

Walter Pozen Oral History Interview – JFK#2, 10/27/1967
Administrative Information

Creator: Walter Pozen
Interviewer: John Stewart
Date of Interview: October 27, 1967
Place of Interview: Washington, D.C.
Length: 57 pages

Biographical Note

Pozen (1933-2016) was the Assistant to Secretary of Interior (1961 - 1967), editor of the book *Strategy for the '60's: Policy Research Centers for the United States Senate*, and lead partner at Stroock & Stroock & Lavan LLP. In this interview, Pozen discusses the post-election transition period, his work at the Department of the Interior as well as the Department's relationships with the White House, Bureau of the Budget and Congress, among other issues.

Access

Open

Usage Restrictions

According to the deed of gift signed July 6, 2004, copyright of these materials has been assigned to the United States Government. Users of these materials are advised to determine the copyright status of any document from which they wish to publish.

Copyright

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research." If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excesses of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement. This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law. The copyright law extends its protection to unpublished works from the moment of creation in a tangible form. Direct your questions concerning copyright to the reference staff.

Transcript of Oral History Interview

These electronic documents were created from transcripts available in the research room of the John F. Kennedy Library. The transcripts were scanned using optical character recognition and the resulting text files were proofread against the original transcripts. Some formatting changes were made. Page numbers are noted where they would have occurred at the bottoms of the pages of the original transcripts. If researchers have any

concerns about accuracy, they are encouraged to visit the Library and consult the transcripts and the interview recordings.

Suggested Citation

Walter Pozen, recorded interview by John Stewart, October 27, 1967, (page number), John F. Kennedy Library Oral History Program.



ORAL HISTORY AGREEMENT

This will confirm my understanding and agreement with the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) with respect to my participation in an oral interview conducted by the Oral History Program of the John F. Kennedy Library.

- 1. The interview(s) will be taped and a transcript of the tapes will be made by the Library. A copy of the tape and a transcript (collectively called the "Work"), will be maintained by the Library and made available to the public in accordance with its rules and general policies for research and other scholarly purposes.
- 2. As soon as the transcription process is complete, the Work will be made available to researchers as part of the John F. Kennedy Library Oral History Program.
- 3. I hereby grant, assign, and transfer to NARA all rights, title, and interest in the Work, including literary rights and copyright.
- 4. This agreement contains our entire and complete understanding.

Name Walter Pozen

Address 3806 Kingle Pl., N.W. 5 Riverside Drive #1710
Washington, DC 20016 New York, N.Y. 10023

Signature [Handwritten Signature]

Date 6.4.04

Signed: [Handwritten Signature]
JOHN W. CARLIN, Archivist of the United States

Date: 7-6-04

Walter Pozen– JFK #2
Table of Contents

<u>Page</u>	<u>Topic</u>
57	Post-election transition period
60	Accepting the position of Assistant to Secretary of Interior
64	Recruitment process during the transition period
72	Civil service positions
73	Federal Power Commission appointments
80	Department of Interior relationship with the White House
98	Department of Interior relationship with Bureau of the Budget
101	Department of Interior relationship with Congress

Second Oral History Interview

with

WALTER POZEN

October 27, 1967
Washington, D.C.

By John Stewart

For the John F. Kennedy Library

STEWART: Why don't we start by my asking you what you did initially after the election? Did you consider joining the Administration then? Did you have any role at all in the transition period?

POZEN: Yes. The answer to both questions has to be yes. The transitional period was a curious one. Among other things I had hepatitis and didn't know it, and felt very let down after the election which I suppose is a natural sort of

[-57-]

of thing, but in addition to that I was quite ill. So I really didn't pull myself together until February or March. But I managed to be very close to Ralph Dungan in his efforts to staff the Administration, and Adam Yarmolinsky, and saw a good deal of Mike Feldman and Ted Sorensen, and the same people that I had been dealing with prior to the election I still saw. But I was very ambiguous because I felt this would be a very good time to practice law since a friend of mine or someone I knew was President on one hand, and on the other, I felt an obligation to do something in the Administration. I wasn't quite sure. My own training had been schizophrenic in the sense that I was principally working at that stage and during the campaign for a.... I was practicing law and one of my principal clients was a foreign policy

group. I'd just finished a book with Senator Fulbright [J.W. Fulbright] called *Strategy for the Sixties*,

[-58-]

which dealt with the whole panoply of foreign policy problems; regional, geographical, substantive, and so on. And I thought for a brief moment, and I was encouraged to think about working in the State Department. In fact, the President appointed a task force -- which at that stage was a fairly unused word, now it's a terribly used phrase -- to look into the reorganization of the aid program. Ted Tannenwald, who's now a judge in the Tax Court, was head of it. Dave Bell [David E. Bell] worked on it and so on. They were very anxious for me to spend some time with them which I did. In January, February and March. The thought being, I'm sure, looking towards some sort of employment in AID [Aid for International Development] or in the State Department. Another possibility was working with their congressional liaison setup. So I really had a foot in both camps in terms of the private

[-59-]

world and the government. I spent a good deal of time at State with a lot of my Kennedy friends, and I think I was moving more and more towards actually making the break and going to the State Department.

Meanwhile, Ralph Dungan and Mike Feldman talked to me about some problems that Stewart Udall was having at the Interior Department. If you remember, Stewart started off with a real bang by blaming the Cuban problem on Eisenhower, and also got involved with a very unpleasant, unfair kind of thing in reference to a Democratic dinner which was held shortly after the early part of 1961. So he was in trouble, he really was. There were people, I think, in the whole Kennedy inner circle who felt that Stewart, perhaps, was a mistake to start with.

STEWART: Oh, really?

POZEN: Yes, I think. I don't think I really should pursue that too much farther, but I think there

[-60-]

was some feeling that he perhaps wasn't the right guy for the job and needed a sort of a stabilizing influence. Mike Feldman talked to Stewart about me and suggested that I might be a good guy in terms of giving another set of eyes to the Department. I think it was a multi-level thing, John, where I don't really know what the motivation was. I think they maybe wanted somebody to keep a watch on what was going on there. Ralph might have had the same view.

STEWART: This was true in practically all departments and agencies.

POZEN: Was it?

STEWART: There was someone that they wanted to get in there that they knew their primary loyalties were to the White House.

POZEN: Well, I think that's really what it was. They never said it to me in those words. And clearly there's where my loyalties were. I

[-61-]

had known Stewart for about ten years and knew him quite well and admired him. I also knew that this little flurry of unfortunate events wasn't the real Stewart Udall. This man has intelligence and vitality and energy that's a rare combination. An idealistic guy who has his feet on the ground of tough political -- I mean, he realized what the politics are with any particular situation. So in April we started negotiations on what I would be doing for Stewart. We thought of it as a sort of six month kind of short term business which was much to my liking because then I'd have served my time and then go back to what I felt was the most important thing for me to be doing. I was Assistant to the Secretary and they found a slot for congressional liaison. There wasn't anything on the congressional liaison. That was in the latter part of April. First I was put on as a consultant for about thirty

[-62-]

days, and then we had this Assistant to the Secretary for the Congressional Liaison. I think formally that the commission was signed on June ninth. What really developed was that Stewart still, at that stage and still today, liked this sort of Hill relationship of running an office where he had one or two people close to him who had full confidence in while he told me he had full confidence, and he could really unload on you and give you things. And if it didn't work he could say, "Why the heck didn't that work," and so on, which doesn't make the best sense in terms of a large bureaucracy because very often you would find yourself being a Secretary of the Interior or certainly creating real problems for the Under Secretary, which did happen and wasn't resolved until we got a very strong, energetic and bright Under Secretary, Charles Luce, who's now Chairman of the Board of Consolidated Edison. At that stage

[-63-]

we all were a little tired and Chuck did realize what his role should be and we were delighted that he did it and he took a lot of the burden off of us. But in those first few years, John, it seemed to me that the people closest to Stewart, Orren Beatty and myself, really had much, much, too much responsibility and authority. To finish the story, what was going to go on for six months and be a limited kind of thing became a much broader activity in which I did the

things that he personally was involved in and interested in. That went on for almost seven years.

STEWART: If we could jump back a little, you mentioned some association with the recruitment process during the transition.

POZEN: Yes.

STEWART: What were your general impressions, and looking back on it now, can you think of any major mistakes that were made or things that should have been done differently or could have been

[-64-]

done differently?

POZEN: Well, yes. I think so. I felt that it was not unfair in reference to me because I knew the people, I knew their general orientation and feeling. It was very much -- to borrow a title from a book which now I guess is the number one best seller, *Our Crowd*, a different crowd let me add -- but it was very much 'our crowd.' Easterners, people who might be geographically located in the West but who clearly shared the values and aspirations and desires of Easterners had an inside track. While I thought it was an impressive operation and clearly the first of its kind in my experience, and while I did call up a lot of awfully good people, people that I knew, understood, empathized with and so on, I think they didn't tape a great area in terms of really effective and useful people who were terribly different, who I didn't even know existed until I went to work for the Department

[-65-]

of the Interior and got to know Westerners a little better. Now maybe that's not fair because I didn't have an overall view. I did see, as I say, Ralph a good deal and Adam. I guess that was an earlier stage, and some others who were working on it. But I think it was a parochial view of the world and as a result the staff administration on the top levels were first rate people in many regards, people who had a very particular set of values which weren't representative of the country in a lot of ways.

STEWART: Why don't we continue on this? I assume that you had a continuing responsibility or association with this whole recruitment process. With who primarily? Was it still with Ralph Dungan?

POZEN: Ralph.

STEWART: Did you get involved at all with Dan Fenn and his people who were

continually recruiting?

POZEN: Later on. Oh yes. John, that was later. It evolved. Then of course it got into the sort of pol level of just getting people

[-66-]

for a job. There are jobs and you want to get a good Democrat to fill it. But Ralph, of course, did the high level kind of selection, and sure I did. I'm just trying to think of particular instances. A great friend of mine and of Ralph's, Bill Brubeck, who's now in London, I think he's our number two guy in our embassy in London, was intimately connected in that. I can't bring to mind particular people, but I know that we had an awful lot to do with suggesting people.

STEWART: Yes. Again, did this orientation that you talked about change as they got into the Administration, say in....

POZEN: The people or the recruiting operation?

STEWART: The recruiting operation as far as the types of people they were looking for and considering.

POZEN: Well, you know, the circumstances after a while dictated the person and very often there weren't that many available candidates. For instance, in our own department Ralph didn't give very

[-67-]

much attention, it seems to me, to the Department of the Interior generally. This was, unfortunately, a major problem, I think, in the early Kennedy days of the Administration. They had no real conception of the Department of the Interior or what it could be, and certainly they didn't share the visions and the dreams to a certain extent that Stewart Udall and Walter Pozen understood it. When you go to the Department of the Interior, for instance, and you have an assistant secretaryship, you must look at Westerners because these are western problems in many regards. I still think though that the highest level and the jobs which were terribly important, policy level jobs were terribly important then, that Ralph really did give some attention to or Dan gave some serious attention to they were Easterners or eastern oriented people, or in some way identifiable in this regard.

STEWART: There was frequently a criticism, and I'm talking now of lower level jobs, that agencies would too

[-68-]

readily pick up referrals who either Dan Fenn or the White House didn't really intend that agencies pick up. I don't know if I make myself clear. In other words, people would be referred as a matter of course and agencies overreacting to a referral from the White House...

POZEN: Oh, sure. They thought there was a laying on of hands and that we really did want....

STEWART: Was this a serious problem? Did this happen frequently?

POZEN: No. You know what happened was that having had some experience in Washington before, a considerable amount of experience, I -- just as a rule of thumb that Secretary Udall uses, and others, that a senator can write letters and so on, but if he picks up the phone and actually talks to you, then you know he's serious about it. I used to follow the same kind of rule of thumb, that while Mr. X would come over or there'd be some papers preceding him. If Ralph called me or Dan or somebody called then I'd have some

[-69-]

real interest in him. Otherwise I would obviously be courteous and so on, but I didn't feel this was a command performance.

STEWART: To what extent did the career personnel people in Interior play an important part of play a valuable part in this whole process of recruiting middle level and top level people?

POZEN: That's an extremely good question, John, because that's one of the hidden and rather large pluses that came out of the feeling, the sort of ambiance of the early Kennedy days. While I saw some feet of clay kind of things and cracks and much talk and sometimes very little performance, the middle level people took this to heart. For the first time they saw somebody who they thought was interested in their problems, and as a result they tried to attract professionals from the private sector into the Department saying, "We've really got a guy in Stewart Udall and John Kennedy is interested in us." While they probably never came

[-70-]

through the Dungan operation, or maybe they did, but only in a peripheral sense they were damn good. I guess this is the sort of thing that happened in the thirties to a real extent, a.) because of the exciting things going on, and b.) because it was so hard to get a job anyway. These people are still in the Department many of them, New Dealers, but they're getting awfully old. I think there's been a restocking of the middle level people as a result of the Kennedy operation. That's a fascinating point I've never seen developed.

STEWART: Was the whole process of weeding out holdovers from the Eisenhower Administration accomplished by the time you got to Interior?

POZEN: No.

STEWART: Were there still problems of people who there was a question as to whether to retain them or not?

POZEN: Yes, we had one, for instance, our Director of

[-71-]

Information was Secretary Seaton's [Fred A. Seaton] Director of Information, and Stewart, who can be somewhat gullible at times, thought he really was a pretty good guy. In fact he wasn't, and was planting stuff all over the map with columnists and people in town including giving a Udall letter to a fellow who wrote a humorous column who's now dead, who printed it, and later learned that this guy was after Stewart's tail and wrote an apology to Udall. And shortly thereafter we saw the error of our ways and told this man to move on. That was Jack Tannenbauer.

STEWART: Were there any others that you can think of, or was this something of a problem at all?

POZEN: Not really, because most people, I think, at the top levels of the Department realized that they had had their day, that their President was no longer there, their Secretary was gone. They moved on. There were isolated cases. They were gone actually even before we took over.

[-72-]

STEWART: Regional people, there's frequently a problem with them, who have civil service status in many cases.

POZEN: They're still there.

STEWART: Are they?

POZEN: Yes. We had them. There wasn't a bloodletting in our department and I think there are a lot of people who really owed their allegiance to the former Administration who probably are still there.

STEWART: Was this strictly an Interior thing? Were there any general guidelines from the White House on the extent to which these kind of people would be weeded

out?

POZEN: I never saw it if there were.

STEWART: Let's see. I think you mentioned on the thing that you were involved in the problems with the Federal Power Commission appointments. This originally came up.... I assume you're referring to the Swidler [Joseph C. Swidler] appointment

[-73-]

in 1961 when it was brought out that he was eventually going to become chairman. Could you go into that and describe exactly how you got involved in it and what the problems were?

POZEN: Well, it was an interesting problem that I don't know if I covered the last time, but to me it was a real eye opener moving over from private legal practice and Hill experience and I suppose not knowing an awful lot about the executive branch except vis a vis adversary. On a particular project, I believe it was the.... I don't know, I can't bring it to mind. It was one of these classic kind of conflicts between private power development and conservation value, private power development and conservation value, private power development and the difficulty with destroying conservation values, fish and flooding out and so on. Stewart and I knew very little about this really. Stewart was concerned about it and asked me to look into it. So I thought the simplest way, of course, would be -- and there was an application for

[-74-]

a license pending before the Federal Power Commission -- I thought the simplest way to handle it, of course, would be to call Joe up, who I knew, but not terribly well, and just discuss it with him since this was a direct request from the Secretary of the Interior and I thought the man who was, I guess, chairman at that stage. Joe let me give my spiel, saying that Stewart had asked me to look into this and we were concerned and that it was a particular aspect that was really on the front burner and I wanted some guidance on it. He wouldn't talk to me. He just said, "Well, look, you're a nice guy and I'm not going to indict you essentially this time." Really, I mean, that kind of thing. "I'm not going to cite you in some way, but I cannot discuss this matter," and hung up the phone without saying goodbye. Then later, during the Administration.... I'm not at all being critical of Joe. I just

[-75-]

never understood his conception of his role as chairman of the Federal Power Commission because they have a very pronounced responsibility under their act. In addition to regulating natural gas prices and so on they have a responsibility to help determine an administration

power position and conservation position, such that they should have made an input, my feeling on the policy level of sort of a continuing dialogue and each guy saying, "Well, I see it this way and I see it that way." This was something that really didn't ever come out clean on the whole problem of development in the Grand Canyon, which went on well after President Kennedy's death and has just been resolved. It really isn't resolved, but at least got partially resolved last year. We never could get Joe's views since he was directly, or should have been directly involved because there was an application pending by the state of Arizona to develop a

[-76-]

particular dam site by the state as a *quasi* public facility. Yet, Joe just viewed his role as a judge, as a semi-judicial kind of agency where he felt he couldn't discuss anything except the pleadings. He couldn't even discuss the pleadings which were public documents. I remember one particular meeting in Ted Sorensen's office at which Lee White was present, Stewart Udall, Ted, Swidler and myself, which is, I would think, a group in which you could let your hair down somewhat. There wasn't a court reporter present, and Joe still refused to really discuss the matter. To me it was a revelation because if you look at the act it's in at least two distinct parts. One is this judicial, fact-finding, rate-setting kind of thing, and the other is this question of really determining policy as part of an administration team, an interesting point.

STEWART: Well, you hadn't been involved then in the....

[-77-]

There was a problem with his appointment, wasn't there? Or did this cancel out before? They announced that he was eventually going to be chairman and the chairman at the time, the holdover from Eisenhower was -- what's his name? It begins with a K.

POZEN: Oh, Kuykendall [Jerome K. Kuykendall]?

STEWART: Kuykendall, that's right. Then there was opposition to Swidler because, as I say, they had announced that he was going to become chairman and Kuykendall's term had some more time to run, but he was eventually replaced in 1962 by Woodward [Harold C. Woodward].

POZEN: That's right. I'm trying to think, I did get involved, but I can't remember what my role was. Somehow or other Lee White comes to mind and talking to Lee about this and also to Ted, but, John, I don't remember what the...

STEWART: Would the Interior generally hold a veto over appointments?

[-78-]

POZEN: Oh, no. Far from it.

STEWART: Not at all?

POZEN: No.

STEWART: Was there any involvement?

POZEN: I think there was an involvement in terms of the problems with having a Republican as chairman for the reasons I've given because we viewed the role of the Federal Power Commission as that of a partner not a foe against us, but somebody we'd like to have on our team. We were delighted when Joe was appointed because then it was somebody we could just call on the phone.... then as it turns -- that's I guess what I had in mind -- it didn't work out that way at all.

STEWART: As far as, for example, Lawrence O'Connor, I think was later nominated.

POZEN: That's right.

STEWART: The Interior Department played no role in....

POZEN: Now, I think that was an effort of Lyndon Johnson.

[-79-]

STEWART: Yes.

POZEN: As a gift. You know there's one member who always represents that aspect of thought and Larry was the guy. And he isn't bad.

STEWART: Could we talk a little bit more about general relations with the White House? Of course, a lot has been made of the frustrations that people in Interior supposedly felt because of the President's lack of interest in either the Department of Agriculture or Interior. One, do you feel this lack of interest was true, and secondly, can you think of any things that may have been done if there was a more active interest on the part of the President?

POZEN: Oh, yes. This is something I don't generally discuss. There is a degree of confidentiality here so I don't want to be too indiscreet. Remembering the ground rules, I'll be candid. Yes, I think there was a definite lack

[-80-]

of interest stemming from a number -- and the second part is really fascinating, don't let me forget that -- but the first part stems from this other thing that I referred to earlier, and I don't mean to sound stereotyped and unoriginal but it happens to be true, is that the people around the President to a significant extent didn't have a true understanding of the Department. They were eastern oriented. Now I realize that Lee White worked for TVA [Tennessee Valley Authority] and Lee comes from a state, as does Ted Sorensen, that has public power systems from Nebraska and Senator Norris [George N. Norris] and so on, so obviously at that level with people of this caliber you can't say they really didn't know anything about it. Of course they knew a good deal about it. You couldn't work on the Hill and not understand the issues and so on. But I mean a more fundamental appreciation and aspirations and hopes for the Department. I think that Ted and the President just viewed this as a

[-81-]

sort of a backwater, a department you filled with Westerners, who after all weren't quite like us, unquote. Clair Engle demanded a job with that state as chairman of the Interior Committee from California, of course, and demanded that he have a Californian, Stewart really didn't satisfy the Westerners in Congress. He was much too unorthodox, but at least he was from Arizona and so Kennedy made that.... It was a good appointment in the sense that it was an unusual one and as it turned out it was a brilliant one. But they didn't know it at the time at all. There was sort of self-congratulation on appointing Stewart, not because they thought he'd be so marvelous but because he would be a little different. To be fair, obviously the President's concerns were with foreign policy matters. This is what truly interested him and it ill behooves me sitting here today to say the great questions of war

[-82-]

and peace are not terribly important. Maybe if Lyndon Johnson had more of a feel for world politics he might have a little easier time getting re-elected, so I won't get involved in that. I don't mean to say that; but just from somebody who has worked in the vineyard, I knew for a fact that there was a lack of interest, a lack of appreciation, a feeling that this was an agency that you just had to deal with with the back of your hand. Of course, this was indicated in terms of who handled our work, and it was Lee White. Lee, of course, was third in the hierarchy after Ted. Lee is an extremely able person and a personal friend of mind; Dorothy and Lee are people we see a good deal. Just stepping back a few paces you realize that when they set up the organization as fluid and unstructured as it really was, they realized that this is the kind of thing Lee can do. It wasn't that important. I mean, they didn't

[-83-]

appreciate Lee either, which is another little interesting fact, you see. I felt that Lee came through like a shining light and worked awfully hard and was very good even though he was a rather conservative person in a lot of ways. But, it just shows how they felt about it. It wasn't Ted's responsibility; it was Lee's, you know. If there was a fourth step through the

fourth guy, which there almost was right before the assassination, it would have been his responsibility. So, I also think the President didn't know enough about the West and this conservation trip he took a little later, it was a real eye opener to him. You know, he had spent summers in the West and he had obviously been to California but he didn't truly appreciate the magnitude of the country, how large the country was, how diverse it was in terms of feelings and values. And only later in this second trip, I mean, only then he became refreshed and I think he really got

[-84-]

a new vision of the country as a result of these trips. At his early stage he just didn't see it that way, Ted, I don't think, had ever seen it that way. Ted, who had an awful lot to say about the substance of things, wasn't keen on Stewart and it's my feeling that.... Well, I won't pursue that. Now as to.... Rephrase the second part of that question.

STEWART: Can you think of any examples of effects within the Department that this lack of interest at the White House level had?

POZEN: Yes, sure. Now this is something that really concerned me actually. There were recurring reports which I never could understand until quite recently, and now I understand perfectly, that the Secretary, that Udall was on the way out, that he just blundered early, that he wasn't cutting the mustard. He just wasn't doing things the way the White House wanted it. *Time Magazine* had a real vendetta against Stewart.

[-85-]

Now this isn't just my own bias. It was very clear. He made a superb speech on travel, which the "People" section -- and I know the guy who wrote the item -- decided to parody and make this... Stewart said -- the theme of the speech was that there are spectacles and things to see in the United States which are on the level with the Mona Lisa, the Arc de Triomphe, the great things of Europe. I mean, this was the general theme, and he documented it to some extent. The little item in *Time* tried to make the point that Stewart was just a boob, didn't really know about.... I mean after all, Saint Peter's really was much more magnificent than the Grand Canyon and who was this idiot. Then they said, quote, "in a shiny, unpressed suit and dusty loafers." What right did he have to say this? This was just *Time* at it's worst. The same guy that wrote that would constantly call me up and say, "What are you

[-86-]

guys doing?" At that stage we were working terribly hard on the conservation fund, which was a new approach which nobody else liked, the Bureau of the Budget was against, but I always felt that the White House was for us. The fellow who kept calling from *Time* kept saying, "Aren't you having big troubles on the conservation fund?" I said, "Well, there are some administrative problems but I know the President...." "Oh, is the President backing

you?" "Oh, yes." Well, as it turns out, the guy who was calling us was a friend of some people at the White House and was told that it was in trouble. And it was in trouble. But only because of Stewart's enormous persistence and the fact that he was a very game competitor did we get the damn thing against everybody's opposition, as it turned out. We were so prejudiced in favor of what was going on and how important this was we didn't see it. We didn't see it until just a year ago when I

[-87-]

pointed it out to the Secretary. The conservation fund is in many ways a sort of wellspring for a lot of the activities and a lot of our thinking too for what went on. Yet, it was a sort of two or -- I'd like for someone else to say this because I realize it's very immodest -- but it was just a couple of people. I drafted the Goddamn bill myself. Stewart and I would go over it section by section. We did the speeches. We did the analysis. We did the things that if you have eighty thousand people working for you you shouldn't have to work fourteen hours and then have to draft a lot of documents yourself. The reason was because we really weren't getting the cooperation from the White House, and the understanding on this score. It's not that simple. Obviously we were suggesting, we were asking the President and the President's people to take a position which was adverse to the Bureau of the Budget and many of the other agencies of government. So they acted as

[-88-]

a broker, which is really what they are. They had problems, but if they'd shared our vision they'd realize how important it was, which I suppose they later did. Very early in the game, and I'll get you a memo which I have in my file, I outlined two political facts that to me keep haunting me and now have become rather, you know, gained great currency and are rather commonplace to say. That's that by 1975 seventy five percent of our population will be under the age of thirty. Did I mention this to you? This is very much a thing that interests me.

STEWART: I don't think so.

POZEN: And that by 1975 eighty percent of our population will be living on one percent of the land. I've been very concerned about this for a long time and when I worked for Senator Williams in 1958 I did a couple of speeches on the need for open space planning and so on, and that's really the reason that he later introduced the

[-89-]

amendment to the Housing Act which he never voted past which was eventually the Open Space Program. So I mean I had some credentials on this score. I read at least two things in these statistics. One, that the generation of America coming to maturity in 1964, which was the next time the President was up, will have really come of age after World War II and won't

really remember the politics. Democratic politics of the thirties which use the traditional symbols and shibboleths and so on of minimum wage and health insurance. And at that stage after all, these things were coming about and what they really were concerned about.... This is really, I guess, a 1961 reading of the future and being right about what's going to happen in 1968 as it turns out. This wouldn't satisfy them and you needed a new dynamic and a new dimension of the Democratic Party. I read that urban problems were something that should

[-90-]

have dominated the thinking of, or at least be of major significance to the Administration; city design, architectural handsomeness, air and water pollution and so on. That's fact number one. Two, that thing you read from the one percent statistic is that we were no longer a rural people. I think this was before the redistricting, the Supreme Court opinion. They were city people, and so therefore the need that I mentioned before is underlined by the fact that you're going to have more people in the cities, you're going to have more people who're going to say, "Well, it's nice to go to Vietnam but what about the fact that my kids have no place to play, or that the quality of the education is so lousy," and the sort of egghead issues of 1960. And that's what they were after all. The quality issues, quality of the environment, the quality of the education and so on would become the bread and butter

[-91-]

issues in 1964. Those are the facts that I convinced Stewart of and I never was able to break through with the White House, or Stewart wasn't. This is the broader dimension that Lyndon Johnson has allowed us to pursue. Now I think when you say the Department of the Interior is the Department of the West it doesn't sound right. People say, "That isn't true." John, think back a few years and you realize that's precisely what it was. They didn't understand, our committee people on the Hill never understood why Stewart spent any time in New York City and resented it. Well, I'm sorry to be so long-winded but to me it's of great significance.

STEWART: No, that's alright. Did this feeling or did the knowledge of these differences reach down into the Department very far at all?

POZEN: No. No. I never allowed it to. I mean, I was blinded somewhat myself. I wanted to believe that everything was great and never

[-92-]

really.... I think the bureaucracy realized, the top level of the bureaucracy realized that we were having big troubles with some of our programs like the Conversation Fund. I guess it really came to a head in the conversation message and so on when the specific proposals were laid out and then people started talking.... then we had the problems with BOB [Bureau of the Budget] and Ted and Lee on agreeing on the proposals which were fairly modest.

STEWART: Did these problems ever come down to the very practical one of the people in the White House giving enough time or giving enough attention to what you people were concerned with? Was there always enough of a forum despite the fact that you frequently couldn't get through to them?

POZEN: No, there wasn't. That's exactly right. One of the few things that I contributed, it seems to me, was I knew Lee and Ted and Mike and very often when Stewart had problems

[-93-]

communicating with them and no one else in the Department could, I'd just go over there and sort of sit on their doorstep. In the Office of the Secretary there probably were sixty messengers, but there was a rather high paid messenger who would go over very often simply because, you know, I could have the paper in my hand and discuss it with them. That was Stewart's clever way, I thought, of doing business but it certainly is really demeaning where you have to send your assistant over because he has some personal relationships in order to discuss things, and you couldn't do it in any kind of a systematic, institutional way.

STEWART: What kind of things would Myer Feldman get involved in or Ted Sorensen that Lee White didn't? Was Lee White always in on everything and then it was just a matter of bringing these other guys in when he felt they were needed or what?

[-94-]

POZEN: No. Well, on major problems obviously Ted increasingly became the court of last resort. A lot of times when we had to resolve something Ted would sort of sit as a judge and then decide which Stewart resented like hell, let me tell you. Later, when Johnson became president the president resolved these things. When Stewart has a real problem he goes to the President. President Kennedy never did this, which again indicated this general view. If Dave Bell [David E. Bell] had -- well Dave was down at the Bureau of the Budget -- but if someone in the State Department, third level, had some difficulty, he'd go in to see Jack. Here the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture have something which, alright didn't the beyond the shores of this country, but it was a rather important issue. Lee would give us a whirl and then Ted would give us a whirl and then Ted would decide it.

[-95-]

I always told Stewart, "Oh it's fine, don't worry," and so on. But I know he resented it.

STEWART: In other words, he was the appeal rather than through the President?

POZEN: Yes. Correct. Mike was involved in matters of sort of special interest, special pleading matters sometimes involving the coal people, or the conflicts on energy problems sometimes. He would just take it away from Lee.

STEWART: Was there ever a problem of Lee White or anyone else in the White House dealing directly with bureau chiefs and people....

POZEN: No. That's a very good question. While that occurred innumerable times in other departments they didn't know enough about our department to do that so they called me. They would have, except they didn't know. I'm sure Ted didn't know who the director of the Park Service was or something and wouldn't understand them, I suppose, is their view. Really, that's a very interesting question. So they would call a guy

[-96-]

their pal that they knew.

STEWART: Yes. That's sort of amazing.

POZEN: It certainly is, and that's why you realize the very personal nature of all this and why to me, I may overreact perhaps but.... Then how Stewart is to be congratulated that he survived and achieved in this kind of a setting.

STEWART: Can you think of any people that you were trying to get to recruit who were shying away from Interior because of this relationship with the White House?

POZEN: John, you have to realize this is 1967 and that it's a lot clearer looking back. Then of course there was still a great aura and I don't think people knew this. At least, I didn't know it really as much as I know it now. That's why I was really offended by this *Time Magazine* effort, which I realized they got from a very good source, which I only realized last year. And so I think

[-97-]

that outsiders didn't know and I can't.... Maybe you're referring to a specific thing, I don't know.

STEWART: No, I'm not.

POZEN: I don't think we missed the boat on anybody because of that.

STEWART: What about your relationships with the Bureau of the Budget? One, how

significant or how extensive were yours personally; and two, how would you describe the relationships in terms of their smoothness?

POZEN: They were extensive; they were adversarial; that's the only way I could put it. Sam Hughes [Phillip S. Hughes], Carl Schwartz, Dave Bell, later, what's his name, he's head of Brookings now, Dave's successor....

STEWART: Oh, yes.

POZEN: We saw them a good deal. I remember one particular bloody session on the conversation fund where Stewart had just, there was just

[-98-]

Stewart and myself, I think, and maybe the Under Secretary -- I don't believe so -- and Dave and Carl and so on, and we just argued until we were blue in the face. The Secretary of the Treasury was there and a couple of other people, because this was, you know, this was a special fund, the earmarked fund that.... I just had a feeling, I just thought that they were trying to be secretary. Lee leaned heavily on BOB [Bureau of the Budget], which I suppose if I were in his position I would do as well. And we had the feeling that they were trying to be Secretary of the Interior and make the decisions for us, and that they shared this view perhaps thinking about it, that Stewart was really just a boob and didn't understand the nature of statecraft. He understood it all right; he just wanted to do it another way. So I think it was an adversarial kind of relationship, not satisfactory really.

[-99-]

STEWART: You mentioned the reliance of the White House on the Bureau of the Budget. This, of course, was a fairly, I think, significant change during the Kennedy administration that they used the Bureau of the Budget, many people would say in a much better way than it had been done before. So you would say that you definitely saw this, that this certainly had a....

POZEN: Oh, very much so. In fact, you could see it develop and sort of coming from the edges because on matters that weren't of great moment to them, they used the Bureau of the Budget. The matters that weren't of great moment were the matters in reference to the Department of the Interior. I think that the BOB showed its confidence, and Dave is an extremely able person and his successor was awfully good. And so they thought if they could do well with Udall's problems, they

[-100-]

could do well with other people's problems. I think this was a phenomenon that we helped accelerate.

[END OF SIDE ONE. BEGIN SIDE TWO]

STEWART: The next item was your relationship with Congress. I thought if you could go through first of all your relations with individual people, with Bob Jones [Robert E. Jones] and Aspinall [Wayne N. Aspinall] and Henry Jackson, Clinton Anderson.

POZEN: That's the fascinating thing and that's

[-101-]

something I do know a little bit about. Are we on?

STEWART: Yes.

POZEN: Okay.

STEWART: Now could we start with running through these personalities and describing them?

POZEN: Now this is the key and somebody in the future cannot overlook this aspect of the Department. In the earlier discussion here we were saying it was the Department of the West; in fact it is, and in some ways it's a creature of the Congress, or was. One important fact is that twenty five percent of the workload of the Congress -- it varies from twenty two percent to twenty eight percent -- is initiated or in some way processed by the Department of the Interior. A hell of a lot of bills, in other words, come out of the Department. Some people on the Hill view it as their special preserve, as their pork barrel and so on.

[-102-]

And so, by far the most significant person in determining whether Stewart Udall became Secretary was not Frank Thompson, who I think did play a large role, or Ralph Dungan, or anyone. It was Clinton P. Anderson, who was one of the great men, in my judgment, on the Hill and who was a Cabinet member, was one of the people instrumental in setting up the whole atomic energy program, and who was and is an extremely well regarded Senator, who at this stage is getting quite old. But, Clint called the shots, and I think he had a lot to do with reassuring President Kennedy after some of these early absurdities that Stewart was a pretty good guy, don't worry. Stewart has never forgotten that and has an enormous affection and respect for Senator Anderson. Also going back to a point I referred to earlier about Clair Engle, who at that stage I guess had just been elected, who was

[-103-]

Chairman of the House Interior Committee when Stewart was a member on that, and later became the Senator from California and unfortunately died early in the Administration. Clair had insisted that a Californian be made Under Secretary as long as an Arizonan was Secretary. I mean, those were the terms, John, in view of this big water fight between Arizona and California. The politics of the West just dictated in the most concrete, specific sense that you split it up. Clair nominated, supported, and championed Jim Carr [James K. Carr] from northern California as Under Secretary. But that's the way it was. I mean you were sort of, you know, someone says, "Walter Pozen you tell me who it is," you know. That was that. These people determined who, I think Clint on one hand and Clair on the other, determined who the Secretary and Undersecretary were going to be. Wayne Aspinall, who had become the Chairman of the House Interior

[-104-]

Committee, is an able, very bright person who is somewhat autocratic and runs his Committee with a very firm hand and without any rules and had some very interesting feelings towards Stewart. He viewed the House Interior Committee as his own special preserve; he was fatherly, he determined which bills came up, which bills passed and still does, and felt that he should have been Secretary of the Interior because he's from Colorado. That's on one score. Secondly, he didn't think much of Stewart because Stewart served both on the House Interior Committee and the House Education and Labor Committee and of course, gave much, much more attention to the Education and Labor Committee than he ever did to the Interior Committee. So he was offended by the fact that a much younger man was made Secretary, plus a guy, a kid I'm sure in his view, who never even came to

[-105-]

the damn committee meetings was made Secretary. So it was a real hostility. I think essentially Stewart has been successful, has preserved, has turned around a rather negative White House situation because of our relationships with the Hill. He made it rather clear to Wayne Aspinall that he would do things Wayne's way, he'd work with him. He after all was still a Hill guy and not some outsider, and he still was a Westerner notwithstanding that he wasn't the guy. He won Wayne over and we've had a magnificent congressional box score in terms of passing legislation. As you know in this town, if you have firm support of the Hill it compensates for an awful lot. Stewart went out of his way to deal closely and very effectively with Chairman Aspinall. On the Senate side of course, we had this relationship with the then Chairman of the committee, Clinton Anderson. Stewart knew who decided later, because he was so senior that he had his choice of being

[-106-]

chairman of four different committees, literally four different committees. Then when Jackson [Henry M. "Scoop" Jackson] became Chairman of Interior, Stewart knew Scoop

quite well. Scoop is just the most, in my book, one of the nicest, most pleasant and intelligent guys on the Hill. Scoop is a very sharp.... There is a very sharp comparison between Aspinall and Jackson. Jackson, never, very rarely ever, cracks the whip. He's the kind of guy who never demands. If he talks to Stewart about something he'd understand the other considerations. But that isn't true on the other side of the Capitol. Stewart had a very definite conception of relations of the Department to the Hill. He gave a great deal of attention to it. He brought his own past experiences as a congressman to bear on it. The two of us would track around an awful lot, much more than we did later, with Stewart always as available to a senator

[-107-]

or a congressman, understands their problems, and is really a rather artful politician in these terms. I think this is a very.... You had to be in our department and if you had someone who wasn't responsive, as the Eisenhower years, you weren't going to get anything out of them.

STEWART: What about the appropriations people, Kirwan [Michael J. Kirwan] and Kerr [Robert S. Kerr] and....

POZEN: No, he didn't, Hayden [Carl Hayden]; Hayden is Chairman on the Senate side and Chairman of the subcommittee. Hayden, being from Arizona did very well. Mike Kirwan is another. Mike is an original. There won't be many more Mike Kirwans unfortunately, I think. He's the kind of a politician that I understand, appreciate, who is to me very attractive in comparison to the Ronald Regans of this day. Mike, I know, just thinks of Stewart as a kid. It is the most marvelous thing where you sit. If we're not out of

[-108-]

tape, I'll tell you a funny story about Mike and his son who's fifty years old. You know Stewart is only forty, January 20th it will be forty eight. But, at that stage he was really quite young, he was just forty and Mike just couldn't take him seriously at first. But Mike likes Stewart very much; they get on quite well. We've done very well with Mike even though Mike relies very heavily on his professional staff who very often didn't agree with us. Stewart could always appeal to Mike if it really needed to be appealed, except that you don't always want to go over the head of a staff representative.

STEWART: Yes. Well, what about Kerr and later McNamara [Patrick V. McNamara] and the Public Works....

POZEN: We didn't have much dealing with them because we didn't have the water pollution responsibility. Kerr made his views known, however.

[-109-]

He wasn't hesitant to pick up the phone.

STEWART: Who's the other one I have? Oh, Bob Jones who was on the Government Operations Subcommittee.

POZEN: Yes, Bob. Again we did have some dealings with him, much more extensive dealings later when we took over the water pollution responsibilities. Bob is a friend of Congressman Frank Thompson's and is probably and is probably Stewart's closest friend on the Hill and also mine from his New Jersey drives into politics in New Jersey. Bob is very much partial to the corps of engineers, understandably so, and yet I think through our relationships with Congressman Thompson and others we minimized the problems and at that stage we didn't have that much to do with them. We do now, as I say, we have this new obligation to them, a new responsibility.

STEWART: To what extent were Larry O'Brien [Lawrence F. O'Brien] and his people a help or an asset in the whole

[-110-]

area of congressional relations?

POZEN: I knew Larry's people very well and I thought at one stage that I would be working in that area, so I want to divide this into two comments and then I think we better break off.

STEWART: Okay.

POZEN: The first is how Larry's operation affected us. The answer is they didn't help us a damn bit. Mike Manatos, Henry Wilson, Chuck Daley, Claude Desautels and so on were people that the two of us knew very well. It seemed to me we probably knew as many congressmen as they knew. They didn't spend too many chips on us, not because we didn't ask, but because they just didn't deliver it seems to me. It was again this part of a lack of interest and a lack of appreciation of some of the problems and the subtleties of some of the problems. We had some really tough public versus private power fights. One was this Hanford Reactor

[-111-]

in the state of Washington which created a real furor and was one of the few times that the public people have beaten the private utilities cold. I think Henry participated but not in the significant way that he participated in other legislation. Now as a general proposition I think it was somewhat overrated, but at least it was in very sharp contrast to Bruce Harlow? No. Yes, the Eisenhower attempt which was feeble....

STEWART: Bryce Harlow.

POZEN: Yes, Bryce Harlow -- feeble and totally ineffective. I think it was overrated but just like Aristotle's ethic to find the golden mean you have to bend over awful far one way in order to get to the middle. I think that in some perspective it was an effective, able operation which didn't perform miracles necessarily.

STEWART: Again, were Interior matters usually handled by people under O'Brien rather than O'Brien

[-112-]

himself?

POZEN: Sure. Oh, yes. It was usually Henry Wilson. Half the time these people didn't return the calls. Again, if it was something where I had to go I'd go over there and see somebody. Larry very rarely got involved. He did occasionally, but not very often.

STEWART: Okay, do you want to cut it off here then?

POZEN: Yes, let's do that.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[-113-]