

INTERVIEW WITH

Ted Stevens

on

October 6, 1977

for

Dwight D. Eisenhower Library

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This is an interview with Senator Theodore Stevens [R-Alaska], in the Senator's office in the Capitol, Washington, DC, October 6, 1977. Present for the interview are Senator Stevens and Dr. Burg of the Eisenhower Library staff.

DR. BURG: I thought we could skip the biographical data because I think that's readily obtainable, and I'd like to go to that period of time, if I could, probably in the summer of 1956 when Mr. [Douglas] McKay resigned as Secretary of the Interior to seek the seat in Oregon, which he didn't get. And my understanding then is that at that time, with the appointment of Fred Seaton, Mr. [William] Snedden, in Fairbanks, went down and talked with Mr. Seaton and said that some kind of calculated effort ought to be made to bring statehood to Alaska and that Seaton then asked Snedden if he could recommend an Alaskan who could come down to Washington and into the Department of the Interior. And that man was you.



SEN. STEVENS: Well, I think it goes back a little further than that. McKay had come to Alaska and I had done some work for him. I was U.S. Attorney and he wanted a concessionaire removed from McKinley Park instantaneously. He had that facility to want those things done like yesterday. It was a strange thing but I did fly down, and I did bring back the concessionaire who did remove himself in one day. McKay got a hold of me and asked me if I would come to Washington, DC to join the Department of the Interior.

BURG: Oh, really?

STEVENS: Before I got down there, Fred Seaton had come to Interior, and Bill Snedden talked to Seaton about continuing me on my way down there. The decision to go there had been made while McKay was Secretary. I did not know Fred, and Snedden did, so Snedden took it upon himself to contact Fred and tell him that he thought that I ought be kept on. I had decided to take McKay's offer because of the statehood issue which was pending at that time. Snedden and others may not have known about the conversation with McKay, but the decision had actually been made prior to Fred's becoming Secretary. I was then employed at the Department of Justice, (as U.S. Attorney in Alaska) and we made arrangements for me to be transferred to Interior and that was put in motion while McKay was Secretary.



BURG: Did McKay tell you--this all strikes me as quite interesting-- why did McKay choose you? Was he happy with the way you'd handled this thing concerning the concessionaire?

STEVENS: Elmer Bennett who had been with Senator [Eugene Donald] Millikin [R-Colorado] was then Solicitor. He had moved up to become Solicitor and his spot as Legislative Counsel was open, and he had mentioned to McKay that he knew me and McKay had indicated--the story I got--he indicated that he remembered this

instant in Alaska so the call came to me from Bennett first to come down. Bennett stayed when Fred came and they became close friends.

BURG: Right. Had you known Bennett before?

STEVENS: Yes, I had been here when I got out of law school, I came to Washington after law school and worked in a law firm here for about two years.

BURG: I see. I see.

STEVENS: And I had met Bennett during that time when he was with Millikin.



BURG: Now when you got down here and reported in, I would assume that you would go to Mr. Seaton and would have some sort of initial discussion with him about your duties, the scope of them, what was to occur. Did such a conversation take place?

STEVENS: Yes, I did meet with Fred when I first came down because of the change. I had met McKay in Alaska, as I said, but I had never met Fred and I did meet him right after I came down here to talk about the job. He had been assistant secretary in Defense handling Congressional relations, and public affairs and congressional relations was combined then as I recall. We had quite a conversation at the time.

BURG: Did he lay out for you some of the major points that he thought you would be working on in the months ahead?

STEVENS: No, I don't think we talked in any specifics except Alaska statehood. That was the only thing that we talked about specifically. I really can't remember anything other than that. He called to my attention that his only speech he had made as a Senator had been on Alaska statehood.

BURG: His maiden speech, I believe, and perhaps the one and only.

STEVENS: His major speech as he put it; I think he called it his major speech as a United States Senator.

BURG: The reason I asked that question is that I think Elmer would have no objection to my mentioning that one of the first things Mr. Seaton did with him, I think even before he got to that office in the transition from McKay to Seaton, he asked Elmer to list out the things that Interior was doing and should be doing so that it could be placed before him as he walked in the door almost. And I wondered if something similar had happened with you. Like he discussed--

STEVENS: Well, I'd just gotten there, really. I forget exactly the dates, but it seems to me I came down sometime in June. I don't know when Fred became Secretary, but it was just before that I think.



BURG: McKay's resignation I think was the 8th of June, and I assumed that some period of time, perhaps a week, of confirmation would be necessary for Fred.

STEVENS: Well I got here right in that period.

BURG: You talked about Alaska statehood, and you must have found that Mr. Seaton was decidedly in favor of it.

STEVENS: Oh, yes.



BURG: Did that surprise you, sir?

STEVENS: No, I had talked to Bill Snedden about it before I came down, and he told me he was going to talk to Fred about it. Snedden was then and still is a very close friend, and that didn't surprise me. Fred was an easy guy to get along with and he was quite busy at that time. It was, as I said, right at the time of the transition that I was coming on board, too. Seaton had other people who were coming on board. And I remember George Abbott came on about that time, and there was someone else that came on, I can't remember who it was.

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BURG: And Elmer Bennett had moved up to Solicitor at about that time.

STEVENS: Yes.



BURG: What instructions did you have then from Seaton, or perhaps they came through Elmer Bennett or someone else.

STEVENS: Well, at first they came through Bennett. I think I'm indebted to Bennett. The sort of "Seaton Circle" was expanded to include me as Legislative Counsel I think at Fred's request and at Ben's [Bennett's] request, too. Maybe Ben's [Bennett's] suggestion and Fred's request. But there for the first few months I wasn't in that circle. They later included the Undersecretary and Assistant Secretary, the Solicitor, me, and Lorne Kennedy, who was Fred's assistant then.

But we had a lot of legislation pending then and it was in the middle of the 1956 campaign. So we were very much involved in position papers and various other things that were going out of the department to the White House. I think Fred said something about the fact that we've got an election to win if any of us wanted to get some of these things done. I do remember that.

But he seemed very confident about it, there was not a lot to worry about winning a second term for Eisenhower.

BURG: Right. Now it would be safe then to think that your duties were what we might expect from the Legislative Counsel in the Department of Interior at that particular time. It's very easy, if one reads some of the scholarship that has been done on the Alaska statehood thing, to see you with your door saying "Alaskan Department" and with a nickname as one author said of "Mr. Alaska" in the Department of Interior, but actually your work was broad and totally tied in with the legislative program that Interior was interested in.



STEVENS: Yes, we had started in the White House, as you probably know, by that time a Saturday morning meeting (which was one of the close-kept secrets, as a matter of fact, of the Eisenhower administration) of the people who handled legislation. I've got a picture of them on the wall in my other office. It was the Bryce Harlow group that met on Saturday morning and we started in right away to try and get Fred's priorities into the Presidential program and to sort of catch up as far as all of us were concerned. And we looked at it on a broad base. We had many things pending then. We conceived Mission 66 which was the Park Service Program during that period. It was a ten-year program of the Park Service.

We conceived the lead and zinc stabilization program and several other major policy initiatives that Eisenhower did approve. He really didn't swing into line on statehood in '56, I'm sure you know.

BURG: Exactly, yes.

STEVENS: Eisenhower came in, let's see, late '57 on statehood.

BURG: Yes, at least that late. It was quite late in the game. Now, I should ask you this: In the upper echelons of Interior did any of the--I'll use this advisedly--the McKay group stay on after McKay himself left?

STEVENS: Yes, for a little while. I'd have to go back and look at the records to find out that, but Orme Lewis was there as I recall and he stepped out and Hatfield Chilson, who had been Assistant Secretary of Land Management, he moved up to be Under Secretary. Roger Ernst came in just right after that I think, sometime around there, but we did have a few people there. Felix Wormser was a McKay person, he stayed on in Mines and Minerals. And [Fred G.] Aandahl had been a McKay person, he stayed on Water and Power, Assistant Secretary for Water and Power.



BURG: Right. And that's Aandahl with two a's, isn't it?

STEVENS: Yes, former governor of North Dakota.

BURG: Yes.

STEVENS: But it didn't take long before Fred had his own people spread around. I think the others left just by their own accord. I'd say within a year, Fred had his own people. Royce Hardy in Mines and Minerals; he had Roger Ernst in Public Lands; and Chilson was Under Secretary and Bennett was Solicitor, and he'd created a new position in Fish and Wildlife, assistant secretary, Ross Leffler took that one. And Fred got his people in the positions he wanted them by then.



BURG: Senator, is it at all safe to think that perhaps the McKay group, using that term very loosely, reflected an anti-statehood for Alaska point of view? Or that McKay himself reflected such a point of view.

STEVENS: Oh, yes, McKay was not for statehood. I'm fairly certain that he--well, he was reviewing his position. We had some discussions about statehood. I had some with his assistant and the person who had been Solicitor, who was from Wyoming. Now I'll have to think

of his name. He's the one that actually called me and asked me to come down and take that position at Interior. And he indicated he was going to go, and that Bennett had suggested my name, and that he had talked to the Secretary and Bennett had called me personally as I recall. Maybe Ben [Bennett] called me first and the Solicitor called me afterwards, but I know I had conversations with both. I think that Fred was looked at sort of as a maverick by a lot of those people in those days. He had been with Stassen, you know. And he had--

BURG: Wild newspaper background.



STEVENS: --been with Eisenhower rather than with Taft. I think that the McKay people were primarily the Taft people; I sort of got that feeling. There was sort of a different force in the Republican structure in that McKay group.

BURG: It's very likely that that's entirely true. That's one reason why I asked about it. We have talked to Mr. Lewis as well as to Elmer Bennett and a few others. I think that that's probably correct. Now Seaton would have been quite a fresh wind, and something that amazes me and you are far more knowledgeable in these things than I, how in heaven's name could Seaton run,

it seems to me quite openly, in defiance of the President's own announced, publicly announced views on Alaska statehood?

STEVENS: Well, Fred was rather excited about the concept that he would be involved in creating a new state. It really had been something that had picked up--he was a friend of Snedden's and of Atwoods; they had been at Publisher's Association meetings together. And they had talked to Fred. Fred's papers had backed statehood.

[Interruption]



BURG: So there was an excitement there on his part. First time this has happened since 1912.

STEVENS: Yes, he saw a great deal of history in it and wanted Eisenhower to be a part of it. As a matter of fact, we set Ike up quite often at the press conferences by planting questions about Alaska statehood. We never let a press conference go by without getting someone to try to ask him about statehood. And we had our little means of keeping him interested. And I told Fred I wanted to hire someone who would work on the statehood thing and I did. We hired Atwood's daughter, who was a bright gal one of the University of Chicago "whiz kids" types, very young, and she came to work in my office, and her main task was

to write speeches for anyone on the Hill that would make a speech about Alaska statehood, or Hawaii, too. He worked for both.

BURG: I see. What was her first name, Senator?

STEVENS: It was Marilyn Atwood.

BURG: Because I was going to ask you, the next thing I wanted to ask, in fact, was who had worked with you and particularly in this regard--the statehood issue.



STEVENS: Marilyn Atwood, she's now Marilyn Odom, lives in Seattle. She was married before to a guy named Coles, who's now dead. She was quite bright, a very attractive young lady who had been a Virginia Apple Blossom Queen or something and was a very knowledgeable gal. She wanted to come join the cause and did as my assistant. But assistant to me on Alaska matters; you see most of the people in my shop then were lawyers; we just had a legal legislative shop. Marilyn Atwood is not a lawyer. Interior had really never had a office of congressional relations; we slowly evolved that as we were there, but it didn't become assistant secretary level though until [Howard] Pyle got it in the Nixon administration.

BURG: I hadn't realized that.

STEVENS: We put the things together there so that we had one person who worked on statehood. We had one other young man who came in later, came on board, I'll have to think of his name, who worked generally in the same type of thing. Members of Congress didn't have as many assistants as we have now; if they wanted to get involved in something like statehood, they'd call down and say, you know, "I need some material. I'd like to think about statehood." Well, we would send Marilyn up to talk to them and I'd go up to talk to them, and she'd then come back with a prepared speech for them, or maybe press releases or something like that. We provided as much assistance as we could to get as many people going on the statehood idea.

BURG: Right. All right, those are two people--the young man's name may come back to you and can be added to the transcript--who were working for you.

STEVENS: It was Donald something or other; I'll have to think about it.

BURG: Do you happen to remember now anyone in Interior who worked against you? Who was unhappy with this situation in the Legislative Counsel's office?



STEVENS: Well, we had people in the Office of Territories who weren't too certain about statehood for Alaska. They were very much for statehood for Hawaii. They had had some, you know, background with the Hawaii people. They were of the opinion that Hawaii statehood had to be first, and, yes, I think we had some opposition from within the department to statehood.

BURG: But you had that blocked off at the absolute top and several spaces down from the top, too, probably.

STEVENS: But I'd say within about five, six months after we got there, the word was out pretty clearly that this was Fred's number one legislative goal, and I don't think there were any vocal dissidents after that.

BURG: Let me ask you this: You were in communication with administration people, presumably White House people for example.



STEVENS: Yes.

BURG: Who up at the White House was especially helpful to you?

STEVENS: Oh, Bryce Harlow was extremely helpful and so was Jerry Persons. I always thought that Sherman Adams never quite

made up his mind whether he wanted statehood for Alaska or not. So I don't know really how Adams came out on it.

BURG: Did you draw--

STEVENS: We finally had to meet Eisenhower's objections, you know; we finally got Eisenhower to articulate his objections and we met them head on. There's a guy still over in the Department of Defense, Jack Stempler; he and I worked out the section on the Alaska statehood bill that answered Ike's objections--it's in section 10 of the statehood bill. Jack was with the Department of the Army then; he's now the--I think he's Assistant Secretary of Defense for Congressional Relations or something over there.



BURG: Jack Stempler. The objection being this business of wishing to withdraw large areas for the purposes of defense?

STEVENS: I think I've still got the map that Eisenhower drew a line on and said, in effect, "All of that that's north and west of that line," must be subject to special Federal defense considerations. We called it the Pick Line--Porcupine, Yukon, Kuskokwim Line, so we nicknamed it the Pick [PYK] Line.

BURG: Okay, we can find that on the map, then.

STEVENS: Ike took the position that that land up there was very sparsely populated and very much an open invitation to invasion, very valuable. Ike, I think, saw more than anybody at the time the significance of the resource values of that area. After he had come to Alaska, he had Frank Heinzelman, who was Governor of Alaska, propose to partition Alaska in two. None of us liked that. I think Fred had addressed that in his speech as a matter of fact.

Fred looked for a young Alaskan to be governor, territorial governor, who was for statehood. Someone who had pizazz and he found him with Mike Stepovich. Stepovich became a roving ambassador for statehood. He's a nice guy; hail fellow, well met type. You know; a jock; a baseball player type, got along well with a lot of people on the Hill and worked very hard for statehood.



But Eisenhower had used the Pick Line and we finally convinced him to take the section 10 provision which gave the President the special power to declare what amounted to martial law within that area of the state and in effect reserved Presidential powers and a Presidential proclamation in a specific area. There were a lot of people that challenged its constitutionality; that was a very interesting battle we had in the statehood days about that. But there's a lot of people who forget that the Alaska Statehood Act passed the Senate precisely as it passed the House. The Senate

did not make one amendment. That was our big fight; we had to prevent any amendments in the Senate, because the conference could kill it.

BURG: And I understand amendments galore were trotted out as a last-ditch effort to stop you, if they possibly could. Do you think, Senator, again looking back now a number of years, Eisenhower used to maintain that any opposition to statehood that he might express had no political basis--that it had nothing to do with the Republicans in the south or the southern Democrats and their fears concerning civil rights and issues of this sort--but that his concern was defense. Does that ring true with you?

STEVENS: Yes. In all the conversations I was ever in on with Fred and the President I would say--they weren't that many, but we had several, the issue was the same.

BURG: And that was the point of view that he took.

STEVENS: It was defense problem.

BURG: And you felt it was an honest, his honest point of view.

STEVENS: Yes, I think he honestly believed we had special vulnerability and also a special significance as far as military strategy was concerned. Ike did not believe that we'd be able to provide



what we now call infrastructure. He believed that rural Alaska would need help to prevent its becoming occupied without knowledge, or a target for sabotage and terrorism. He always made that point.

BURG: In these discussions, Bryce Harlow would be one who would assist in presenting your case, at least on the White House staff?

STEVENS: Yes, I always thought Harlow was very much of a proponent of statehood and a great friend of Fred Seaton's.

BURG: Anyone else come to mind over there who would have had special interest in these matters and could have provided assistance to you?



STEVENS: The White House staff wasn't that big then. There was Adams and then later Persons. During that time Persons' brother was there. He was sort of a, you know, a more formal functionary type as I recall. They had Gerry--

BURG: Gerry Morgan?

STEVENS: --Morgan and Ed McCabe.

BURG: McCabe, right. Roemer McPhee, perhaps--

STEVENS: McPhee had been a classmate of mine.

BURG: Had he really?

STEVENS: And we spent a lot of time in McPhee's office those days.

BURG: So, are these also to be counted as friends of Alaska and Hawaii statehood?

STEVENS: Yes, I think they were not as enthusiastic as Fred, but I don't think they were enemies. I think that they always questioned, you know, our intense pressure that we kept behind statehood--thought there were other things more important at the time. We didn't. We really pressed statehood as the number one cause. Eventually, we did get statehood on the Presidential program. It became one of Eisenhower's legislative objectives, but it wasn't until 1958.

BURG: Right. Right. I did run across, as I briefed myself for our talk today, the things like Mr. McKay telling you to be ladies and gentlemen.

STEVENS: Well, McKay, didn't come across much different than prior secretaries of Interior. They had been, you know, [Oscar L.] Chapman, [Harold L.] Ickes, the Great White Father concept as far as Alaska was concerned. Secretaries of Interior have never been exactly the most popular leaders in Alaska. Fred was very popular and really had quite a following in Alaska.



BURG: If we went up on the Hill at that time that you're in Interior and you're doing this work, Miss Atwood is helping, who now stands out in your--

[Interruption]

BURG: Who now stands out as perhaps people that you counted on pretty heavily, either in the Senate or the House side? People with whom you may have had contact yourself?

STEVENS: Well, John [Phillips] Saylor [Pennsylvania] was on the House side, and we never quite knew how to take John Saylor or Doc [Arthur Lewis] Miller. Miller was from Nebraska and he tried to love us to death. He knew use of land, and we're indebted to him because he kept increasing the amount of land we were going to get. We started off seeking twenty million acres; we ended up with a hundred and five million acres primarily because Doc Miller kept increasing it, thinking you get to the point where the Congress would vote against it. But Saylor was sort of for it, was a friend of Fred's--he worked pretty well with him. And we had Wayne Aspinall from Colorado was there, he was a friend on the other side of the aisle. Over here Murray, Senator [James E.] Murray of Montana; we had Clint [Clinton P.] Anderson of New Mexico and Gordon Allott of Colorado was there as Senator, I think in '57. We had Bill [William F.] Knowland who was the minority leader and my memory was he was still around then, left in '58 I think. And Norris Cotton was a friend, then, too.



BURG: How about in my home state, Washington? Were [Henry M.] Jackson and [Warren G.] Magnuson on your side?

STEVENS: Magnuson was on our side from the very beginning; Jackson was on our side. He was chairman of the sub-committee then and worked with us. He's a very able guy and he was tough to convince that we had to keep that bill without amendments. Once Jackson agreed to that procedure, then we thought we were on track. And he insisted on getting a ruling from the Attorney General, I recall, about section 10.

[Interruption]



STEVENS: We worked up a separate briefing on the Senate, Time magazine has still got some of the photographs, I'm sure. They covered it. We had a whole group of Alaskans, a task force came down. I had made a study of each member of the Senate and this goes on now into '57, '58. Whether they were Rotarians or Kiwanians or Catholics or Baptists and, veterans or loggers--the whole thing. We had made, Marilyn and I, a card on each member of the Senate and we brought down this team. Atwood, Snedden, Stepovitch, Bob Groseclose, Tillie Reeve; Groseclose was Republican National Committeeman, Tillie Reeve was National Committeewoman. We had, oh, quite a few others; John Butrovich, a state senator. And we assigned these Alaskans to go talk to individual members of the Senate and split them down on the basis

of people that have something in common with them. We started in-- I think that was at least a year before this new bill finally passed the Senate. But we had a real organized lobbying effort, really from the Secretary of Interior's office on that. Norris Cotton, incidentally, from New Hampshire, was a very, very solid citizen and very much behind statehood, sat next to Fred on the floor, felt very strongly as a friend and had helped recruit Eisenhower to run for the Presidency. Fred called on a lot of old friends in the course of that.

BURG: But Bill Jenner was not one that could be called on evidently. In Indiana.



STEVENS: No, I don't think Bill [William L.] Jenner was a friend. There was the other Senator from Nebraska; wasn't a friend, either. Forget what his name was now.

BURG: John Stennis, I guess, was not a friend. Strom Thurmond.

STEVENS: Most of the southerners were not friends.

BURG: Right. There was no way you could change their minds. You were not able--

STEVENS: There was one southerner who was with us. We had most of our support from the west and from the midwest and the New England area.

BURG: Now when you spoke of that card file, it brought to mind this book which you may have read by Claus [M.] Naske who was at the University of Alaska, teaches history there. And it's out in paperback, it's been out, I don't know, perhaps two or three years now on the battle for Alaska statehood. He has a segment in there about that file, and I think he ties Mr. Snedden to it, also. He says that the file not only went so far as to note religious preferences, their golf game, and things of this sort, but that-- and I got the impression that Mr. Snedden had also hired the services of a detective agency, that they then got certain things on certain members of the House or Senate, and then through Snedden's newspaper contacts would offer to trade off support for Alaska or they would be publishing some of these interesting items. Now is Naske right on that?

STEVENS: No. I think I was as close to all those people as anybody. Bill spent most of his time in my home when he was here, almost every night we'd have dinner together. We had breakfast together almost every day during this period, and he was down here six months out of each of those two years, 57-58; last part of '56, all of '57, and first part of '58. And I don't think he did any of that. We did some things that I consider to be legitimate lobbying tactics, but we didn't use any dirty tricks. We got the Mormon people in Alaska to write to their friends in Utah to contact Arthur Watkins



who was opposed to us, who was a prominent Senator on the Interior committee. We had a whole Operation Statehood going up in Alaska that dovetailed with what we were doing, although they really didn't even know where it was coming from. We fed our stuff through Atwood or Snedden, and they made the suggestions to Operation Statehood. I don't even think Sundberg, who was the head of that operation, knew who I was, but we were down here doing the same thing. We were triggering their activities of writing to people in particular Congressional districts. But we didn't hire anybody to try to get anything on anybody.

[Interruption]

BURG: Let me ask you two questions:--



STEVENS: Let me finish that. I'm confident that there was no trying to find out personal problems or blackmailing type tactics used by our people. It just was not done. You know I was just fresh out of being a district attorney and had even more puritan views than I have now as far as what government shouldn't and should do, and I would not have allowed it and neither would Fred.

BURG: The reason I asked was that I didn't think the footnote citation would hold much water. It didn't look as though there was much substantiation for it, but it's simply flat-out stated in the book.

STEVENS: I had those cards, they were my cards and I made them. I know what was on them. No one else did that. It took a lot of time. Marilyn and I made them. I don't know whether I've still got them in my files or not. If I do, they're stored up North. I, unfortunately, moved so many times I finally went through one time and threw away a lot of the stuff I had from Interior days. I wish I hadn't.

BURG: Ah, yes. That's regrettable.

STEVENS: I had copies of all those things and particularly those cards which I think is the first time anyone had ever really done that one within the government, to try and match up people from an area like Alaska with people here on the basis of things that they could talk about, and get to know one another.

BURG: Yes.

STEVENS: But it was a friendship thing of developing ties rather than any kind of a twisting tails that we were involved in.

BURG: Well, I know Claus, I've met him several times, but unfortunately the book came out in the interim between my last meeting with him and now, so I've not had any chance to say, "Where did you get that story?" But I thought I'd--



STEVENS: Well we did some things and we encouraged people to be absent, and we encouraged people to fly from Texas and to talk to some of the oil senators, and we tried to convince Arthur Watkins that the Mormons really wanted statehood, and we planted editorials in weeklies and dailies and newspapers in the district of people we thought were opposed to us or states where they're opposed to us so that suddenly they were thinking twice about opposing us. But I don't consider those dirty tricks. We didn't get involved in dirty tricks. In the first place we didn't really have to keep it buried. I think Snedden's money was spent on ghost writers of editorials and that sort of thing. If he had any private investigators going, he certainly never told me about it. I don't think he did.

BURG: You think it very unusual that a man who was as close to you as that would not have let you know, or that you would not have found out in some way.



STEVENS: I'd be very surprised. I know some of the things he did that put heat on people. That's a legitimate lobbying thing to get their friends to call and to get their friends to threaten to run somebody against them, that sort of thing, that's another matter. Not from any, you know, hiring detectives sort of thing.

BURG: Well, the story struck me as being unusual.

STEVENS: I think that they misunderstood some of the things we were doing and put two and two together and got six, that's the problem. We didn't do that kind of thing. It would have backfired on us if we had, I'm convinced.

BURG: Yes, things for you were quite tenuous as it was without having that pile of ammunition fall into the wrong hands.

STEVENS: And besides that we were violating the law as it was-- we were lobbying from the executive branch, and there's been a statute against that for a long time. There was then and there is now. It's a question of, I believe, what constitutes lobbying. That's why we brought in the Alaskans; they actually did the visiting. Snedden and Atwood, that's where they were involved. We more or less, I would say masterminded the House and Senate attack from the executive branch. Within the Congress, you know, Alaskans had Delegate "Bob" [Edward L.] Bartlett, and Ernest Gruening and Bill Egan were here as Tennessee Plan Senators during that period. We coordinated a lot with them. I coordinated a lot with Bob Bartlett; Gruening was very independent but he knew what we were doing, but Bartlett was the delegate and had an official standing. Bartlett wasn't the Tennessee Plan Senator, it was Egan and Gruening. Rivers was the Tennessee Plan Representative.



BURG: Egan--

STEVENS: --and Gruening

BURG: Egan and Gruening and Rivers.

STEVENS: Egan and Bartlett and Fred got along particularly well; Rivers and Gruening worked a little bit with Fred but primarily with the Operation Statehood group, and we worked through that group as I said with Atwood and Snedden.

BURG: Yes. How did you yourself get along with Gruening?

STEVENS: Oh, very well. I ran against him in '62, but we were personal friends. He was a very dedicated guy for statehood; very forceful man.



BURG: A White House staffer recently told me extremely liberal, extremely liberal.

STEVENS: Oh, he was most liberal. He'd been a Republican though. He was LaFollette's campaign manager when LaFollette ran as third party candidate, and was a progressive Republican. He really had a very, very amazing career. Very forceful guy, was very liberal in some sense, very conservative in others, if you really think about it in terms of what his views were on personal rights and liberties and that sort of thing.

BURG: Yes. And a very determined man.

STEVENS: And very prolific from the point of view of writing. He got Edna Ferber to write that book on Ice Palace; that helped us a great deal. He wrote his own book on the state of Alaska. He--

BURG: Which is quite a massive thing, I believe.



STEVENS: Yes. But he carried his load. And he and Fred were very good friends. They got along, but not as well as we got along with Bartlett because as I said, with Bartlett, we were dealing on a day-to-day basis with as a Delegate, and Bob was a tireless worker. Had many great friends in the Senate as well as the House.

BURG: I'm going to ask you because I'm using up and have used a good bit of the time that I needed to have from you, I'm going not to follow your own career in Interior which took you up to the solicitorship yourself. I am going to ask you, though, what occurred during the transition period. Did you play any part in the transition into the Kennedy administration?

STEVENS: I left on January 20th, 1961. I went back to Alaska. I was not part of the transition team. And I really don't know who played that role.

BURG: Okay.

STEVENS: I did, however, go up to see Stewart Udall (then a Congressman) on the morning of January 20, who was going to become Secretary of Interior, and left with him my feelings about the one major issue which was in the Interior Department that affected Alaska; the Alaskan Native Land Claim Settlement. And we talked for a good hour about problems that he was going to face as Interior Secretary. He was very gracious about it. But I was not on the transition team; we had people from the Kennedy team move into Interior Department at least two to three weeks earlier. I had met my successor as Solicitor, and we had made offices available for his assistant to come in. Eisenhower had decreed a freeze on employment to hold the spots so that Kennedy could not be embarrassed by late appointees and that sort of thing. I think it was, from my point of view, as a Presidential appointee at the time, a fairly smooth transition. Most of us had been very deeply involved in the Nixon campaign in 1960, and most of us left almost immediately. I don't remember many of my friends that stayed, or tried to stay on as a matter of fact.

BURG: Right. You then went back up to Alaska. Did you practice law up there at that time?



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STEVENS: Yes, I practiced law nine years, and I ran against Ernest Gruening in '62, and I ran for and was elected to the state legislature in '64 and '66 and then I came down here in '68.

BURG: All right. I think that takes care of the material that I wanted to get from you at this time and I appreciate it very much.

