

Comradery, a group of guys that came together because they loved to play the game of baseball especially in the early years of the original Lenoir Oilers who later became the Broyhill Chiefs.

The players got along so well while seeking to play against the very best teams available. Playing teams in Virginia, Tennessee, Georgia, and South Carolina, most anywhere there was a good team. The players were very competitive, never backing down from anyone.

The first State Championship was one of the better moments. And the first trip to Wichita, Kansas in the National Championship. I think the team went there five times but you had to win the State Championship first.

Some games I remember most: a 1 to 0 win over Greenville, Tennessee, who won the Tennessee State Championship fourteen consecutive years. We beat Pete Constable in that game. He had pitched for the Atlanta Braves a few years before that.

A 2 to 1 loss to Greensboro Teamsters where our pitcher struck out twenty-one against them. We had nineteen strikeouts. The first game against a South Carolina team when we hit three homeruns in the first inning and went on to win the game. They had a very good ball club.

The games against Saltville, VA, who had a very good ball club. Somehow they could not beat us. We came to know the manager very well. One Friday afternoon when we arrived at the ballpark, their manager came to us and said, "I got you boys this time. I've got a pitcher who shutout Greenville, Tennessee last Saturday night." The very first pitch their pitcher threw, Tommy Simmons hit it out of the park and we won six to nothing. Their manager sat mostly in their dugout just shaking his head.

The team grew and went on to be known as the Shur-Pak Packers and then Lenoir Furniture Kings and then back to Lenoir Oilers. Now it will be the Lenoir Oilers for a third time.

I wish the endeavor well.

Carl Richards