty ball player. I like to see a man chesty if he can back it up, and he could back it up, see. And McGraw had some ball players that could back it up. In fact, I think McGraw liked those chesty ball players because he was a fiery man himself.

HAUSE: Who do you think are the best \*chesty' ball players today?

DRAKE: Chesty? Well, this boy with Baltimore is pretty chesty, Frank Robinson, he's a pretty chesty ball player course he can back it up. I don\*t think Gibson is a chesty ball player.

HAUSE: Do you think Gibson would have been a better ball player if he had been a little more chesty?

DRAKE: I think if he had a little more fight in him he'd be a better ball player. Gibson, of course I'm not in a position to criticize no other ball player—there's some things that I don't think, in fact, we wouldn't do when we was playing baseball, we never did throw a ball he could hit with two balls and no strikes—now I've seen Gibson get some awfully hard hit balls off with two pitches and no strikes, that's what we called a set-up pitch, you either knock a man down, pitch him a wide ball or something he'd fish at or something like that, you don't give him something good to hit. But you can't take nothing away from a man that's won more than twenty ball games a season.

HAUSE: After your team had beaten the Kansas City Blues, the Monarchs beat the Blues, and perhaps, well you said at the time that you didn't think "Well. we're better than they are" you just thought, "Well, they'll another team and we beat them."

DRAKE: We didn't give that no consideration: we just beat the Blues, just beat a ball club.

HAUSE: After a while, didn't you start to think. -Well, something's wrong here.,"? Or, when did the id DRAKE: I always knowed there was something wrong. When I was able to do something and get \$150 a month and another man doing the same thing getting \$450 a month. I knowed there was something wrong there, but I didn't think the day was coming as soon as it come. I know it didn't come in my time.

HAUSE: When the day came, when the Dodgers signed Jackie Robinson. were there any other Negro ball players, do you think, that were more qualified than Bobinson to come up first?

DRAKE: Well. I'll tell you what I think. Just like you all are Interviewing me. I think that's just what they did to Robinson. Robinson is due a lot of credit, because the boy went through, went through a whole lot. And they had to screen the right type of man for it

because the whole future could have been killed by picking the wrong Man. that's just my opinion. And Robinson went through quite a deal to make it, and he succeeded Now there's some ball players, it's very easy for them to play, say for Instance, if they wanted to send some white girl in on him or something like that, it would have killed his career. The boy carried himself like a gentleman. You can not take any man and do that with him. The boy didn't drink, he didn't smoke, and therefore he made a good leader. Say for Instance, now, you take another man, a rough type that drank and didn't care, he'd 'a' killed the goose that laid the golden egg. So I really believe that they made the right choice when they picked him, and I think that's just what they considered when they picked Robinson, that he was the logical, at that time he was the onliest Negro that was logical for that thing.

KOBR: Did you keep following, or keep contacts with the Negro baseball league after you retired? I mean. for instance, you said you saw Robinson...

DBAKE: Oh, yeah. When he played with the Monarchs, why, he came here and played the St. Louis Stars but I didn't miss any of those games. I didn't miss any of the games because after that I joined up with the umpires' association, and I had a season pass that I could go. I could go to all the Cardinal ball games, didn't cost me anything. And I didn't miss ball games, after the Stars quit playing here. why, those teams used to play over in Belleville, see, there used to be a white club over there in Belleville. I didn't miss, there were very few games that I missed. But Robinson was. he turned out to be a much better ball player In the white league than he was in the Negro league.

KORR: Are you at all disappointed now that it's almost 25 years. and so many of the All Stars have been black and there still hasn't been a manager or general manager, there's two coaches. Does that bother you at all?

DBAKE: I think that the Negro hasn't been given all the opportunities, he's made some pretty nice achievements in baseball, and I think it's time for them to try a Negro manager. They have several, of course, this boy LUKE Easter he is a St. Louis boy he coached for Cleveland, and a white ball player, a white man he'll take orders from a Negro. You see, what Rickey said about those boys. he said, "I'm going to let you go on back to Mississippi and pick cotton, see if you can make \$30,000 a year picking cotton." So they went on and played with the Monarchs and there was no trouble. The trouble of It is, the owner just doesn't do that. I think Frank Robinson, I think Maury Wills I think all those boys are qualified to manage.

KORR: What about Jackie Robinson?

DRAKE: Well, Robinson. in my opinion would make the best manager, because I think Robinson, it's hard to beat a college man, you take a college msn with a trained mind, I always put him over the boys with a trained mind. and Robinson is a college graduate. If he don't know what to tell somebody. I don't know who would. I think Robinson would make one of your best managers.

KOBR: A couple years ago The Sporting News had an article on Robinson, and it talked about how much he'd taken and how well he had handled himself, and then it said, Once he made his point. once he could act naturally, he became, what you call a chesty ball player,

and then they said, "That's the reason that he will never make a manager, because he was too chesty." Don't you think they make the best managers? The McGraws? and....?

DRAKE: As far as being chesty, look at this boy over here, Martin. Billy Martin, who's any chestier than he is? You got to be chesty. I managed a baseball team, several baseball teams, and I know what you have got to go through. I know what you have to do. I remember one instance when I was managing a ball club in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and I had a big boy there and he was about six-foot-six, he weighed a good 220. I knowed I couldn't: whoop him. So he said to me one day he said something, and I said. "Starks, looks to me like you want to run the team." "I don't want to run this team," and so and so and so and so. I said. "I'll give you a fair chance," I said, "If I go to Cleveland, and I run a ball club, then you whoop me, boy. So he kind of thought about that and he broke and run. just what I wanted him to do. see, cause I didn't want no show down. So the rest of the fellows said. "Good God, the capt jumped on Starks" Well, now if I jump on a man, if I was to fight a man six-foot-six and weighed 220 pounds, what do you think about the little fellow? Do you think he'd want to tangle with me? So there's a lot of psychology in managing a ball club. You can't handle each man alike, what you do to one man, you can't do to the other. Robinson's good and chesty and that's what I think it takes. All good drill masters are chesty. You got to have that respect for your fellow man. You just can't let him run over you. That's what I think about Robinson. I don't think he'd give any more than he can take, and I believe he would make a good manager.

KOBR: Do you think the owners are more than anything just afraid 7 Afraid that if the first black manager is a failure, the people will point at the owner and say that it's his fault? They're just afraid to try something new?

DRAKE: He's putting himself on the spot. It takes a lot of courage to do that. You got to figure this. the type of players that you have, he's liable to run into a lot of obstacles in that, cause you might have a lot of fellows that's going to rebel. And you know, there's a lot of cases where they got rid of managers on account of a ball player. This boy Alex Johnson. he caused that manager out there, Lefty Phillips to get fired. And he also fired the general manager. Then you got to find a man like this, you got to be able to find a man that's not a racist. There's a lot of Negroes that dislike a white man: there's a lot of white men that dislike a Negro. Okay, you pick a Negro manager, maybe he doesn't care for the white man, he won't make a good manager. He's prejudiced, and you can't be prejudiced with eight men.

KOBR: Don't you think, if anything, a Negro manager would have to bend over backwards?

DRAKE: Well, I wouldn't want the job. I wouldn't want the job. I wouldn't want the job, because he is going to have to take something. You take one of those boys that maybe just signed a bonus for \$500.000. something like that in the big league, it's going to be hard to tell him something. I wouldn't want it. But I really believe sooner or later, you're going to have a Negro manager. I really believe that.

KORR: Do you think it will be easier now that they've had basketball coaches. Bill Russell won the championship, he showed that you can have a black manager, a black coach Do you think it will be easier now for a manager?

DRAKE: That sounds logical, doctor, but a basketball team don't have as many men, not as

many men as a baseball team. You got more men under you. See, Russell, was a manager, he don't have no coaches, he don't have nobody but himself. You take a manager, you got maybe four coaches, and some of those coaches would be no doubt trying to get your job. And you send a man out there, and you tell him one thing, and he might say, "I forgot," and so and so.

HAUSE: I'm sorry I've got to leave: it's been fascinating talking with you, Mr. Drake. I could do it for hours.

DRAKE: Well^ I could stay for hours.

HAUSE: Well, I hope to hear a lot of interesting tape, then, of what I missed.

DRAKE: Okay.

LICATA: I've heard so many people talk-about this idea, they were afraid to let the blacks in organized athletics whether it was baseball, football, basketball, or whatever, and I'm not so sure if they were afraid of criticism if they failed, if the blacks were to fail, or if they were afraid of dominance if the blacks were to succeed. Almost every professional team that's fielded today, the majority of the players are black athletes. Do you think these other athletes, when they had to come against black athletes and realized that perhaps they were even better than they were, were a little concerned with this and realized that this was what might happen if they were allowed to come in?

KORR: The Hornsby case, for instance...

DRAKE: I believe that, I really believe that.

LICATA: And they used the idea as an excuse that well 'they're black' because they realized they were superior athletes.

DRAKE: I really believe that because it has happened to me. It causes jealousy. You can be jealous of him regardless of his color, that jealousy, you can't kill that. And the Negro has dominated sports as far as salaries and things. You take the highest salaried basketball players, the highest salaried football players and baseball players are Negroes, and that does cause a conflict.

LIGATA: Who were the people who got these black teams organized, I mean, how did you find out about a black team playing somewhere so you could go? Who did you have to go see to join?

DRAKE: Well, now, here's what happened. Managers, fellows that owned baseball teams, a lot of them was gamblers, saloon keepers, and he might have three, four hundred dollars, and he might buy a set of uniforms and go buy a team. They was just good sports that liked baseball. In the early days, as I say, the Negroes who owned ball clubs were saloon keepers or gamblers because the average workingman didn't have that kind of money, didn't have the time to buy a set of uniforms. I know, the fellow I worked for, when I come in, Charles Mills, he owned a saloon. He was a saloon keeper, but he had a white fellow in the background Ed Brock. Cause you recall, the Federal only played two years, '14, and '15, and it disbanded in

'15. We played here in '16, we played at the old Finley Park which was located at that time at Grand and Laclede. Well, if Mills hadn't had a man like Brock, you ever heard of Johnny Brock? Used to play wit the Cardinals? Well, his brother, he was an automobile salesman. Through Brock, we played at the Finley Park. And Rube Foster had a lot of money, C.I. Taylor, they all Negroes, they owned ball teams. It's just some men that just like sports and they'll buy some uniforms. I had a fellow that'd buy seven suits, basketball suits. He was a bootlegger. He had the money, and I give him the idea. He bought the uniforms, bought an automobile, and I took those seven ball players and jumped in the car and lit out through the South. So that's the way those things in the early days originated. Some man with enough money to buy us some uniforms, now they weren't worried about salary, there was nothing about no salary, ball players would just go out there and play all day Sunday—hee-hee, and ha-ha, that's all they got.

KORR: Did they pass the hat at all during the game?

DRAKE: Yeah, I've seen them pass the hat. Now, I think Foster was about the first Negro who had a salaried ball club, if not Foster then old man Leiand, otherwise Leiand handled the Leiand Jets in Chicago. Both ball players, they got paid for playing baseball. That was better than sixty years ago.

KORR: What about Wilkerson? He seems so different.

DRAKE: Wilkerson, like I told you, doctor, was a white man, and he thought different. He was strictly business, it was strictly business with him, and the man knew baseball, made Tom Baird he had something the other fellows didn't have, he had a booking agent, see. He had a fellow that used to go out on the road and book games and look out for the team, find out about your accommodations, where you could eat or where you could sleep, and that made quite a difference. I know most of the booking back in those days was through mail, our games couldn't open til after they organized the league. After they organized the league, then they drewed up a schedule where you knowed where you were going.

KORR: Did Wilkerson have money besides that or did he actually make money off the ball club?

DRAKE: He made money off the ball club. Where he first got his money, I don't know. He's always been connected with baseball. I know when I first went to him he had the All Nations ball club, and at that time he was interested in a team—Hopkins, Hopkins Sporting Goods in Des Moines, Iowa, and the year before that, he had this woman Carrie Nation, he had her on a ball club as an attraction. You remember Carrie Nation?

KORR: Did she come with her hatchet?

CRAKE: I think she left her hatchet at home, but he had her on with All Nations one season.

KORJR: Nobody drank on that ball club when she was around?

DRAKE: No, no. He had a special car that he traveled around in, and a cook. He ate and slept right on the car.

KORR: Do you think it was good business, that he got more out of the ball players by doing it first class? That they really wanted to play? That he could get better ball players?

DRAKE: A ball player is like a contented cow, a contented cow gives good milk, see? And you got to keep your ball players satisfied. A man can't give his best results when he's not satisfied, and to under-pay a man, he's not satisfied. He's not going to give his best. Wilkerson was pretty lucky. He was pretty lucky in selecting the right managers. He had managers that the ball players respected. See, Negro ball players respected a man if he was a good ball player. Now if he was just a mediocre ball player, they didn't pay much attention to him, but if he was a good ball player...that's why Charleston and those fellows made good managers, because they were outstanding good ball players. And when a man can tell you something, you agree with him. In your case, a man that never went to school, what can he tell you, you won't pay much attention to him, because there isn't much that he can tell you. You spent maybe fifteen years in school and he hasn't spent any. So to get respect from a manager, the Negro ball player, he had to be a good player himself.

KORR: Does it surprise you that some of the best managers like Walther Alston and Earl Weaver were lousy ball players? I mean, one game in the major leagues and...

DRAKE: Yes, you do, you think about that. I was thinking about Joe McCarthy that managed the Cubs so long. He never played further class than triple A baseball, I think he played for a while with Louisville, but he turned out to be an outstanding manager. But I don't think a manager is any better than his players. In my opinion, a manager makes a team, and the team makes a manager regardless if you don't have the material to work with, you're not going to do much. But that's always been a mystery, too, why a man like Alston, I think he played one day in the big league.

KORR: One time at bat.

DRAKE: And turned out to be one of your greatest—best managers. Look at Durocher, Durocher's one of those fiery managers. He's good and cocky.

KORR: Then you get somebody like Ruth. I've heard a lot of ball players say that it's hard for a really good ball player to be a good manager, because everything came so easy to him that he can never tell anybody else how to play....(BEGIN SECOND SIDE OF TAPE) ....just raid the Negro leagues, and Gibson, Page, Campanella, bring in a collection of all-stars and have them play for the Phils, and the league found out that that's what they were going to do, and they made sure the ball club was sold to somebody else.

DRAKE: Why I imagine that was their plan. Campanella, in my estimation, was a better catcher than Gibson as a receiver. Gibson was way farther the best hitter. He was a hitter more than Campanella was. When a man goes big league and accomplishes the things he did in the big league, he's got to be good. Course you know, in Negro baseball, back in those days you only had two newspapers. You only had the Pittsbnrg Courier, and the Chicago Defender. Then they had, I think Ches Washington was the sports writer and Fay Young. Naturally, the Eastern ball players always got more publicity than the Western ball players. Now there's any number of good ball players that never was talked about. Nobody heard about them, because nobody wrote about them, and if you don't read about a ball player

through the paper, how you going to find out about him? And back in those days, as always, they had to sell the ball players they was going to feature. Just like the Homestead Grays, Cyclone Joe Williams, they use to talk about him being fifty years old and pitching. He wasn't fifty, but we had to do something to attract attention. Everybody wanted to go out and see the man fifty years old: play baseball. All the guys in the battery knew he wasn't fifty. He was an old man, and naturally, by writing about him, more people knew about Joe: Williams. Just like the bally-hoo about Satchel and Josh Gibson, there's no bally-hoo about Campanella, because Campanella's made a name for himself in organized baseball.

KORR: Does it bother you at times that the whole thing seems forgotten now? Whenever anybody talks about the Negro baseball league, whenever any white talks about it, all they can talk about is Gibson, Page, maybe Williams, everything else seems forgotten? It seems a shame.

DRAKE: That's right. Well, it's just like when a man dies. When our President was assassinated, the country mourned, and mourned, and mourned, nobody now says anything about it. So Negro baseball's been dead ever since '47. When they organized baseball, when they started to put Negroes in baseball, that killed all your Negro baseball. Now there's no place for a Negro to play but in the big leagues, because you don't have no summer pool parks. There's no summer pool park in St. Louis. Where you going to play if you don't play in the little league out on Tandy, you don't have the chance to play any place.

KORR: Were there a lot of Latinos in the Negro baseball league?

DRAKE: Latinos?

KORR: Latinos and Cubans or Puerto Ricans.

DRAKE: Are there any?

KORR: Were there when you played? DRAKE: Yeah, there was white Cubans, but they were...Washington always had Cubans, Costa, Marsans, they were Cubans, but they were white Cubans. They had the same as we have here, the light and dark race. There's white Cubans and dark Cubans. Old man Griffith always did have several white Cubans on the Washington Senators.

KORR: No, I meant in the Negro league.

DRAKE: We had one. Mendez, he was...the only Latin American ball players they had in Cuba, they had a Cuban ball club, the Cuban Stars. They come through here and played a series of games. They played every team in the league. But they weren't all Cubans, they weren't from Cuba. Molina owned them and they had a Cuban star out East, this little boy, Pompey on a ball club. In the East were Cubans, Rojo and all of them, they all were Cubans, but they was a Cuban ball team, but they played in the Negro league.

KORR: Was that when you got friendly with some of the Cubans?

DRAKE: Yeah, that was when I cracked two, three of them.



KORR: There's other stories that's part of the myth now, that the Negro baseball leagues were a lot rougher, there'd be a lot more head-hunting, and a lot sharper spikes, that people just took more chances. Is that really true? Was it a lot rougher game than the white baseball leagues were then?

DRAKE: Yeah, that's true, that's true. I played on a ball club where a boy used to file his spikes, he'd cut your throat if you got in his way then. I guess they just didn't know any better. They'd spike you, they'd hit you, they'd hurt you. You had to get out of their way, that's all there was to that. I know I was a rough ball player. I would hit a man, I would throw deliberately at a man. Deliberately I would throw at a man, other fellows, if you got in their way, they'd cut you. That's all there is to that. But them old ball players, they were pretty crass. You didn't hurt them too much, because they knew how to take care of themselves .

KORR: You could've played for McGraw, too.

DRAKE: If that's the type of ball player he wanted, I fitted in his program, because I really believe in utilizing respect.

KORR: Do you think part of that change because of baseball itself, when guys decided they could hit home runs, that it wasn't worth getting cut up? It was a lot easier to hit a home run instead of trying to steal a base.

DRAKE: I didn't quite get your question.

KORR: I was wondering if the reason you think it changed, that people stopped trying to cut people up, do you think it was the baseball itself, that it was a lively ball?

DRAKE: No, I don't think that was important. Ball players got to be more human. Why would you hurt a man that's making \$50,000 a year? And put him out for life? Ball players just used more judgment, they didn't do that. I think they just stopped that themselves. I know just common instinct will tell you, I felt like throwing close to Ruth, but you couldn't do that. You see, you hit a man like Ruth it would be bad, because I've had that experience. I remember one time I was playing in Picher, Oklahoma and we stopped at Baxter Springs which was about thirty miles from there, there was no accommodations there. And Picher, Oklahoma is a mining town, and they had a big chet mine out in left field, and I'll never forget a big old boy named John, He was going up to Cubs, hit a ball off me into that chet mine, hit a home run, and when he sat down on the bench, it looked to me like he said, "I sure hit that off that shine." So when he come up to bat again, I would up and stuck this thumb up like I was going to throw him a curve ball, and I did throw him a curve ball on the outside, two of them, then I stuck the thumb up again and I threw a fast ball and hit him. And I didn't go back there the next day because the crowds didn't like it, they didn't like it at all. You got to be careful about who you hit, if it's a mediocre ball player, but you can't hit one of them stars. Suppose I hit a man like Ruth, what do you think the reaction would have been? You've got to use some common judgment and you'll get along real fine. You just can't hit everybody, I found that out early in life.

KORR: Probably would be safer in Cuba.

DRAKE: That's right.

LICATA: On the way over here, we were talking about all forms of athletics, how there's a lot more organization, a lot more control, a lot more safety measures. So some of you older fellows think that some of these kids are coddled today? If they had to play the way you guys started out, they would have never made it?

DRAKE: When I first come here those old time ball players, we used to have what you call a uniform roll that you carried your uniform in. So I walked in the club house, and I unrolled my stuff. I had the best little shoes, and I heard one of them say, "He must have been doing something, he's got the tools to work with." And they gave me a uniform, and I went out. I threw. So I impressed them, but those old ball players would watch you, and they wouldn't tell you nothing. They couldn't afford to tell you something, they'd only push themselves out of a job, cause when I came in, they only had twelve ball players on a ball club, twelve ball players. A young ball player come up like that and said, "I play first base" and the first baseman said, "I play first base on this team," and that meant he was going to do everything possible to keep him from playing first base. He wasn't thinking anything about your problems, he was thinking about his own job. It was pretty rough when I come on, awful rough. I fared rough: I seen some rough days, and I seen some good days. I recall, I had a boy, I was managing a ball club in Tulsa, Oklahoma and the boy wrote me a letter and told me that he was a left-fielder and would like to have a job. So I wrote and told him, I said, "Well, if you happen to get up this way, why, I'd be glad to give you a try-out." So one morning I walked into the hotel, and a boy walked up and said, "My name is MacIntyre and I'm from so and so and so and so." I said, "I remember, we're going to work out this morning so why don't you come along?" So he come along out to the park and he had his glove and his shoes. I gave him a uniform, and I said, "Trot on out there in left field, I'm going to hit you some." And he said, "Where's left field? I've never been in this park before." He didn't know where left field was, so he had a lot of baseball in his background.

KORR: Did you find it tough as a manager to tell an older ball player that that's it?

DRAKE: That's hard, that's hard. You know, I'll tell you, doctor, ball players won't stick together. I had occasion to run into something in Memphis. They used to have what they called a "Dixie Series" down there between Birmingham and Memphis. So I went down, I been down there about six weeks. I thought I'd go down there and cut in that Dixie Series. So they had a meeting to discuss what percentages we were going to get, so the manager was going to give the team 35%. So I spoke up, I said, "Thirty five per cent, that's only 17 or 18%, for each team." So the next ball player to me said, "You're lucky to be here at all." So I sat down. So we started the series and they found out they were only getting 17% of the series and they wanted to strike. I said, "This ain't no time to strike now." "yes, it is," so they made me their spokesman. I said, "You fellows aren't going to..." "Yes, we are, we are.." So it ended up, I told the manager, I said, "Mr. Lewis, the boys want to see you in the clubhouse, they're not satisfied." So Lewis walked down to the clubhouse, I told him just what's what. So he said, "What about you?" I said, "I'm satisfied." He said, "Looks like everybody's dissatisfied but you, Mr. Drake." So he made me go round again, right then I said, "The best I can do is look out for my self cause they won't stick." They'll say anything in the club house til the boss walks in and not a man has the guts, very few of them have the guts to speak up for himself. But to tell an old man 'that's all, that's a sad story. It's hard to tell a man that. I didn't wait for them to tell me cause I knowed when I was over the hill. I

just hung up my spikes.

KORR: Did you have any idea what you were going to do? While you were playing, as you were getting older, did you give any thought as to what you were going to do?

DRAKE: None whatever. I didn't think about doing anything, and I didn't do anything for a few years when I began to realize that after I went to the war, I knew I would get 'a pension if I lived long enough to get old enough to get it. I got to thinking one day, "When the Social Security comes, I won't have to worry." I went and I worked for Famous and Barr for ten years, when I reached 62, I retired, that was in 1956 that I ever did anything. I haven't done anything since. I got along fairly well, nothing to brag about. I never made any plans, I didn't think about making any plans.

KORR: Was that the case with most ball players, too? that 'I'm the top man and... '

DRAKE: Some of them, some of the ball players are in pretty bad condition. I don't think any made enough money. None of them made enough money to retire playing baseball, that goes for a lot of your white ball players. That's why they established a Pension Fund for them, to take care of them when they get old» I was just more foxy than, cause I could do a lot more things than some of the other ball players could do. I had a way of taking care of myself.

KORR: What about the owners? Were any of the owners any help as far as trying to come up with jobs for guys?

DRAKE: You mean back in those days?

KORR: Yes.

DRAKE: Hardly any of them.

KORR: You were just left on your own.

DRAKE: When the baseball season's over, because the owners never had enough for you to do, you had to get a job to work in the winter to make ends meet, course a lot of the ball players play winter baseball therefore they didn't need no job, that's why I used to play winter baseball, that's why I'd go to California. I always was loose cause I never did like to work, see, so I'd go out to California and play winter baseball.

KORR: You didn't think of baseball as working? You enjoyed it.

DRAKE: No, I didn't think a ball player should work. I just didn't think a ball player should work, and I still think that today. I don't think a ball player should work. If you can't make enough money to live off, then give it up.

KORR: You don't think of baseball as a job then? The way you would another job. Baseball was something you did because you were good at it, and you were getting paid for it.

DRAKE: But baseball is a profession, that's the way I look at it. It's a profession. If you can't

make enough playing, let it alone. But we didn't make enough back in those days to ... only to live off during baseball season.

KORR: When you signed with somebody like the Monarchs or one of the league teams, did you sign a reserve contract, too? Did they have the right to trade you?

DRAKE: I played with the Monarchs five years, just a mutual agreement. I never signed no contract. That's why they laid off Robinson. If Robinson had signed a contract, they would have gotten something for Robinson. They couldn't have snatched him away. Their contract called for a reserve clause. In other words, you couldn't play with another team unless they wanted you. They could trade you, or they could release you, but other than that, you had to play with the Stars, the St. Louis Stars, or you didn't play at all. But Wilkerson..I don't know whether any ball players signed any contracts, I know I never did sign no contract with him. I don't think he had any contracts, cause I'm repeating, Robinson never signed any. Do you ever remember reading about anybody signing with the Monarchs? He didn't have no contracts signed. He didn't have no protection.

KORR: Ernie Banks was stolen from one of the teams, too wasn't he?

DRAKE: From the Monarchs. The Cardinals could write him.

KORR: The Cardinals were sort of late signing black ball players.

DRAKE: Yeah. You remember the Browns signed a colored boy out of Kansas City, Thompson and Brown, but they didn't do that in good faith. They just figured they might get a little more support from the Negro fans, and the fans are pretty hard to fool.

KORR: I know what it did in Philadelphia. The Phillies waited a long time and I remember going out to Dodger games and half the ball park would be rooting for the Dodgers and there was only one reason, Robinson and Campanella, and Newcomb.

DRAKE: You know when Robinson and Campanella, I used to go out to the pavilion...there's people who come out to see ball games who didn't know who the umpire was, I've heard them holler about that little old man in the blue suit, 'why don't he get out of the way?' They didn't know he was umpire. They used to bring baskets of chicken out there just like going on a picnic. They was just that crazy about Robinson, they was really crazy about Robinson when he was with the Dodgers.

KORR: Somebody asked a question on radio a couple weeks ago about the Cardinals, they pointed out on the whole Cardinal roster there's one Negro ball player that they signed themselves and that's Bob Gibson. Every other one they got, they got in a trade. Either the scouts are stupid or they haven't been looking too hard, one of the two.

DRAKE: Well, you know, they claim there's a lot of conflict on the Big Red. They claim the Negro ball players, the football players don't get the consideration the white boys get. It's also been said that the Cardinals weren't particular about Negro ball players, because they could cut too many ball players. They could've got Banks and they could have got several ball players. It kind of shows that they got rid of some good ball players, and the ball players they got today like those Latin American ball players like one of them brothers. What's them

brothers' name?

KORR: Alou.

DRAKE: Alou brothers, see they're Cubans, or Puerto Ricans one, but I don't recall no other ball players that they signed for. I know they traded for Brock. In fact they haven't had too many, well, they got this boy Brooks Lawrence years ago. I don't know how they come about getting him. Do you remember they had this fellow Lawrence, a pitcher?

KORR: Yeah.

DRAKE: They pitched him to death, though. But they seemed to think there's a little prejudice. I on the Cardinal ball club about employing Negro ball players.

KORR: There's been a lot of talk about St. Louis, that the Cardinals were supposed to be the team that was going to go on strike, not play against Robinson. A couple of friends in the National Basketball Association claimed that the reason that the Hawks left here is that the last couple years they were starting five Negroes and nobody would come out to watch them.

DRAKE: Well, you understand, the Jewish population supported the Hawks, and after they lost that, why, they never went to the...but they won a lot of praises on up. Hawks basketball. And I don't think you could find a man any stronger racist than Enos Slaughter when he was with the Cardinals. He led all the fights against the Negro ball players. But that's just something in some men that you can't get out.

KORR: There's Enos Slaughter and Dixie Walker who was the big leader on the Dodgers and ended up in Pittsburg.

DRAKE: That's right. Well, the fellows would bring it on in and you can't expect to get it out of them.

KORR: Then you get a guy like Pee Wee Reese who's had it bred and bored in him...

DRAKE: But he wasn't a racist.

KORR: It must have taken an effort for him to realize that Robinson, that he's black, but he's a man.

DRAKE: Well, I don't know, you can take Walker and Slaughter, I don't know how limited their literary training was.

KORR: Yeah, that could be. Slaughter never seemed to be the brightest guy in the world.

DRAKE: Well, then he's a hard man to deal with. Walker's from Alabama isn't he?

KORR: Yeah.

DRAKE: Dixie Walker, isn't he from Alabama?

KORR: Yeah.

DRAKE: It's just in them and it's going to die in them. But Harry Walker, his brother, he seemed to make a pretty good manager. He's dealing with Negroes. And Dixie dealt with them after a man told him he could go back and start picking cotton.

LICATA: Mr. Drake, how do you feel about the younger black athletes that are now asserting the fact that they are black? For instance, the Olympic stars when the national anthem was played they would raise their hands in a black power sign? The younger black athletes on professional teams today that are trying to assert more the fact that they are black, it seems almost to be a complete reverse from the situation before. How do you feel about that?

DRAKE: Personally, I think they're wrong. I don't believe in no kind of organization, militants and all that. I don't believe all that, what's for a man, he's going to get, the first thing, be a man. A man's got those communist societies and different things like that. I don't believe in it. I'm just an old-fashioned Republican, and I just believe in a straight-forward thing. Now that whole "Black Is Beautiful", I don't go along with that. If you respect yourself, you'll be respected. The Negro don't have too much to complain about if he is qualified. You can look at all those quiz programs, there was a girl today on one of those programs, winning money. In the first place, qualify yourself, then when you qualify, if you don't get a chance, then you lost what's coming to you. So many of them aren't qualified.

LICATA: In other words, they're trying to take advantage ...

DRAKE: That's right. Why:, should a man pay you \$200 a week when you're

not qualified? Because you're black? KORR: What do you do about a case, like we were talking about Robinson before who really is qualified and is never going to get what's coming to him? He would've been a great manager.

DRAKE: But, doctor, that happens in your race. There's a lot of white boys qualified that never get a chance.

KORR: Yeah, but, in the case of Robinson, it's really clear the reason he didn't get the chance simply because he's black, because he's a loud black, because he never stopped telling somebody when he thought he was right and when he thought they were wrong. Now if Billy Martin can get away with that stuff and Leo Durocher, why can't Jackie Robinson?

DRAKE: Simply because he is black. That's the only answer to that.

KORR: Those are the tough cases.

DRAKE: Those are the tough cases. You know, being black is not the easiest thing. It's not the easiest thing on earth. When I went to work for Famous and Barr, being a ball player all my days, instead of being a porter, it looked to me like I should have the job clerking, they could have hired me a clerk in the sporting goods department. It would add prestige to the store, here's an ex-ball player, all the other stars when they come in they have them at Stix, Baer and Fuller they have and all those people down there signing autographs and things, course that's Inter league big names, see they're just late in opening avenues for the Negro.

But Robinson got a fair break in baseball, and he got a bad break. I don't think Robinson wants to manage baseball.

KORR: Probably not now.

DRAKE: Not now. When Robinson went out, when they traded for him, that was a bad trade they made to give somebody up like they give for him. That's a pretty bitter pill to swallow, just a mediocre ball player for a star. That goes to show that 'we're through with you.' That's the way I look at it.

KORR: That they wanted to get rid of you, get you out of the way.

DRAKE: They punish you.

KORR: The Sport Magazine just came out with its twenty-fifth anniversary, and they picked the best man in every sport for the last twenty-five years. Then they had a special award for the most important man in sports, and it was Robinson.

DRAKE: Well, you take a man that's carrying himself like Robinson 's carrying himself on and off the field, he's bound to make those achievements. I don't think you could give it to any better man than him. He's deserving of it. It looks like now they want to try to do something for the Negro athlete, something they have never...In fact, they're trying to do something for the Negro, something they never did. Just look at your schools: I have a little granddaughter that went up to Kirksville, just look at your schools. Just look at football in Tennessee and all along the southern states got Negroes playing on the football teams. So it's up to the Negro to make it. He can make it now if he qualifies himself.

KORR: Don't you think it's still tough though. You take a white ball player who goes out and likes to drink and play the horses and nobody talks about it, but when Richie Alien does it then it becomes a really big things.

DRAKE: Who's a bigger race horse player than Hornsby?

KORR: Yes, and nobody complained about that, but they sure do with Richie Alien.

DRAKE: Well, after all, he's black. He's black, and as the old saying goes, "there's two strikes on him when he goes to bat." This other boy got in trouble the other day, this football player. I read in the paper here last year about this boy down in Atlanta, Carty, this outfielder that...

KORR: Oh, Rico Carty

DRAKE: He got arrested, and I think they suspended him while he was these in Memphis, some black athlete these did something to him, put him in jail, roughed him up, or something. Then there's an article in Pittsburg and that's an eastern city, they say the police there are awful rough on Negroes. Because police brutality is bad, and I don't go along with brutality. You just can't put all Negroes together, just because one Negro would do something, that don't mean all of them will do it. You just can't put them all together. You've got to single them out just like any other man. It used to be a saying, the white man would say, 'all

Negroes look alike.' That's just a saying, they all don't look alike. All white people don't look alike. Socially, I don't think the white man is ever going to take the Negro socially.

KORR: As an equal.

DRAKE: As an equal. I don't believe it. Course it can happen, but it won't happen in my day, and I don't think it will happen in your time.

KORR: Do you think things are better in sports than they are in most other areas? For the Negro, do you think he's had a better chance?

DRAKE: Yes, that's his only chance to make any money, in sports. There's more Negroes making money in sports than in any other profession. Take, you have several Negroes running for mayor of little towns, that don't pay anything but prestige. Prestige don't mean anything, you can't do anything without the Council or Aldermen. Look at Cervantes, what can Cervantes do without the Aldermen? Now you take this fellow Williams over there in East St. Louis, what can he do? He's just a mayor in name he can't do anything because he might not have the help. He's got to have the help from his Aldermen, see? I'd advise all young Negroes to participate in sports, because that's where the money is. You don't have to go to school, you can just come out of high school or college and get a bonus, a million dollars where you'd have to stay four more years, if you want to take a doctor degree you got to spend six more years in college and get \$50-60,000 you made for six years. In my hook, that's the best brake- a Negro can get is sports.

LICATA: I wonder if it's because of the fact that one of the few avenues that has been open to blacks has been athletics or it's the mere fact that they are better than whites?

DRAKE: I don't look at it that he's better. You know the Negro hasn't broken all the records that has been made in sports.

LICATA: That's true.

DRAKE: They always have been good ball players, the white ball players, and they always will be.

LICATA: If you had to rank the top three athletes in baseball, black or white, as long as you remember whether you played them or not, who do you think they'd be?

DRAKE: While I was playing baseball?

LICATA: Then or now, maybe that's not a fair comparison, but the three best.

DRAKE: That's not bad. You got to take the men on their records, and when you pin-point it out of three, that's pretty tough, three, just three men. Now you take Dimaggio, you take Ruth, you take Carlton, you take Speaker, now that's four great ball players, now you turn around, you take Mays, you take Aaron, now the onliest way that I would pick three would be on their records. All those men who have established a record in organized baseball, and the three men that have the best record, those are the three men that I would choose, regardless if he's white, or if he's black. In other words, would you pick Mays over Ruth, or Ruth over



Mays?

KORR: Or Henry Aaron over both of them.

LICATA: Or Bill Drake over all of them.

DRAKE: Right, see what a man has made on a record, that's what counts is the record that he has made. Just like when you went to school, when you take your exams, your marks, you passed on your marks. If you made high, it was the fact that you did well in the class, so you can't get away from a record. Now there's no man that ever hit a homer 61 times a year other than this boy Roger Maris, and he did it in actually 62 games, 162 games. So that's a record, no man has ever broke that record so home-run you can't say that one of those boys is a better, hitter than Ruth. You take those fellows that have four thousand hits, I tell the man just send the four thousand hits back, that he's not a better ball player. He's not a better hitter, those fellows. That's the way I look at it. I take a man on his record, not on his color, on his record. Regardless who you are, if you're Mexican or a Greek or any nationality you made a record, your record stands, see? Because prejudice, I know nothing about prejudice. You're not responsible for your great-grandparents, what they did. They might have been slave-owners, but that don't make you feel that way because they were. Now here's a young man in Philadelphia. Things are different than they are in Mississippi. Now he can be just as prejudiced as a man from Mississippi, and the man from Mississippi wouldn't be as prejudiced as some other man.

LICATA: It boils down to an individual thing.

DRAKE: If a man makes a mark in life, he has made it and you can't erase it.

LICATA: But see here's the inequity of the whole thing—men like you did make that mark, or you made that mark and yet you didn't because it wasn't written down, or you weren't acknowledged as being as good as you really were, don't you sometimes feel a little bitter about it?

DRAKE: I don't feel bitter about it. I only say this, I said this when I received the letter, 'I come along about sixty-five years, if I had come along in those days, I would have had the chance.' But I didn't come along, so I don't feel bitter about it. It's just one of those things. It just didn't happen in my time. So I don't have anything to be bitter about.

LICATA: That's a pretty wise way of looking at it.

KORR: That shows how important it is to talk to people like you so that kids now don't think that this is the way it always was.

DRAKE: That's right. Why should I feel that the Negro is getting the worst brake on earth? Simply because I didn't get a good brake, I didn't come along in time. I don't feel bitter. I didn't have the chance, I didn't come along in a day when that opportunity presented itself. Now if I had come along in those days, and I didn't get a chance, then I would have felt very bitter about it. But I think a man should be honest. I really think a man should be honest. But if I had told you that I did feel bitter, then I wouldn't be honest, I'd be lying. That's just the way I look at it.

KORR: But at the same time you can understand why other people would feel bitter, somebody who knew that he was good enough, but yet never did get the chance, for example, he walked up to the door and somebody slammed it in his face when he saw him.

DRAKE: They got a right to feel bitter. It's not your fault that your white: it's not my fault that I'm black. We both have the same feelings. If I stick a pin in you, it hurts just as much as if he sticks a pin in you. That's the way I look at it.

KORR: That's what it really boils down to, except you've had a lot more pins stuck in the box.

DRAKE: That's true. We've never had the opportunity, and still don't have all the opportunities, but the chances are much greater now than they have been.

KORR: You talked about your granddaughter. How well do younger kids, young black kids seem to understand what it was like for you?

DRAKE: Well, this little girl, I have another little granddaughter that's going over to Florissant College, and I talked to her about that little flare-up they had over there. She don't go along with it.

KORR: Do you mean for instance, does she feel bitter because of what happened to you? Does it bother her?

DRAKE: She kids me sometimes. She says, "Granddaddy, you ought to come along so and so and so and so," but I don't think the child is bitter. She just kids me that I come along too late in life: I kid her right back, I say, "If I didn't come along then, I wouldn't been your grandfather."

KORR: 'Where would you be?'

DRAKE: 'Where would you be?' But I don't know, it looks like you've got so many whites nowadays are talking to the Negro and lead them to believe the way he believes. In all these uprisings the Negroes' been in, there's , always the white boys in there, too. And there's a lot of white boys today that don't think nothing about a man's skin. They don't think nothing about a man's skin, about him being black, they don't pay that no attention. Then there's some do. But if you let the kids work this out, it'll be better. How on earth would a little child six years old who probably never seen a Negro before' say, 'that's a nigger'? Where did it come from?

KORR: You're basically hopeful then?

DRAKE: That's right. I had a son who has a step-son, my step-grandson. I think he's one of the first Negroes that graduated from CBC when there wasn't but one Negro out there. And he doesn't feel bitter. He don't have the right to feel bitter. He was in the band and he take part in activities and things out there. So what does he got to feel bitter about? I only feel bitter when I been denied something, where you haven't been denied anything I couldn't.. I have the highest respect for this university, because they thought enough to write me and sent

me to come out here, now why would I be bitter against the University of Missouri? Only thing I can speak about is how well I was treated, and I appreciate coming out here.

KORR: No where near as much as we were glad to have you.