YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Erie Railroad Project

Personal Experience

O. H. 556

EDWARD SONTAG

Interviewed

by

Julie DiSibio

on

May 15, 1980

EDWARD JOHN SONTAG

Edward John Sontag was born in Erie, Pennsylvania on March 2, 1910. After his father's death the family moved to Youngstown, Ohio and Ed attended school in that community. He was forced to leave school because of the financial status of the family. However, he would later finish high school at the YMCA School which would later become Youngstown College.

On October 6, 1926, he was hired by the Erie Railroad as a mail messenger boy and would continue to work for the Erie in various capacities until his retirement forty-eight years later. Ed enjoyed the years spent on the Erie Lackawanna Railroad and regrets the fact that railroading has lost its romanticism. Ed feels that railroading will be important in the future of this country and goes as far as to suggest that steam power might return.

Ed and his wife, Isabelle, reside in Boardman, Ohio. Ed enjoys gardening, golf, bowling and reading and is a member of the Erie Railroad Veterans group.

O. H. 556

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Erie Railroad Project

INTERVIEWEE: EDWARD SONTAG

INTERVIEWER: Julie DiSibio

SUBJECT: Mail Secretary, Top Management, Various Positions

DATE: May 15, 1980

D: This is an interview with Mr. Edward Sontag for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program on May 15, 1980, at 9:15 a.m. The subject is the history or the Erie Railroad.

Okay, Mr. Sontag, could you give us a little background about yourself, such as when you were born and something about your parents and your family?

S: I was born March 2, 1910 in Erie, Pennsylvania. I was one of eight children, three brothers and four sisters. My father died when I was twelve years old. My mother was formally from Youngstown, Ohio so she moved back here to Youngstown with her family. Needless to say, it was hard sledding for my mother. Interestingly enough, she never received one penny of welfare or any help in raising this family of eight children. The youngest was my sister, who was nine months old. After coming to Youngstown, being the oldest boy, what I had to do was find a job. I worked in a dairy store for a period while I was attending South High School in Youngstown, Ohio, until my sophomore year. Things at that time were so bad financially in our home that I had to quit school and get a job. I heard about a job of a mail boy or messenger being open on the Erie Railroad and I applied for that job. I was the thirteenth individual to apply for it and the man told me, after I received the job, that I was the only one that sat down and made my application without asking a million questions. He took me for that reason. So, I was sort of happy about that. That was on October 6, 1929, and I spent forty-eight years and five months since then on the Erie Railroad. I stayed in this area until the present time. I expect to die here,

I guess.

D: What was the job that you first had?

S: It was called mail boy or messenger. You delivered and collected mail to and from the various desks in the office. You sent out mail, made envelopes and things like this.

D: Where was the office located that you worked?

S: In Youngstown, in the Terminal Building.

D: Where would that be?

S: On Commerce Street.

D: Now, before we go any further, could you tell us a little bit about your schooling?

S: Like I say, I finished second year of high school at South High and then I went to work. As I was only sixteen years old I had to attend school part-time. My boss at that time was willing to release me one morning a week to attend school. It was then the YMCA High School where Youngstown [State] University is now located. I then finished my high school at night at the YMCA High School and graduated from that school. I continued on in college work for about a year and then I quit and put all of my emphasis on my job and future career in railroading.

D: Now what year would this be that you finished your schooling?

S: 1928.

D: Now what do you recall as your first impression of the railroad on your job as a mail boy. What were your impressions of railroad life?

S: I was all excited. At that time, railroading was an exceptional job. You heard it said that if you got a job on the railroad that you had arrived. So I felt that I had arrived and I was all set. But, if you're interested in a starting pay, it was fifty-six dollars a month. At that time I thought, "Boy, if I ever get to two hundred and fifty a month, I'm going to like a king." But that was the starting rate, fifty-six dollars a month for my position.

D: Now you started, then this would be 1928 when you were really working full-time at this job?

S: No, I started in 1926.

D: How long did you stay at that position as mail boy?

S: Julie, I had so many positions. I was all over the place.

D: Why don't you just give me a rundown of the different ones that you did?

S: I was a mail boy and then I went to file clerk and various other positions in that office and I stayed there until the Depression in 1929. I don't know whether you remember--you wouldn't remember the Depression--but it was really bad. All during the Depression, I was laid off--about a month. That's about the only time I lost in my forty-eight years, was one month during the Depression. When they laid me off, they then called me back. I worked in the signal supervisor's office as his clerk. I worked in Greenville. You had to go where the work was. I worked in Cleveland as a clerk. For a while I rode what we called our "Train 629". It left Youngstown at 6:00 a.m. in the morning and arrived in Cleveland about 7:30 a.m. Then coming back I caught a train at about 6:00 p.m. and got in Youngstown about 7:30 p.m. So it was about a twelve hour day. You had to go where the work was.

Then I came back to Youngstown in the freight office here and worked there for a while. Then I went back into the superintendent's office and worked various clerical positions. Then I was promoted to the general manager's office and worked up there as chief clerk to the assistant general manager. Then the bottom fell out again, and they elminated the general manager's office. That meant I had to go to Cleveland or else exercise my seniority right on the Mahoning Division where my clerical rights were. So I decided not to go to Cleveland, but exercise my right in the superintendent's office at Youngstown. But before I went upstairs to the general manager's office, I was division clerk, which was the highest clerk's job on the division. But then, of course, when they broke up the general manager's office they wanted me to go to Cleveland, but I couldn't see it. All my roots were here in Youngstown and I just didn't want to move. So I excerised my rights to a job in the superintendent's office as a contract clerk. And then from there I exercised my right to the position of chief clerk in the accounting office in Youngstown. I retired on April 1, 1975 from that position.

D: Okay, now, let's go back a little bit. In 1929 when the Depression had really begun . . . How did the Depression, in your opinion, affect the Erie Railroad? What changes were very noticeable to you that you saw in your own department and on the railroad itself?

S: Of course, there was a lot of layoffs. To give you some idea of the impact, employees had put their pay checks in the banks during the noon hour of pay day, and at two o'clock that same afternoon we heard that the banks were all closed and

no money was available to draw out. Naturally, this made a severe economic impact on all the employees. Then there were the layoffs. At that time there wasn't anything like unemployment compensation. It was just scratching and scratching and getting what you could. It was a very trying and hard time for everybody.

D: Did you take a cut in pay during the Depression at all? Was your pay reduced any?

S: No, not per day or per hour rate, but they worked sometimes where you took one or two days off a month. That way, of course, you wouldn't get paid for working those days. Naturally, your salary was lower. But, it was just the idea of trying to hold a job. There weren't any jobs available. There was no business, no jobs available. So you were furloughed, which means laid off. We had what they called a roster of all clerical employees that they put out showing your seniority date. Of course, half of the employees on that roster were furloughed. Where were these people? Out trying to make some money someplace, but they weren't making it on the railroad. They weren't working on the railroad.

D: At any time did you go without pay? Did you always receive a pay check?

S: For the one month that I was furloughed, I didn't have any pay check. But at that time I was single. My mother's family was all grown. So I really lived on what I saved. I had very little money or cash flow. What I had in the bank there was no access to because they were closed. I just had accumulated a few dollars and I lived on that for the one month.

D: Okay, for any of your clerical positions did you receive any type of training or did you pick it up yourself? Or were you ever trained?

S: No.

D: Any kind of training program?

S: No. What the training program was, Julie, if you were ambitious and aggressive and wanted to get ahead, you sort of looked at the job next in line to you and tried to learn what you could from the incumbent. If he or she was kind, then they would show you. In other words, you projected your eyes on another job that you wanted. Then you would try to get as much information as you could for yourself and through the help of the incumbent. That's the training program. But, no on-the-job training whatsoever.

D: Now throughout the Depression then, you would say that you had fairly steady work with the railroad?

S: Yes, outside of one month.

D: What was the months pay you made during that time?

S: During the Depression?

D: Do you remember?

S: I would say anywhere from seventy-five to a hundred dollars a month.

D: By the end of the Depression and the beginning of World War II, what position were you in then? Could you tell us a little bit about that position you worked at?

S: Well, one of the things that saved me really in the Depression, that kept me working, was my shorthand. I had taken that in school. Male secretaries were in demand on the railroad.

D: Why male secretaries?

S: Because they did road work.

D: Meaning? What is road work?

S: They went out on business cars. A general manager had a business car. That car would be attached to the rear end of the train. It would be just like an office. It was equipped with a typewriter and other office essentials. He would dictate letters to me while moving from one point to another. It was just an office on wheels is what it was. Of course, business cars were very elaborate with sleeping quarters, and dining rooms they were very nice too. They served good meals. There was a chef and a porter on each business car. I think at that time there were about four or five of those cars on the Erie Railroad.

D: When you refer to the general manager, is that the same as a president?

S: Yes, he was one of the two general managers between Chicago and Hornell, New York.

D: Who would this have been? Who was the general manager?

S: F. W. Rosser.

I had this shorthand ability and this one time the regular secretary got sick and the general manager called me and asked me to go to Chicago with him. He liked me so well that he got rid of the other guy and gave me the job. I held that job as secretary to the general manager for, I think, all during the Depression. For about ten years I

was working in that capacity.

D: Okay, now you were stationed here in Youngstown?

S: Yes, in the general manager's office in the Terminal Building on Commerce Street.

D: The beginning of World War II then, were you still at this position?

S: Yes. Well, I was a father at the time and I was exempted from service because of my position and being a father. But they were breathing down my back. I would probably have gone next if the war hadn't ended. I worked as road secretary at the start of World War II and almost all during the war.

D: What was business like during World War II?

S: Busy. You wouldn't realize how busy we were. Mostly hauling military material and military personnel. They hauled a lot of oil to the East Coast for heating purposes and, of course, that received priority. Marion was one of our big yards. There was an oil train out of Marion for the East Coast about every hour. We had as high as twenty-four in one day. They received priority. Most of the freight handled was priority stuff. The government materials and troops would go first and the rest of it on the sidings and moved when it could be moved. It was a busy time. There were all kinds of troop movement. It really was busy.

D: You're stationed at the Terminal Building in downtown Youngstown?

S: Yes.

D: Do you remember German prisoner-of-war trains coming through? Do you have any recollection of them?

S: German prisoner-of-war trains? No, I can't say I do. I've heard of them, but I can't say that they came through Youngstown. There were a lot of those movements that were sort of secret. They moved without anybody knowing it. So it is a possibility that that could have happened, but I don't recall it.

D: In your position, with the general manager, what were your job duties? What exactly did you do? What were you responsible for?

S: I took care of his dictation. I had certain statistics that had to be kept up so that they would be available to him at all times. This was my job. When he went on the road, of course, I went with him. You traveled in a business car which was home and office to you. You ate your meals there, you slept

there and you did your work there. There were various meetings that he went to, and sometimes I would go with him and sometimes I wouldn't. I was road secretary to the general manager.

D: Did you have anybody under you, working for you?

S: No, I wouldn't say so, except indirectly through the general manager. I would give orders that he had given me to somebody else, that type of a situation.

D: How many days did you work for the general manger?

S: About twelve years I was on that job.

D: The whole time it was this Mr. Rossner that you worked for?

S: No. He was succeeded by Mr. Randall, and then Mr. Maley, and then Mr. McGranahan. I worked for all those men.

D: What position did you move into after that?

S: During Mr. McGranahan's time there, the division clerk's job came open in the superintendent's office. The superintendent was the head of the division. The division clerk was more or less the administrative assistant. So I was then promoted to the division clerk's job on the Mahoning Division from my job in the general manager's office.

D: What year would this be?

S: Let's see, around 1945.

D: Who was superintendent at this time?

S: Superintendent was V. J. McMullen,

D: What were your job duties under him? Primarily the same as they were with the general manager?

S: No, more responsibility. You had charge of all of the clerks on the division. There were a lot of offices and station agents on a division. Agents had clerks under them. In the operating department or transportation department in which I was working there were numerous clerks and agents that came under the jurisdiction of the superintendent and were indirectly under my supervision.

D: At this point were you the person that would hire and fire the clerks? They were all answerable to you?

S: I wouldn't exactly hire, say like somebody in Warren, but they would have to be approved by the Railroad Company through

me when the employment papers came into our office. We had a ninety day probationary period and if applicants weren't satisfactory, of course we would tell them and then they would have to be released.

D: Were you unionized in your clerical position?

S: No.

D: Did the clerical forces ever unionize?

S: Did they ever? Oh, yes.

D: In what year did they?

S: The clerks had what they called a company union when I first started with the railroad in 1926. It was a company union. In other words, more or less run by the company. The union would have a division local chairman, and a grievance committee. They would handle grievances with the management.

I think it was around 1930 then that the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks came into being. Of course, that was not a company union. It was one of the Brotherhood Unions of the railroad. So then the clerks would come under the rules and regulations of the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks. The division clerk's job, however, was an excepted position and did not come under the rules and regulations of the Brotherhood. It was a management position.

D: Prior to your position as division clerk you had been in the union?

S: Company union, yes, not the brotherhood.

D: What was your impression of the union at this time?

S: Weak, no power, no clout.

D: Are you referring to the company union or both of them?

S: Both of them. There was no clout, I think, because most of the employees didn't take them seriously. You know what I mean? If they had a just grievance they wouldn't do anything about it. Rather than put themselves in bad with the management, they would just keep quiet about it and take it whether the grievance was justified or not. But as the years rolled on, why, that condition changed. At the present time there seems to be an animosity between labor and management. I think that's for the better, really, because unions in my time were not strong at all.

D: At what point would you say they began to gain more power?

S: At what point in time? Oh, I would say around the sixties, 1960, around there.

D: But really up until that time they didn't accomplish that much for the clerks at least?

S: No.

D: Did you think that maybe some of the other Brotherhoods were more powerful?

S: Right. The engineers, the trainmen, exercised a lot of power.

D: Why would this be?

S: They were considered operating employees. They operate the trains and in other words they carry the freight. I think the clerical end, our end of it was considered sort of like a necessary evil, if you know what I mean. In other words, a clerk wasn't as important as an engineer on a freight train. So management catered to them more. The operating unions recognized this so they asked for more, and received more attention than the clerks did. I think it was just the reason that they really carried the freight and they were very important to the railroad.

D: You had mentioned that during World War II the government had subsidized the railroad; could you tell us a little bit about that?

S: The government sort of mobilized the railroads like other industries during wartime and they more or less took over the operation and "called the shots". This meant that all of the directives and important things involving the war came out of Washington, while the railroad personnel remained the same; nevertheless the operation of the railroad actually was run from Washington, D.C.

D: Would certian things take priority?

S: Yes, certain priorities had to be given preference. Because of this, the government took over the railroads on a wartime operation.

D: Now, that last job that you had, you worked at the division clerk's job? How long were you on that position?

S: I was on that position about eight years and then I was promoted to chief clerk to the general manager of the western district. There was a western district and an eastern district. Eash district had a general manager and I worked on the western district.

D: What year was this?

S: Let's see, about 1960.

D: Who was the general manager at this time?

S: Mr. J. P. Allison.

D: What were your job duties as the chief clerk to the general manager? Did they change again?

S: They didn't change much, but they increased. In other words, as division clerk I was head of a division, but as chief clerk to the general manager, I was clerical head of four divisions.

D: How many clerks did you have under you at this point? Do you remember?

S: Directly or indirectly?

D: Indirectly.

S: Indirectly? Oh, there must have been at least 500.

D: And you were in charge of all of them?

S: Yes, well, not directly as they had bosses over them, but they all reported to the general manager's office. I was chief clerk of clerical forces in all of the offices on the district. So that made me indirectly in charge of all clerical employees in offices on the Western District.

D: How long were you in this position, chief clerk to the general manager?

S: About five years.

D: Then what position did you go to?

S: The general manager's office was abolished and I exercised my right back down to the division office, not as division clerk, because that job was excepted from seniority rules. In other words, you couldn't bump that job. So, I went back into the superintendent's office as a contract clerk. I handled contracts, sidetrack agreements, leases, and stuff like this.

D: Why was the division clerk's job exempted from being bumped?

S: It more or less was a management position.

D: It wasn't a union position.

S: It was listed in the union. At one time it wasn't, but

then they did list it. Certain rules covered the job, but not the seniority rule. It couldn't be bumped if you know what I mean. You culdn't exercise your rights to the job. You had to be appointed to it by the management. But some other rules, not very many--like sick benefits--generally applied to the division clerk.

D: Then you remained on the contract clerk's position?

S: Yes.

D: Then you retired?

S: No. A job came open in the accounting department for a chief clerk or office manager. It was a bid job but subject to appointment by the management. The qualifications being equal, seniority would govern. You had to be qualified. So, I bid on that job and they appointed me to it. That's the job I retired from, chief clerk, in the accounting office.

D: You were working for the Erie railroad when they merged with the Lackawanna?

S: Yes.

D: What were your impressions with this merger and your attitudes toward the merger between the Erie and the Lackawanna?

S: It was a black day for me. (Laughter) One thing about it is you can merge property, but you can't merge people. I think one of the reasons it never really worked was that they were still being Lackawanna men and Erie men and they didn't work together as a unit. They more or less pulled against each other. They were both sort of weak railroads financially. It was just like tying one sinking ship to another sinking ship. In other words, financially they didn't have much going for them. They needed a large traffic potential, which never materialized. The railroad started to go downhill ever since that merging took place. Half of the freight business was gone. People didn't ride the passenger trains. At one time passenger business on the railroad was really a delight. Like the Lackawanna had a train called the Phoebe Snow and things like this. They had character. It was romantic. But, all that was lost. I think the biggest culprit was the automobile. The railroad did not go along with the times. I think they kept their passenger service at a point where people just couldn't afford it. A family going on vacation couldn't afford to go Pullman, eat in the diner. They would eat their breakfast and they would have to go home; all their money would be gone. They needed to get into the hamburg and milkshake era and stuff like this. In my opinion, the railroads didn't want the passenger business, that was why they didn't cater to them.

D: What was your position with the railroad when they merged with the Lackawanna?

S: I think I was division clerk.

D: Did you receive a lot of the Lackawanna people to work under you?

S: No, they generally stayed right in their own territory. Mostly the merging was done down at Binghamton in New York and places like that. The Lackawanna didn't come as far west as Youngstown so we weren't too much involved. In the eastern district there was a merging of rosters and things like this, but sometimes the rosters wouldn't merge. They would just work on their own rosters. It didn't affect us here in the Youngstown area too much as far as employees were concerned, it was more on the Eastern District from Hornell, New York and east.

D: Why do you think the Erie Railroad merged with a railroad that was in poor financial condition like the Lackawanna? For their lines or what was it for?

S: I think one reason was that they would try to eliminate cost, overhead, employees and things like this. A lot of times the two railroads ran alongside of each other going to the same place. This was the reason, I think, for the merger, trying to eliminate duplicate services and duplicate employees.

D: While we're on the subject of other railroads what were your impressions of railroads that competed with the Erie in the years that you've worked for the Erie Railroad, the Pennsylvania and the B & O [Baltimore & Ohio] and other railroads like that?

S: My impressions of the Erie was that the Erie, for a long time, got whatever the other railroads didn't want. That was my impression. In other words, we were sort of a second class railroad as far as this area was concerned. Here, the Pennsylvania, New York central, and the B & O, all the great railroads at the time "called the shots". The Erie has always been, more or less, a road that has been in financial trouble. They always seemed to me to take the crumbs rather than going out after the load. They were satisfied to do this. But I always admired the Pennsylvania, the New York Central and the B & O, the roads that ran through this area at that time. They were great railroads. They were more aggressive, better organization and stuff like that.

D: Could you give us your impressions of the western railroads at this time when you worked for the railroad? Why were they so successful and still are today much more so than the eastern railroads are?

S: I think the biggest thing why they were more successful is there was less competition and also a longer haul. Like the Santa Fe would have a haul all the way from the Pacific Coast to chicago, which was one of the railway gateways along with St. Louis to the East. In other words, all freight to the west either went through the St. Louis on the Chicago gateway. But there were any number of eastern roads, too many, trying to get that business from the east coast to Chicago or St. Louis and there was not that competition on the western roads. They had good equipment and they had speed. Their passenger service was luxurious. Their time was better. I think at one time it was 22 hours on the Super Chief from Chicago to Los Angeles. In 22 hours now you can go where? On an airplane you can go around the world in 22 hours, but that was good time at that period. I think their speed, their consciousness of what passengers wanted and also the fact that they had long haul operations made them more successful than the eastern railroads.

D: In your opinion, do you think that federal regulations hindered the eastern railroads or helped them?

S: Definitely hindered them because the federal government regulated the railroad how much they could make. I think at one time it was as slow as 3%. There was so much regulation at that time even when I worked, with reports and red tape. Just like they cry today that there's too much government intervention; well, I think this is probably what was happening to the railroad. Of course, the railroad was a common carrier and the government should have some regulation, but they were over-regulated, really. I can remember the reports that had to be made out to the government annually. These reports had to be kept up all during the year which required quite a clerical force to do it. I definitely feel they were over-regulated; that was one of their problems.

D: What are your feelings about what the union has done to the railroad, the eastern railroads. Do you think that they have somewhat hindered the railroad?

S: The union definitely didn't help the railroads any by demanding work rules that were, say, in vogue when the railroads started out, still trying to hold on to those rules which were not anywhere fair in this day and age. For instance, they had the eight-hour rule--eight hours pay or 100 miles, whichever was the greatest. Well, back in those days, if you had a train go 100 miles, that was about eight hours. Now, when I was working, why, a train could go 100 miles in maybe two or three hours. Yet the union still demanded eight hours pay. Do you see what I mean? For example, they could have taken another train back within that eight hours without claiming an additional

eight hours pay.

Then when the diesel locomotive came in, the fireman was more or less or no use and he did nothing but sit there and verify signals. The unions tried to hold on to that fireman job. The railroad got rid of some of these jobs in the yards and stuff like this, but unions really were strong in their opposition to taking any of the jobs off, which was a considerable financial burden for the railroad.

D: Now were you working or had you retired before the consolidation took place with Conrail?

S: I was retired, thank goodness. (Laughter)

D: What is your opinion of Conrail and what it has done for the railroad?

S: I think Conrail has too much government in it, too much subsidization by government. It's not private industry, it's run by the government. When you realize how much it's being subsidized by the government, how can anything like that be successful? I think someday the railroads will be coming back as private industry. I think this country really started to go downhill with the railroads. The railroads built this country in the beginning. A lot of people say they received a lot of subsidy then, but nevertheless, they built this country. Today we have so much trucking. Trucking is all right in it's place, but on the long hauls there are certain things trucks cannot handle like bulk items such as iron ore, coal, coke, et cetera. I think that the railroads have to come back with coal now coming back into the picture. Of course, at one time railroads burned all coal until the diesels came along. I wouldn't be surprised to see the steam engine come back. We're going to need it if we run out of oil. I would say that Conrail, as subsidized by government, is not the right way to go.

D: Looking back, if there could have been any changes or anything that could have been prevented that happened, what would you have liked to have seen done differently through the years that you worked for the railroad? Maybe some of the major things that were done.

S: I would liked to have seen some of the railroads merge on their own without government intervention. There's no doubt it could have been done easily because, like I said, before some railroads ran parallel to each other. Down east we ran parallel to the Lackawanna from Scranton to New York and there was no reason for this. I think if the railroads could have merged on their own and sort of unified their systems without government intervention, the railroads

today would still be operating at a profit. When you get the government into anything you're running on taxpayers money, subsidization and stuff like this, this was not the way this country was built. Private enterprise is what we need more than anything.

D: Do you think that passenger service is going to come back in this country on railroads?

S: No.

D: Why not?

S: Because of the automobile and the airplane.

D: What about if fuel costs get so high that we can't afford to run an automobile or an airplane? Do you think that's going to force passenger service?

S: I think they're going to find something, really. They're going to go to smaller cars. They should have done this a long time ago.

D: So, you think the hope for passenger service on the railroads is over with? It has seen its day?

S: I don't think it will ever come back, really. In other countries, like in Japan, they have beautiful passenger service and it's well patronized, but they have a different situation there. It works well there, but in this country, I don't know, we just seem to like the automobile and the airplane and the railroads just take too long.

They're talking about this fast rail service now in Ohio and experimenting with that, but I just don't feel it's profitable. I think it's a waste of money.

The people are going to drive if they can drive and it has nothing to do with the railroads. This is the way families go. Look at the mobile homes. That was a booming industry until an energy crisis came in. This is the way people like to go today. They don't want to go to a station and get on a train. Distances, long distances, the airplane is going to provide the service.

D: What role then, do you see for the railroad in the future? Any role at all in this country?

S: Because of the energy, I think, freightwise the railroads are going to come back. Get some of the freight off the highways because these trucks burn a lot of energy, burn a lot of fuel. Just think what one diesel engine can haul in the way of freight. Economically, fuelwise, there's no

question that we should bring the railroads back freight-wise. I think they have to come back.

D: Is there anything else that I haven't asked you that you might want to add that you think is important that maybe I've forgotten to cover?

S: No, all except I loved every minute of the 48 years. (Laughter)

D: That's good.

S: It's a romantic industry, but it's not as romantic today as it was back when they had the steam engines and other things. All you have left are your memories. But I'm not sorry I worked for the railroad and I enjoyed every minute of it.

D: Thank you for the interview.

S: Julie, it was a pleasure. I hope I did you some good.

D: I'm sure you did.

END OF INTERVIEW