

Lancaster County Historical Society
Oral History Project

Interviewer: Bob Leer

Interviewee: William Sullenberger

Location:

Subject: Western Union

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Transcriber: Katie Fichtner

[] indicate uncertainty of what was spoken

Narrator: That's alright, we will just be able to talk and it will hear. We're at 44 South Prince Street, this afternoon, to talk with Mr. Sullenberger, about his experiences, with the, particularly in the Western Union office, here in Lancaster.

S: Am I on there Bob?

N: Yup, we can review it and my name is Bob Leer, and when, Mr. Sullenberger, when did you start to work for the Western Union?

S: When I was ten years of age, in 1876, I started to work for them; I worked for them continually for 52 years, without a vacation. The first vacation I had, I worked thirty years before I had a vacation; I kept going.

N: Where did you work, where was the Western Union office?

S: The Western Union was out in the square; [at the Fulton Bank, building a new building]. It was right there on the corner.

N: That's the north east corner

S: The picture is in there; I was standing on the steps and grew tired. I was there, I guess about fifteen years, and I was the manager. Then we moved to upper North Queen Street, in the Northern Hotel; from there moved down to, next to the Farmers' Bank, I mean next to the Northern Bank on North Queen Street. And I stayed there until I retired in 1940. My wife died in 1939. I just couldn't take it any longer so I resigned in 1940. I lived at home there for awhile. And then I got [feeling] pretty good and I got traveling. I traveled all over the United States; from Key West, Florida, to San Francisco, to Seattle Washington; half a dozen times. Then while I was doing that, [I had time to get my head together again]. I had a store down on Amber for a while, during the, in 1941 and '42 during the war. I had that for about a year and half, part-time. I had a partner, and I left him, I would be running around, you know. Then I left there and came home. I had to [be sold out] because I couldn't get any supplies on account of the war.

N: When did you come back to Lancaster?

S: Oh I couldn't give you the dates, but after '40, '42, I came back to Lancaster, I guess it was, and stayed here awhile, then I went out to California again, Los Angeles. In 1940, Los Angeles was just a country village. It had a million people in the 30 square mile city. Living was very cheap. I had a hotel room for \$25 a month. The San Carlos Hotel, right on [Parkins Square, a fine hotel]. I ate next door in the restaurant for a dollar and half a day; I got a t-bone steak, two vegetables, and coffee for 35 cents.

N: That's a good deal. When you were working for Western Union, you started when you were 10, and you, and what did you do then when you first started to work for them?

S: I carried telegrams all around the city. I knew everyone in the city and county. I had a [track] as far down as Mylin's corner. I walked three or four miles, that's four miles down there. I walked ten or fifteen miles every day, of my life, starting at ten years of age. At every city I have went in; I've been in every state of the union. I walked the streets just to get acquainted with the cities. I went to Chicago for 3 days, from there to Denver, Colorado. I stayed there for three or four days and walked the city and different streets. And then from there I went to Salt Lake City, stayed there 3 or 4 days. And I was going to go out to Los Angeles from there, but while I was in a tabernacle, met a fellow from Belgium. An ex-army officer, a young fella and we kept talking. And he had a little [coal] car company. He didn't have much money, and he asked me if I would travel with him and pay part of the [cost to drive to Newark]. So we [actually lived in] Salt Lake City one day at four o'clock in the afternoon, we traveled all night to San Francisco, all night through the, and you know something, it was so light and so clear, you could see a car coming from fifteen and twenty miles away.

N: That distance?

S: Never saw anything like it in all your life. [Once in] San Francisco early in the morning, and he went to the YMCA, and I stopped at a hotel. And I didn't see him for two days. I wanted to cable him, to know what he was doing. You know what he was doing? He was studying the map of that county and then he can down for me on the second day. And he said, "Boy we're going to see this city and county" [Swinded me]. He had the map in his mind. He covered everywhere. We saw all kinds of stuff. This one place, a few had a restaurant that came from his home town. [He was over here during the war, over there. And he took me there, and the funny thing about it. Oh, it was a nice place; beautiful music and a good time. But anybody who went out to the bathroom had to pull a bell. [Guess it was just a joke or not]. So anyway I went out there finally and we went to Yosemite National Park. That was a nice place. Have you ever been there?

N: No, no I haven't.

S: You saw those big trees you drive through?

N: Yea, well I have seen that, yes.

S: We drove through that.

N: You knew every part of the county, and everybody in it from walking and delivering telegrams to them?

S: [Why in there, in the story I told you] I was the best known man in Lancaster County. I had, over the years I was manager, forty years, I had to travel. I had to see every businessman, large or small, I had to see them. Finally I had charge of the entire county. I had Ephrata, Manheim, [Little arch], Quarryville. And I had to visit them once a month, all the people there, business people.

N: Did you ah, after a while you stopped carrying the messages around?

S: I carried messages till I was near fifteen, than I said to my mother, I was getting ten dollars a month, that's all I got. I said, if I could lay off for six months, [without taking pay] just stay long enough to finish up my trade, I could get a good job. Well, she agreed. Well, I worked at the office for six months for nothing. [Went there to work, you see]. Learnt everything. A good thing I did. When I was fifteen, I was finishing my trade, I was a good telegrapher. [] on a freight train. I had no money. Nobody had money in those days. I gets the job at Western Union; you couldn't get a job in those days by writing, you had to go there. But you always did get the job.

I was put on the job for forty-five dollars a month, paid once a month. I had no money, so I went up and go up in Eighth Street, in the [tenderloin] district, to get a place there near a restaurant, a boarding house. I got board and housing for \$18 a month. It was a dump. I had to sleep with some bum. He said to me one day, "You don't belong here, you ought to go somewhere else". I was lucky. I traveled around, [back] the next street, cut in to, Franklin Square in Philadelphia. And I saw a sign on the door, "roomers", so I go in. What do you think I found out? They were from Lancaster. His name was [Worst], and he had charge of the poor houses one time. He moved down to Philadelphia to open a boarding house. He had three daughters and two sons. Me coming from Lancaster, and they're from Lancaster, they made me part of their family. I slept with the older boy for, I was maybe there for two years I guess. I kind of fell half in love with the little girl, too, but I didn't. Remarkably I didn't.

Then I was traveling around with the company, here, there, and everywhere, substituting. I worked all through Jersey, Maryland, and Delaware. You know, substituting, some goes away for a day or so, or something like that.

N: When did you come back to Lancaster?

S: Well, then I came back in Lancaster, I guessing about [20], and I met my wife. I was standing on the old Western Union steps and she passed. Went to school with her. And that's were I stayed, I stayed, and we were married at 21. And then we moved to Philadelphia, we were there I guess about a year and half. And the boss said to me one

day, go down to New Brunswick, New Jersey as manager. And says, take your trunk with you, then I knew it was a permanent job, you see. So I moved down there, I guess about a year or two. I didn't like New Brunswick, New Jersey, [didn't like the climate]. So I went into Philadelphia one day, and I said to my superintendent, "I'd liked to get out to Lancaster sometime, I miss my hometown, [and my wife's hometown], and we don't like Jersey." "I'll send you back tomorrow" And I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "I am going to fire that s. o. b. back there." I was in the New York district then. [I went over to New York and lasted there 'til they relieved me and had to go back to the Philadelphia district]. Well, they finally agreed to do it and I come back here on 1900, in about 1902, I guess. Moved back here and stayed here ever since. [], they wanted to transfer me to different places, and promotions. But I didn't get promotions; I just stayed here and worked it through.

N: What were some of the big news events you remember covering.

S: The [worst] thing I got, I got the first news, see in those days there was no telephone. I got the first news of the sinking of the battleship [men in the half hour Harbor]. I got that news first, on the wire, you know.

N: You were manning the office?

S: Oh yes, of course I was the telegrapher, that time there was the manager, day operator and one night man, of course that increased later on.

N: What did you do when big news like that came to Lancaster?

S: I gave it to the *Intell*, see. I got the first news of [] Pearl Harbor, there was no telephone in those days, it had to come through my office, see. Then we got the news during the World War Two, I guess it was. I got the message on a Sunday, I worked on the Sunday. And they signed the Armistice, you know what that means? I never heard that word before, I called up Jack [Steinman], it was Sunday, I called up Jack [Steinman], I said, "Jack there's a telegram from there and they just signed the Armistice, and he said, "What did you say?" I said, "They just signed the Armistice." He said, "Oh, okay".

N: Was the Johnstown flood one of the first pieces of news that you received?

S: Yea, the first piece of big piece of news. [Then I got that out, I don't know what they got out at]. Then I got the San Francisco earthquake. That was terrible, you heard about that? I got everybody in town wanting to wire about relatives out there. They wanted a quick answer. I said, I can't guarantee you anything, the town's ruined. Everybody is scattered around, living in camps. I'll [take] your telegram, subject to delay, if you get an answer, alright. If you don't you have to be satisfied. A lot of people weren't satisfied; I had a lot of trouble.

N: Did it take you days or weeks to straighten that out?

S: Oh, it took three or four months before I think I had everything straighten up pretty good [].

N: Before you got answers to the telegrams?

S: Some never got an answer. You see, I have forgotten about a lot of stuff you're asking about. What else do you got? I got (laugh), I probably did, the []Dempsey fight.

N: Dempsey? I see, you were getting round by round information?

S: [I went over to the *Intell* to get a copy you see, they didn't show you the {room}, you had to wire over there]. And I was helping that, and you know it only lasted three rounds. Dempsey said, "If I can get underneath his arm, I can knock him out." Well, he knocked him down seven times in the first round. But in those days, you know, you're not taken out until you can't get up. Anyhow, it was over in the third round, I got up and told [Nelly] and said, "I'm going home, I am getting tired of all this fighting, fighten' business." "Oh you can't do that; we gotta do all this news, oh no." I said, "There's your typewriter, fights over." Lasted three rounds.

N: Were you also on duty when they had the blizzard in '88?

S: I was the messenger boy then. [Well, I was [] then].

N: Well, what happened then?

S: Well, I was...what do you mean?

N: What did you do? Were you carrying telegrams then?

S: That night I only got three telegrams: one for Hager's out west end of town, one for [Curb] Johnson out the east end, one for [Barnum and Banson]. Didn't I put it on there?

N: Yeah, alright. And you delivered those three telegrams?

S: Yeah, I worked the whole day and half of the night. Twelve years of age, I didn't know any different, you see. [] you had to work. I got out to [Barnum and Bailey] and he took me home in horse and wagon. In those days, you know, there were no street cars, no nothing. The [first] street car we had in Lancaster, was started at the [horse park], it started at the square. Went up East King to Duke, up Duke to New Street, crossed New Street to North Queen Street, then back and that's all. Five cents for a round trip. We had no [electric lights] in town, no gas, only the center of the city. Later on [we had an overlapping pier]. At home we had to use the coal-oil lamps. Yes, that's all we used, coal-oil lamps. We went to bed at dark.

N: Where did you live?

S: I lived at the corner of Frederick Street and Christian Street; Frederick and Christian Street. He had no bath in the house, had no toilet in the house, had no gas in the house, we had no electric in the house, we had no stove in the cellar, and no [clothes] in the house. We had no window screens, no door screens. They didn't make them in those days. We lived like rats. Flies eat you up in the summertime. Had one stove in the kitchen. Everybody took there baths in tubs and buckets, and basins, you didn't know any different. I didn't saw a bathtub until I went to [floppy] at sixteen. Nope, never saw a bathroom. In those days, only needed a bath in the bathtub once a week. It was on Saturday. Had to stand in line for your turn. Had to wait all day for your bath sometimes. But was only once a week.

N: How large an area in the middle of town had gas light when they first started?

S: They had gas lights around the center of the city up here.

N: Just four blocks around the center of the square?

S: Yeah, four, five, or six blocks. Right in front of the Western Union office they had a very big [fountain]. They had the top basin for the horses to drink out of. And also a place for human beings to drink out of. And at the base of bottom, it had the basins for the dogs to drink out of. Water was running continually. That finally got away. I never knew what became of that.

N: Did the Western Union office stay at the same place, on the square, all the years that you were with them?

S: They were there before I went there. They must have been there, I was there must have been five years at least, and they were there a long time before I got there. But they didn't do much business. No telephone at all you know. The first telephone was over in City Hall, in the Square there, on the third floor. One girl and about five, (laugh) eight or nine telephones. And they finally picked up after awhile []. Year after year, they got heavier and heavier. When I went to school, all you learnt was reading, writing and arithmetic. That's all you knew.

N: Where did you go to school?

S: Ah, New Street, the first block of New Street. The two story building there. I went there, I guess two or three years probably, I was about seven to ten.

N: When is your birthday, when were you born?

S: October 12th, 1876 (1896,1976?) I am in my hundredth year.

N: This is an exciting year for you.

S: I was 99 years old, October the 12th, just a month ago.

N: And who were your parents?

S: Oh, they were, they were nobody.

N: What was their name?

S: Oh my father's name was Benjamin, and my mother's name was Louise. And my surname was Louise [Diffendapher] and her family came from Holland. And they named it New Holland down here. Settled down New Holland and named it New Holland. There names are in the cemeteries, a lot of their names; [Diffendaphers], John [Diffendapher], he was my mother's brother, and they have a John [Diffendapher] down there in the cemetery. My father and his four brothers were coopers. Do you know who the coopers were?

N: Make barrels.

S: They could make everything. They were experts.

N: Don't do it like that now.

S: Oh, they were marvelous.

N: Where did he work?

S: They had a place; they all lived down in the country. When I was a boy he came to town here. And he opened, had a place [tailored] where we lived [finally]. Right at the corner of Frederick and Duke Street, is the general [hospital]; was [gray] great, big building with a house on the front and in the back, in the alley were some warehouses. We lived in the building in the front and he had his cooper shop in the back. He had three men working for him.

N: Who would buy his wares? Some of the brewers?

S: I couldn't really tell you. Brewers and [] and they made flour barrels. After I got married. I married Dr. [Sheldon's] daughter. And in those days we had to do our own cooking. And so I bought a barrel of flour [from someone and sons] for two dollars and half. And used that flour down near the bottom and there we found a dead rat. I went to him and I said, [Brad] I just found a dead rat in that barrel. "Oh, well they get in sometimes and die. Next time you buy some flour make it a little bit cheaper. I only paid two and half for the barrel. I guess today would be about twenty-five. I didn't buy anymore. I stopped making bread.

N: So that was probably one of the uses for your father's barrels?

S: Oh yeah, they made mostly for flour; oh but they could make [] any kind of stuff they could make.

N: How many people did you have in the Western Union office when it was more established near the end of the time you were working?

S: I quit there in [1940] and I think it had eleven employees.

N: And you were still sending people out to deliver telegrams in those days.

S: Oh yes, [that ended about a year ago]. See the individual telegram was big business at one time. That's all we had. Then the telephone came in, and everybody has a telephone, so that [killed] the individual business, so they shut down [the shazoa] and opened up this branch office, this telephone office, there off Duke Street. [It changes you know].

N: Did you do anything else with the news but give it to the newspapers? Did you post it on a board of any kind? You gave it to the newspapers?

S: Oh, I could never do that.

N: You'd steal there thunder. You'd hurt the newspaper.

S: Oh yeah, [it's the kind of stuff they paid for], you see.

(They pause to listen to the interview so far)

N: We're recording again, you thought of something else.

S: I'll tell you, are you ready now? After I retired, I can't give you the dates, [the war broke out, so 1942. I was on pensioned, of course, I was retired. I would come back to work if they needed me. So they did, they sent me down to [Bel Air], Maryland to the racetracks. I was there two weeks. And they sent me up to Charlestown, West Virginia to that racetrack. I was there two weeks. When I was there I got a telegram. Will you go to [Brenton Woods] New Hampshire, for a monetary conference. Did you ever hear about that? That was the beginning of the [U.N.] in New York. What do you call it?

N: The United Nations.

S: The United Nations. That was the beginning of that. Well, then I was there for about three weeks after [senton hall]. You'd never seen anything like it in all your life; must have been a thousand delegates there at the Mount Washington Hotel, from all over the world. We got together for big meetings everyday, and I worked my heart out for about a week there. And the last day, the Secretary of [mardons hall], remember him? He gave a big banquet and I got an invitation to it. It's in there. And I went to the banquet, and they had all this stuff, [the waste was tremendous]. Money was nothing.

Anyway I left there, and I came home. And it was on my birthday, on October the 12th, I don't know what year it was any more. We were going go down to Florida on my birthday. I went out the front door there; and I met the Secretary of the Lancaster Ironworks. He said, "Bill when are you going to go down to Florida again?" I said, "I am going down tomorrow." [] The next day [Poisy] called me up; he had Lancaster Ironworks "Come down here [Sully]." He and I had been good friends for years. He and I used to bowl together. He said, "Who are you going down to Florida with?" [] He said, "I sublet the building of five tankers down there". He bid on fifty tankers and he got the job. But he sublet them out, you know. So he said, "I'd like a (doughboy?) to send down there. Things are going bad, will you go down?" He said it'll last till December 31st. Two months. Oh I said, "That's alright, I'll [give it to you]." "How much do you want?" I said, "Oh, I don't care anything about that." "I'll give you seventy-five dollars a week." (laugh) I said, "Okay." He said it'll last two months. Well, I went down there; the next day, all he gave me was, "You'll go down as a northerner, see". I went down and there were no shipyards there. They were start to build one. They would right the channel from the bay over to the road, and they built the ship. I was down there just one solid year. I come home on the 12th []. The last went out on the 27th of July and I couldn't get them to adjust anything. They stole everything. Everybody stole something, everybody. I telephoned to [warren]. And I said, "You might as well come down, I can't settle, and they're selling everything off." And []. And he came down. And I said, "How much do you owe them?" And he said, "I still owe them thirty-five thousand dollars." Well, I said, "I estimate us at, the stuff they had left over, at twenty-three thousand dollars, so you owe them thirteen thousand dollars." And I said, "You can't settle everything that has been sold off." Well, then I said we should come home. Then we come home and about four or five months they sued Lancaster Iron for about \$315,000. Of course, I was the only witness, see. I was the prime contractor. Well, they sued him in the Philadelphia courts, but it didn't come to trial, the courts threw it out. Later on they opened it up. And it took me down everyday for about a week, before we came to trial. And they had there stuff [] and I had my records too. So I got on the stand and start to read all the stuff that I found, discovered. And they said that's enough, that's enough. Case is over. It took them six months to decide how much Lancaster Iron was going to get. I mean, how they were going to pay them. You know how much they amounted too? Just at exactly what I said, at thirteen thousand dollars. And that's what they got.

N: Is that Walter [Poisy], is he, is that the father of man at Lancaster Iron today?

S: He started Lancaster Iron. He died here sometime ago. He grandson runs the place now. The funny thing about it. Well when he and I are together lots of time, we used to bowl together. He said one day, "I bought some, a piece of land here on the Harrisburg Pike, [that was back on Cottage]. And it's in bad shape. And I'm going to give it to the city to fill in, and some day I will sell it for big money." And what do you think happened? My grandson went out there last month...

Tape pauses (0:30:10.3-0:30:17.2) hard to hear till (0:30:21)

S: Never shoveled the streets off.

N: They never shoveled the streets, and the horses just went?

S: In those days, the snow just lay there, you see. Lay there and froze solid. There would be three or four inches of snow around us. And we had sleighs, everybody had a sleigh and horse, you know horses and sleighs. Then you used to have a great big bobsled that would hold about twenty-five or thirty people. They would take that out, [travel] boys and girls and two horses pulling the bobsled; take them all around the city and county. You know a little ride. I forget what they charged them. They didn't charge them too much. Then in the summer time all you had was dirt, you had no paved streets, only out in the center of the city there. And then when it rained there was mud. And I can remember many days, when men would drive cattle through the streets, and pigs through the streets, drove them you know.

N: Just to go from one side of the city to the other? Or they would bring them to slaughter, or what?

S: Yeah, they would buy them and take them to the stockyards to sell them. Every once in the while there would be a runaway. Us boys would chase them back. Another thing that I guess, this is hard to believe. One time a fella came through with a drove full of turkeys, driving them through the streets.

N: Right through the center of town?

S: Never saw anything like it. Didn't have much trouble with them either. One time they came through and a dog chased them. Boy, they flew all over the neighborhood. I don't know how many they got back. When they drive those turkeys, when the time comes for them to roost, no matter where they are, that's where they'll stop, that's where they are going to roost. Can't chase them another step further.

N: Carry them off from there. When did they start paving the streets? Do you remember when they started to paving more of the streets?

S: No, I can't remember that.

N: You remember when it happened though, but you can't place it?

S: Oh no, no I can't tell, it's been so long you know. A hundred years is a darn long time, I have been here; I'll tell you what happens. You ask me something and my mind goes blank, temporarily, but then it will come to me, after awhile. I sit here some days my mind goes back to my boyhood days everyday. My entire life comes before me, so. One day I was sitting here, months ago, but I was trying to think of some of my school mates and I couldn't think of their names, no how, one day I was sitting here, not think of anything and five names came to me, my schoolmates. That's what happens.

N: Did most of your schoolmates stay in Lancaster to work?

S: I lost track of all of them.

N: Did not many of them stay here in Lancaster?

S: I guess most of them. I met one of them, one time, up at the Square, her name was Miss Buckwalter she was about eighty-some at the time and so was I. She was standing there in front of the bank and I said, "Hello there, Ida", and she said, "Who are you?" and I said, "You outta know me, I went to school with ya." "You did?" and I said, "Sure." And I told her who I was and she knew me. I went to school with a colored boy named [Ownie Stuart]. And a girl named, a colored girl name, I forget, [Cora] Porter. [Ownie Stuart] was a nice colored boy, very nice, everybody like him. Well, as time went by, he grew up and I grew up, and years went by. One day my grandson's, one of his relative's wives was married. And gave the reception out here in the East-end somewhere and I was invited to it. There was a nice looking colored boy, a chef. And I said, "What's your name?" He said, "My name is [Stuart]." And I said, "I went to school with a man named [Paunie Stuart]. Well, he says, "That was my father."

N: Who were some of the other merchants on the square? Or on North Duke Street, or rather on North Queen?

S: Merchants, lets see, there's [Baron Witmer], [Limebob and Company], Luke's jewelry store, Groff and Wolf--they started a little late--and there was [Hersch] Brothers on the corner, you don't know them I guess. [Hersch] brothers on the corner, [Limebach]; all failed. I know why they all failed.

N: Did they all have businesses on the square at one time or another?

S: No, they didn't, they were on North Queen Street towards the first block. And the second block, they had about, ah, I was thinking about it sometime ago, they had about eight saloons, from the corner Orange, up around the Hotel Lancaster, I mean up to the [Dacount] Hotel and they had one.

N: You mean right near the corner they had eight? Or in that block there?

S: In the block up round where the parking lot is you know, where the Hotel Lancaster is, in the corner. They had a bar, [Nice Slimmings] little bar on the corner, that's two. Another corner of North Queen is three, across the corner was [Mike Burnum's] that was four, and come down the street, was the City Hotel, further on down was the Franklin House. And across the street was, I forget their names, let's see, one, three, three saloons. Every Saturday night that was where everybody went. Oh boy, that was terrific.

N: All in that area.

S: Yea, all in one area.

N: And up to the Hotel Brunswick? Going up that way, and they had a lot of eating places in the Brunswick

S: Now the Brunswick Hotel, that wasn't there. That was called the Old [Caldwell] House, in my day. Sixty or seventy years ago; it was called the [Caldwell], then it was called the [Imperial] Hotel I believe, and they changed it to Brunswick.

N: Did they just change the name or they rebuilt it?

S: Oh, they rebuilt. Paul [Hanning] rebuilt it one time. He was a brewer here in town. He didn't have any money but his relatives of his wife's parents told him to build [the Brunswick] hotel. That was a big hotel around town, big business, nicest place in town. The [Stevens house] up here, they were alright but they used to have, this used to be, when I moved here this was a dirt street.

N: South Prince?

S: And trees in front of every house, see. And Steven's House, had twenty-five, thirty chairs sitting out in front, for people to sit on.

N: On a porch?

S: No, no porch. Just the way it is now.

N: On the walk?

S: On the walk. Here, underneath the hotel. I used to sit there lots of time. When my wife died, I was sittin' out there some nights, took my two sons to be out hunting for me, didn't know what the devil I was doing half of the time.

N: How long have you lived here?

S: I think I moved here in 1918. I was just up to a big empty house, not a thing in it. After awhile, my taxes were [real] low and [Harry Butts], he increased the taxes, I was assessed at thirty-five hundred dollars, and he assessed me at sixteen thousand.

N: Quite a jump.

S: I said to that, if I can't stand that, I am going to make apartments. I didn't know what I was doing at the time anyhow. I made it out alright, it panned out pretty good, its mine now and its up to keep.

N: It's important, right.

S: I don't want to go to no nursing home if I can keep out of it. But I got a student nurse living up stairs with her husband. She's working today or she would have been in here with you. She works three days a week at the [Dixie convalescence home], and she takes care of me a lot. And I got a girl in the front here, she's been with me for seventeen years, she's seventy-four years of age now, and she comes down to see me once and while, does a few things for me, she doesn't feel real well, I, I don't bother her. She pays my bills for me.

N: Yes?

S: And then I have a man come in for me once a week and gives me a good bath, with Epsom salt. And I had a stroke last January.

N: A year ago, yea, this year.

S: I was in the hospital about eight day, and I go there and I was dead [about til the turn of July]. They took care of me pretty well, everybody. And I started to get better, and I never got better until just [] day. Doctor comes down every month, once a month. Then last month I had an attack, worst I ever had, I thought sure I was going to die. I got awake at half past nine, and I had a burp.

N: Were most of the other houses here on South Prince when you came to live here?

S: This was one street of the city, supposeta be the nicest street. We had, there was four doctors in this block, and supposeta to have, a grocery clerk along here. This place was famous to at one time. I had a nice house on the outside, shutters all around.

(Lady enters room...tape stops and restarts)

N: We were talking about that but we don't have it. This goes back to the Blizzard of '88.

S: We don't have any on there that talked about that?

N: We have some about it. I just would like to talk about when you delivered the three messages, and you went to Barney [McGran's] house, right on the New Holland Pike, right near where the RCA is.

S: Are you ready now, should I go ahead? And during the blizzard of 1888 I had three telegrams to deliver. One for [Hagers'] out on Columbia Pike, one for [Clairga Jenson] up on East King Street above, past the jail. The last one I had was for [Barney McGran] who lived out on New Holland Avenue, where RCA is now located. I got out there about ten o'clock, nearly half frozen, and I went up to the door. And Mr. [McGran] came out and said, "What are you doing little boy?" and I was crying and told him, "I've got a telegram for you." And he says, "Come in and I will give you a drink of whiskey." And his wife said, "Don't give that little boy whiskey, you'll kill him." She made me a cup of

coffee and gave me a piece of cake. And I was going to go home through the fields; I live out on East Frederick Street at that time. And Mr. [McGrans] says, "Hey, boy you can't get home, you'll die." So he called his hired man in and hitched up the horses and the buggy and took me home. And then gave me two dollars tip. And every time I saw him after that he gave me a dollar, and I always got in his way whenever I could. (laugh) I did too. He'd always laugh. He knew I wanted the dollar. Then as I, as years went by I met his son, and I said to his son one day, "I was a boy of twelve years old and took a telegram out to your father, blizzard of 1888." "Yeah," he says, "I sent that telegram from Atlantic City." I said, "Is that right?" We got to be very good friends after that, very good friends.

N: His son was stranded in Atlantic City?

S: Yeah. [Barnaby McGran] was good and nice fellow and when he died he owned a little property out there. He owned both sides of the road. And he gave one side to his son, Richard, the one I was talking about. And one to Frank [McGran], the other son. And Frank kept his and made more. Richard spent his. Well, I'll tell you he went to school, he went to Yale. And he met the Gould's and the Vanderbilt's and they were rich. I think, [] he put his money in [] instead of tractors, anyway he went through his pretty fast, thought it would last forever, same as the Gould's and the Vanderbilt's. But they still kept touch. Whenever they had a reception over there they sent him an invitation. And he used to go, for the last, towards the end he wouldn't go anymore, he was down and out. Anyway, out the old New Holland Pike, Barney had a little, owned a little home out there. I don't know where it was anymore. It had to be [on the old home]. He said to [Richard] that's where you'll end your days, and that's where he did. He went [beef] and broke all together and the Gould's and Vanderbilt's helped him out. They sent him out to California, and gave him a job out there. What happened he goes into [] and marries some ****, oh, society women, but she was no good, she just ruined him altogether and they had to leave him go. And he came home and I don't know what happened after that. But he was a nice fellow, I don't care what they say about him, he was a nice fellow.

N: That's a good story about your delivery.

S: Well, I am glad you like it.

(Break in tape)

N: That's the end interview on 14 January with Mr. William L. Sullenberger, 44 South Prince Street.