

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Erie Lackawanna Railroad

Personal Experience

O. H. 1305

CHARLES HUNTER

Interviewed

by

John Demetra

on

November 13, 1989

Mr. Hunter was a yard brakeman for the Erie Railroad. His brother Jack, former mayor of Youngstown, also worked for awhile on the railroad.

Being a yard brakeman, Mr. Hunter worked strictly in the Youngstown, Niles and Sharon, Pennsylvania yards of the railroad. He became interested in the rail unions and was elected grievor for the yard brakeman in the late 1950's. He held this position until just before he retired in 1989.

As the union representative, Mr. Hunter was privy to many of the events that occurred in the turbulent decades of the 1960's and 1970's.

Mr. Hunter's actions as union representative earned him the nickname "Fair Play", he is naturally proud of that.

His father and mother both were railroads, and now Mr. Hunter's oldest son Chuck carries on the family tradition as an accounts manager for Conrail in Portland, Oregon.

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INTERVIEWEE: CHARLES HUNTER
INTERVIEWER: William Davis
SUBJECT: All aspects of working on the Erie
Lackawanna Railroad.
DATE: November 13, 1989

D: This is an interview with Charles Hunter for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on the Erie Lackawanna Railroad, by John M. Demetra.

Mr. Hunter, can you tell me a little bit about growing up in Youngstown back when you were growing up.

H: Well, I was the oldest of two boys in our family. We went to Taft grade school and moved over to the other side of the South side, and I went to Sheridan grade school, Princeton Junior High and South High School. I graduated in 1947. I spent my time mostly going to school, working around the house doing chores, and playing baseball whenever given the opportunity, or family vacations.

D: Where would you play baseball at?

H: Oh, the playgrounds in the summer from the time school was out till the time school started. Then, when the leaves fell, we started playing football. Once in a while we worked, not considered a job, but part-time. I remember working at the old Pepsi-Cola bottling company, that was my first job. Then, I worked on an Erie Railroad Track gang one summer before I went to the service. I went to the service when I reached my seventeenth birthday. I went to join the navy in 1945. I went to Great Lakes for basic training and ended up in the Pacific. The only real action I saw in the Pacific was a typhoon in Okinawa, and then we decommissioned Japa-

nese submarines in Sasebo, Japan, which is on the west coast of Japan. Then, I was transferred back to Hawaii where I was a cook at John Rogers airfield, and then I took my discharge in 1946.

D: What do you mean by decommissioning a Japanese submarines?

H: Well, they would take them out and sink them.

D: Oh.

H: Basically that was the purpose. So, that was to take away the Japanese Navy, to decommission it so to speak. We would open the valves, or put holes in them, or blow them up and sink them. That way they couldn't be used for anything. That was somewhere, I think, within fifty miles of the atomic bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima. The short period I was in Sasebo Harbor, they never let us on the beach, so to speak, where we could go directly to the town of Sasebo. We were put on a small island once every six days for recreation and that was it. Everybody that we saw or knew there as far as the inhabitants of Japanese wore surgical masks as a precaution of the aftermath of the dust in the air and pollution as a result of the atomic bomb that was dropped about fifty miles from Sasebo Harbor.

D: So, you came back into the United States after serving your tour in the Navy?

H: Yes. In six months or so I finished high school. I got my last semester in high school and graduated and enrolled in Youngstown College. I was at Youngstown in 1947, 1948, 1949, 1950 part-time. I was working periods of time, and not attending full-time at Youngstown College. I was in my third year when I got married, so I never finished my education as far as graduating from Youngstown.

D: What kind of a degree were you pursuing?

H: General business and accounting. I got hired out on the old Erie Railroad. I got married in January of 1951, and I got hired out on the railroad in either March or April of 1951. I got hired out as an extra clerk. I completed the spring semester up in Youngstown, and then I discontinued my education because my wife became pregnant. I started figuring on working to support a family, and I transferred in the train service on November 1, 1951, working in the yards and balance of my career. In 1960, the Erie merged with the former Delaware Lackawanna and Western Railroad, and it became the Erie Lackawanna Railroad. During this period in 1959 I entered the grievance committee here representing the

yardmen in Youngstown, and I held that position for some twenty-four years in Labor relations representing members of local 1365 lodge and road trainmen also in that local.

D: What made you decide to hire out at the Erie Railroad rather than the Central or the B & O or the Pennsylvania Railroad?

H: Well, it was more or less family oriented. My mother had worked for the Erie during the first world war and because of the shortage of people during World War II they called her back to work. I had two uncles that were engineers on the Erie, and I had two cousins that hired out and worked as locomotive fireman and graduated to engineers.

D: For the Erie also?

H: For the Erie. The Erie at the time, for many many years was more or less a family oriented in that they would hire right out of family to family. those that were interested in pursuing railroad careers. I might add as far as flexibility and peace of mind, the railroad was always one of the best jobs that a person could have as far as potential income and raising a family. Although the hours were strange and long at times, if a person was willing to work, you could make a descent and good living. The hours you would spend out there depended upon whether you wanted to work long hours or a forty-hour week. The opportunity was to make money. Like I said it was family oriented, and we never really had any major strikes or disputes other than just the normal grievances. We never had any real strikes on the Erie up until the time we got into Erie Lackawanna and Conrail in later years because of the change in the railroad itself. When I hired out, we were in the last stages of going into dieselization. All the steam engines in the yard had been replaced by 1951 by diesels, and the only steam locomotives we had left were the up working the road jobs. by 1955 or 1956 our railroad was completely dieselized. That was one of the biggest changes in the railroad industry at the time because the diesel could work longer without being serviced with greater flexibility, haul more cars than the normal steam engine, and it was less costly as far as maintenance.

D: Did you have a preference whether you worked with a diesel or steam engine other than the economic benefits?

H: Well, the diesel engine in my opinion was much easier to work with. It wasn't as ugly and as cumbersome to get off and get on, and it was more compact than the steam engine. On many occasions you would have to bring the

steam engine to a complete stop to get on or get off because of steam coming out of the underside of the engine. It was just awkward getting on and getting off, more or less being careful and being more tentative as far as safety is concerned. The diesel engine was one of the best modern day happenings of the railroad. It started the big change in the railroad industry as a whole. The other equipment, gondolas, box cars, covered hoppers, hopper cars, all coal and all that, they were relatively the same as they were forty years before. The new aspect of cushion cars entered the pictures in the late 1950's or early 1960's when commodities were packed in the shack fashion into the construction of the new equipment where the slack action with the train that carried them from point to point would absorb and cushion the shock inside the car as far as the merchandise that it was carrying. The diesel and the steam engine in my opinion caused no great impact on the environment. All that came out of the steam engine when it was taken in to be serviced was the residue that remained in the furnace and that would, a lot of the time, be the majority of the coal that was fired into the furnace on the steam would go out through the grates as a fine residue and it would drop itself onto the road there.

D: Did you ever run a steam engine?

H: No, I never ran a steam engine. It was relatively simple to run an engine, but it was cumbersome and awkward, and you had to know what you were doing. I did, however, after fifteen or twenty years experience at different times run a diesel engine. They are much easier to operate as far as any kind of a switching operation or over the road operation. All you have to do is sit down and the engine does what you want it to do. During this period there were other innovations or attempts at innovations by the railroads to eliminate fireman. We had different crisis on the different railroads where eventually the firemen through different agreements with the individual railroads the fireman started to disappear from the scene somewhere in the late 1960's. They made provisions to retain everybody who was in the service through an attrition program. This reduced the crew size from the normal five or six down to three or four. That was the first step in stream lining the rules and reducing the crew size because the operation remained the same, but with the diesels, the radios, and communications the arguments came in to being such as what should be the crew process to make up and how many men should operate a crew and so on and so forth. This is more or less handled through arbitration of national rules handling by the railroad and representative unions. To get into the labor relations end of it basically and briefly is the railroad industry is archaic in that the government will not

allow an individual railroad to strike per say. Everything is handled under federal law to the degree that there is different stages that you have to go through. You have major disputes and minor disputes. Minor disputes are more or less on time claims and trivial disputes arising at a local such as Youngstown, or another local such as Sharon or Cleveland. They were handled through due process under the railway labor relations act. Major disputes were not handled through the local union, but the international union and generally ended up in Washington in mediation or arbitration. That is where all the contracts were handled, through the international union with railroad supporting one spokesman or group that would deal with all the railroads in having their wage negotiations and rule changes. After the format the Erie Railroad merged with the Delaware, Lackawanna, and Western in 1960 and it was sometime in 1974 that because of the bankruptcy of Penn Central Railroad Company and the dire financial straits of several other small railroads, the Reading Railroad, the Le High Valley, the Central of New Jersey and the Hurricane in the East that devastated the former Erie Lackawanna that these railroads were in dire straights and legislation was put through to Congress to establish a new railroad and to establish a new set of work rules with the idea of trying to join all the employees of the different railroads into one company called Consolidated Rail Corporation. It was an undertaking that took some three to four years to accomplish. It created all kinds of aggravation and problems throughout the former railroads. Nobody was ever satisfied that they were getting there fair share. The have nots argued that the bigger group within the new company, most notably Penn Central, got the greater percentage of the work, and it was just one mess as far as the have nots were concerned that they weren't protected and taken care of properly.

D: Were the EL people the have nots?

H: The Erie Lackawanna people were the have nots, and it was a very unfortunate situation. I'm naturally bias because I came off the Erie Lackawanna, with twenty-four years of experience in the railroad industry serving as a representative. I might also mention that I was the Vice-general Chairman for eight years during that twenty-four years. It wasn't done properly to satisfy everybody. Using the Fairness Doctrine as a guideline as far as treating everybody the same it appeared to me that people weren't far sighted enough to look down the road. The way they established seniority for train service people was they set up eight different districts within the Conrail system. I worked in district D. If I went to any of the other district, I would have to work behind their youngest man, and I did for four years

have to go out of state to work. First, I went to Olean, New York in 1983 where I worked in Olean in 1983 and 1984 only on what we called Erie Lackawanna Equity. That is the only way I could work would be to work an Erie Lackawanna job in Olean, New York, which I did for two periods of time in 1983 and 1984. The job was abolished in Olean during the early summer of 1984, and I had to go to Pittsburgh to work part-time for six months between Pittsburgh and Altoona, Pennsylvania working an Erie Lackawanna Equity job.

D: That would be on the road?

H: That would be a road job, yes. That was more or less a new experience for me, being that I worked in the yard my entire career up until that time. It was interesting work. When I would get laid off, I would get bumped by another senior Erie man, I would have periods of furlough and occasionally during 1984, 1985, and 1986 I could brief periods of vacation time in Youngstown. Then, when I would get furloughed again in Youngstown I would either have to go back to Pittsburgh to work or Toledo, Ohio to work.

D: We're talking about you being furloughed with thirty-three, thirty-four, and thirty-five years of seniority?

H: That is correct. I was. . . There were people behind me with twenty-five years seniority that haven't worked since 1983 that are still furloughed.

D: So, in your estimation the putting together of Conrail was not fair at all?

H: No. There were other employees that it wasn't fair to either. When Conrail started in 1974, it was created by an Act of Congress. Congress implied that if you don't work we'll pay you. Well, they appropriated 250 million dollars and that money was expended foolishly within a short period of time. With the change of administrations in Washington the new administration said, "We can not allow this luxury to continue on Conrail paying people for not working." Some of the proper people were getting paid, but some of the other people who could have worked were collecting by just sitting at home and drawing vast sums of money. It was nothing fair or uniform about the whole thing. The money that was supposed to last for a long period of time was used up within a period of time that scared the daylights out of everybody, so the administration went into congress and revised the Railroad Revitalization Act of 1974 by the NorthEast Rail Service Act of 1981 that eliminated all the guarantees except a \$20,000 maximum for any one person. Still this was not a good figure for Erie people and other people from other railroads that had

seniority, but could not work. Like I said it has just been in recent years around Youngstown that men that hired out in 1953 were able to work in Youngstown. I just finished my career on November 1, 1989. I completed thirty-eight years of service, and I have only been able to work in Youngstown in the last three years, 1987, 1988, 1989. Prior to that, like I said, I had to work out of state on Erie job on other parts of the Conrail system. What the unions did and the train service in the middle 1970's when they were writing these new agreements, they established prior right seniority. Wherever the work ended up, the people that worked in those areas had prior right seniority over everybody else. So, hiring out seniority was not the normal function on Conrail, it was prior rights seniority. If you had thirty years service and did not work in the town where the work originated out of, you work go in and work behind a junior man if it was a Penn Central yard or Reading yard or Le High Valley yard. In my opinion the state of Ohio was greatly devastated by the elimination of jobs because of duplication within the state. Youngstown was one of the most destructive areas within the Conrail system to be affected by the changes that took place after the date of consolidation and putting the new court rules in effect on April 1, 1976.

- D: Was the merger with Lackawanna railroad back in 1960 or 1961 similarly destructive or was that more of a smooth operation.
- H: No, it was a smooth transition because it only involved two parties. All the different labor groups were in the make-up of the former Erie and the former L&W that they did not do away with facilities originally. Over a period of time they gradually eliminated duplication and the worst spot to be affected by the merger of the Erie and the L&W was the Hornell New York which was just a yard more or less in the middle of the Erie. It had no solid business base other than small industries, but there was a point where they maintained twenty-one to twenty-three yard crews. Within a year Hornell Yard went from twenty-one or twenty-three yard crews down to three because there was no heavy industry at Hornell. Their basic function on the railroad was to make up trains out of the East which was congested and run them through to Chicago. That was one of the major switching points on the Erie with the exception of Buffalo, New York where we ended up with an electronic yard one of the newer experiments at that time. When it was constructed, they called it the Bison Yard.
- D: What was a typical day working on the Erie railroad back in the mid-1950's as a conductor or breakman in the yard?

H: I can best explain it. . .The Erie and the Lackawanna both, we were very fortunate that we had a descant relationship as far as labor relations in our immediate area here, and the rules were such that we could work what they call a one day bid. We could own a job on daylight and go to the dentist on a particular day and drop down and work afternoons. Then, they could move you back up the next day on your own job. So, the work rules for the employees prior to Conrail were. . .You could almost select any job you wanted on a day to day basis, and you could work an eight hour day or you could mark up and work on an overtime job when somebody was on vacation.

D: Based on seniority?

H: Based on seniority strictly. We had continuity. The Erie railroad was noted for servicing the firms, the industries in the Mahoning Valley here. The Erie would accommodate people to the extent that they would call extra crews to service these industries. If the regular crew couldn't get into the industry, the Erie would set up an extra crew on either daylight or afternoons or evenings to go in and switch these different industries and that was the basis of service given by Erie Lackawanna in this industrial valley. That was one of the enjoyments that we had working in the yard, particularly that you had flexibility and the work was different everyday. It didn't get monotonous and boring, and you had the opportunity to work with fresh faces.

D: Better than working on the road?

H: Yes, I was more or less yard oriented for my entire career. On the road you had to go from point A to point B, go to bed, wait for the next train to come back into Youngstown, And in my opinion it was more or less boring. The best way to explain it would be that it was a lot of. . .It would just be plain boring. It was all routine unless there was a derailment en route in either direction or some unforeseen event. . .It was monotonous road work as far as I was concerned. As I said I enjoyed the periods of time that I worked on a short pool between Pittsburgh and Altoona. Setting off and picking up in both directions did not create boredom. Since the early sixties your road crews because of dieselization and such traveled greater distances, 200 miles is considered a basic day in road service today. Under present circumstances in Conrail interdivisional trains operate from Harrisburg to Conway. The crew gets off at Conway, they recrew the train with a fresh crew at Conway, and run them to Toledo. So, the crew that brought the train to Harrisburg will go and get their rest in Conway, and the next day they will make the return trip back to Harrisburg to get their rest before

they work back to Conway again. In yard service the regular job is something that is different everyday, switching the iron, you go in the service industries different industries on alternate days, and it is such that it might create long hours. It falls into a pattern so to speak that it is not the same thing everyday. It is not a routine thing, say you are going to do this all week. You do the same thing with it in different aspects and different phases as far as being normal. Nothing is normal on the railroad in yard service, it is all predicated on what the industries demand or request because all that the railroad has to offer is service. Youngstown does not enjoy the industry that we had ten years ago or longer. We do not operate the same amount of crews, working crews have been cut by at least eighty percent. We work five or six crews a day in the yard where as before when Conrail started in Youngstown and all the industries where operating, we had forty-nine crews on September 1, 1977. Today in Youngstown we have five yard crews operating out of Haselton yard. Our former Erie Lackawanna yard at Brier hill is completely shut down and is just used as a storage yard. We do service several industries in the Brier Hill area on alternate days. We work out of Sharon, our major business over there is Sharon Steel and five or six or seven other small industries that we service on alternate days. Sharon Steel we provide service for on a day to day basis seven days a week, but the biggest change that has curtailed work opportunities in the Mahoning, Trumbull, and Shenango Valley is the absence of the Steel industry and related satellites. Sharon Steel is the only remaining steel maker in this three county area, and they themselves are on the borderline of going out of business. It has just been, this area for the past ten years ago has not been a very good work place for young people as far as the railroad industry. We still have people that hired out on the Erie Lackawanna in the middle sixties and have not worked since 1982 or 1983 and still retain seniority and are waiting for recall to work under the existing Conrail rules. The railroad industry as a whole is not confining for a man that hires out in his late teens or early twenties and is very fortunate to. . . And myself, I feel fortunate that I was able to enjoy a career of thirty-eight years under basic freedom of movement, and I had the opportunity to make wages that were sufficient to raise and educate three children and still put a little aside for retirement. However, the last six or seven years have not been good years as far as my best earning years, that was because of the make-up of Conrail and it has effected my pension to a degree. Instead of collecting a maximum, I am collecting within several hundred dollars of a maximum, but that in itself is greater than what I could have had under social security. By far anybody who has spent a career working on a railroad and walking

away with sound mind and limb will walk away with a good pension because we pay a considerable amount over social security into the railroad retirement fund that supports our Annuity. I think in our country today we only have about two-hundred thirty five to two-hundred thirty thousand people in the railroad industry at one time. When I started shortly after World War II, we had upwards to two million people in the industry as such the new modes of transportation, most notably the diesel engine, the radio communications, and the work rules have changed to such a degree that if I was a young man today I definitely would not hire out on a railroad to be an engineer. The engineer is basically the most important employee on Conrail. They are to the point within the next six months to a year that most crews in true freight service will be operated with an engineer and a breakman and/or conductor. In other words a two man crew. These trains of 100-250 cars going 200 miles with just two men is too much to place responsibility on that engineer that so many things can happen en route that the engineer has the responsibility laid on his shoulders is such that it is almost impossible that he should have to work the kind of hours that he does. His assistant would be the former conductor or breakman, which he will be known as when this new contract is negotiated will be the engineers assistant. If the train goes in an emergency or something happens, that man will have to walk the train looking for whatever the problem is and trying to correct it and communicate to the engineer who in turn will communicate to the dispatcher as to where they are located, what the trouble is, and what is needed to get the train on the move again. It is just too much pressure today as far as how they operate these trains with expecting the engineer to work every other day or everyday. It is something that has to be handled because problems will arise from it, and it has to be done by mutual agreement instead of arbitrarily by one side or the other, most notably the carrier. The only real man that is going to survive will be the engineer. Even in the yards they want to reduce the crew size in some instances from three men to two men and one man on the ground. It is even conceivable that eventually in the yard that they will operate with one man like they do in the steel mills that put in a box on a harness to carry on his chest and switch cars out there by himself. I'm fortunate to get out of the industry at this time and having all my limbs and my sanity left that I appreciate having this opportunity to put some of my views and make them public. Thank you.

D: What was Youngstown like when you hired out in the 1950's?

H: The steel mills in this area: Republic Steel, U.S. Steel, Sheet & Tube, Sharon Steel, and all the other

heavy business concerns in this three county area, they were tripping over each other. I mean, they had big pay rolls, they had large employment in the steel industry, and everybody seemed to be working. As the years continued after the late 1940's and early 1950's, you saw less and less people because of modernization, new techniques, new business methods to the point where in the late 1970's when steel vanished from the Youngstown area. A lot of times we go into industries and we don't see anybody because they only work daylight. If we don't switch them on daylight, we go on afternoons or evenings. We never see anybody, everything is done over the telephone or by fax machines where the customer talks to Haselton yard and programs the work to be done. The crew goes and does it, and you just don't see anyone. It is kind of weird at times because from time to time you run into the situations where you need to talk to someone to see whether the cars are spotted right or they didn't get the correct car numbers or whatever and then it caused problems as far as the railroad completing their switching.

- D: You mentioned earlier about being glad that you were able to retire with sound mind and limb and all that. Where there really a lot of safety hazards on the railroad?
- H: Getting on and off an engine is a hard thing to do if you're not coordinated or you're awkward and that in itself is something you get used to after your first six months or so. It is just second nature after a while, but the railroad yards and the industries are such because of reducing their employees that their maintenance has suffered as a result. Today, you have to be more careful than ever before because everything seems to be economics as far as these small industries that are trying to keep their heads above water. They let the weeds grow in the summer time, they don't maintain their tracks and switches, and in the winter time they don't clean out around the switches or just offer minimum maintenance at best where the railroad crews in the yards and switchers industries have to do a lot of the work themselves which could possibly create injury to the railroad worker on the property of the industry, which has happened on many occasions. It is just the ability and the experience of the railroad man is the most protective mechanism that he has when he goes to work. He is a supposed professional and he has to be aware of where he is at and what is doing and what the surroundings are from one job to another as far as protecting himself and the other members of his crew. You have to be alert all the time, it is that type of an industry. Being that mostly during the winter months more so than before that you are working in the darkness, it is part of your work day because most of your

work is done on afternoons and evenings as far as the industrial work is concerned. It operates twenty-four hours a day and not necessarily daylight hours.

D: Do you have any recollections of any memorable derailments or accidents that you may have been involved in or have seen?

H: Well, fortunately I haven't been involved with any fatalities or serious accidents. I have been involved in periodic derailments that are either caused by track conditions or equipment failure, but there have been many serious accidents involving crossing accidents. Today, these trains with 100-200 cars can not stop. If there breaks were applied within a quarter of a mile, they have done a good job. A car that doesn't observe these crossing signs or the flashers and gets hit by a train, they are just asking for trouble because they can not stop. There have been serious derailments where they have to reroute traffic, that is expected in the railroad industry. It happens from time to time on all the different railroads. They can check the tracks on a day to day basis, which they do, and vandalism or the public. . .The railroad industry is not fenced off or anything like that and a lot of it is caused by other trespassers.

D: Vandalism?

H: Vandalism causing an accident, it happens from time to time. No, I have not been involved in any serious accidents involving loss of life or serious injury at crossings. It has happened. Although we have people that have never had any serious accidents in their entire railroad career. I had two incidences in thirty-eight years. I had a broken toe where I was off for nineteen days. Then, I sustained a hernia which occurred on property of the General Motors Yard. It was taken care off. Besides those two injuries, I had knuckle busters, bruised shins, bug bites, frost bite, et cetera. These were the suffer in silence injuries as they don't incapacitate you or cause to lose any time. Basically, you get tripped by the tree's roots and scratched by the bushes. That is expected, that is normal because of the area and terrain that you work with. It is par for the course.

D: Did you ever run across any women breakmen or women switch tenders? I read about them in New York state, but I don't know about here though. I guess a lot of them got hired out during the war when there was a shortage of men?

H: Yes, in the passenger trains they did have women who hired out towards the end of World War II, but Conrail,

being an Equal Opportunity Employer, has women engineers now. I've never had any women hire out at the train service or in the yard during my time on the Erie or the Erie Lackawanna or Conrail. Like I said, I have seen women engineers come through Haselton, maybe back east they might have more women in the engineers program. They maintain classes for potential engineers, train them, and when they graduate, they become extra engineers. I understand that there are more women back east running engines than there are on this end of Conrail. It is just a new concept. As an Equal Opportunity Employer women have to be considered applicants the same as men.

D: Do you think a women could do a breakman or switchman's job?

H: Yes. It might take them longer to train them to the point of whether they are flexible and athletically inclined and suited for the job. It is just something that I never dreamed possible that a women might enjoy or use it as a means of livelihood. On this end of the railroad I don't think they'll hire women because they have so many prior right people that are still unemployed.

D: Did you ever work in passenger service? I know the Erie was one of the last railroads to service Youngstown by passenger train.

H: Well, when I hired out on the Erie, we operated four daily trains to Cleveland and back. Some of them originated out of Youngstown, some of them originated out of Pittsburgh. The P&LE ran several trains a day between Youngstown, Pittsburgh and Cleveland, and the Erie operated three passenger trains daily from Chicago to New York. The trains were five and six, seven and eight. . . We had twenty some trains a day through Youngstown at one time into the late 1950's before the passenger business started to deteriorate.

D: We had the Black Diamond Express? It was a Phobe Snow train?

H: No, I don't remember any train other than the Delaware Lackawanna. It had a train, the Phobe Snow, that operated on there end of the railroad into Buffalo. It was incorporated in train five and six, I believe. Number five was a major train on the Erie. Its arrival time to Chicago would be 10:00 in the morning, and the companion train would arrive at approximately 6:30 at night in Youngstown going to New York from Chicago. Then, we had train one and two. One would arrive in Youngstown at approximately at 11:30 at night, and train two would arrive in Youngstown at approximately at 5:30 in the

morning. The other two trains were seven and eight, and I forget just what hours they operated. Number eight was a through train, and number seven, in my recollection, was strictly a mail train that traveled from New York to Chicago with the mail and express.

D: Where was the Erie station at?

H: It was on Hazel Street and Walnut in downtown Youngstown.

D: You yourself were never involved with passenger trains?

H: Yes, we would switch them. . .The yard operation on the passenger trains in Youngstown was you would add baggage cars, coaches and take sleepers off. I remember train number one would arrive in Youngstown around 11:30 at night. We would take a sleeping car off in Youngstown and put it in the siding opposite the depot. Then, that sleeper car would go east in the morning on train number two.

D: Would there be people on it?

H: Yes, passengers leaving the train at Youngstown. The only ones that would be left on the sleeper car would be the attendants and the porters until it was put back on the east bound train in the morning. Youngstown was the equipment change as far as taking coaches and pullmen off and adding them on the east bound trip. Taking baggage cars off for the railroad express people, and then adding express cars both east and west for later trains depending on railroad express. Railroad express used to handle a lot of their business exclusively on the railroad, but in recent years they have gone to trucks like a lot of industries have as far as changing modes of transportation.

D: One of the things that might be common to the railroad industry is the nicknames. Do you remember any particular memorable nicknames? I know a lot of people would go by their initials.

H: Well, the only. . .We use initials for a lot of people, and we use given names for a lot of people, and nicknames for others. The only notable thing I remember when the Erie and the Delaware Lackawanna and Western merged, they wanted a new logo for the merged railroad, and they offered a hundred dollar savings bond. In later years, I ran into this man at Akron, Ohio, the locomotive engineer that fashioned the EL symbol for the new railroad. He got the hundred dollar savings bond for having his logo selected as the Erie Lackawanna emblem.

D: Did you have a nickname?

- H: I had a lot of names. Besides being Chuck, I had a nickname Fairplay because of my union activities, and different other things depending if they were friendly with me that week or not.
- D: The last thing I have is I am just curious after all you experience, what do you see for the railroad industry in the future down the road?
- H: The railroad industry is going to have a rebirth once they get everything straightened out as far as. . . This country is becoming such that you have to have alternate modes of transportation, and I do think that addition passenger service in the forth coming years is a great possibility as soon as they get the crew size, the related issues settled within the railroad industry. The innovation of the trailer car is fascinating and that is only twenty years old. Bringing containers overseas in freighters, unload them on barges at the west coast, put them in the yards where they are put on trailer cars, and they are shipped from the west coast to the east coast, emptied, and in many cases they ship loads back to the west coast on these trailer cars. The tri-levels and the bi-levels that they carry the automobile on now, they can load twenty to thirty cars and transport through two or three states to a distribution point for lest cost than it is to carry them by truck. When they arrive at these distribution centers, then they put them on the trucks and hall them to different dealers. That is a recent innovation in the past twenty years. So, there are many areas where railroad transportation has opportunity in the future. One of the biggest things that the railroad industry can serve a useful purpose in the forth coming years is if they establish environmental dumps or areas as far as getting rid of trash and disposable waste that that has to concern people as to how and what manner or means they want to use to destroy waste products created by society in these large cities. It has to be shipped. It can't be dumped in the ocean. It has to be disposed somewhere either by burning or in landfills where nearby population is protected. That is another concern that will have to be decided between government and environmentalists as to some means of how to ship and dispose of waste in the forth coming years.
- D: Well, that is all I have. Is there anything else you want to add?
- H: No, but. . .The railroad industry is a proven means of transportation not only of durable goods. . .We used to ship cattle and all kinds of live stock in what you would refer to the good old days. They put the cattle on the cars out west and water them and take them into

Chicago where they were slaughtered and the packing houses distributed them. Chicago, to my knowledge, is not a major distribution point right now as far as packing houses are concerned. Out in the Hinderlands is where they built these new modernized packing houses, and the cattle and different animals are transported by truck to the place to be slaughtered. There is still ample opportunity in the future for railroad as far as freight and passenger service is concerned. There can and should be foreseeable markets for different means of utilizing the railroads as far as modernization of society is concerned.

D: I have really enjoyed talking to you. I want to thank you.

H: Well, it goes without saying that there is probably a lot that I missed. I am just talking off the top of my head. I hope I have given you some insight as to what the railroad was and has been like, and how it has changed over a period of years. Unfortunately, in this area we were involved in a steel mill climate that they didn't modernize the mills, and they didn't want to reinvest for the future here in this three county area. As such today we have no base as far as the younger people in this area. We have the educational system with Youngstown University and such, but we are losing all our young people because there are no jobs or opportunities in this area as far as our college graduates are concerned. So, they have to go out of state to different parts of the country to make their livelihood.

D: Okay, thank you very much.

H: My pleasure.

END OF INTERVIEW