

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Public Affairs in Youngstown, Ohio

Political Experience

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ANTHONY FLASK

Interviewed

by

William Manser

on

May 1, 1975

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INTERVIEWEE: ANTHONY FLASK

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SUBJECT: Government, public opinion, communication, industry,
law

DATE: May 1, 1975

M: This is an interview with Mr. Anthony Flask on May 1, 1975, at the Union Distributing Company for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program by William Manser.

Mr. Flask, how did you get started in local affairs, politics?

F: Well, many years ago in the early 1940's, since I was born and raised in Youngstown, I thought it was my duty, as well as the duty of other citizens of our town to become involved in many things. Government is one of the more important functions of our lives. Therefore, I felt that if I could play a small part in government, I would be aiding and helping our own community. I could possibly be making it better, advancing it to a level that other communities throughout our nation are now holding. That thinking, I believe, was the primary reason I became involved in politics or government as you want to state it. I think that young and old people alike, both men and women, should be actively engaged in government. They should find out what makes it click and how to better it. We do have a good form of government. It's up to us as individuals, both singly and collectively, to do our utmost to run our democracy in local government as well as state and federal government.

M: In what ways did the city of Youngstown differ from other communities throughout the nation at that time?

F: Not too much. We're a typical town. We have people who are alike. We do have one unique thing about Youngstown that is very prevalent and that is we have a great number of ethnic groups in our city. They are very progressive; they have initiative; they have energy and they are effective.

We are most fortunate that Youngstown does bring about the hope and desire in many people to make it better.

I want to preface my remarks, first of all. Whatever I may say here, whatever I think, I am not being critical of my predecessors or my successors in office. I want that understood. These are my opinions and I have always believed in them. I have faith in these things and that they can be accomplished. Some of them are being realized at the moment. I hope that in the future we get more active about it and people get behind these movements of government officials. There is a need for interested groups to aid and help public elected officials and appointed officials. We have lacked that for a long time.

M: How do you believe this can be remedied?

F: Well, forget the philosophy of most people that say, "All politicians are alike," or "It doesn't matter whether you're a Democrat or a Republican--their thinking is alike." I don't think that's true. I venture to say that the great number of politicians are good, honest, hardworking people. I think they attempt to do the best job they know how. But, they need moral support from their constituents. In many instances, they do not get or obtain that help and aid from people. They're left alone and we sit back and wait until they make an error. Then we become very critical of that individual or that group who has erred in their judgment, in their honest judgment, whatever that may be. There aren't Watergates every day; that's not true. It has happened, but it's something of an exception.

I think you'll find that if we were to show statistics to determine how many people in government misappropriate, embezzle, steal, or take illegal funds in comparison to private enterprise, I think we would be shocked by the differences in the percentages that we would find. There is very little compared to private enterprise. Therefore, I again repeat, most people in government, whether they are appointed or elected, are honest, hardworking people.

M: What do you feel about the recent scandals in government that we've all heard about? Many people feel that these scandals have really dampened an already apathetic public interest in current affairs and politics. Do you feel that the effect has been that great?

F: I don't know whether it has dampened the spirit of people because of Watergate, but I know one thing for sure, it has awakened many people to realize that some of us have been asleep or haven't been active or haven't been involved sufficiently to offset, to stop, and impede such things as Watergate. I think that's the thing that has happened to America. It can happen here. Sinclair Lewis, a great, prolific

writer, wrote, "It can't happen here." But it can; it can happen here. We must be on the alert at all times; we must be ready to act, to aid and help officials of government. If we don't do it, we'll find Watergate will again occur.

M: This Watergate situation had reinvigorated many people on the national level in politics and has changed attitudes there. What kind of effect do you think it has had on the attitudes of the working of local government in local affairs?

F: Well, I think it has gotten to a point where you and I are concerned with city councilmen now. You and I are concerned about the mayor of a city, about the prosecuting attorney or the judges or our courts. You and I hear that word, or read about that word "credibility" so often now. Do we believe? Do we have faith? I think Watergate has caused this thing for you and I to think about. I wouldn't say it was good for the country, by any means. It was a disaster and I realize it.

On the other side of the picture, after it has occurred, I think that we are beginning to become a little bit more concerned about the behavior and the conduct of our fellow man. I think that's what Watergate has proven to us. Although we have lost much in morale, spirit, hope, and desire, I think we'll come out of this just as we have come out of other things. We've got a great country.

M: Watergate shows that the press can be very important in governmental affairs. How would you describe the role of the press in local affairs and city government?

F: How do you mean this?

M: In what way would you describe the role of the press? How important would it be and in what way is the press influential? What are the limits of the press' influence in local affairs?

F: Even though the press is a powerful instrument, although to many of us often times it seems very biased or prejudiced or one-sided, without it I don't believe we could exist as a democracy. The press is a good watchdog over all of us, whether in government or not in government. I think that freedom of the press--I have not agreed with them on every occasion--tends to make us better citizens. I think that they're able to curb many things that could happen, that don't happen. We must extend ourselves in giving the press the credit for being able to bring about and keep us within good conduct and good behavior.

M: From what we have talked about, you have indicated an appreciation for the role of public opinion in helping to have good government. During your career, what particular

ways did you keep your fingers on the public pulse and find out what the people wanted?

F: I tried. Again, we go back to the role of the media, whether it is television, radio, newspaper, news periodical. We're guided by their thinking somewhat. We weigh, balance, and determine the pros and cons of an important issue when they discuss or comment on it and when they editorialize in many instances, whether it be television or not. I think that it's a good barometer for men and women in government and in business. They're able to use that thinking of the media to be able to make good judgments on the issues that are before them. Whether it is locally, statewide or nationally, I think it worked the same way. I think we all abide by it.

I'm sure President Ford, when he reads the editorials of the New York Times, the Chicago Tribune, or the San Francisco Examiner, balances, thinks, and determines with others in his administration on the important issues that are before him and are being discussed.

M: What other avenues of reaching public opinion would a public official, a councilman or a mayor, have besides the press?

F: Well, not so much in local government as in other governments. In state and national government the lobbying is present at the various hearings they hold. That determines much as to what should or should not be done. Those are pressure groups, I realize it. Some of them are very constructive. Wherever the hearings are being held, it helps the officials to make a determination on what is good or is not good.

M: As far as using clergymen or business leaders or civic leaders as ways of finding out what the public is interested in and what certain groups are interested in, how can a local official or mayor or councilman utilize these groups to determine what the public has on its mind?

F: Well, during my administration, in order to bring about these groups to serve our city, we had various commissions that I appointed. They attempted to draw from the city, the community, every facet of community life, the religious, the laity, the businessman, labor and the professional man. They hoped from their discussions, their interests, to help to obtain the concepts that our people needed or wanted in the city. I think that has a great bearing upon a mayor or a city councilman in a community. They were a great help to me while I was mayor, the commissions that were appointed--the Human Relations Commission, the FEPC Commission, the Traffic Commission, the Safety Commission, many facets of community life.

M: Was there ever any difficulty in getting people to serve

on the commissions, say certain groups?

F: No, there wasn't difficulty in getting them to serve. The difficulty was in getting them to attend the meetings. Therefore, what you have to do in a case like that, where you feel that four or five individuals will do the job, you appoint twelve or fifteen. You determine that unofficially your quorum will be five or six and those five or six are the ones that do the work. The other eight or nine just--well it's more than butter on the bread; it's putting the bread and the butter and then some ham or beef on top of that. That's the way it works all the time.

I was told many years ago when I was a young man in school that whenever you want a job done, always select someone who is very busy. Get a busy person to do the job for you, it will be done. Don't look for that idle man because he's going to idle anyway. Pick out the busy one.

M: I believe you consulted various local leaders in dealing with the disputes that occurred with the safety forces' pay raises in 1967. How effective are such consultations and commissions dealing with labor disputes in city government?

F: In that particular instance, you would get representatives of labor in addition to representatives of business to help obtain a compromise or a place where you could satisfy both parties. Labor was very helpful, naturally. Those persons in labor who were not involved in the labor issue at the time are well acquainted with the ways and means of compromise to come to an understanding. Being that we are a very labor oriented community, as you well know, I think we have a very fast community in labor. Labor does play a very important part in community affairs.

M: Does the utilization of outside members of the community, from all segments of the community encourage trust and participation on the part of dissident city employees? Are they more willing to negotiate and talk if you bring somebody else in?

F: As a general rule, I think you're right. I think they will listen.

M: I also understand that one of your commissions used accounting people from the university, students and faculty, to help size up the financial situation of the city. To what degree did your administration rely on cooperation from the university to help solve Youngstown's problems? In what way did your administration help the university?

F: The fact is that when we selected those university people, we knew that we were getting into a nonpartisan group,

one that was not interested in one side or the other. We knew that we could get a very good unbiased decision from them. Also, both parties who questioned the financial statement of the city were perfectly satisfied that we had made that selection. It was something unique, something different. Therefore, they knew there was no ulterior motive behind the selection of university people to make that survey for us. It worked out very successfully.

- M: Were there other circumstances where the use of university personnel solved city problems?
- F: Oh, yes. We began, in our administration, the formation of a legal enforcement study for police in the city of Youngstown. I think we were one of the first in the state of Ohio that began the study of police enforcement in university training. Mr. Foster, now Dr. Foster, initiated the program for us at Youngstown State University. Dr. Foster I think gained great prestige in the university itself through the formation of the law enforcement division there at the university.
- M: In what ways was the city administration, the government, able to help the university?
- F: We paid the tuition of any policeman who voluntarily went to the school. It cost him nothing. We gained greatly by it, from their education and their advanced training as a policeman. We found that the applicants were very satisfied that they were able to take advantage of something of this sort. I understand that now it is in the regular curriculum of the university.
- M: What other ways was the local government able to help the university?
- F: Well, I think our greatest asset to the university was through the urban renewal. During our administration we were successfully able to buy up enough land for two projects and bring about the fruition of what you see there today. I think that without that, we probably would not have received this great enrollment that transpired in the 1960's. We may not have brought it to the attention of the state authorities at that time that there was a great need for a state university in Youngstown. It is our belief that this aid we gave to the university, at very little cost in acquiring the expansion of land that you see there now, brought about this realization of what we have there as a great institution today. I think that's one of the better accomplishments of my administration. I feel very pleased that I had a part in this development of Youngstown State University. They were very gracious to me afterward by conferring upon me the Doctor of Public Affairs at the regular commencement exercises. I think that is probably

the greatest achievement of the Flask administration.

- M: What groups worked with you and gave you support in helping to expand Youngstown State?
- F: First of all, it was the beginning of urban renewal. We had great teams in the department itself. With the aid of Dr. Howard W. Jones, who then was the president of the university, his cooperation, his great help, his understanding of the red tape, the problems, the complications, the delays, and then the improvements was of great help to us. Anything that we desired and needed, in return for what we gave, there wasn't any hesitancy on the part of Dr. Jones in making that grant to us. I think we both are well-satisfied with what we see there now.
- M: What particular groups in the community-at-large were particularly helpful in bringing about this improvement and enlarging the local college education?
- F: Well, we had a number of individuals who were affiliated with the Chamber of Commerce of Youngstown. We had the late Mr. Beeghley and Mr. Bliss. We had many of those individuals who gave us an all out effort and support in this endeavor. The Chamber worked with us very closely. They also had in those days the Youngstown Area Foundation. They gave us help, a great hand. We had everyone interested in it and everyone supporting it. There was a project in which many people could get involved. I think it's success was because of that. We had great interest.
- M: In what ways did the trustees of the mayor's office give any kind of support for this program to improve Youngstown?
- F: That was an easy project to promote to the mayor's office. Youngstown College at that time was a topic that everyone was interested in. They knew the value of it, what it would do to Youngstown as a city. Not only would it enhance the physical values of our town, but the moral values. We had no problem whatsoever in interesting the high ranking people in Youngstown as well as the middle income people and so forth, and the old. Everyone rallied to the forces of Youngstown State. If all projects were as acceptable as Youngstown State University, I don't suppose we would have much trouble here in our city.
- M: Were there any particular groups that were slack in supporting the university?
- F: No, not to my knowledge. None whatsoever.
- M: You said that this was a relatively easy project to drum up support for; what projects have been more difficult to gain

public support?

- F: Not to gain public support, but I mean to gain financial help or interest. He's having the same trouble now, my successor. The rehabilitation of the downtown area of Youngstown, they had no problem tearing it down, clearing it, and getting rid of all the fire traps and the delapidated buildings and the ugliness of the old downtown, East Federal Street area. We were able to accomplish that not easily, but well. Now the big job, all of the rebuilding, placing upon the tax duplicate private buildings to enhance the tax structure of Youngstown is a most difficult thing. The building of a post office in taking three-fourths of the land of downtown Youngstown is not conducive to a tax duplicate. It becomes another exempted tax building. It does not increase the employment of people. We'll transfer our people from the old post office to the new one. They take all of their land off the taxpayer. My objective, one of my other projects, was to build a downtown post office at the present location, but have private enterprise build it and in return lease it to the federal government, such as they do in Toledo and it would remain under the tax duplicate. You and I, as taxpayers of Youngstown, would benefit greatly by its revenues, and that is not being done, I'm sorry to say. Those are the things that we look for for rallying purposes, to get people behind us, and we have a difficult . . . and he's having a difficult time.
- M: What difficulties have you encountered in getting a large tax duplicate put downtown, in the center areas for the post office or getting new business downtown? What would be the chief difficulties toward mitigating this?
- F: Well, our problem is we've got to increase our tax valuation in our city, not decrease it, and if we keep tearing down private enterprise and keep building public buildings, we don't accomplish too much, other than we have these facilities. For example, we give the YMCA on Champion and East Federal additional land and it is tax exempt. We build a parking garage in downtown Youngstown, and that's tax exempt. We were building from what I read in the newspaper, going back to the old method of having the government come in and build a post office in downtown Youngstown and that's tax exempt. The only thing we have accomplished is City Plaza Number One; that one building. It's the only thing that's going to bring us some taxes. We've got to get more of private enterprise interested in downtown Youngstown, in putting up buildings. I realize we have the AAA--the auto club down there--and the Goodyear station down there, but we've got to have more than that. Our tax duplicates should be over the 500 million dollar mark and we're below that. We always were over \$500 million in assessed valuation of taxation; we haven't gotten that. Those are our problems now. If we could rally our forces together, to interest individuals or groups for more

buildings in our downtown Youngstown, we may reincarnate the spirit of our citizenry in our downtown. The mere fact you've a few benches and trees and shrubbery, it is wonderful to have the beauty but you've got to have something else for these people to come downtown, and we haven't accomplished that. I think that's one of the big jobs ahead for the future government officials of our city.

M: How can people be rallied in order to make the city more attractive to business?

F: There are a number of ways, one of which I've always had a lot of faith in and that is private and public interest, involvement by appointing committees to become the steering committee of going out and doing it for the city officials, involving those who are closely allied in business in downtown Youngstown, giving them a voice in the matter, letting them help to make the decisions so that we get the private enterprises thinking as well as the public. I think sometimes we don't do that enough. We don't let "Mr. Businessman" tell us too often how he thinks we should do the job. We do the thinking; we make the decisions, and then we tell the businessman, "This is the way it's going to be done." In most instances we do not get the cooperation we want because we've already made up our minds how we're going to do it.

M: Why do you think there is this reluctance to consult the businessman and get his opinion on how things should be accomplished?

F: They know what is needed, more so in a mercantile center. They know what is lacking, a dress shop or a tailor shop or a shoe shop, what is lacking here or there. They know whether there are too many here or too many there, and they ought to be divided in scattered groups. I think they're better planners in the business field. We do have planners who know how to put up the building: what size, what the architecture should be and so forth. But our planners don't know what type of mercantile businesses should be in each of these buildings, and I think the businessman or those closely aligned to that central district know much better than we do.

M: Why is there a reluctance to use the businessman's knowledge to find out what should be done?

F: There is no reluctance here sometimes; maybe sometimes we ignore it. We don't ask him.

M: Why is this?

F: I shouldn't say we're ignorant of the thing, but we may not be thinking well. We don't use. . . Working men don't use

all of their tools, many times, and they do a poor job because they didn't, or they don't know how to use them, shall we say. I think politicians are the same. Is it our ego that we don't call upon them often times?

M: Could be.

F: I think before we close the discussion, I talked about Youngstown State University as one of my chief accomplishments, and I repeat it again. I think the rehabilitation of downtown Youngstown was the second one. The third one which is not less important, is the completion of the inner-belt and the freeways in the city of Youngstown. I think that was formulated prior to my time; the construction had lagged and had not been working, and I think through the efforts of one of our greatest city engineers of all times, J. Philip Richley, in my administration, we were able to bring about the construction state of the innerbelt of the interstate highways in our city. I think in the next four or five months, they will be completed.

One project that has lagged since we already have had the consultation engineers hired in 1965, is the Hubbard expressway. Those are so important to a community. Those are the things that can make an inner city more prosperous, give it better potential. Easy access to and from is what people want, and if they don't have that, they avoid coming downtown because they don't want to get involved in traffic snarls. If you have a smooth running traffic pattern, you'll find more people coming into your downtown area. You'll find more people going to the outside area if you don't have it, and if we are to encourage people to come downtown, we have to give them access to and from.

M: What obstacles were encountered in getting these belts and highways completed?

F: Oh, I don't know. It was just lack of imagination, disinterestedness. We knew when I took office that that was one of the greatest advantages that I could have as a former mayor was to show the expressways being built and that was the reason I stressed a number of times that with a good engineer you can do mostly anything.

M: During your administration the problems of the city really came to a head. This was happening all over the country and Youngstown, of course, had some civil disorder during the 1960's. What do you feel were the causes of this and how was the local government able to deal with these problems?

F: I don't think it was a unique problem in Youngstown; it was nationwide during the 1960's. Disturbances were erupting everywhere; the black communities especially were very unstable.

We were most fortunate--we had a university that did not uprising, did not become disturbed, did not under any circumstances cause us any problems at all. We were most fortunate there, where other cities were not.

M: Why do you think nothing happened at Youngstown whereas it did at other places?

F: I can't give you the answer other than we have the best people going to Youngstown State University. Of course, I realize that a lot of our students were transients, that is, they drove back and forth. We didn't have many dorms then, whether that helped or not, I don't know. Even today I don't think . . . We did have a few problems with parking and so forth, until the areas were available for them. We did, however, have the disturbances among our own people. I think it just grew on them from the disturbances elsewhere. Something happened somewhere else and someone wants to emulate someone else who appears in another town, and that may have had something else to do with it.

M: What particular groups are most likely to emulate trouble-making?

F: Well, it could be any group. You can't point them out. CCNY in New York City for example, rebelled on the college campus; then it went to Columbia and then the next thing it was in Berkeley and it just scattered everywhere. We're just talking about college students there and we had uprisings in Chicago, Detroit and the Watts area of Los Angeles. This thing just fermented and rose everywhere. I think the Vietnam War had a lot to do with it--dissatisfaction among the young people that they were going into a war that many of them felt we had no business going into. I think that caused a great amount of trouble and they became vicious. Kent State, you can never forget that. Those were the things that we were confronted with. Those were the terrible 1960's.

M: Why do you think that things have quieted down in the meantime?

F: I think the withdrawal from Vietnam was one of the biggest things. It was something that we all looked forward to and the agreement that this thing did occur; I think that stopped a lot of dissatisfaction among all of our people.

M: In what manner did that affect the inner city?

F: It affected us to the point that many of the young people who caused these rebellions, were relieved from the threat of the draft or going to Vietnam, or going elsewhere when they didn't believe in it. I think that helped greatly. I think also our social legislation that began to promote

and produce aid and help to many of the unfortunate people, it came in faster, that helped considerably. I don't think we'll ever have a utopian form of peace in our country. I think that there will always be dissenters. I hope that they will be a little more mild than they were in the 1960's though.

M: Once the disorders started, what were the particular difficulties in getting the situation under control?

F: In order to offset the extremes, as in Watts, we sent out our own local police to bring about order knowing beforehand that we didn't have sufficient personnel. It was our thought and I still believe that I was right, even though the National Guard had acted long before Kent State. Kent State happened in 1970 and this was in 1966. We came to the realization that the mere fact that the National Guardsmen on the scene would cause these people to react, become conscious of the fact that we meant business, and when they did come in, that's just exactly what happened. The disturbance stopped; we got back to normal; we had the curfew on for two or three and after that, everything went on very nicely. That was a short act. These eruptions happened elsewhere in the country and again we had the second movement and we got the National Guard the second time. Fortunately, we had no killings, and I think we're all thankful for that, but it didn't work out too well politically for me. But I still feel that I was right and that I'm glad we did it that way and that we had no loss of life.

M: How did it affect you politically?

F: Naturally, they were of the opinion that I was anti-this and anti-that. I guess I must just accept that as inevitable. I'm not anti-anything. I'm for. I think you should always be for something and not against something.

M: Did the fact that extreme violence did not occur in Youngstown the way it did in some other places, didn't that support your political platform?

F: It did at the moment, but they forget that.

M: What did they tend to remember?

F: "You sent in the National Guard against us," as a group.

M: Really?

F: Sure.

M: Wouldn't some local business leaders and many people in

general tend to favor a firm but fair response to disorder?

F: If they do, they don't expose it too well.

M: In other words, as long as the mayor is doing his job . . .

F: Very seldom do you get a letter of thanks or appreciation. You do occasionally; you save those. You get many crank letters, though, crank calls, that sort, but not too many laudatory letters.

M: Looking back at the way you handled the disorders then, you did handle them without going to extremes one way or the other and sort of letting things blow without any real damage or loss of life. Do you think that there might possibly have been a way that you could have done it with even less damage to your political thought, and perhaps might have possibly have gained more supporters?

F: I couldn't. I don't see where I could have done anything else. At the time I called for help from one of the black leaders, when this was happening. I'm sorry to say that he failed to respond.

M: Why would this be?

F: I wouldn't know. Maybe fear, they had fear of reprisal against them. I don't know, but they failed to respond so we took our own way of doing it, our own initiative.

M: How would a mayor find out what is on the people's minds, since you had no response?

F: Well, we had communications in the field to find out what was happening, what might happen, what might occur. There is effort on the part of the police department to infiltrate into these areas. We were well aware of what was happening or what was going to happen, and the Guards were brought in to avoid what could happen. Those are the things of which you have to be careful.

M: How about communication with business leaders and civic and religious leaders? How was this changed by the disorders?

F: The persons that we wanted to bring in to help us are not the business leaders to whom you would talk about Youngstown State University, or the rehabilitation downtown Youngstown, or things of that sort. The leaders that we wanted in there were those who knew these people best, and they failed to respond until after the turmoil had quieted down.

M: In general, what do you feel is the mayor's role in coping with civil disorder and other disturbances? What ways might the role be improved?

- F: I think there are many ways now that we didn't have in the 1960's. People have been trained properly now for it. Our police departments are coming back. We didn't have the facilities; we didn't have the necessary weapons for riots or disturbances of that type at that time. They do now.
- M: Do you feel communications have improved with dissident elements?
- F: I would say, yes.
- M: How has this come about?
- F: Through education and through programs that have been initiated by the federal government, and given to the local governments. There are many projects, now, that we didn't have in the 1960's that have improved the situation greatly.
- M: How did these projects come about?
- F: Through federal grants, all federal grants, model cities, et cetera.
- M: What input did you as a mayor, and mayors in general throughout the country, have in prompting the forthcoming of these federal grants and aid? The last time I remember, there were a lot of meetings of mayors on city problems.
- F: There were no funds available.
- M: Would you feel that the meetings with the federal officials eventually did bring these funds to fact?
- F: Oh, sure. For example, the law enforcement division itself today gets hundreds of thousands of dollars in the city of Youngstown. We didn't get anything at all in my day, nothing. Today they get eighty to ninety thousand dollars a year in law enforcement in the city of Youngstown, for the police department alone. They are able to buy new radios, new radio communication lines. They buy equipment for us. In our day, if you had it in general fund, if you had it in government fund, you bought it. If you didn't have, you didn't buy. We didn't have it. The businessmen weren't very receptive to it; they did on their own contribute a certain sum of money to the city of Youngstown and bought us equipment in the 1960's and the public doesn't know that.
- M: Who promoted these federal programs to be put into effect? What groups in the public at large?
- F: It's called to their attention by the mayors' conference and other individuals who pressure the Congress for them. I think before Lyndon Johnson, before he left office, he

accepted many social programs because he went through the 1960's also.

M: I think that a lot of people were surprised that you were defeated in 1969 since you had survived so long during various difficulties that tended to beset politicians in those difficult periods. Why do you think you were defeated in 1969?

F: A number of things. I think that one of them was the shootout that occurred at Stop Five, Poland Republic Steel Corporation, September of 1969. I was mayor; the event occurred; I was held responsible for it and it's just and it's right.

M: How was that?

F: In Youngstown it's right. The mayor is held responsible for it.

M: What could you have done to prevent it?

F: Nothing. I knew nothing about it, but I am the mayor. In Youngstown, we have a charter form of government; it's a strong mayor form of government. The mayor of the city appoints the entire cabinet: the police chief, the fire chief, the director of law, the finance director, the commissioner of engineering, all the way down the line, and he's held accountable for everything that occurs. If anything occurs in the city, or the city departments, the mayor is totally responsible for that. There are two things he can do. You as a department head are not doing your job, with the exception of the finance director, the mayor can remove you immediately and appoint someone else. You do not have a term of office as a cabinet member, other than the finance director, who must be approved by the city council. Therefore, people felt that I should have avoided or I should have controlled that affair that happened at Stop Five that afternoon.

M: What other factors do you feel contributed to your defeat?

F: As far as things such as a close race in various council positions, and bitter races in the political field, not the mayor's race, but the other races caused some slippage. I think the main thing was the shootout.

M: How do you account for the fact that you did survive up until then politically for over twenty years, particularly six years in the mayor's office?

F: Oh, that's simple. I got more votes than my opponents. Maybe they wanted a change, I don't know. I can't answer that.

My twenty-odd years was very satisfying to me. I enjoyed it immensely. I only hope that those who I served enjoyed it as much as I did. I hope that some of the things that I stood for were worthwhile; that's my greatest hope and desire.

- M: What do you feel were the most important things that you did stand for and promote during your career?
- F: This is my sixth year that I'm out of office. I feel very proud to this moment that no one has questioned my integrity or my honesty. In these years, I have to be repetitious-- back to Youngstown State University. I think that was my number one objective that was accomplished of greatness; that was the number one project. I look at the expressways and I feel that I had a good part in that too. And I'm a little bit sorrowful looking at downtown Youngstown, I think a better job could be done.
- M: You said at the time that an arena-type of complex could have been built if the finances could have been arranged. You stated the financing was the chief problem. What difficulties were there in arranging for the financing?
- F: Our intent was to present a good program to the people of Youngstown--either to the city or on a countywide basis-- a bond issue for a certain portion of funds, but not in the downtown area. Again, to have a good stadium, you've got to have access to and from. It's got to be a place where people can park and where people can go and get out. They don't like to stay around for an hour after an athletic contest to get to their cars and to get out of the area. It can be done and it should be done.
- M: Why was it difficult to get finances?
- F: I mean we were more concerned, at that time, with the educational buildings. We wanted Beeghly Hall; we wanted the School of Education; we wanted a new library; we wanted a science building; we wanted the planetarium built. We wanted those built first, and what we're talking about is a second or third stage of the university. The third stage was up to the expressway and included in that was the stadium and the athletic fields; that was the third stage. I don't think we've arrived at that yet, have we?
- M: In what ways do you feel that local government can be improved?
- F: Because of the lack of time, when people wish to speak to someone of authority in city hall, preferably the mayor, it's an impossibility. For the mayor to sit in his office and talk with each of the people who come to city hall with their

problems, much as he would like to, it's impossible. Therefore, after these six years as mayor, I have come to the realization that we always as public officials are asking people to become involved, asking people to get interested in government, and we don't do enough on our own as politicians to make them able to do the things we want them to have. Therefore, it has proven very successful in other areas that we should establish without any increase cost many mini city halls in our city at various locations. It was my intention, naturally that we would begin with three mini halls in Youngstown: one on the north, one on the west, and one on the south side of our city. Place them and locate them in one of the fire station's that could handle our business. We would staff at regular hours a person from city hall who was well acquainted with all of the questions and answers of the individuals in these locations. They could follow through by calling the respective departments of the complaints for the problems that any citizen would have. Naturally, if the work became too cumbersome, we could increase it from three to four mini city halls, if the occasion arose again to five, six or seven; naturally, with seven you would have one in each ward. It could become the office of the councilman of the ward in addition to mini city hall. I'm sure that it would eliminate the reluctance of the part of the individual to come downtown to city hall and be lost in a maze of many people who work about the hall and shove a person from one person to another.

M: How could this be done without increase in city expenses?

F: We have personnel in city hall now who are placed in various departments with the express purpose of helping out and doing this work and answering questions and filling in for many services that our people want. Those would be the people that you would send out into the various areas. Since then, again I think, there are so much federal funds coming in to the cities today that we didn't have in the 1960's, there's no question that a federal program at federal expense could be done in this instance. Again, it would not cost our city any general fund money. This would be a very splendid project today and I am sure that you could even get headquarters and everything else through federal funding for programs. This is an ideal situation for all of our cities to do today.

M: What goal do you think mini city halls could play in heading off civil disorders and general unrest?

F: They've got the answers. You don't give them the old line that, "Wait and we'll find out," "Wait and see," "Come back tomorrow." You don't give them those answers. You're able to accomplish because you've got fewer inquiries in each of the divisional mini city halls than you would have compared to what you would have in downtown city hall. I think you can satisfy many individuals right then and there, or a

call can be made immediately by the person in charge of mini city hall to downtown city hall. They know who to call; they know where to get the information and they can give it to them , the right answers. I think that's why-- you'll begin to satisfy a lot more people with the right answers. You may not be able to help them all, but you can give them the answers, the correct answers. I think that's what people want. They want honesty, and you can obtain it.

M: How would mini city halls compare to rumor centers?

F: Well, rumor centers are a different thing all together. A rumor center is something different; it's not what people are looking for or asking about. The rumor center is a different thing all together. It wouldn't perform what mini city halls would do, although they could accept a rumor from an individual if they so desired and follow it through and see if it's correct or not. They could do that also. There wouldn't be any harm in it, but I think we could give them better service.

M: How did you come upon the idea for mini city halls?

F: Like I told you at the outset, people could not, under any circumstances, meet all the individuals in our present downtown city hall, not then or today, and get the correct answers at that moment and be satisfied as they walk out of city hall. They can't do it. There isn't enough time in the day. Also many people can't get downtown or will not go downtown to find out. They'll gripe about it; they become irritated and agitated; they never solve their problems, but they never go anywhere to find out. But if you make it closer for them and a little more accesible for them, they will find out. They may go down to the neighborhood fire station, or the headquarters, where the city hall is going to meet.

M: How has this idea of mini city halls worked out in places where it has been tried?

F: Very good. It's not my innovation, by the way. I didn't invent it. I read about it and knew about it being done elsewhere. They do it a lot in Canada now; Toronto does it. This is a metropolitan area now, I realize this, but they could never accomplish in the metropolitan city of Toronto everything in the city hall. That would be an impossibility. I think that in a smaller scale, the same thing would result here in Youngstown.

M: What uses do you think the idea of a mini hall system would have in a modern city of Youngstown?

F: You're again concentrating too much upon an individual. You're concentrating too much work on a person and he's

got to neglect the lesser important ones. You know sometimes the lesser important details are the most aggravating and the most irritating to the individual. They begin to accumulate, too many of them. You make too many of them secondary and therefore they begin to accumulate. You only begin to pick out the larger ones. You've got to expand and segregate your authority to other people and let them give you a hand and let them help and get them involved in it. So there are more people involved in the government.

When they run into something very grave and serious in the mini city halls, it'll get to the proper person in city hall. It'll get to the mayor; it'll get to the commissioner of engineering; it may get to the police chief himself, not to the desk man. I think the better the person is, the better you perform. Give people service and I think you'll satisfy them greatly. You won't have your unrest; you won't have your disturbances; you won't have the fighting among yourselves.

- M: You feel then, that the mini city halls are actually the best way to give the administration feedback on what the people are thinking and on what problems are important?
- F: Yes, and I think that it prolongs the life of a politician when he knows what they want and what they don't want.
- M: Looking at it from another viewpoint, do you think it would be possible for a mini city hall besides giving the mayor and local administration information on what is bothering people, it might be possible for the mini city halls to also implement programs designed to solve these problems and to help the people?
- F: Oh, sure. They could probably issue a minor restaurant license instead of going down to the main city hall, or even a birth certificate. They could put it in the mail for you. You would come back in three days and they would have the birth certificate for you. They could send it into the Board of Health and all of those little errands that would necessitate, especially for the elderly. We talk about the elderly, the senior citizen, you could accomplish so many things so easily and at very little expense. Many people don't realize it's against the law to cut a curb in front of your house to make a driveway without getting permission of the engineering department, but they could find that out very easily from mini city hall, instead of going downtown. That becomes a great amount of work for a person to get a bus, or drive downtown, park his car and go to city hall, go up to the fifth floor of the city engineering department, get all that information, when you have a city hall.

- M: During the periods of your activity in government, the people who were most unable to go downtown and give voice to their problems were the old people and the poor people. These have increased in the population of Youngstown, while the more mobile people have decreased in the population of Youngstown. What are the ways do you feel that you might deal with their problems, besides the mini city halls? Perhaps organizations or something along that line.
- F: That would be about the only way you could do it. Senior citizens don't want to be handed everything. They like to do a little on their own. You would like to be able to walk here and talk to a person and get firsthand information. With all the goodness of organizations and groups who want to help . . .
- M: Do you feel it's easier to deal with people, with citizens, as organizations or as individuals telling you their problems?
- F: Naturally, it's easier with an organization, much easier. Is it more effective? We don't know.
- M: Wouldn't there be difficulties in dealing with an organization than with an individual? Wouldn't there be additional difficulties? For instance, how well did the organization represent the individual?
- F: It depends on how well they do the job too. If they do the job well, it makes it easier for you, naturally. You meet with the officers or the committee and you have your hour session with them and they go back and report to forty, fifty or a hundred individuals. You're much better off because then you don't have to meet fifteen, twenty or thirty separately. It does take a lot of time.
- M: You emphasized the necessity of delegating authority, or spreading it out to where people can get at it, with mini city halls, et cetera, in which people will be inclined to think that such willingness to share power is commendable, and certainly it improves the way our democracy operates. However, would there be some individuals in political life that wouldn't like this power to be spread out to the people-- they might like to keep it more centralized downtown or in the hands of the administration. Wouldn't they tend to more or less oppose this idea?
- F: Could be. Remember, if you aren't able to delegate your authority and keep control of authority, you're not going to be too successful as an executive, because you aren't able to accomplish everything by yourself; you can't do it and do a good job.
- M: How about legislative bodies and bureaucrats? How would

they feel about spreading government power? Would some of them tend to oppose it?

- F: Oh, no doubt. You'll find that. But you'll find that the most successful one is the one who delegates it. If I sat in this office here and expected everything that goes in that front office to come over to my desk, I'm going to stymie this thing to a standstill. Things aren't going to be done. I have spent an hour or better with you, and while I've spent it with you, they're not just out there not doing anything; they're not waiting for me to give them their next order. They're doing their jobs. They know what has to be done. Since I'm not out there, if there's something else in addition to what they do, if they want, they're doing it now, I hope. I'm sure of that. The same thing for a person in government. You appoint a police chief and you expect that police chief to enforce the law. You don't talk with him every morning and every noon and every night to find out how many arrests he made, not in a large town like Youngstown. If something goes wrong, you call him in, because you're responsible for his actions. He's your agent. That's all he is. He's doing work for you. There's a scandal in your police department, the mayor's responsible, nobody else.
- M: How did people tend to react to this idea of mini city halls when you did bring it up?
- F: I didn't get too much flack on it. There wasn't much discussion on it either. Couldn't get people enthusiastic about it?
- M: Why would this be?
- F: It was never thought about, that's the reason for it. They never saw it operate.
- M: In other words, it's something that has to come about before the enthusiasm will.
- F: Yes. They determine, "Well, that was just another campaign promise. He's a politician; he promises everything and doesn't do anything." That's the normal take.
- M: How can these kinds of attitudes be overcome?
- F: You've got to go out there and be a very forceful official and do these jobs, that's all. I thought we had it in 1967, 1968, 1966. People were responding greatly, and 1969. I think we got a fine job from everybody, cooperation from everybody. We had no problems.
- M: Do you feel your reelection in 1967 might have been due

to the fact that at a time when many other places in the country were experiencing turmoil, Youngstown really had no serious civil disorders or racial tensions or things on that order?

F: Well, it wasn't an issue in the campaign, that's for sure. It was kept very quiet; it wasn't mentioned and it worked out very nicely.

M: What groups have tended to seem to oppose this idea of mini city halls?

F: No, no opposition.

M: People agree with putting the power back into the hands of the people, or at least communicating with them?

F: I would say so. The opposition wasn't there; the enthusiasm wasn't there; they didn't realize, I don't think, up to this point the importance of them.

M: Besides this idea of bringing government closer to the people, there has also been a tendency in local governments toward bigger and bigger organizations and bigger and bigger governments, capitalized governments, and so forth. Do you feel that this might possibly provide some solutions or advantages to the . . .

F: But if there's a duplication of services, if there's a duplication of personnel and so forth, yes. If there's not, no.

M: How much is that a problem?

F: Well, a little bit of duplicaiton of work, duplication of services. Could we function with one police department for the townships of Boardman, Youngstown? I say, "Yes." It would be a larger one, but you wouldn't have two police chiefs; you wouldn't have this, that, and so forth.

M: You think it might improve on efficiency?

F: I think it would. Fewer boundary lines.

M: How about other types of services?

F: We've got that and just about done it now. We've got water in just about all the townships. The boundary lines are disappearing there other than the costs. But you could. You have the opposition on the part of the suburbanites. He doesn't want to become part of the inner city.

M: The suburbs, whether the suburbs were called Boardman or

Austintown or Youngstown, it would still be a suburb; the people would still be the same. They wouldn't be part of the inner city.

F: They don't want to assume the responsibilities. They want to accept all the facilities, but not assume the responsibilities. It's the selfishness of nature, I suppose.

M: How did you handle the tendency toward annexation and towards expansion of Youngstown government and services during your period in office?

F: I was very nonchalant about it because I knew the opposition was there. They wanted no part of the annexation of coming into Youngstown, and therefore, I looked at their discretion, the suburbanites, to determine whether the petition for an annexation, attempting to get all of the good things in Youngstown to attract these people. First of all, let's have something to offer. But we hadn't achieved that as yet.

M: Was there any opposition in Youngstown itself to annexation?

F: Not to my knowledge. Not by Youngstowners.

M: What prompted you to suggest the annexation of waste disposal materials?

F: Did I say that?

M: I believe you did.

F: Is that on account of the sewer problem out there?

M: I believe it was.

F: When they wanted us to pay for the sanitary sewer into Coitsville township at 100% city expense, you're talking about hundreds of thousands of dollars. As I recall correctly, I say this. If we are to make such an investment into a township and make it a potential revenue for the township and they want no part of the cost, I said, "Um . . ." We'll go in there and take that part of the township which would be benefited by these storm sewers and sanitary sewers that we were going to install in the area. That's why they haven't installed them yet.

M: How did the people react to this idea?

F: Not too well, they were opposed.

M: How do you feel that surburban opposition to annexation can be overcome? What is the answer, do you feel, a united

metropolitan government . . .

F: You're never going to attract them. There's only one way of annexing, like they do elsewhere. Take away from them the facility that the inner city has for them, water and sewers.

M: And you feel that they'll come in?

F: Well, they have to. The city of Columbus down there said to the suburbs, "If you want the city of Columbus water under Mayor Senzenbrenner, you must become a part of the city of Columbus."

M: Why doesn't this happen in Youngstown?

F: Because no one has ever championed the cause. That's why Columbus today is probably the second largest city in the state. They annexed everything around Columbus.

M: No one in Youngstown has championed the cause, yet there's no real opposition for annexation in Youngstown itself.

F: Yes, no one has ever said, "Well, now wait a minute. We won't give Austintown; we won't give Boardman; we won't give Poland; we won't give Canfield any more city water for Mahoning Valley unless they become annexed." That's all. Your contract runs out in 1972. They could have forewarned them in 1970, two years before, that in 1972 you won't get any more water from Youngstown--give them two years notice. You must be humane about it too. But they weren't in Columbus.

M: How can you be humane about it?

F: By giving them sufficient time to make up their minds. Therefore, the expressional contracts, you know, to find out its sources or provide their own sources of water . . .

M: What role do you feel the mayor has in attracting outside industry?

F: Prestige of the office, guarantee of certain services that you will render to the prospective industry coming in, selling the city, in that fashion, that's about all you can do. There are certain statutory provisions that you can't overcome. Some of us had ideas of giving free taxes for twenty-five or thirty years--things of that sort--but you can't do that because of the statutory provisions. You can say we can guarantee you police protection, fire protection and we will see that your street is properly paved and that the sewers are fine for you. Give you all of those services that we can render for you. You can do all of that.

- M: What departments or organizations do you feel might be most useful in promoting the growth of industry in the city?
- F: Well, I always liked the department of planning but when you say planning, you must say engineering planning. They are the two departments that can work out a very nice arrangement for industry.
- M: What kind of relationship do those departments tend to have with the Chamber of Commerce? They must have communication.
- F: They're close. They have to be.
- M: I believe sometime in the early 1960's, around 1964, you indicated that perhaps Youngstown was on the verge of a big change as far as future industry was concerned. Do you feel that this has come about?
- F: To a certain extent, it has, yes. I remember one time we were collecting around seven million dollars in income tax, when I first took office. When I left office, we were around almost ten million dollars. There was a great increase in industry and business. Youngstown State University is one of our greatest contributors to the city income tax.
- M: So it paid off?
- F: Oh, yes. We get a lot of city income tax from Youngstown University. Don't forget all the salaries of the professors and these teachers and everything else--all those students who work in the city. They contribute a sizable amount to the tax.
- M: What areas do you feel future growth lies within Youngstown, as far as industry?
- F: Specific areas? We've got the Salt Springs area yet, between Salt Springs and Meridian Road. There is a lot of wide, open space. There is a program for sewers in that area--government financed plus local financing. That should prove a very fruitful spot, close to the expressway, close to 680 and 80 expressways and 76.
- M: How about the far east?
- F: I have often thought of that. There are a lot of wide, open spaces in the far east corner, but I've never gotten anything encouraging from that. Many people are apprehensive about the east side, but I am not. I like it because I don't think that we have any problems on the east side, in that area. No racial or disturbance problems, they're not there.
- M: In what respect are people apprehensive about these areas?

- F: The racial problem. They have that, but that's not true. We lack the sewers in the area, but if the sewer problem is resolved, the chances and the opportunities are great there.
- M: Is it possible that the far east side might experience a building boom in the near future?
- F: Not too much. I don't think so. You're talking about home building? We've attempted so many times. The cost of land there is very low, very cheap. It would not attract homes from the middle income bracket. I think that our hopes are for industrial purposes.
- M: Why do you think Youngstown's population has declined in recent years?
- F: Youngstown isn't any different from other cities. All of our cities, as you well know, the population has declined-- Cleveland, Toledo. Columbus is an exception and I explained to you why just a moment ago, what happened in Columbus' case. So many of our white population, to be very honest and frank, have moved out of our cities to the suburban areas. This has caused a great decrease in the population. The minority groups have increased in the inner cities, in Youngstown especially, but not enough to overcome the transition of moving out. Therefore, that is the primary reason why Youngstown has shown a decline in population. You still have the same amount of industry and everything else, but they come from out to within to go to work. That's about the answer.
- M: Do you think that there's any way that the movement of people to the suburbs might be stopped or possibly reduced?
- F: The only hope is that someday Youngstown will attempt to try the same programs that they are trying in other inner cities. The rehabilitation of old homes attracting groups into various sections of the inner city--Columbus has one called the "German Village". It has been very successful. I think Youngstown can do the same. I think that the east side of Youngstown and the south side, the Hillman Street section, could stand a good rehabilitation program, federal program. That may bring back people from outer city to the inner city. We must retain what we have here, and we have to be very dependent upon federal financial aid to do this project, to accomplish this project. I think we're wrong in our judgment and honest in doing it, that we continually raze and tear down and destroy old residences. Maybe we ought to do the opposite; maybe we should invest and restore them, rebuild, rehabilitate. I think that's our problem. At least attempt to keep what we have, and not destroy. Once we destroy a home or tear it down, there's never another home built on the same piece of land. It becomes a vacant piece of land. Again, we go back to our

tax structure, our tax evaluation. You begin to use and drop rules.

- M: What do you think, insofar as promoting the city, what opportunities, advantages, may arise from the ethnic diversity, in the sense of the very rich in ethnic cultures around the city. Do you think that might have some advantages? Such as I believe you mentioned that German Village in Columbus.
- F: Yes, it does. They took a whole section of Columbus downtown, just outside of downtown Columbus, about six, seven blocks away from there. They went in there, young people especially, and began to rebuild homes in that section-- an eight or nine block area. They modernized them completely, outside and inside. They've done their own policing with their next door neighbor. If you didn't mow your lawn, they told you about it. You mowed your lawn. If your house needed painting, they told you about it if you didn't have it painted. They're doing their own policing, of taking care of their properties, I'm talking about. It's working very nicely. They are very proud of the German Village in Columbus. We could do the same thing here. But we've got to get financial institutions, whether they're federally owned or state owned, interested in helping and making up this project. I think that our planning department, the city of Youngstown, will take care of the community development department. It could spearhead a project of this type, pick out a section and go in there and go to work on it.
- M: How do you think the federal government can be prompted to develop these kinds of things?
- F: They have federal programs that people are able to obtain federal funds at low interest costs for this purpose. Let's do it. But it's a lot of work and it's if you want to do it, you'll have to get right down to it. Put people to do it. Unless we do that, we'll never know the growth because you're not going to have any new homes built. I think they had, what, up until the other day, two building permits issued in the city of Youngstown for two homes in the city, this year. I hear the city of Warren had none this year; no building permits for any homes. I don't know how true this is, but I heard someone make that statement. Although there aren't too many homes being built right now anywhere, because of our economy.
- M: What role do you feel the government might be able to have in at least alleviating the effects of a poor economy?
- F: Our government will have to spearhead these projects for us. Our government will have to provide the tools, especially the funds to our political subdivisions, wherever they may be. We are to maintain an inner city growth and it's important

that our cities remain at least as they are and if possible better than they are by doing these things. Remember the homes that fill our cities are fifty or sixty years old and many of them have been neglected for years. These are the projects that we can be proud of that we have accomplished. I recommend very highly that persons who are interested in the growth of the city visit the German Village in Columbus.

- M: Do you feel that possibly the school situation might tend to mitigate against the people even wanting to live next to Youngstown or even wanting to come back to Youngstown?
- F: I would say that is a matter of opinion. Our schools are having a terrible problem. I don't know about the schools.
- M: What kind of liaison can the mayor's office and the administration provide between the teachers and the school administration?
- F: Not very much. There is very little communication between the schools and the city. The only time is when they ask for help for the passage of the levy or a bond issue that's on the ballot.
- M: They ask for your support?
- F: They ask for your support. That's about the extent of it.
- M: How does the public view this? What does the public expect of the mayor in this situation?
- F: Well, the public not realizing, naturally, expect that the mayor would be able to accomplish something in the schools as well as outside the schools.
- M: Do they associate the Youngstown city schools with Youngstown city government?
- F: Yes, that's right. In many instances they do.
- M: How did people react then to the occurrence of the school strike in 1968?
- F: I had some bearing on that. They couldn't understand why there was a strike and why the mayor hadn't done something about it before they went on strike. The mayor hasn't anything to do with it, the striking schools. You're not even advised; you're not even asked; you're not even told about it and rightfully so. That's a separate authority all together.
- M: Well, the mayor can become a friend of the public. How long did that sentiment remain?
- F: Until after the strike was settled.

- M: In what particular industry do you feel Youngstown might find some development? What for instance is the future of steel in this area? How about trucking and this sort of thing?
- F: I haven't been close to it lately, but I gather that it's not too encouraging in the steel industry. All I do is read about it now, about the antiquated machinery. The mills are not modern; threats of shutting down and moving out because of EPA [Environmental Protection Agency]. The status of the Mahoning River has never come to any conclusive understanding. I don't want to be a pessimist. I still have a good outlook. I like to read about the Youngstown Sheet & Tube or Lykes Youngstown. Lykes is making a great profit up from their last quarter, compared with their corresponding quarters. That was good news. Attempting to bring the new open-hearth furnaces in replace of the old--going to spend 77 million dollars for electrostatic precipitators, smoke control, dust control--but we've been hearing that for a long, long time. I hope that the steel mills remain in town. We're dependent upon them.
- M: What has been a local reaction not just in the steel plants, but in public opinion too is the issue of pollution and also the effects of the pollution?
- F: The people don't take it seriously, pollution. I say I would rather watch the smoke come out of the stacks any time rather than no smoke at all. When there isn't any smoke, we're in dire trouble.
- M: I believe you were involved in some anti-smoke programs early in your career. Those were the days before the stuff was really popular.
- F: 1952.
- M: What prompted your involvement at that time?
- F: The federal government's pressure at that time to get rid of the pollution. We were one of the few cities in the nation that gave our steel companies a ten-year moratorium. Was it 1952? I'm not sure now. It was in the 1950's. We gave them ten years to get started on pollution problems. Campbell Lykes, Sheet & Tube did some work; U. S. Steel did some work; Republic moved their open hearths out all together and didn't have to do any work, as you recall.
- M: Why do you think the issue has become so stylish and such a fashionable issue in the past five years?
- F: You can't sell people on the idea in Youngstown that the Mahoning River should have fish in it. No one in their right

mind will agree to that. It's more important to people in Youngstown that the mills, the steel plants, keep running. They need the water. They need the river for them. If they didn't have the river, they wouldn't have the steel plants there. We built Milton Dam, Lake Milton, originally for drinking water and after the drinking water problem was over, we went to the Mahoning Valley Sanitation Board, to the district. We use Lake Milton for another reason now--to keep the flow of the river at certain heights at certain times of the year. It's a storage pond for us. We go to great expense to keep Lake Milton going for that purpose, but it's worth our while to have Lake Milton and it's worth our while to have the Mahoning River at certain heights because it provides jobs for our people. We don't intend to go down there and fish. But I think we ought to keep it as clean as possible.

- M: What role should the mayor play in forcing the people to bend to the federal government on this?
- F: Just sell them the idea. We don't want a polluted stream, but we want it clean enough to be healthy and clean enough so that we keep our steel plants here.
- M: How can the mayor organize public opinion and promote it to make it seem as solid and as wide spread as possible? In giving voice to his constituent's attitudes to the federal government? In other words, can they help organize public opinion on this to let the government, the federal government, know how people feel?
- F: Oh, we've done that over and over, but they're adamant in their stand in the federal government. They've begun to deviate a little bit now because they realize that they haven't been able to sell their criteria, as they call it, for the water in the Mahoning River. They haven't been able to sell it. No one has bought their idea.
- M: Have local government officials gone out and organized meetings and met with organizations . . .
- F: Oh, sure. We've met with the Congress. I recall during my administration, we appeared in the Congress with the late Mike Kerwan, Congressman Kerwan, on a number of occasions.
- M: What elements of the community have been most responsive in helping to express the opinions of the mayor?
- F: Public officials only!
- M: How about clergymen or business leaders?
- F: Very, very few. One or two. We didn't get a sufficient number.

- M: The rest aren't that interested in expressing your opinions?
- F: They're interested, but they haven't had time to come.
- M: How about labor?
- F: Labor has. They're trying to save the jobs for the working man, understand that. Although some of the businessmen realize it, the industrial leaders, naturally, are concerned. They can't afford to spend those millions of dollars for that purpose.
- M: Are there any elements in the community that are, say, opposed to the dominant community opinion on this issue?
- F: You mean opposed the government?
- M: Or opposed what the people of Youngstown generally feel.
- F: No, other than the federal government authorities; they're the only ones. They were all by themselves. No one supported their cause, to my knowledge.
- M: Do you think they will ever get that way on things?
- F: They've compromised somewhat from what I gather now. They've lessened the quality. The state EPA authorities have gone along with the city pretty well, realizing that it can't be done.
- M: Do you feel that the sagging economy might have helped prompt this?
- F: It was prior to inflation, prior to the economy. This has been going on for ten years.
- M: I mean the government's willingness to compromise?
- F: Well, I haven't heard too much about it recently. Could be.
- M: Public attitudes on this I'm sure intensified in recent years. Since you have been in politics since the 1940's, have you noticed any fundamental change in public spirit and attitudes toward government and towards our society in general?
- F: Oh, yes. There has been a decided change. People are more conscious of government today than they were twenty years ago. They're concerned. They question many things they didn't twenty, twenty-five years ago. Whether they're more active or not, I don't know. Recently, in the last four or five years, they call and write. They know their public officials pretty well today, than they did twenty-five years ago.

- M: Why do you think people tend to question more?
- F: I suppose television has helped a lot. Television, that's all. People have seen with their eyes many public officials they never saw before, or didn't know before, think about before, just through reading or the radio. I think that has broadened their intellect a lot into the government. I think that has caused a lot of help.
- M: How about the increase in the Americanization of the various ethnic groups? What effect has that had on local politics and government affairs in general?
- F: They're more active, a lot more active. You see a diversification of faces and ethnic groups that you didn't see before. Twenty, twenty-five, thirty years ago, it was the Irish predominantly in government, and a filtration of Italians. As you look at it now, you see more and more getting into it. The Slav group, the Black group, the Puerto Ricans coming in, the Spanish speaking people . . . You see the Pole; you see them all moving in. Their education, their schooling, they are all involved in it more now than before.
- M: Are ethnic differences less important in local politics now than they used to be?
- F: No. Men and women running for office are still attracted by the ethnic groups.
- M: This tendency hasn't decreased?
- F: Not too much. Not at the moment. Of course, their buying the ethnic versus the minorities. The ethnics are no longer the minority, as they say. There are only two, the Spanish speaking and the Blacks. They are the minority groups; all the others are the ethnic groups.
- M: Do you feel with increasing education and just people getting out and meeting more and more people, as time goes by, there might be a decline in political affiliation according to ethnic groups? Meaning ethnic groups in a wide sense, meaning national groups.
- F: No, I don't think we've arrived at that point, as of yet. I don't think so. I think nationality, they strive for ethnic groups; they strive for positions with various groups. You find it more prevalent in the larger cities, New York and Chicago especially.
- M: How do you think politics might be changed when people no longer associate politics with ethnic identification? How do you think politics might change? How do you think politics might be different then?

- F: You would have to make people different, and you're not going to do it.
- M: You don't think the change . . .
- F: You're not going to do it. They're not going to change. As long as I live, you're not going to change my blood. I'm still of Italian extraction. There are certain things that Italians do that you don't know they do or vice versa. Therefore, I am prone to excuse a person of Italian extraction a little bit more readily than you are. I can understand their feelings and their reactions about an issue or a problem. I think that the same thing holds true for the Irishmen or the Slavs or the Blacks or the Spanish speaking. We're not going to change them; we're not going to change human nature that easily. Although they call us the "melting pot" of the world, we still group ourselves or center ourselves among ourselves, among our groups. You're asking a person to disclaim everything he feels. Not that he knows, but that he feels, and our feelings aren't easily moved away from our thinking. I don't think you separate them too well. You think you do; you attempt to do it; you want to be honest about it, but you always have that little bit of loyalty that you can't eliminate entirely.
- M: Do you think that as intermarriages of people of different groups increases that this tendency toward ethnic politics might decrease?
- F: I think that melts it away somewhat. See the intermarriages will melt it or dissolve it somewhat because the husband or the wife picks up something from the other and mixes it up with his or her's and sort of neutralizes it somewhat. I think that is true.
- M: What role do you think local politics and local affairs played in helping to Americanize ethnic groups that were new to the area?
- F: To cope mainly with the various groups together, in finding out how the other person lived, has made them think somewhat differently, working side by side, day in and day out with a person of that other ethnic background.
- M: How can a local politician in local government encourage the integration of ethnic groups into the mainstream of society?
- F: He has to in order for him to remain in office. He has to recognize members of the other ethnic groups. His hope of getting jobs for the Lebanese or for the Italian or for the Greek or for the Slav or for the Poles, the Blacks, the Spanish speaking people enhances his position in public office. It aids him immensely. You see, when he goes out for reelection,

and he goes into a Slav group, he has got to be able to say, "Well, I have so-and-so and so-and-so working for me."

- M: Nowadays there are a lot of people in the cities who are pretty much new to city life and to the way things are done in the city. How can local government help these people to adjust and to learn how things are done here and to get into the mainstream of life?
- F: Remember many of them come from university training, from colleges, from high school training. Very few that come in don't at least have a minimum of a high school diploma, are high school graduates. It's not a difficult problem anymore for two persons of two different backgrounds, ethnic backgrounds, to get together to work and to be able to fulfill the things that you're thinking about.

END OF INTERVIEW