ORAL MEMOIRS

OF

E. E. “DUTCH” SCHROEDER

A Series of Interviews Conducted
2 July – 14 July 1998

Interviewer: Marcus E. Johnson

Baylor University Project

Baylor University
Institute for Oral History

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GENERAL POLICY AND PURPOSES:

A member of the Oral History Association, Baylor's Institute for Oral History (BUIOH) supports and embodies the goals, guidelines, and standards of archival quality prescribed by the national professional association to ensure long-term preservation of memoirs. It is the policy of BUIOH to select memoirists whose recollections, as participants or eyewitnesses, are relevant to the institute’s chosen research topics. Their tape-recorded memoirs provide links between the immediate past and the present in a very human way. A scholarly, but relaxed, conversational atmosphere exists during the interview. To encourage completely candid recollections, the memoirist is asked to regard the oral history memoir as a highly personal journal. The transcribed historical document which the finished memoir becomes is the raw material used by historians and professional scholars.

The memoirist may choose to have the memoir:

1. Accessible to the community at large
2. Access limited to portions of memoir
3. Free for use after stipulated time span
4. Accessible at discretion of memoirist
5. Sealed until death of memoirist
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MEMOIR PROCEDURE:

Oral history at Baylor follows a prescribed plan which may be briefly outlined:

1. Initial contract with the memoirist
2. Arrangements made for interview(s)
3. Recording of interview(s)
4. Transcribing of tapes in the BUIOH office
5. Editing of transcript(s) by memoirist
6. Finished memoirs: one transcript for the memoirist, one transcript and tape(s) for The Texas Collection. The finished typewritten oral memoir follows the interviewee's stated wishes as reflected in his/her editing of the first transcript(s), with only minor further editorial modifications performed in the BUIOH office in preparing the completed memoir.
LEGAL STATUS:

Scholarly use of the tapes and transcripts of the interviews with E. E. “Dutch” Schroeder is unrestricted. The interview agreement was signed on 7 July 1998.

INTERVIEW HISTORIES

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SCHROEDER INTERVIEW NO. 1

MARCUS E. JOHNSON: This is Marcus Johnson. It’s July 2, 1998, and we’re in the office of Coach Dutch Schroeder, at Baylor University, in Marrs McLean Gym, room 214. We’re talking with Coach Schroeder. It’s hopefully the first of several interviews that we’ll be discussing his career at Baylor as a player, as a student, as a coach, teacher for many years. Coach Schroeder, when were you born and where?

E. E. “DUTCH” SCHROEDER: I was born in Austin, January of 1924, so you know now that I’m seventy-four. I was born one block off of what is now Interstate 35 at 900 East Seventh. Today it’s a Mexican restaurant, but in those days we weren’t born in hospitals, we were born at home. So that’s where I was born. I grew up on East Seventh. It’s one block from the French Legation and I remember when I was four or five years old throwing rocks at the French Legation because it was a vacant building at that time, but we moved to south Austin just before I turned six years old and that’s where we lived during my growing years.

JOHNSON: Can you describe any highlights you want—would like to describe of your growing up down in south Austin before you reached adolescence, anything that sticks
out in your mind?

SCHROEDER: I went to the Fulmore Elementary School—it’s a junior high now—for six grades, but I just lived a block from South Austin Park, it’s now called Stacy Park. The best things were the opportunities to play ball and bat games at the park. I also learned to play tennis there on my own. It prepared me to go into some sort of an athletic career.

JOHNSON: Growing up, were you a pretty good athlete as a little kid growing up?

SCHROEDER: I played on my first park softball team. We had a league in Austin for softball. There was no youth baseball at that time.

JOHNSON: There wasn’t?

SCHROEDER: No—

JOHNSON: That’s surprising.

SCHROEDER: —absolutely not. I’ll have to tell you they didn’t start Little League until 1939 and I was already ready to get out of high school by that time. So we did not have youth baseball, but there was softball. Of course, softball at that time was the major game of the nation during the Depression, because you didn’t even have to have a glove and bats never got broken because of the soft ball, and it was a soft ball then, not hard like it is now.

JOHNSON: It’s not like it is now. Well, I did not know that. Describe your parents for us.

SCHROEDER: My father was very interested in me playing ball.

JOHNSON: What was his name?

SCHROEDER: His name was Emil. He was a cabinet maker. Had had to begin earning a living when he was twelve years old. His father died and he had to become the moneymaker for the family; had four sisters—three sisters, there were four of them. Began working as a lumber handler at the Beker Lumber Company, which was located at Congress Avenue at the bridge. My mother had graduated from high school, worked
while she was a student in high school in one of the local five and dimes, which we don’t
have anymore. But as she raised her family of four boys, she never worked outside the
home again. She took us where we needed to go.

JOHNSON: So you have four bro—four boys?

SCHROEDER: There were four boys in the family. I was the oldest.

JOHNSON: Did you all do the normal sort of brother things growing up?

SCHROEDER: There were no other boys on the block. There were a couple of girls, so
we mostly had to learn to play with ourselves, so we did things as a group. There was six
years difference between the oldest and the youngest, so we were close enough that we
could do things together. We fished at the creek. We also did a little swimming in the
creek, which was a taboo.

JOHNSON: Is this Barton?

SCHROEDER: No, this is Slaughter—no, Blum Creek. It runs near what is now Travis
High School down into the Colorado River. We did go to Barton Creek occasionally and
swim at the pool, but it cost a nickel in those days and nickels were hard to come by.

JOHNSON: In the information I have here about you, it said that you didn’t really begin
to play—you played one year of baseball at twelve years. Is that correct?

SCHROEDER: When I was—I believe I was eleven, Austin decided to have a youth
baseball program, different from the softball program, so they got some—four teams in
the city and I was assigned to play on one of them. It was called the sub-junior league
baseball. They did have a junior league for boys under eighteen, but nothing for very
young boys. This is where I got my name. The second game I played, I pitched. I only
walked twelve and the game ended eighteen to seventeen and I won. But in the
newspaper, because there was not a lot of youth programs then, we got all of our games
written up in the newspapers to help fill the sports page. There was a young fellow in our
town, who was the out—one of the outstanding softball players whose name was Dutch
Schroeder. So the paper writer thought I was related to him, and called me Little Dutch.
It stuck. I have been Dutch Schroeder since I was eleven years old.

JOHNSON: So your friends and family saw that in the paper and thought, Well, we’ll call him Dutch from now on.

SCHROEDER: That’s what it was. But my baseball took off from there. I played in that league the next year as a twelve year old. So, I did play two years in this twelve and under, before I began playing in the junior league.

JOHNSON: How did—you know, nowadays, that would be considered a very late start in a baseball career for a little kid. Did softball—did the softball that you played transfer over the skills in that and make it easier for you or did you have some good coaches or what?

SCHROEDER: There were no coaches. We did not even have managers. The boys got together and one of them was selected to be the captain and he put the players on the field. When we moved into the junior league program, though, there were managers for the teams and when I was thirteen, I played for a fellow named Fullingim, who was like seventeen or eighteen. But after that year, I became the manager, coach of that team. Somehow or another, I had a few leadership qualities that the director of the league thought I ought to be the person who ran the team, so I ran the team for the next, I guess, three years that I played there.

JOHNSON: It sounds like that first game, when you were eleven and twelve, that you needed a pitching coach.

SCHROEDER: (laughter) Well, I certainly didn’t have that kind of control, because I’d never pitched before. I’d played catch with—

JOHNSON: Did some of your friends just get out the day before and just say this is what you need to do, throw the ball over the plate?

SCHROEDER: No. I didn’t even know I was going to pitch when I went out there. They just said, “Dutch, it’s your day to pitch.” They didn’t call me Dutch, then, you see, my name was Ernest, so they said, “Ernest, it’s your time to pitch.” So I pitched. But it
was Dutch all the time after that.

JOHNSON: Growing up, what was—did you always want to be a baseball coach or involved in athletics, or what was some of your, maybe, early career ambitions? What did you want to do when you grew up?

SCHROEDER: I thought about being a lawyer. The lady who ran the park where we played, South Austin Park, was married to an outstanding debater at the University of Texas, who was studying to be a lawyer and became an outstanding lawyer, and I looked to them as role models. (knock on office door)

JOHNSON: Let me turn the tape off here real quick so you can answer the door.

(pause in recording)

JOHNSON: All right, we’re back.

SCHROEDER: My plans—I made fairly good grades in school with Ms.Griffin and Mr. Marks as role models. I thought I’d be a lawyer, so I was really looking forward to that kind of a college preparatory degree, if I got to go to college. I enjoyed sports. I never played basketball. I never played football. I played football on the sandlots. My role in high school was more in keeping with student government. I became the president of the student body one year. I did not go out for baseball at the time, though I was encouraged to do so, because I played reasonably well in the summer leagues. But there was no age limit for the baseball teams at that time. It was not a recognized interscholastic league sport. So we had some—

JOHNSON: So whatever organization governed Texas high school athletics back then, that was not a state championship sport.

SCHROEDER: There was no championship, there was no districts, you just played against other schools who felt like they ought to have a baseball program. But our players were nineteen, twenty, and twenty-one, just as the others were—

JOHNSON: Were they enrolled in high school?

SCHROEDER: Oh, they were in high school. But I did not feel like I was going to get
much of a chance playing against these older boys, so I only played my last—my senior year in high school. I played reasonably well. There was an authorized type of state tournament in which they picked eight teams from around the state to meet at the Dallas Professional League ballpark. We did play in that; we did not win it. But we did have success in the summer program called the American Legion Junior Program. This was the first youth program that the veterans from the first World War put into operation, financed it, furnished coaches, furnished balls and bats, transportation. And Austin, during the two years that I was eligible for that—I believe I was fifteen one year, and sixteen the next, that was the upper limit for that program—we did play in some regional championships, but we did not go any further than that.

JOHNSON: So that’s kind of—that’s how Legion ball got started was by returning—by World War I veterans who saw there was an opening for youth baseball.

SCHROEDER: Awhile ago, we talked about there was no youth baseball in Austin for many, many years. Actually, the beginning of Little League baseball started because of the American Legion Junior Program. A man from Williamsport, Pennsylvania—two grandsons could not play on the American Legion Junior Program because they were just eleven and twelve years old, so he started a league of his own. In 1939, it did not take off well because the war came along and it was after the war that his program just took off like wildfire.

JOHNSON: All of the returning veterans and their boys and girls—

SCHROEDER: Wanted them to play, so they began leagues of Little League baseball. So these were the twelve and under. They didn’t have a program for those over twelve, because there was an American Legion Junior Program, but there were too many boys being left out of that program, so another group in Pennsylvania called Boys Baseball, Inc.—they were from Washington, Pennsylvania—began thirteens and fourteens in what was called Pony League baseball. And this was a good opportunity for those under twelve to begin breaking into longer bases and getting to take leads at bases and the
pitcher throwing from a little—from sixty feet. But they were at seventy-five feet bases, where the sixty feet had been for the Little League. Then, of course, they had for the fifteens and sixteens, the Colt League baseball, so all of this helped bring about youth baseball.

JOHNSON: How would you describe—it’s almost like postwar explosion in the popularity and availability of baseball, so that’s kind of how all of the baby-boom generation, that’s—they learned and grew up on baseball, I take it.

SCHROEDER: After the war, baseball made its comeback. You have to go to the history of baseball, now, to understand that, but in the Depression, people quit going to see professional games because there was no money. And so, baseball was losing out, but there was no pro-football, no pro-basketball. There was pro-boxing and there was baseball. People began to play softball and go to softball games rather than to pay to go see baseball. So, baseball was on the way out, but they revived it by starting the All-Star game, starting the baseball Hall of Fame, and reading in some memoirs that Abner Doubleday had played this game of ball and bat in 1839 in Cooperstown. So, they set 1939 as the centennial of baseball. The ball and bat games had been played many years before that. In England, they played rounders and the game of cricket. They played those games over here. Cricket never did take off, but rounders was a forerunner of the game of baseball as we know it, but it was just a series of circumstances that caused all of this. But, when the war came along, baseball took a backseat again to softball, because you could play softball in much smaller areas, so all the units of soldiers, they had their softball ticket. There was some baseball, but baseball was beginning to take a backseat again, but after the war every town in America had a professional baseball team. There were six leagues in the state of Texas.

JOHNSON: You mean minor leagues?

SCHROEDER: They were all minor leagues, yes, but they had professional baseball.

JOHNSON: Where did these players come from?
SCHROEDER: They just got—everybody thought they could play this game of ball and bat, so there were teams in every town, people had opportunities to play that had—would never have gotten the chance to play, if there hadn’t been this explosion, to play baseball. The youth leagues took off. American Legion Junior still had their program, but the other leagues came on strong and really put the American Legion to a back burner as they became stronger and stronger.

JOHNSON: Boy, that’s a nice concise history I did not know about. What—there’s some—who are your mentors? Who were, maybe, some of your role models growing up when you were a teenager?

SCHROEDER: In high school, we had a coach named Tony Burger, who the athletic fields in Austin are named after. Burger Stadium is there. He was not a hitting coach, but he was a winning coach. He taught us how to win. We played great defensive ball. We relied on the inabilities of the others to win games and we had very good teams in Austin High School at that time. I graduated from Austin High in ’41 and was able to go off to the University of Texas. Now, there was one player on our team who people said had a scholarship. I didn’t even know what scholarships were. I know that some of the football players had working scholarships, and when I was a freshman and hung around the other athletes. I got to sweep several rows of the Gregory Gym for a fellow named Roy Dale McKay, who was the backup fullback. But all of them had a section to clean up, but they got some freshman to do the job for them. The next year Roy Dale McKay was an All-American fullback, so I had been the freshman for an All-American. But that was just that first year that I did that. I played freshman baseball. I played reasonably well, the war had begun, so—

JOHNSON: You entered into UT—what year?

SCHROEDER: In the fall of ’41, just before Pearl Harbor.

JOHNSON: What—did you always grow up a Longhorn fan, since from being from Austin?
SCHROEDER: Oh, yes. Texas was my team.

JOHNSON: That was where you went—that was your dream to go to?

SCHROEDER: Wanted to go to Texas.

JOHNSON: Um, what was their baseball program like?

SCHROEDER: They won the conference every year except in ’41; A&M did upset them.

JOHNSON: They did not like that.

SCHROEDER: No. The game ended—I was still in high school in spring of ’41, but I went to the game. It ended up in a melee when A&M won the last game of the championship and A&M football players and the Texas football players had a full blown fight right there at the game. I snuck away. I didn’t want be a part of that party.

JOHNSON: Little baseball player did not want to have too much involvement in that.

SCHROEDER: (laughter) No. A&M would slip in occasionally, but Texas had the premier program. Mr. Billy Disch, Uncle Billy, was still the coach at that time.

JOHNSON: For the people who later on don’t know too much about baseball history, who was Billy Disch?

SCHROEDER: Billy Disch began coaching the Texas team in like 1910 and retired about 1945 when Mr. Falk took over. But Mr. Falk had been my hitting mentor when he would come home from his role as a professional coach and manager after his playing days were over. He would go to the local sporting goods store, C & S, and there we would go listen to him as he would show us how to hit and do things with a bat. So, he had been a friend of mine before he became the coach at Texas.

JOHNSON: Yes. He came at ’45, you said—that’s what you—

SCHROEDER: I’d say ’45, but can’t remember the exact date, but Mr. Disch was the first baseball coach; Mr. Falk was the second. He was replaced by Cliff Gustafson and now they have a fourth coach, Augie Garrido, and so they have had very few coaches in their baseball history.
JOHNSON: That’s unbelievable. What was it like, you know, as a senior in high school? Was there recruiting for baseball players or you just enroll in Texas and, Hey, I want to play baseball?

SCHROEDER: That’s how you did it. The players that played on the freshmen team with me were players that wanted to come to Texas, except for George Schwebel, who came from Galveston and I heard he did get some financial aid to come to play, but none of the others, they all just—

JOHNSON: It was all for love of UT and love of the game of baseball.

SCHROEDER: Play baseball.

JOHNSON: What was your freshman year like? How was it for a hometown boy to be at the University of Texas, you living your dream?

SCHROEDER: I was living at home, so I didn’t stay out there much, but I was there from about eight in the morning until about six at night. Going from my classes and stay everyday. It was a neat experience. It was something that was very different from my family, because no one in my family had ever gone to college.

JOHNSON: You mentioned earlier about—you said if you went to college, so that was never a real certainty, was it?

SCHROEDER: No, because no one had any money and it only cost twenty-five dollars a semester for all your classes, but finding twenty-five dollars was hard to do, but I found a man who let me work at the state capital in the state Department of Education. I think I was making a dollar a day; he let me work long enough to make my entrance money. And then he let me keep on working. I believe I worked four hours a day in the afternoon. I got twenty-five cents an hour. It was enough to keep me in school and there weren’t that many jobs around at that time anyway.

JOHNSON: So, the Depression still had lingering effects in Austin?

SCHROEDER: Until we got into the war, we were still in a down time. But it was better than it was in the early thirties.
JOHNSON: Any highlights in your freshman baseball career that you want to talk about?

SCHROEDER: Well, we beat A&M.

JOHNSON: With you on the freshman team I assume, because they had freshman teams back then.

SCHROEDER: There was no freshman that played on varsity. That began during the war. When there weren’t enough athletes around, they began to play freshman. I will say some more about that when I talk about Baylor’s program after the war. But beating A&M was our big thing and we were able to beat them. We had a six run rally to beat them 6-5 and I happened to get one of the hits during that, so that was probably the biggest thing that happened to me.

JOHNSON: So, even the freshman wanted to beat A&M.

SCHROEDER: Oh, well, you have to understand when you went to A&M, our benches along the grandstand—you had to move them out toward the playing field because the Aggie’s corp would come to freshman games like they did to the varsity games and they even chewed tobacco back in those days. So to keep our uniforms from being too spotted we had to moved far enough that they couldn’t spit that far. And that’s where I learned to have a feeling for A&M. I didn’t say what kind of feeling, but you understand.

JOHNSON: The feeling has probably never left you.

SCHROEDER: I still feel pretty good about that feeling that I have towards them.

JOHNSON: Very strong.

SCHROEDER: Very strong.

JOHNSON: So would you say your freshman career was nothing outstanding, but you were on the team and you were learning baseball and opportunities that you never had before.

SCHROEDER: I had had a coach. I had a coach named Ed Price, who later became the football coach at Texas, who actually was a teacher of all aspects, more of the offensive, which I had not had in my American Legion Junior Program and in my high school
program. I was real proud to have played for Ed Price.

JOHNSON: Wow, a man who knew football and baseball. Pretty varied coach.

SCHROEDER: In those days you had to coach lots of sports. It’s not like today when they have so many football coaches, so many basketball, and so many baseball.

JOHNSON: What positions in high school and college did you play?

SCHROEDER: In high school, I only played in the outfield. In college, I caught some and played third base and played in the outfield. This is on the freshman team.

JOHNSON: What, maybe, what are your athletic gifts or athletic strengths that caused you to be put in those positions?

SCHROEDER: I had a fair arm. Could catch; could throw from the outfield. I had reasonably good hands to play ground balls. I guess my arm was—this is why the three positions I named—catcher, third, and outfield—need strong arms, so I guess that’s why I was put in those positions more than others. (noise in background)

JOHNSON: What was your greatest strength, would you say, as a baseball player, then? What was your greatest asset?

SCHROEDER: I guess that I could play lots of positions. I was not a great hitter. I was not a power hitter, I don’t even remember any of our kids being power hitters. You’ve got to remember, we didn’t understand what weight training was. There was none. We did a little hoeing and picking and axing that strengthened our bodies, but other than that, we had no means.

JOHNSON: And you had to do that to maintain the field, I assume?

SCHROEDER: We did those things, too—

JOHNSON: So, there was no groundskeepers to keep your field up?

SCHROEDER: No, you did that as a part of the team.

JOHNSON: So, even upper classmen—did upper classmen get freshmen to do it for them?

SCHROEDER: In high school, we all did it.
JOHNSON: Yeah.

SCHROEDER: When I got to college, on the freshmen team we were all the same and we all helped. Now, when you got to the varsity, the sophomores did most of that, or if they could find a freshmen who wasn’t tied up, he got to help with it, too.

JOHNSON: Voluntarily, of course.

SCHROEDER: All things were voluntary, no hazing.

JOHNSON: None at all. What was your greatest weakness, would you say, as a baseball player?

SCHROEDER: I did not have good power. I hit for a good average.

JOHNSON: What was your average usually around in those days?

SCHROEDER: I batted anywhere from .280 to .350 in the various summer programs and leagues that I played in. In the junior leagues, I usually batted a little bit higher than that. In the American Legion, I probably hit .333—something of that sort—both the years that I played that program.

JOHNSON: Well, you wrapped up your freshmen year at UT. It was 1941 and some pretty traumatic events were going on in the country. I know that you left UT during that time to go enlist in the military.

SCHROEDER: I joined the navy, so I didn’t have to carry a rifle and walk in the mud.

JOHNSON: Did you join after Pearl Harbor?

SCHROEDER: I joined after Pearl Harbor.

JOHNSON: So, real quick, can you just describe that day? Where were you and what was going on?

SCHROEDER: It was a Sunday over here and I remember I went out to the campus and was watching pick up football games, because the previous day, the Texas team that year was selected to be the number one football team in the nation. All of their pictures were on the front of the Life magazine, but they were upset twice. The first one was a 7 to 7 tie with of all people, Baylor University.
JOHNSON: I’m sure that was galling for them.

SCHROEDER: A team that had been beaten by A&M like 49-0 the week before. But Baylor tied Texas 7-7. The next week TCU found that they could even beat Texas, 14-7. Texas was at the low point, but they came back. They beat an Oregon team like 70-14 the day before Pearl Harbor. They had already beaten A&M for the conference championship. Had beaten them like 23-0, as I recall. But we did not really understand the significance, Hey, Pearl Harbor’s been bombed. Okay, so what? Where is it?

JOHNSON: Yeah. Real quick, let me switch the tape to the other side.

(tape 1, side 1 ends; side 2 begins)

JOHNSON: This is side two of tape one of the first interview with Coach Dutch Schroeder. You were talking about Pearl Harbor and when they had bombed. You said no one really realized the significance of it at first.

SCHROEDER: Just the year previous, national guard units had been called to active duty, so a lot of our young friends who were in the guard because they could get a dollar every Saturday they went to march and do whatever they did.

JOHNSON: They got a little surprise.

SCHROEDER: Got taken over to various places, I remember Reuban Artega, one of my fellow friends, played baseball with me, brother had been sent to the Philippines. We didn’t realize that war was imminent. It was just growing up. And when Pearl Harbor happened, we were not—we did not realize the effect. But when we saw the pictures the next day in the paper, of the devastation, then there was a real hunger for going to protect your country. A lot of people jumped on and went and signed up, thinking we’re going to be drafted if we don’t sign up, so the navy and the marines got a number of my friends, by the way.

JOHNSON: Why the marines?

SCHROEDER: Glory. That uniform—that dress uniform was the thing. Personally, I didn’t want to be a marine.
JOHNSON: Even then they had that reputation?

SCHROEDER: Oh, I knew that they were going to be the people who were going to have to do the fighting. Even during the first war when I would read about it, they would talk about the United States Marines and I would wonder, Why were the marines fighting in the middle of France? But they went anywhere to fight. They were a branch of the navy, though, but they were the fighting branch. Didn’t want anything to do with them. I wasn’t sure I wanted to shoot a gun at anybody.

JOHNSON: So, what was the date you joined up? Was it shortly after Pearl Harbor?

SCHROEDER: No, no. No, it was a whole year afterwards. I stayed in school and tried to do some of that, but I was just turned seventeen and my mother didn’t want me to leave, so I stayed at her wishes, but in the fall of forty-two, it just looked like we needed to go. So, I was going to turn eighteen the next January, so I joined on December the eighth, but it was a year after Pearl Harbor. It was in 1942.

JOHNSON: So, what was that last year—that year at UT like?

SCHROEDER: Well, that’s when I played freshmen baseball at Baylor in the spring of ‘42.

JOHNSON: You mean freshmen baseball at UT, don’t you?

SCHROEDER: Freshman baseball at UT, yes.

JOHNSON: So, while—what were you talking about earlier, the things happening, we were at war?

SCHROEDER: We were at war, that’s right.

JOHNSON: What was the home front like?

SCHROEDER: Well, there was a—they began to ration sugar and ration gasoline; tires were hard to get. But at the first of the war, it was not as bad as I understand it got later on, so I didn’t feel the—I knew a lot of people had gone into wartime work—ship building, working on bases—they were building bases all around. There was a big camp just east of Austin called Camp Swift that took in thousands of acres that they bought. I
remember going to play softball and baseball with the soldiers over there in their programs. We did that as—so they would have some outside competition in there.

JOHNSON: So, you joined on December 8, 1942.

SCHROEDER: Right.

JOHNSON: You chose the navy.

SCHROEDER: Chose the navy.

JOHNSON: What happened after that? What was your career like?

SCHROEDER: I don’t know why I joined the navy because I couldn’t swim.

JOHNSON: Did you learn how to swim while you were in the navy?

SCHROEDER: You didn’t get to take—get any liberty to you until you could swim fifty yards. And I missed the first liberty because I had not passed the swimming, but the day after that, I jumped in that water and I went fifty yards in a hurry, because I didn’t want to stay on that base any longer. But it was a neat time to learn discipline, having to stand at attention for long periods of time and learning how to march with other young men. At first I was trying to understand why the Navy was making us be a marching group. I thought that was the army thing, but it’s a form of psychological training to help you become a—discipline, because in the service, it’s a team effort, there’s no individual. We work as groups and we all have to work in unison and that’s why we did this marching. I guess they still march in the service, because it was good training for us and I’m sure it’s still good training. I went to—after my three months of basic training—

JOHNSON: Where was basic at?

SCHROEDER: —At San Diego. There only two places: San Diego and Great Lakes up there by Chicago. I took some tests and because I made real good on tests, they thought I could be a quartermaster. Now, a lot of people don’t understand what a quartermaster is. It’s not a person in the Army who handles equipment. Quartermaster in the Navy is a right arm, which is administrative type. The others are working types on the left. Quartermasters worked with maps and sextons and navigation and signals, signal flags,
Morse codes, and help with—run the wheel house where all the officers run the ship, and so I was selected to go to quartermaster school, never having heard what the word quartermaster meant. But I went to quartermaster school for another three months and came out a quartermaster third class. Now the biggest thing in quartermaster school was that the fellow—there was a fellow in the class ahead of me when I would go to this little library to study the book so that I could make good grades on the tests that we were given. There was a fellow that sat at the next table from me who never spoke to anybody—was not unfriendly, but never—he would read his book and leave. His name was Henry Fonda. Henry Fonda had a camera mind. He read it, it was etched on his brain. He made the highest grades of anybody on our tests. When he finished quartermaster school, they sent him to officer training school, and that’s where he belonged, because he was so smart. He could remember anything in the book. When I finished quartermaster school, I was sent to receiving bases to be sent wherever a quartermaster was needed. I was sent to northern California to Camp Shoemaker. I stayed there for several months before being shipped into the South Pacific.

JOHNSON: When were you shipped into the South Pacific?

SCHROEDER: Oh, me. The month—it was in the late summer of ’43. I was sent to Noumea, New Caladonia, which was the receiving base for the South Pacific. I was first assigned to a ship called the Port Whangarei, which had been built by the Germans before World War I and part of the reparations that were given to the winners after the war. New Zealand got this ship. There was still German printing on some of the plates down in the engine room, but it was a small cargo ship. Very small.

JOHNSON: It must not have been nice, being that old.

SCHROEDER: Very small. It had a crew of twenty. We traveled between Noumea and Auckland, New Zealand, all the way up to Guadalcanal. To take supplies.

JOHNSON: So, by this time Guadalcanal had been secured?

SCHROEDER: Secured. I never saw a Japanese plane in this part of my tour.
JOHNSON: Did you have to worry about submarines?

SCHROEDER: Well, there’s a little funny story there. We were so small, we’d go up into some inlets on the island of New Caladonia, which had been a French island, and there was a place up there that we could get eggs. So we went in one day to get eggs and there was a scope following us, but nobody would waste a bomb—a torpedo—on the ship I was on. It wasn’t worthy of being torpedoed.

JOHNSON: (laughter)

SCHROEDER: But that’s the only time I know of that a submarine—now whether it was one of ours or one of theirs, I have no idea.

JOHNSON: So, being on such a small, old, dingy ship—

SCHROEDER: Had its advantages. Oh, it was heaven.

JOHNSON: Better than being on an aircraft carrier in that situation—

SCHROEDER: I never was on a big ship. I don’t want to be on an aircraft carrier either, because I saw some of those that had been kamikazed later on. But I did this for only a short period. I was then transferred to a net tender, and it was at the island of Efati in the New Hebrides Islands. There we opened and closed the gate for the big boys. I saw the battleships—

JOHNSON: What is a net tender?

SCHROEDER: Well, we had two horns out in front and we could—with cables we could move the net; we repaired the net—

JOHNSON: Oh, so a submarine—

SCHROEDER: —Antisubmarine nets. And we made sure that the entrance to this cove, and it was about like Pearl Harbor, just a narrow entrance—there were just a lot of islands there that let all the big ships—all the battleships would come in for a month, period where they sat on the shore for rest and relaxation. This was a neat job. Nobody was coming to shoot at us or anything, but from time to time, we would see the ships take off and we knew they were going where there was action.
JOHNSON: Any famous ships come through there? Do you remember?

SCHROEDER: The Missouri did not come, but the Iowa, it was of the same class. They had just built it. It was so new it sparkled everywhere and we would talk about—they’d better put a lot of gray paint on it in a hurry so it then it wouldn’t be a target. It came in—I can’t remember, there was only one carrier left down in the South Pacific at the time. They’d lost one over at the Battle of the Coral Sea. But lots of cruisers, lots of destroyers—

JOHNSON: Was it the Saratoga?

SCHROEDER: I—I’m not—I’d better not say. I don’t know. But it was a neat duty, but I got transferred off of it. I got to ride on the three hospital ships though, back and forth to my different duties. Can’t remember, Hope and Charity and there was one more that we had—at the end of the war ten or twelve hospital ships put out—at that time there were only three and I was on all three of them, but not as a patient. It was just transportation back and forth to different parts of the South Pacific. I got to come home after a short period over there. I had not even spent a year, I guess I got to come home in May—or got to come home in May and June.

JOHNSON: Of ’44?

SCHROEDER: Forty-four. Because—the Whangarei was in a storm and they decided it was time to take it out of commission—I got to take it down to Wellington, New Zealand, and we all got to come home off that ship. They would send us back to receiving ship. And while I was home, I went to visit my brother who was in a naval education program at Clinton, Mississippi. I rode the train over to see him and on my way home the train stopped in the middle of the night because they just got word that we had landed in Normandy, so we celebrated by tooting the horns and everybody was hugging and hollering. I came back to Austin before going back to the West Coast. I knew that I was not going to have as easy a duty. When I went back, I was assigned to a new mine sweeper squadron, then went north to Seattle to pick up the Shelter, which was the name
of the mine sweeper I was on. We did all the things you had to do, shake down cruises. We first began to be a—we escorted single raiders and oilers between Honolulu and San Francisco. We did this for several months. We’d take a trip over one week, escort something back the next. Then we—all the eight ships in our unit were—had gone through the shakedowns and it was time to go, and then we went to the North Pacific, where we began our training to work on before landings.

JOHNSON: Where did you train at?

SCHROEDER: This training was all on the West Coast and then when we went to Honolulu, then we went to the Marshall Islands—we had a little chance to practice there. It was all under control. We went to—you know, we’d talk—and the next thing I knew, we were heading north to go to Iwo Jima. From there we swept those islands for a week before the landings. We did not cut one mine. Their defense was all in the edge of the water and I saw my first frog men go in and blast various parts there. All the ships were there, battleships, cruisers—we didn’t see the aircraft carriers because they were off, but the planes came over everyday. It was a kind of an exciting time. Got to watch the landings.

JOHNSON: So you watched the gunfire and bombardments and all of that?

SCHROEDER: Got to see all of that.

JOHNSON: What was that like?

SCHROEDER: Well, I didn’t want to be a Japanese at that time. Of course, I know how our people felt at Pearl Harbor when we didn’t have any chance of defense from what happened. I saw the marines go forward, we were close enough to the beach. One day—the Pensacola was a cruiser—was pummeling—we had diagrams with numbers and your told where to hit—the planes are told what to hit where we don’t have people, and the Pensacola was shooting in there and all of a sudden, a Japanese battery rolled itself out of the hills and point blank, hit the Pensacola and knocked out all of their range finding area of which was all of their radar. Boy, they sped out of there.
JOHNSON: They were that close?

SCHROEDER: I could see marines working back and forth in the land over there, so we were all that close. I could have thrown a rock and hit the Pensacola, we were that close to them. They wouldn’t have hit us. I say that, but one day while sweeping around the northern end of the island, a shell was lobbed over us. We were the only ship there. I guess they shot us, but—

JOHNSON: What was mine sweeping like? Was it considered a pretty dangerous—

SCHROEDER: The safest job you can have.

JOHNSON: No way.

SCHROEDER: Safest job. We sweep in formation. A little wooden hulled ship goes first that won’t set off a magnetic mine and its two lines go out and then the first metal ship in our group gets inside one of those lines and its two lines go out. And we do this and I guess we could cover pretty close to a mile at a time.

JOHNSON: So those lines would snag mines?

SCHROEDER: Oh, yeah. And when it does, there’s a big giant cutter and when it goes down, this cuts it and they come to the surface. Now, that’s when we have to be careful and hope we don’t have to break formation. What we hope is that the lines—there’s an upper and a lower—will hang on the upper and go past the last ship’s upper line, and then when it goes out there it’s floating. Then there’s a second wooden ship behind us and their job is to get in close to shoot it with rifle fire and get one of the pins and set it off. Not at Iwo, because we didn’t cut a mine, but in Okinawa later, when we cut mines, they floated to the beach, and that—where we were going to land, and so they had to take in three inch guns and blast it where there was an explosion of power and would cause the mine to detonate rather than get our landing craft run into them. We didn’t cut a thing at Iwo Jima.

JOHNSON: You said you saw your first navy frog man. What was that like?

SCHROEDER: That’s funny. We could see our people working over there on the land
and from time to time there would be an explosion where they would blow some of the barb wire or whatever the traps were that they had set in there.

JOHNSON: And you could say that the Japanese could see it too—

SCHROEDER: Oh, yes.

JOHNSON: —so I’m sure they were getting shot at all the time.

SCHROEDER: No, because they were at a point of land that we had just pulverized; where the airstrips were was pulverized. And that’s where we were going to land and the big Mount Suribachi was up high where they could not shoot down in there and bother our frog men. I don’t think they were shot at all.

JOHNSON: Yeah, but that probably was a dangerous job, though.

SCHROEDER: Oh, yes. I didn’t want to be a frog man either.

JOHNSON: Yeah, kind of like an earlier version of the Navy SEALS.

SCHROEDER: That’s what they are.

JOHNSON: So you—after Iwo Jima, you went to Okinawa, I assume?

SCHROEDER: Went to Okinawa—back to the Philippines first to restore our equipment and to get ready. There were times when we would pick up echoes of submarines in this area and we’d shoot what was called a hedgehog—a group would shoot a pattern of depth charges—and if they didn’t hit, there would be no explosion; they would go on down, but then when we’d run across an area we would let off our cans on the back of the ship to try see if we’d got them. But they always exploded; we never did see any debris, so I don’t think we got it, but we had to go reload and get all of our equipment ready, because we knew we were going to Okinawa. Went to Okinawa and we were there, oh, let’s see, went in there April first, we stayed there until about the middle of June. Middle of June, we would get a relief again, but we swept quite a number of mines off of Okinawa, but we had maps showing where the Japanese had mined them—I don’t know where we got those. We didn’t have those at Iwo, maybe that’s because they didn’t have any, but we had some lanes that they had mined that we cut—
JOHNSON: Did they ask if they were accurate maps?

SCHROEDER: Pretty accurate. We were right there in the area where they were, so we cut a number there. We began to see the kamikaze. There was one mine sweeper that was hit by kamikazes, but for the most part they left the small ships alone.

JOHNSON: Not important enough.

SCHROEDER: We were not important enough.

JOHNSON: Did you ever sail as part of the big battle fleet? Did you ever see it under attack?

SCHROEDER: No. They always—you see, they fired from out of sight of one another. And I could see the ships that were shooting and pulverizing the land, but at Okinawa, The Texas was just outside of us and they were shooting over us.

JOHNSON: That was that—

SCHROEDER: Longhorn—

JOHNSON: —That should have made you feel good.

SCHROEDER: Well, we had a real funny incident there, right into the area where we were going to land, a little Japanese sub jumped up between us and The Texas and fired at the Texas. Didn’t fire at us, but it caused us all to break our formation to get around the Texas until they could get out of the area.

JOHNSON: I take it—did it have to take evasive action?

SCHROEDER: Uh-huh. There was a submarine base on the northern end of Okinawa; they were still operating when we first went in there, but the air fields were neutralized, so we had no problems, but, yeah.

JOHNSON: You said—did you ever see an actual—you said you saw carriers that had been hit by kamikazes?

SCHROEDER: We were in a group of islands called Karama Retto in which the admiral had his headquarters on a ship. We were allowed to go in there—

JOHNSON: Was this Halsey? Or Spruance? Or Mitchener?
SCHROEDER: No. I don’t know which one was running the show. No, those—they ran the big operation with big ships. This was a lesser admiral who was running the operation and knew what all the ships—service ships were doing. The oilers, the freighters, the tankers, the mine sweepers—all the self-help tanks.

JOHNSON: Yeah.

SCHROEDER: But his ship was hit with a kamikaze—I was on the ship, and they had flown in low and it was not a red alert, so we did not know they were coming. I happened to be on the bridge and I saw them coming low and I could see they were dipping into our area, and I went up to man one of the forty millimeter guns when I—after the first one hit, I knew we were in trouble. But four of them came in on us and three of them got ships and one hit the mountain. He missed the ship.

JOHNSON: Well, he must have had a little too much sake.

SCHROEDER: Well, he might have been just fourteen years old, too.

JOHNSON: Yeah.

SCHROEDER: They’d just taught them enough to fly tripods. So we had a lot of heartache and devastation in there that day. But that—the ship in charge from then on was hollering to the ships that were out on the limits that were supposed to be the radar—radar points to tell us what was going on. But I saw some others that were coming in, but they were away and we were in such a small area that they—

JOHNSON: Did you ever see the Franklin or the Bunker Hill after they got hit?

SCHROEDER: No. No, didn’t see either one of those. Who got hit—it may have been the Bunker Hill.

JOHNSON: That was the big Essex class carrier. Like—almost got wiped out?

SCHROEDER: Yes. It was—they were dragging him—they were pulling them. I don’t know where they were pulling him from, but they were pulling him south, try to get him to some kind of help. I assume the Philippines, where they could get some bases there.

When Okinawa was secured, we went back to—we swept the island of Ie Shima and this
is where Ernie Pyle, the big correspondent of the war, was killed. We all wept as we went around there after that, because the word got around, Ernie’s dead.

JOHNSON: Because he was a very popular —

SCHROEDER: The navy—because he’d come on ships. He interviewed people and he wrote the common soldier, sailor story in the paper and we could read in it the *Stars and Stripes*, and we could get one of those.

JOHNSON: Yeah.

SCHROEDER: But we went on back to the Philippines where we reloaded again, we had a couple of practice sessions. We were getting ready to go to Kyushu.

JOHNSON: So, you were getting ready for the invasion of Japan?

SCHROEDER: Yes. We were ready to go.

JOHNSON: So that—what was the mood? That invasion was not looked forward to, I know.

SCHROEDER: Always, since I have come home, and I talk with Dr. Joe Jaworski, a local doctor here who’s ninety-six years old now—I visit with him often. He was to be in charge of the medical units on Kyushu. They were to be the first MASH units. They had developed this program where they could bring in the doctors and nurses and hold them in the back and bring the—

JOHNSON: Rapid response to the injuries.

SCHROEDER: —Rapid response, that’s what it is. He told me my group was supposed to take care of one million casualties in the first week of fighting, because the Japanese were expected to fight house by house and that the Japanese who were not trained to fight would be given the kinds of instruments—grenades, bombs—to do whatever they could to keep us from getting in there. There’s a little side story to it. My brother had since become in a unit called—not seabees—but a group that furnished information—furnished supplies and information about how to move the equipment once we were on land and he was to go in with the first group. I learned later, now. So, you can know that I’m glad
the bomb fell.

JOHNSON: So was my grandfather. He was at Okinawa, too. He was part of the second wave, so he did not experience a huge amount of fighting, but he was a part of the invasion of Japan, too.

SCHROEDER: Most of those would not have come back. Those that came back would have been severely injured, its—yeah. This is what we were looking forward to. It was not going to be good.

JOHNSON: Yeah. So you all were in the Philippines and assembling the fleet to get ready for the invasion and then the bomb was dropped?

SCHROEDER: At Okinawa, the day we went in there were more ships than I knew there were in the world, because there were ships from horizon to horizon. But in the Philippines it was going to be that many or more, because we were going to have take in so many people.

JOHNSON: Let me flip the tape here right quick.

SCHROEDER: Okay.

(tape 1 ends; tape 2 begins)

JOHNSON: This is tape two of the first interview of Coach Dutch Schroeder. We stopped to flip the tape there, you were talking about just your experiences on Okinawa. The preparing for the invasion of Japan and the expected casualties and then they dropped the bomb. So, I would assume that the surrender of Japan had much jubilation.

SCHROEDER: I was on duty the night we got the word. It was on the eight to ten—eight to twelve shift and all of a sudden there was shooting. All kinds of noise. We were at Tacloban on the eastern side of the Philippines. It was there we learned—

JOHNSON: Can you spell that because—

SCHROEDER: —T-A-C-L-O-B-A-N. The joy was horrendous. (laughter) I tell you, they even broke out food for us at midnight when we don’t do those kind of things. It was a time of real celebration. Then we finally settled down, after I got off my watch.
We now realized we were going to get to go home. We’re not going to have to go to Japan. Well that’s not quite true, because we still had to go to Japan. A lot of the ships and a lot of the men did not have to go, but all the mine sweepers went because we had to go and sweep. Now, there is a difference between sweeping at Okinawa and sweeping in Japan, because mainly we were the ones who let the Japanese mine sweepers sweep theirs. One of the great things that we had in the war was radar. Most of the Japanese small ships were still using range finders. Where they peer through up a prism and these two things come together and they’re able to spot distances and all, but we helped them sweep. We did some sweeping ourselves, but we swept between Korea and the western part of Kyushu. Lot of mines were swept. We lost one of the Japanese ships, because he hit a mine. We knew he was in the wrong place. There was a Japanese signalman on our ship and he was frantically trying to signal them that they were in the wrong place, but could not get them out of there. They were down in less than thirty seconds; it was gone. But I was on the bridge, because that was quartermaster’s—that’s were we worked. And I saw him cry. And I guess that was the first time I thought Japanese were human beings. Until that point, I hated them. They were cruel. They’d forced this on us and we had to go to fight a war. But when he cried and I saw those tears, I knew they have a heart and they had a soul, and it helped me to change my attitude toward people. But I stayed over there until—this was in September—I got to go to Nagasaki to see where the bomb had fallen. I remember riding in a truck for seven or eight miles and there wasn’t a thing standing except four walls from a hospital, no roof, nothing else. It was all rubble. There had been no clean up because they let us—they cleaned the street so that we could go down it in the truck. That’s what they let us do when we got to Nagasaki. After we’d finished our duties over there, I did—we did go into Sasebo, which was the fleet base for the Japanese Navy. Of course, we took our fleet in there then. What was left of theirs was still in there, so I got to see the remaining big ships of theirs, which wasn’t much. We had sunk most all of them. After we’d finished there, got to come on back to the
states; began to decommission the Shelter. Got back, oh, let’s, see—I was in Honolulu on January 1, 1946. Then came on back and when they told me they were going to take the ship through the Panama Canal and end up at Galveston, I decided to stay in the navy a little longer. I had plenty of points to get out, but I stayed in so I could go through the Panama Canal and came up and docked in Galveston. Then I finished with them. I stayed on until May, because we were going to get to take the ship up—

JOHNSON: Is this May of ’46?

SCHROEDER: —May of ’46. We would take the ship up by Orange, up the Neches River, up by Orange and Port Arthur. That’s where they were going to permanently seal the ships off. And they sealed us all together, all eight ships from the unit and they let us go home. Now that was end of my navy career. Time to go back to school.

JOHNSON: So how did they—the ships sealed; you guys are discharged, have fun? How did it work?

SCHROEDER: We covered all the metal parts with something called, like cosmaline, all the guns. We cleaned the ship as best we could and then they put something like a cocoon over it and it was sealed and we were all off and that was the end of it.

JOHNSON: So, literally, just—you finished it and walked off the ship and you could go home?

SCHROEDER: Well, we had to go through the paperwork at something called Wallace, which was not in Galveston, but that’s where they took us. I’m not even sure where Camp Wallace was. They sent us home. It was all over.

JOHNSON: When you were talking, when we—I flipped the tape—that you knew several people that you know and grew up were killed in the war, you—it definitely hit home.

SCHROEDER: It hit home. Elmo Ellis, who I had been very close to in my playing days, was killed at Saipan. He was a marine. Ray Sh—Shipley—he was one of the better pitchers of my youth days—was shot down and killed. Joe Randerson, another one
of my baseball friend buddies, was a fighter pilot. Was killed escorting the planes over Ploesti.

JOHNSON: Oh, gosh, that was horrible, Ploesti.

SCHROEDER: Right now I can’t even come up with the name—Steve—Steve—he was killed on the *Warrington*—Steve Barker. He wasn’t a baseball player—

JOHNSON: And these were guys you grew up with?

SCHROEDER: Oh, yeah. Fred Robertson was also killed flying over England.

JOHNSON: So you—coming back, I mean, when you got back, there several—you know—there were people missing.

SCHROEDER: There were a lot of people missing. Austin took a pretty good lick. A lot of our boys were gone.

JOHNSON: Yeah. I take it once you got back, though, your mom and family were very happy.

SCHROEDER: I slipped in on Mom and Dad. They didn’t even know I was coming in. And it’s over. Very happy. My brother was still in the service. He didn’t have enough points; he had not been in long enough, but it was a happy time, very happy time.

JOHNSON: All right. Well, what was your plan after that? What were you thinking?

SCHROEDER: Go back to school. But now I was no longer interested in being a lawyer. I really wanted to play ball. One of the things I had gotten a touch of when I was in the receiving base in Noumea was—in New Caladonia—was they played baseball games occasionally over there. And so I’d get to go over and I’d play. There was no practice or anything, but I got to play in some baseball games and I’d just decided that’s what I wanted to do. So I went back to Texas that—

JOHNSON: When you say ball player—professional ball player? Or a coach?

SCHROEDER: No, I didn’t have dreams of being a professional baseball player. I guess it would have to be—I wanted to play in college. I wanted to consider physical education and coaching as my plan. So when I went back to school, I quit taking all those hard
history and English and math courses and begin taking physical education courses and loved it. But I only went one semester, because I had a friend named Slater Martin, who later became one of the all time great basketball players at Texas and in the pro-ranks. Slater and I got thrown together in some classes and he wanted to transfer to Baylor. He told me I ought to, too. He wanted to go up here with all his friends, who’d been on the state championship team—I think in ’44 or ’45 —out of Jeff Davis in Houston. So, I—he told me I was going to go up here with him and we were going to talk to the people up here, so I ended up agreeing to go and at the last minute he pulled out and, of course, I know what happened; somebody put some money in his pocket and he stayed at Texas. But I came on up here and I liked the school, so they were on the quarter system, so I didn’t have to make the change from—at that time we went from September into January for the fall, and then started mid-January and bring it to almost June for the spring.

JOHNSON: That’s how UT did?

SCHROEDER: Well, yeah. At Baylor they were on the quarter system. They went September, October, November, and then December, January, February, and then March, April, and May. So I had until March to make my plans and come up here.

JOHNSON: So the fall semester, you were at UT.

SCHROEDER: I was at UT.

JOHNSON: Fall of ’46. What about—did you get reacquainted with the baseball program there during that time?

SCHROEDER: Well, I did and they kept their baseball program going during the war. Mr. Falk was a good friend of mine, so I went over to him. I was going to come out to the team again and he said, “Now, Dutch, you know I got fifty lettermen back from the last few years.” He said, “It’s going to be tough, but perhaps you could be one of those that stand out.” It kind of told me, I’d better think about something else, too. That’s why it was easy for me to go up here to Baylor, because the baseball coach was Mr. Pete Jones. A. E. “Pete” Jones. When I talked to him, he said, “I’d love to have you here.”
And I have to go back and tell you what had happened the summer I got back from the navy. I played in a local league in Austin. I played for a team. I played on a team with Bobby Layne, who was the outstanding football player and baseballer at Texas. We played against a team called the Waco Dons, which was the Waco team.

JOHNSON: D-A—D-O-N-S?

SCHROEDER: D-O-N-S, that’s what Waco called all their teams in those days—Waco Dons—until the Pirates took over. They became Waco Pirates. Well, the pitcher on that team was named Lloyd Russell and by chance I got a couple of hits off of Lloyd Russell in one of our games. I—he beat us, but I happened to get a couple of hits and he came over to me after the game and says, “Young man, what do you do?” I said, “Well, I’m going to be—go to school.” He said, “Where are you going to go?” I said, “Well, I’m going to go to Texas.” He said, “Have you ever thought about going to Baylor?” And I said, No, that I remembered Baylor tying us back in ’41.

JOHNSON: And I’m still mad about it.

SCHROEDER: Uh, yeah! (laughter) He said, “I’m the head of the PE department up there and we’re going to have a good athletic program starting right now.” He says, “I’d like for you to come up there and be a part of the baseball program.” He says, “We have a coach, Coach Jones, I’d like for you to talk to him.” I said, “Well, I’m not really interested.” And I really put it at the back of my mind until Slater Martin says, “Dutch, your going to go up here with me.” And after Mr. Falk says, “I’ve got fifty lettermen coming back, Dutch.” And of various skills and some of them were quite good and it turns out they were very, very good. I probably would have had a hard time making their traveling squad.

JOHNSON: So, this is the fall of ’46, and not only do you have all the high school kids that had not gone to war, they’re now at UT. You had the people that stayed there during the war, but you have the returning servicemen—

SCHROEDER: All the returning—
JOHNSON: —Who were mature.

SCHROEDER: —Yes. And I knew some of them that were coming back. I knew they were good ball players if they hadn’t lost their skills during the war. But when I came up and talked to Mr. Jones, he said, “I’d like for you to come up here.” He said, “We had a good ball team this year, but I think I’m going to have a better one.” So, I made my plans to come to Baylor and go out for the team. Now, I was going to be late because I couldn’t enroll until March and they began in February. Up until this time, the Southwest Conference was allowing anybody to change schools who wanted to. The rule had been if you changed schools you got to lay out one year, but because of the war, they were allowing players to switch immediately. I knew some people that switched to Texas, I knew some Texas people that switched to SMU and Rice. So I changed—came to Baylor. So they presented my name and they turned me down. I was the first one to be turned down. Of course, I was bitter at the time, but it was really the right thing to do. They needed to stop this switching schools and letting you be eligible right away, and so my bitterness—it was a short-lived thing. But I was not eligible to play, but Mr. Jones allowed me to come out and practice with the team before practice and I could stay after practice. And I did those kind of things because I did want to make the team. That’s the reason I came here, so I wanted to make the team the next year. They had a good ball club. He only kept fifteen on his varsity—you didn’t play all these games like you play today. Usually played ten non conference games and fifteen conference games. Twenty-five was maximum. So fifteen—he didn’t need but two or three pitchers, a couple of catchers, five infielders, about four outfielders, and if anybody could play a couple of positions, even less. There was not a lot of money available for scholarships. There was not a lot of money available for equipment or travel. It was a very sparse budget that he had, but many of the players were returning veterans who had their schooling paid for. But the high school students—

JOHNSON: But did that include you, I assume?
SCHROEDER: Well, that was me. I got my tuition and all and got something like sixty-five dollars a month, which was good, and then when I got married, I got one hundred and five dollars a month. So I was rolling in money in those days. Yeah. But, the high school players who’d not been in the service who were here. They were the ones who received the scholarship help to help them with their tuition. And it was not much, it was like five dollars an hour. Wasn’t as cheap as Texas, but it was still very reasonable. So, I stayed out there with him and stuck it out to the end, knowing the next year I would have the chance to make that ball club.

JOHNSON: What was Pete Jones like? I read something in the Round Up about he was a returning war veteran and he actually got in a little late after the season had started.

SCHROEDER: That’s right. They had a—

JOHNSON: What was his background?

SCHROEDER: He was a Baylor athlete in the late twenties. He married a Baylor girl named Louise Bens—she taught English here. He was over here as one of our coaches. By the way, his granddaughter was the queen of the homecoming not last year, but the year before that. I can’t think of her name right now. So, he’s still around with me and Mrs. Jones is still alive. I talk with her. She’ll be here at homecoming this year when we honor the ‘48 team.

JOHNSON: The ‘48 baseball team?

SCHROEDER: Well, we’re honoring all of the ‘48 athletes at homecoming this year, because it is the one greatest year of Baylor athletic history. The ‘48 basketball team went to the finals of the NCAA.

JOHNSON: That’s when they lost to Kentucky.

SCHROEDER: The baseball team didn’t win the conference, but because Texas was mad at the NCAA, in the second year of the NCAA playoffs, they played four in the west and four in the east. We represented the conference and we lost only to USC, who ended up being the champion and so we were either third or fourth. We could—perhaps we
would have beaten Yale. Yale had President Bush on their team, but they got beat by USC in the final playoffs. The football team played in Baylor’s first ever bowl game, the Dixie Bowl in the fall of ’48. So, it was the best year Baylor has ever had. We thought this year might be a better year, the way our women’s basketball team did, our men’s baseball got off to such a great start, our men’s and women’s tennis did outstanding things. We just thought it might even be a bigger year, but it didn’t turn out to be what that particular year is.

JOHNSON: Not quite. On the national competition they didn’t do as well.

SCHROEDER: Right. Uh, but Mr. Jones was just the nicest person. He was not a tough coach. We did our working out. I wouldn’t say he was great baseball coach, but he was a good baseball man. He’d been a baseball and football player here at Baylor. There just is a sideline. The pitcher for the years he played at Baylor was named “Lefty” Stallings. “Lefty” Stallings is still alive today. I visited with him Tuesday morning in Montgomery, Texas.

JOHNSON: Well Lefty’s got to be—

SCHROEDER: Ninety-two years old. But Mr. Jones was just a nice, nice person. I loved him. I named my first cat, Pete, after him.

JOHNSON: I’m sure he was honored.

SCHROEDER: So I loved him.

JOHNSON: All right, you come to Baylor in March of 1948, what was—

SCHROEDER: I came in March of ’97.

JOHNSON: You mean ’47. Yeah, March of ’47. So what was—describe the Baylor campus and Baylor atmosphere in that time, because in Baylor history that’s a revolution going on with all the returning GI’s and postwar explosion of Baylor. What was it like being here at that time?

SCHROEDER: The campus was very small. This gym that we’re in now was the only building to the north of 4th street, on the east of 4th street, I guess what you’d have to
say. All the of the territory to our—

JOHNSON: East of this street, that’s 5th street, right?

SCHROEDER: Yeah. And it’s called south 5th, so all that territory south of us now were boarding houses. There were five tennis courts right here in what’s now our—the drive way between us here. There was no Student Union building. The old science building was there and out beside it was sort of a quonset hut—that’s where the law school was. And the law school students walked down to 5th street so they could smoke, because there was no smoking on campus. Even before the no smoking days, you didn’t smoke on Baylor’s campus.

JOHNSON: So they crossed the boundary and they could smoke out on the street.

SCHROEDER: Out on the street.

JOHNSON: So Governor Neff couldn’t get them.

SCHROEDER: I guess that was it. Well, by this time, W. R. White had become the president. The campus was located inside of Speight and 5th and 8th street. There were two dormitories for girls between 7th and 8th and there was a printing building over there. The rest of the campus was Speight to Dutton, and the only thing over on the other side of the creek was the dormitory, Brooks Hall, and there was playing area out there. It was very small. Behind our gym was a creek that they’ve straightened out now, but there was—we were the only building this side of 5th. Very small campus. I think that’s what I liked when I came here. Everybody was friendly. As I walked on this campus, everybody was speaking. We all knew each other. It was just a neat place to be.

JOHNSON: Which contrasted, probably, with UT.

SCHROEDER: Because UT had ballooned. There were a lot of foreign students. They took over the gym. You had to fight for a place to play in the gym and I didn’t like that.

JOHNSON: Yeah.

SCHROEDER: So, it was easy for me to make a switch to a smaller school.

JOHNSON: Did you know some people here already?
SCHROEDER: Would you believe a pitcher on the team named Leroy Jarl had been a friend of mine. I’d played against him in youth baseball in Austin. Other than that, I didn’t know a soul.

JOHNSON: So, it was kind of a little brave thing you did.

SCHROEDER: But everybody made you feel so at home. It was just a neat feeling. A fellow named Ben Dean Sheets, who was a football quarterback, but he was down two or three out there. When I walked in the gym, grabbed me, made me feel so at home, took me everywhere, let me meet everybody. It was just a great feeling to know that there people here who loved people.

JOHNSON: So, you quickly got over your earlier attitude towards Baylor.

SCHROEDER: Oh, it was easy. It was easy.

JOHNSON: So, UT days are behind you, you’re now at Baylor. You were working out with the baseball team and so what happens after that?

SCHROEDER: I was a part of the physical education program here. Dr. Lloyd Russell was still my mentor. He was the head of the—

JOHNSON: I’m sure he’s glad to see you.

SCHROEDER: We got along well. Didn’t always remember my name, but I was one of his students. He was a neat person. I got to know his family real well. In ’48, when we got ready to start the team there were fourteen lettermen back and he was going keep one more. And I got to be that one.

JOHNSON: Yeah.

SCHROEDER: I was very fortunate. They had some excellent players here at Baylor University. It was hard for me to even break in. I rarely got to play, but he had players who had already played two years for him as starters. There wasn’t going to be much moving them. They would have to do really bad or I would have to do really, really good to break in. So, I was just a member of the team that year. I met a girl in one of my classes and we decided to get married. I think it helped me. I became a better ball player.
after that or things happened better for me. By the end of the season, we were a good team, but Texas was better. A&M was a little better than we were, but these were three outstanding college teams. My wife and I were going to get married in June, June 12. Baseball was going to be over, we could take a honeymoon, but lo and behold, Texas wins the conference and tells the NCAA they’re not going to go play in the Western Playoffs because they felt like they got cheated in the tournament the year before. The umpiring was just—was so atrocious, so the conference asked us and we go. Now we had lost one of our outstanding players, a fellow by the name of Tom Chandler, who had signed a pro contract. He left us. Later became the coach at A&M and so he and I had a lot of confrontations on the field. But Tom had a chance to go play pro baseball. Pittsburgh Pirates signed him, so he was gone, but we felt like we wanted to go represent the conference, but we were weak with pitchers to play a tournament—

JOHNSON: Tournament format, yeah.

SCHROEDER: Where we might have to play four games, and we picked up some pitchers who were not officially on our team, but they worked out with our freshman players. And we could not play the freshmen, but we took two of the pitchers that played there, fellow by the name of Ben Huff and one by the name of Ben Dean Sheets. That’s the same Ben Dean Sheets that I’d met the first day I ever came here. So, he got to go with us to that tournament. And we had an outstanding tournament. USC had seven players who went directly to the major leagues, they were that good.

JOHNSON: Wow.

SCHROEDER: A pitcher named Wally Hood, who pitched many years with the Yankees, shut us out in the first game. They went on in the winner’s bracket, we came back and beat the other two teams, Oklahoma State—they were called Oklahoma A&M at that time—and we beat Colorado A&M, which were the other teams that been selected to play.

JOHNSON: Colorado A&M, is that now the—
SCHROEDER: Colorado State—

JOHNSON: Colorado State, yeah.

SCHROEDER: They both became state universities, after—I guess that’s the new nomenclature. But we had a great team and some great young men on it and we were really looking forward to the next year when they would all—we would all be seniors.

JOHNSON: So in the finals—you lost in the regional finals, correct? To USC?

SCHROEDER: That’s right.

JOHNSON: They beat us—

SCHROEDER: Well, it was called the Western Playoffs, because there was a Western and an Eastern and the two met.

JOHNSON: For the championship.

SCHROEDER: Yeah, so we were among the last eight teams that were still playing.

JOHNSON: What happened the second game with USC? Still—

SCHROEDER: They mauled us, they mauled us. We were out of pitching and they beat us like 15-6 or something like that, but we got the same pitcher again. It was his turn to come back, so we got to face Wally Hood both times. We hit him a little bit the second game, we did not hit him the first game.

JOHNSON: Took that second look to kind of get an idea how to go after him?

SCHROEDER: I got further back in the box.

JOHNSON: Give you a little more time. (laughter)

SCHROEDER: He could throw hard. This is before we could measure the speed of pitches.

JOHNSON: Yeah. Yeah. Uh, I have down here that you were—you batted .380 your senior year. That’s a pretty good average.

SCHROEDER: Well, I did something like that. I did lead the team our senior year. We had hopes that we could win it, but we got upset by A&M in a game and ended up second in the conference to Texas and Texas did decide they’d go play in the playoffs this year.
They were over their mad and after they saw how well we had done the year before, they were ready to go and, of course, they went on and won the national championship.

JOHNSON: They did? That was that team you were talking about with all those fifty letterman?

SCHROEDER: They had a great team. Now, we were the ones who had to the fourteen letterman.

JOHNSON: And Falk was the coach by now, correct, at UT?

SCHROEDER: Yes, Mr. Falk was the coach and he and I carried on conversation out there. We remained friends all of our years and even when we coached against one another. I did have an outstanding senior year hitting. I only hit two home runs, but both of them were with the bases loaded—that didn’t hurt. I just had a good year.

JOHNSON: Yeah. Hold on let me flip the tape here real fast.

(tape 2, side 1 ends; side 2 begins)

JOHNSON: This is side two of tape two of the first interview with Coach Dutch Schroeder. So, your senior season, you batted .380, a very good hitting year, and let’s take it from there.

SCHROEDER: Unfortunately, Texas had the great year and won the national championship that year, but we were going—thinking in ’49, we could be a lot better. Coach—Mr. Jones had brought in a couple of good pitchers to try to bolster us and help us be a winner. He brought in a young fellow named Adrian Burk from a junior college, who turned out to be an All-American football player, but he was an outstanding pitcher and when he—and the year after I was through, when he didn’t pitch, he played first base. So, you know, he was a great athlete. So things didn’t work out as well for us, but we still had an outstanding year and though I out hit both Joe Szekely and Chuck Devereaux, they were the two on the all-conference team. They and a fellow named Ed—his name started with K-n—I think it was Knipper or something like that—was the other outfielder. He hit probably better than .380. He was an outstanding hitter for Texas. I
don’t remember what he hit. It seemed like I was third in the conference in hitting, but I
can’t remember what it was. But, we had other all-conference players. I think Hogo
Pearson may have made all-conference catcher. Hal Harris, our captain, the shortstop. It
was just an outstanding group of players and so I was way down the list on that. I was
just fortunate enough to get the hits that got the average.

JOHNSON: What positions did you play in Baylor?

SCHROEDER: In ’48, when I was having a hard time breaking in, I began playing some
at third base, because that player, another very good friend of mine, A. B. Reader, was
not having an outstanding year. I got to play a lot of third at the end of the season, but I
played in the outfield some. Two fellows, well, three of us, Billy Kimball and Fred
Gravelle and I, sometimes alternate in the third field, but Szekely and Devereaux were
outstanding players, so, we weren’t going to take their place. So, I played third base and
outfield. My senior year I played in the outfield without playing third because we
brought up our young third baseman, Clay Parker, who turned out to be an outstanding
third baseman and all conference football player. One of Baylor’s all-time great in the
hall of fame. But our first basemen was having a tough year and so to try to get a little
more hitting in the line up, Coach put me at first to play some—and put in another out—
put in Kimball to play the outfield. So, I played a little bit of first base that year, but
mostly played as an outfielder. But its interesting that when I married a Temple girl and
Temple had a team in the Big State League and when they looked at me, I was playing
in—at first base—so they thought I was a first baseman, but I’d played very few games at
first.

JOHNSON: Yeah. Yeah. I want to go back and briefly talk about the changes at Baylor
during the postwar period. What was it like for the GI generation, your generation? You
all fought a war—literally faced death to come back to such a normal life—to just
studying and to playing ball. What was that like? It seems like it must have been good.
My mind is like, you know, you faced all this, now to get an education and other stuff is
nothing.

SCHROEDER: But it was a serious time. We had come back. Before I’d gone into the service, my grades were C’s and D’s—I think maybe a B—and I don’t even remember making an A. But you came back with a more serious outlook. Grades were a lot better. We studied. A lot of people changed to a more serious career. A lot more lawyers, a lot more thought about medicine. It was a time when frivolity was down; there was not a lot of partying. There was some beer drinking, but not a lot of that. Maybe I just wasn’t around as much of it, but clubs—they were not fraternities then—but clubs were very small minority and did not make a great impact. They were a great help at things like Homecoming. They furnished floats and all. There were not a lot of clubs to do it. Helped Baylor to build a homecoming parade tradition that’s second to none. But there were a lot more students on campus, continued to grow. We did not bother—it did not bother us that we did not have great facilities. We were just glad to have a seat, if we had that. The rules at Baylor were a little more strenuous than they were at other schools. I don’t know that people were upset. They didn’t have to come here. They could’ve gone somewhere else if those kind of rules—what happened was perhaps the biggest biblical movement that Baylor has had. The era of the late forties was the era of the youth revivals. Some of the biggest names in Baylor history who had gone into the ministry came through that period. Revivals out here on Minglewood field would fill the tents. We had H. E. Butt, Jr., who never did go into the grocery business with his father, but he was—he is a lay leader now. Quit preaching, but became a leader. Jess Moody, Buckner Fanning, Browning Ware. Now, I know I am forgetting some, but these people have been in the biggest churches. In Austin the First Baptist, Browning Ware. The Trinity in San Antonio is Buckner Fanning. Jess Moody has been in a number of the big—Charles Wellborn—uh, Milton Cunningham, our own Milton Cunningham right here. And we called him Squirrel in those days.

JOHNSON: Can you divulge maybe some secret information on why he got the name
Squirrel. I don’t know anybody—everybody I know the name Squirrel, there’s a reason for that.

SCHROEDER: You know how squirrels act?

JOHNSON: Uh-huh.

SCHROEDER: Jump here. Jump there. They’re here to get a nut, blade of grass, they’re looking a somebody. They’re just jumping back and forth. And you have to understand, Milton came from Austin, too. He is four years younger than I am, but I knew Milton. His father was the preacher at the East Avenue Baptist Church. Milton came to Baylor and wanted to be a part of the football program. He became the manager and what he did was jump from every player. He would do anything they asked and he didn’t wait. He’d just jump back and forth. And, I guess, that’s where he got the name Squirrel, but I’m not even real sure.

JOHNSON: Yeah. Because most of the guys that I know are named Squirrel have a pretty wild past and that would be hilarious that our chaplain—

SCHROEDER: Well, I can’t tell you all of those things, because there are some things where he got involved with some football players that might be a little risqué and I’d better not tell those.

JOHNSON: We’ll let Milton tell us one of these days.

SCHROEDER: Now he turned 70 in September of this year and I’m sure we’re going to throw a lot of things up to him.

JOHNSON: The dirt will come out then.

SCHROEDER: It will come out.

JOHNSON: Yeah, so it was a very serious time and a very important time in Baylor’s history. Then they just had a presidential change. Pat Neff had gone out and W. R. White had come in. Is there any faculty members or members of Baylor’s staff that you remember fondly?

SCHROEDER: Lloyd Russell, my mentor. Bill Menefee was my teacher here. He was
hardly older than I was, but he got his degree and been through the war.

JOHNSON: So, did he get his degree before—during the service?

SCHROEDER: During? Yes. Before he got in the service. He was at North Texas, where Lloyd Russell was a coach, a football coach. But Bill Menefee was a basketball All-American in that class. NAIA, whatever it was. Those were my main people. Dr. Evelyn Kappes, who was on this staff for so long, was a prime mentor that I had. Mrs. Douglas has gone by many names. Mrs. Douglas wrote the history of Baylor. I know there’s another one by Gene Baker, but she wrote one. Mrs. Douglas had been a student here.

JOHNSON: What is her first name?

SCHROEDER: Lois Douglas. She married—Lois Smith—she married “Fuzzy” Douglas, who was the head of the P.E. department at that time. He was killed in a car wreck about ’46, ’47, something like that. She married several other people here, and lost husbands. She married a Murray and a Strain was her last one. Far as I know, she is still living down here, but she took me under her wing to help me with English. I needed help there. Very strong mentor, for not only myself, but other athletes as well, but her husband having been an athlete was head of the P.E. department. She had some strong ties to this. I don’t know that any of the others were really close. Mamie Klett, who was a teacher of genetics. I—P.E. majors had to have six courses—of course, that meant thirty hours because they were quarter hours. It’s like eighteen today. You had to have all of this science and Mamie Klett was one of my outstanding teachers. I really was glad to have her. She was young. The others were old, I guess. But that’s about the number of teachers that I really recall. The football coach was Mr. Woodruff and his first assistant was Frank Broyles. Frank was also a baseball player. He was a pitcher in our summer leagues around here. Was a good pitcher, by the way. Uncle Jim Crow was the athlete’s—whenever you had a problem, whether it was with your love life, money, you went to Uncle Jim. Uncle Jim had been a line coach here for years, but was now the
director of the Bear Club, which was the money arm to raise money for athletics. Uncle Jim was one of the first to put into the Baylor Athletic Hall of Fame. The other was Teddy Lyons. Ted Lyons was a pitcher here and in 1923, he and Jake Freeze pitched us to the only clear cut championship Baylor has ever had in baseball.

JOHNSON: And we’ll get to—we will do a little work on Baylor baseball history—

SCHROEDER: Talk about them later—

JOHNSON: Later interview.

SCHROEDER: Okay. Uncle Jim was strong. J. D. Stovall was the track coach and he was just everybody’s friend also. Our publicity director was named Dub King, who’s still around here. Still works for the fair, does their promotion. Was a neat person. No, that’s not right. It was Don Oliver, a student was the one here—Dub King came right after that. Right after—I had just gone, but I knew him here. Those are the most—the fondest people that I remember from my teachers and the other coaches. Mr. Bill Henderson, of course. I left him off. I knew who Mr. Henderson was. He had coached at Temple in the years when I was in Austin High. We knew him as a tough coach to try and win against.

JOHNSON: What was Waco like?

SCHROEDER: Nice little ol’ town. The trolley ran out here. Became a bus. Took us to town, but most of us walked. We walked to—there was a couple movie theaters in town. We’d walk there. Many students went to the First Baptist Church. A great number of them went to the Seventh and James, because those were the lazy ones, or got up late and didn’t have the time to go down to the First Baptist Church. But most students went to church. I would say seventy-five, eighty percent. That’s not what it is today. It may be completely the reverse of that. But Waco was a nice town. It probably had forty thousand people here. It was just a town—it was—not a lot going on and if you were not seeking a lot of excitement, this was the right place to be. Baylor was the right place.

JOHNSON: Did you ever go to Cameron Park any?
SCHROEDER: Well, that’s where my wife and I had our walking dates. At that time, Cameron Park was the neatest place; the safest place to be. Of course, it changed over the years and people didn’t go back, but I believe it’s coming back again like it was before with the zoo there and more security, I believe it. You met there do lots of things. Meet there to throw the football around, or a baseball or bat. Can even remember playing croquet out there. A lot of student picnics were held at Cameron Park and we didn’t go to Lovers Leap and those other places because we had to walk and that to tough to travel, but we got there to the lower part where it was just on a flat land when they had horses out there at the time. It was not a part of Cameron Park, but there was a family that had some horses that you could ride there very reasonably.

JOHNSON: Well, is there anything—

SCHROEDER: The stadium was Muny Stadium.

JOHNSON: Yeah, I heard about that.

SCHROEDER: We did not have—

JOHNSON: Muny. M-u-n-y?

SCHROEDER: It was for Municipal.

JOHNSON: Municipal.

SCHROEDER: The high school played there. Everybody played there. That was the only field.

JOHNSON: That’s on Dutton, correct?

SCHROEDER: On Dutton, that’s where the baseball games would later be played there, but we could play there then, because the field was fixed for a rodeo, because that’s how Baylor athletics got their money. Week long rodeo in August, but there were no fences for this place and the stands were built so you could watch a rodeo. There was a barn in center field that we kept the horse troughs and what other things else you have to use with a rodeo. They could break it out at the rodeo time and the football team practiced there. We played baseball at Katy Park. We didn’t talk about Katy Park before. It was
ruined during the tornado in ’53, but it was a band box park.

JOHNSON: Now, what is a band box park?

SCHROEDER: It was small. It was 287 feet to left field and 291 to right field.

JOHNSON: That’s it?

SCHROEDER: Yeah, but the fence was sixty feet high. A high fly ball could go over the fence, but if you hit it on a line, it was going to hit that fence. It wasn’t going out. Lot of times you hit the fence.

JOHNSON: It was a different style of the ballpark, huh?

SCHROEDER: Ah, yes. They had to put up the big fence so that they could get—it was so small, it was a city block is what it was. But the Waco Dons played their semi-pro games there when they were semi-pro and when they became a professional team, they played in that park, it was the only park we had.

JOHNSON: Yeah, I’ve seen a lot of information that Katy Park was one of those unique places that people who grew up in Waco remember.

SCHROEDER: Well, and we had the state’s semi-pro tournament here. Teams from all over the state, they would all play. It was equal for everybody. It is a unique park and its there that a player once hit three home runs in one inning.

JOHNSON: Wow. I didn’t know that.

SCHROEDER: His name was Gene Rye. R-y-e. And it was in—when Waco was in the Texas League back in the teens, but three home runs in one inning.

JOHNSON: Bad pitching that day.

SCHROEDER: The unique ballpark was in Austin. Clark Field, because they had a hill in left field. It went from the left field foul line all the way to the right field foul line.

JOHNSON: A hill?

SCHROEDER: A hill. It was called Billy Goat Hill and the Texas players learned how to run up paths—Billy Goat paths—to get up there in case you hit one up there and they could get it and throw it back before you could get home.
JOHNSON: So it was definitely a home field advantage.

SCHROEDER: Uh, it was .380 down the left field line, which is a long clout, but the hill was the last thirty for forty feet of it, but it was that way all around center field. White stone cliffs out there. Now that’s a unique ballpark.

JOHNSON: Yeah, I’ll bet. Wow. Well, is there—so Katy Park was an interesting place to play sounds like.

SCHROEDER: We were still playing there in the late forties—I mean in the late fifties, although we had gone back to Dutton Park and put up some fences, some temporary fences during the baseball season. It was just like a picket fence that we put around there just to set some limits.

JOHNSON: Did you all enjoy playing at Katy Park.

SCHROEDER: Well, I enjoyed playing any place, so I guess that’s not even a fair question! I loved playing ball.

JOHNSON: Anytime, anyplace, anywhere.


JOHNSON: Well, this is probably a good place to stop. You finished up your Baylor career. And, is there anything else you would like to talk about as far as just your Baylor days? Anything else you’d like to add?

SCHROEDER: Well, I did graduate, ’49, and moved on to a job in coaching, so I pretty well left it at this point.

JOHNSON: All right, well, that’s where we will begin next time. Going down to Temple and your first coaching stint.

SCHROEDER: That was it.

JOHNSON: All right, thanks a lot for your time.

SCHROEDER: It’s been a lot of fun.

(end of interview)