Tape Counter Number | Topic
--- | ---
000 - 028 | General assessment of Frank Zeidler's performance and major accomplishments
029 - 100 | Zeidler's major failures: lack of a good relationship with business leaders, did not have a solid political organization (socialists declining). Relationship with the Common Council was not too good; Zeidler wouldn't sit down with council members and talk about issues. George Safran had a good relationship with the Council but was not close to Zeidler. Old budget structure conducive to closer working relationships and better communication than the newer one.
101 - 141 | Zeidler's relationships with department heads was very businesslike and administrative. Met with department heads frequently but they had considerable freedom. Dept. of Public Works Commissioner and Knapp were strong individuals. City Comptroller was influential, while the Treasurer was businesslike. Other individuals in the administration.
142 - 245 | Zeidler's legacy to the office of the mayor - his intelligence and absolute honesty. His staff was minimal; expanded a little later on as new functions and issues became part of the office. Standouts in Council. Martin Schreiber and Jim Mortier tended to support the mayor; other side included Fleming and Quirk, who didn't tend to support the mayor. Meyers was a swing member who voted on the issues more than the people. Annexation was not a dividing issue; public works was important because of the growth of the city. Zoning also was a major issue. Group opposed to mayor was more orientated towards business interests. Kupka was very receptive to builders and zoning changes. Underlying hostility to socialism. Aldermen were very much in control of their wards.
246 - 358 | Battle over annexation. Zeidler felt suburbs were draining the resources of the city. Zeidler's other favorite projects included public housing and programs for the poor. People were critical of public housing because it was seen as socialist. Zeidler and race issues; not up front on the issue and not really pro-black or anti-black either. Labor was needed by big companies (war industries), and stories circulated about Zeidler advertising for blacks to move here; he lived in a largely black area as well. Health problems were a factor in decision not to run in 1960. Council opposition became stiffer.
358 - 440 | Farris left city government reporting about 1956 or 1957. About that time, there began changes in county government. Board chairman was largely a figurehead who dealt with the department heads who were strong and really only had to answer for their budgets. Role of county executive. Growing importance of county government after WWII with issues of freeway system, administration of health and welfare. Lukewarm support for the creation of the county exec on the board; Doyne lobbied at the state level, O'Donnell supported the idea also.
441 - 510 | Doyne's performance as board chair and county exec. Handled himself well with the board; did outstanding job of molding the exec's office. Good politician and maintained the dignity of the office also. Role of the board historically and changes.
511 - 637 | "Who has the most power" of different groups in Milwaukee - during Farris' years it was labor, which relied on endorsements. Milwaukee was heavily industrialized and had many members of labor organizations.
Milwaukee Labor Council dominated by AFL-CIO; Jake Friedrich was an important leader. After WWII the CIO was reputed to be Communist, which reduced its influence. (End side 1 at 604) Labor foothold in govt. remains in police and firefighters unions and such groups. Otto Jankovic of CIO was less effective than Friedrich. John Zinos had a lot of influence, as did John Schmidt (especially with Meier), but he but tended to stay in the background. Labor's power came largely from political endorsements and not as much from persuasive power, although labor could persuade on issues as well.

638 - 679 Business leaders in Milwaukee and their role. Business community in Milwaukee has always been protective of its interests. Northwestern Mutual was and is important, utilities (particularly electric company) also. Power derived largely from their economic impact, but businessmen also contributed to campaigns and such. No real secret power structures.

680 - 718 Influential community groups included the Public Enterprise Committee, which represented a lot of neighborhood groups; the Citizens' Governmental Research Bureau; and the old City Club. These had influence in policy rather than politics. Religious influence probably behind the scenes.

719 - 789 Meier's years as mayor. Strength in working with Ferguson on issues and communicated well. Problem was that he sought out or nourished controversy; is remembered as a fighter, which probably made his job tougher than necessary. Relationship with Council did strengthen the mayor's office but that depended more on personality than official changes. He did not relate well to individual council members but his office got very involved in aldermanic elections. Meier's mark on the office of the mayor was his effective use of television to talk to people. Was dogged on issues that he considered important.

790 - 831 Power of the press in Milwaukee was considerable - more from reporting information than from editorial opinions. Papers have been detailed in governmental coverage. Fans think that Meier really felt he did have legitimate complaints against the press. The Mayor was very protective of his personal life. Fans think he was covered as fairly if not more fairly than anyone else.

832 - 895 Experiences as a reporter. Stories about Zeidler, who was very open with reporters. Doyne was not as open. Usually supervisors and council members were pretty open. Thinks reporters now are a little less informed and are mostly looking for sensational stories.