

Oral History Interview Transcript

Subject: Averill Thayer

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AT: As I was saying, it helps to have the background I think of something experienced before you ask the questions. You'll have to edit the dickens out of it, and throw away whole reels.

AT: We had lunch with Jerry Stroeble and Roger Kaye that day, and someone asked me why I was picked to be the Refuge Manager of Arctic Refuge. So I gave a couple of lame reasons, the only thing I could think of. But the story of why I ended up there rather than someplace else is a long trail of incidences, and people too. To think of it in terms of, "I did this, I did that, I did this" and then I got to be the Manager, what that's leaving out is people along the way who were helping out by doing one or two things. And if they hadn't been there and hadn't done what they did, I might not have made these other steps. So its self-centered to not include those people. This is the one thing I want to do here is mention these people. Definitely.

The reason I think I ended up as the Arctic Refuge manager goes back to when I was inducted in the Navy. When I was inducted in the Navy during the War, I logically assumed like everyone else that I would be a gunner. Because I was a dead shot. Everyone in my society thought they were a dead shot because we lived in a western state, hunting was a big thing, shooting was a big thing. We shot hundreds of 22 calibers per year as well as hunting ducks and pheasants. A lot of shooting at moving targets. The favorite thing to do was throw a can in the air and shoot it. So when I go into the Navy, I told the guy that I'll be a dandy gunner, and he said something like "we'll see Mack." They've seen them all. So they had a bunch of tests and I had to be an electronics technician. I had to work like a slave to get through that, but what happened then was that it biased me and when I came out of the Navy and went to college, I just automatically thought electrical engineering. I didn't look at whatever else there was. I had never even heard of wildlife management. If I had gone with an open mind, I would have discovered wildlife management. But as it turned out, after I'd been in the electrical engineering school two years I was palling around with guys who were in wildlife management, and I finally woke up. So at that point I switched to the wildlife management and then forestry and finally biological science. After five years I left the university -- this was the University of Idaho.

I came up to Anchorage in the fall of 1951. I worked that winter on a construction job, and then in the spring, took a job with Commercial Fisheries with the Fish and Wildlife Service. They had it all at that time, being Territorial status and so I was a stream guard and spent the summer on Kalgin Island in Cook Inlet. Had a little boat and went around the island and kept people out of the salmon creeks as best I could. Did some fish counts, then when the fall came and that shut down, I worked on the hunting season checking hunters. And then from there went into the winter trapping season and I traveled around with one of the more experienced guys by air, checking trap lines.

FM: Now did that require a change in bureaus or anything?

AT: No, everything was under one heading, it was called the Alaska Game Commission. The Alaska Game Commission was part of the Fish and Wildlife Service (I think it was called) and then later on it was called the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife. And at one point then Commercial Fisheries was split from Sport Fish, Hunting and Trapping, but I don't remember when.

FM: Now the hunting and the trapping those were areas beyond Kalgin Island?

AT: They were in the Matanuska valley, Lake Louise area, Copper Center, up to Paxon, over to Tok, down to Valdez and so on. It was all the same area. I found myself needing to write reports. That was scary, because I missed English classes. I could see being subject of ridicule for turning in a badly done report. So I worked on those reports, over-compensating and trying to cover up my failings and weaknesses. But as a result of trying to cover up my tracks, I put in extra photos. I tried to have action in the photos and write about the dynamics of stuff, what was going on and divert people further by pointing out what was wrong and what should be changed. Those reports made a hit. It gave me an identity. I have to say that some of those reports looked a little bit like somebody was writing for Outdoor Life. But they went over well so what else can you say.

FM: I can understan where the specialty often in government is these bland rather dry reports how your colleagues would find them interesting because they were used to reading these uninteresting reports.

AT: By contrast. Anyway, at a later time when I was working on the oilfield on the Kenai, I cranked out reports. They had a blowout there and I wrote a dramatic report about gas and earth flying up in the air, the roar of the gas was dramatic, the woods shook from all that gas under thousands of pounds of pressure coming up.

I went out to Saint Lawrence Island for five weeks on a walrus survey and study. I took 400 black and white pictures in five weeks. Went out in skin boats and got a lot of photos of butchering walrus and so on. Then I made bird counts at Augustine Island. Augustine had a good beach where you could set a Pacer down. I spent a month out on Umnak and Unimak Islands on surveys. Bob Jones was not there. Vern Burns, the Assistant was. I traveled with him with a Super Cub and took him to places he needed to go.

FM: At what point did you become a pilot?

AT: When I was in Anchorage. That first winter when I came to town in 1951, I went out on the power line construction job, and then when it terminated, I went to United Airmotive at Merrill Field. If you gave them five hundred dollars they would guarantee a private license. I gave them the five hundred and when I had exactly forty hours, not forty and a tenth, they were through with me.

I first flew in the Arctic Refuge in 1958 searching for Clarence Rhode's airplane. Then I made some trips up to the Arctic Refuge in 1963. I went up there with Dave Klein and a couple of others. We prepared a report on that which got pretty wide distribution. Also looked over the Prudhoe Bay region at the same time and circulated that report. So when the Arctic Refuge (manager) position opened Dave Marshall who was the Regional Biologist in Portland (our regional office was in Portland at that time), Vern Ekdahl and Van de Knacker (sp) spoke for me. They liked that I took the Wilderness Act very seriously. It should not be compromised. Dave Spencer also stuck up for me. So I think that's how I ended up where I was.

I wanted to mention Tom Wardley. Are you familiar with his name? He worked with Theron Smith at the Aircraft Division. I traveled a lot with him in the Gruman Goose. Did aerial surveys of salmon streams. He could fly that Goose down winding salmon streams, banking one way and the other, about the way you'd do it in a Super Cub. He was in charge of certifying people for flying Fish and Wildlife Service airplanes. He had a good way of teaching, and he pointed out too, that if you don't really feel physically up to it, you probably shouldn't go flying. Or if you're just a little bit down, you might modify the day's flight making shorter, carry a little less load, skip the small airstrip, because you're operating below grade just a little bit. And I thought that was really remarkable advise from a check pilot. Check pilots are usually pretty hard cases, you know. Theron Smith, I didn't have any flights with him during that period, but later on I did. That was pretty much his view too. The other thing was that every check flight turned out to be a flying lesson. You don't know it at the time, but when you get all through you realize that you just had a flying lesson. And a really good one, very specific to your needs, you know. They didn't need to do that, all they need to do was go out and check you out and say this guy is a rotten lander and a rotten taker offer, but they upgraded your skills considerably.

But the business of flying when you are under less than optimum health its kind of ironic because its excellent advise, we followed it. But then when I was first refuge manager here, we had an assistant named Gerry Fisher, and he was a pilot. In the Navy he came highly recommended he was a test pilot in the Navy. But what we didn't know was that he went on a flight up in the Brooks Range and crashed, killed himself and a state biologist. Out of that came contact with his brothers down in the states, and his brothers said basically, "Holy Smokes" we didn't know he was flying. He'd developed high blood pressure when he was in the Navy. It went up so high they couldn't control it. They had to ground him, and then it stayed so high that they finally had to muster him out. He couldn't stay with in the Navy. And somehow he had a medical flight certificate and so the Aircraft Division didn't know that. So they went down and talked to the doctor here in town that he had been seeing for his high blood pressure. The doctor was astonished that he had a pilot's license, and said that he had warned him about driving a car, that he could black out at any time with his high blood pressure, and that if he felt the least bit bad he'd better park his car and get off the road. And there he was, up there flying in the Brooks Range, so all that good advice from Tom and Smitty about don't fly when your health is bad came back to haunt us. And it did look like the airplane had just nosed right into the ground. FM: It may have been some medical problem that he had in flight possibly? AT: Well, we think so because he was a good pilot, as I say, he was a test pilot in the Navy, he could really fly. But you'd only have to black out for about twenty seconds. As a matter of fact, the wreckage showed that the flaps had been pulled on at high

speed. And the way the flaps are rigged, there is a push rod that pushes against the flap to push it down. If you try to push the flap down when you are going so fast that you'd damage it, this rod would bow out in the middle and it won't go down. And that's the way those rods were. They were bowed out showing the application of the flaps at excessive speed. Which meant that he came to looking at the ground and he did the right thing, tried to get the nose up, but it was just going too fast.

A person I wanted to mention was a man named Tom Costello. I was working in the Anchorage office and I think there were four of us and the boss. Costello was a fisheries man and not working with us in enforcement, but he took me aside and suggested that I apply to take a position in Mc Grath, there was an opening there. He pointed out I was on the bottom of a priority or an experience list. I was the bottom out of four. There was not much chance of going anyplace there. So I did that and it turned out that was the favorite station of the Assistant Regional Director, because he had been there. I made a hit with him by applying for that. If Costello hadn't come forward, I never would have made the move, probably. It was a good experience in McGrath. I went there the first day of 1954. I was there for about two and a half years. Our work consisted primarily of trapping. Trapping was a big thing then. We spent the whole winter out checking trap lines and sealing beaver skins. We had a 170 Cessna and McGrath country is a wetter climate. You get deep snow. On meadows where we'd land tall Elymus grass grew about four feet high. The snow would lay on top of it. You'd land, the plane would slow down and then one side would start to sink. It would sink down until the wing tip was down in the snow. And then you're stuck. So we'd get out and one guy would snow shoe back and forth while the other guy shoveled and made a ramp. Sometimes we'd get the plane up and going on the the packed snow and hit that soft snow and not be able to get any more speed and down we'd go – stuck again. We did that a lot but it was the only way to get out and check the traplines. [FM: Sometimes maybe you'd spend a good part of the day just dealing with one of these episodes probably?] AT: A good time. We stayed out a few nights too, because darkness caught us and we were still there. There was a lot of beaver trapping there we sealed over 10,000 beaver skins per year. We had to measure each one and put the metal seal on.

At that time the Fish and Wildlife Service was still in charge of commercial fisheries so we did some work on the lower Yukon and the Kuskokwim with the fish wheels. The word came down that the fish wheels, according to regulations, were not supposed to be working on Sunday. It had been that way for a long time and never observed. So we went around and told everybody, and there were some unhappy people, but a few weeks later when we came by again, most people decided that having Sunday off was not a bad thing. The purpose of course was to give escapement a little break.

I wanted to mention Bob Jones. He was a nice guy. I first met him when I was in Anchorage, working in that office with the others. He had come into town and for some reason, he and I went up to the local bar to have a beer. He told me all about the Aleutians and his career out there on the same level that he would have related it to some very experienced employee. He did not talk down to me or to the fact that I was brand new. I thought it was the ultimate in courtesy. I learned a lot just from nursing that beer for about an hour, and talking with him. Some years later, when I went out to Cold Bay, he arrived back about five days before I left and so I got to know him better than too. The Fish and Wildlife Service

had a jewel in him. He accomplished a great deal. He insisted on using the Cape Cod dory, he was absolutely right, could not have been more right about that. But the higher ups in the Fish and Wildlife Service just could not get over that antiquated looking boat. They wanted to give some sort of an inboard sports cruiser thing that you could not take up on the beach and would not handle rough water. But he dug in, he was a guy who did not give in easily. If he had given in and used one of those other boats, they would have lost it. He knew what he was talking about. Its just that its an open boat, and you are out there, exposed to all the elements. But it would handle anything, a super boat for his operation.

I want to talk about Dave Spencer too. One thing he said that I always liked was: "If this is the right thing to do, then you know, that's a hard thing to argue with. You can see objections: cost, delay, people are going to complain about it and so on. But if it's the right thing to do, you just have to do it."

There were a couple of incidences with the BLM. The BLM was planning a lease offering in land that's near Old Woman Creek in the Refuge. That is before the boundary was extended (by ANILCA). (FM: So over east of Arctic Village?) AT: Yes. So these blocks would be to the west of Old Woman Creek. The BLM wanted to where ever the lease encountered Old Woman Creek, rather than a meander survey, and have less than a full block, just extend the lease block into the Refuge. In some cases the block would extend more than a mile into the Refuge. We had a meeting in the BLM office in Anchorage. Dave Spencer did the talking, I listened. The BLM State Supervisor was somebody "Burton" or else "Burton" somebody, I can not remember his name. He really wanted to extend those lease blocks into the Refuge, and he pointed out he was just asking for a little compromise here. That's what he kept saying: "we just need a little compromise here." And Spencer pointed out that cutting the lease blocks short and squaring them off short of Old Woman Creek is also a compromise on the part of the BLM. At this Burton would get flustered. "We just can not do that." I thought he was going to break down and cry. He really wanted to get those blocks in there, but Spencer would not give in. He just said this is not the thing to do. To compromise the boundary in a place like that or any other place. So it did not happen. An then later on when I was Refuge Manager, and rummaging through the land status files, I discovered that on the Canning River, the BLM had extended lease blocks across the river. So I called Dave Spencer and told him about that. He called various people and finally they had to withdraw those leases, and go in and meander survey them. So they were really keen to save money on that survey, which was all that it amounted to. BLM people thought it was perfectly reasonable that the Fish and Wildlife Service would compromise, as they put it. But the point I wanted to get at here, I guess is that there were other people who might have compromised, however Dave Spencer was not one of them.

Then there was an incident on the Kenai Refuge where this was still when the regional office was in Portland, the engineer came up from Portland with a map. They had a plan to issue cabin sites at the north end of a lake (I do not remember the name of the lake). It was right by the road near Skilak Lake. A big south facing hillside. The engineer goes out there and paces it off and surveys and draws charts and he had it figured out it was going to be nearly a hundred cabins. These little summer cabins on the north side of that lake. And with all those drainage problems, it would have been a disaster, but he was determined he was going to do that. Drew up a big blueprint had all the descriptive material and the

slope, and the angle of the roads, because there had to be a zig-zag road up and down the slope for access. He had all the papers. We did not like it a bit. When the guy was getting ready to leave, he could not find those papers. They were gone. Honest, I did not take them. But I think I know who did. The engineer was just beside himself, but he went back to Portland and he never came back.

FM: I'd hate to think of what some of our conservation areas would look like if it weren't for people who as you say, as Dave Spencer put it: "we should do the right thing" and watch out for these kinds of inroads coming along and stop them in their tracks. AT: You really have to. An inch at a time and pretty soon you have lost the whole thing. It's happened a thousand times.

FM: So those leases that went across the Canning River, you were the person that discovered that they had done that and found the records? AT: Just by accident, going through the status files. Otherwise I wouldn't have known. FM: Boy, I hate to think what they would have done, what they would do now-a-days, if they were still holding leases inside the Refuge. AT: It would be hard to get those backed up. Because BLM guys came in and they still argued that case and pointed out the problems of the meander survey and so on. I suggested that they just quit trying to figure out where the river bed is. It quits over on the west side where the tundra starts, an call that it. I don't know what they did.

Dave Spencer was very quiet. One time in our office we had a secretary who was a little bit stern. She was always getting on us about things. Didn't take jokes well. One day somebody put a live mouse in her desk drawer, early in the morning. She opened up the drawers and there was a live mouse. There was a horrible shriek. Out the door she went. She did not come back until the next day. For half of the winter she was beating up us guys (assistants) for that live mouse. But I think Spencer put that mouse in there. He never said a word one way or the other, and then let us get beat up. FM: She suspected you guys more than him? AT: Oh yes!

I had a couple of incidences too, I wanted to mention that stick in my mind. We were using a Piper Pacer at McGrath one spring. The boss had been out with the Cessna and wrecked it. He was a good pilot, but he cut corners pretty close some times. We were landing on the Yukon – Kuskokwim delta in a white-out. We never got landed, we touched down and there was a big invisible snow drift right in front of the plane. It threw the plane back up in the air violently and my boss, Lyman crams on the power and went back to Bethel. When we landed in Bethel, the right landing gear was broken. So the plane laid down on the wing. At that time the landing field was on the river. We needed another landing gear. We sent in to town for it. At that time the mail plane only came out a couple times a week so we had to wait a few days for the mail plane, and hang around town. We were at the freight office which was right by the river, getting our landing gear when a guy came in in a Norseman. A Norseman has a six hundred horsepower engine, a great big thing right in front. When it's on the ground, the forward visibility is nil. They have to taxi zig-zag to see where they are going. This fellow landed and he started a big curve taxing, but the rate of curve was just right that it kept our plane out of his sight. But he knew it was there. The Norseman propeller chewed right up the wing of our plane. It cut the gas tank in half. It did not ignite. It finally lodged up against the fuselage and it looked like a hawk had just caught a dove. We were standing up at the air terminal with our new landing gear in our hands. I used to have a picture of

that. A big plane beating up this little one. FM: So you had some paper work to fill out after all that I suppose, file a report or something. AT: I don't remember doing any, but I guess the boss had to do it.

On another occasion, I was at the hangar in Anchorage when we got the word that one of the Fish and Game planes was missing. I forgot to mention that I went from McGrath back to Anchorage for a short time. Then in 1958 I went to the Kenai Refuge. So I was up from the Refuge doing something at the hangar and we got the word of the missing plane at McGrath. Theron Smith and Charles Evans and I went over in the Beaver. That was a considerable search. At one time there were twenty-two planes on the runway at McGrath, looking for the Fish and Game plane. It was also a time of great cold. People were very keen to find these guys because they were out there in that super cold. On the, I think it was the third day, we ran across their plane. It was standing pretty much nose down in the timber. Its not really known what happened, but its believed that the pilot had a medical problem, (that's the only thing I ever heard about it), and may have passed out. But it was crashed there. The pilot had hit his head on the panel really hard. He didn't have a shoulder harness so he just flopped forward. The observer, the biologist had survived the contact. One of the wings was knocked off and was laying down like a lean-to. The biologist was laying under the wing with no mitts on and had some 38 caliber flares in his hand. But I don't remember seeing the gun. He was frozen. So we reported that we found the plane just at dark. We stayed over-night there. FM: So you were able to find a place to land nearby or something? AT: We landed about a mile away. We encountered a lot of wolf tracks walking over there so for that reason especially we stayed overnight by the plane so the wolves, if they were inclined to come around, wouldn't. It was extremely cold that night, we didn't have a tent, but had some pretty warm sleeping bags and kept a fire going. The wolves howled quite a bit, and kept waking us. The next day, we cut down trees so that a helicopter could land. A military helicopter came in and took out the guys. And then we went back, and had to fire pot that Beaver for about four hours and finally get it warmed up to and get it going. Because it sat there over-night and half a day in that low temperature. FM: It took a long time to warm it up. AT: We let Smitty handle the engine. He said its what's called a "wet engine." You can prime it a lot and he did. The gasoline was running out of the exhaust pipe in a steady stream, finally it took off and we got out of there.

Anyway, I wanted to provide this background information so when Roger and you write questions I think it will be a help and also help understand some of the answers.

FM: This is very interesting to hear what you've had here so far.

AT: Well this is all I've made notes for. And so this is sort of the end of it other than answering questions right now.

FM: Well I sure didn't have a battery of questions ready to go, but I'm trying to think. You mentioned that is was many of the people that you met as your career developed that got to where you went and Dave Spencer, was he the Refuge Manager at Kenai when you were there?

AT: No, he was the original Refuge Manager, but when I was there, he was the Refuge Supervisor.

FM: Was he in Kenai also then?

AT: Yes, his office was in Kenai. He was the supervisor over the Aleutians Refuge and others as well.

FM: And when you were on the Kenai that was right in the middle of some of that oil development, or close to it during that period?

AT: I went there in 1958, and that's when the oil activity was just getting going.

FM: At that time were you aware of some of the behind the scenes maneuvering that has come out since then with regards to the editor of the Anchorage Times being involved in pushing for the leasing in the Refuge, those sorts of things, were you aware of that behind the scenes things going on at that time?

AT: No, I don't think so, I think I was pretty much in the dark about the whole works. Just sort of accepted it as a fact at that point.

FM: But it must have given you a taste for the problems of oil development in a wildlife refuge?

AT: It certainly did.

FM: It got your attention and had perhaps had some influence on how you viewed those activities in relation to the Arctic Wildlife Refuge.

AT: I think so.

FM: It must have had an impression on you, I would guess.

AT: When I was first at Kenai, I was in the law enforcement division. This had to do with wildlife law enforcement. I had a Pacer airplane, a wheel plane so I could land on the beaches. I flew up and down the lower Cook Inlet, Seldovia, Port Graham and on the west side too. Checking on hunters, clam diggers and most anybody. But after I'd been there about two years, I think, the person who was overseeing the oil field activities left, and I asked for that job, and transferred into the refuge division. And so from that point on then, I was pretty closely involved in it. And I did learn quite a bit about that. The one thing that I learned was when they came with applications looking for a permit to do something, they would describe what they wanted to do. What we really needed was a list of the equipment, and stuff they were going to do and use to do it. And this is a real eye opener, because you read the description of what they are, then it didn't sound too bad. But when you look at the equipment list and you see that they need three D-9 cats, two belly-dumps, six front-end loaders, a camp trailer, and a mess-house trailer, and a shop trailer and all this heavy equipment, it casts a new light on those innocent little words in the description. So once I figured that out, things were a lot easier. You could look at the list of equipment and make decisions about how to do it.

One other incident I thought of was when I came to Fairbanks in 1968, I transferred back into the law enforcement division to do that. I was the agent -in-charge here, but there was just me, no assistant. In the spring I went up to Prudhoe Bay. They'd shut down exploration for the summer. I discovered that they had done most of their camping on lakes, which were frozen lakes, because of the nice level surface. And they had their airplanes landing on the lakes too. And they had camp trailers, the mess trailers, the shop trailers and they were all parked on the lake.

FM: Right on the lake?

AT: Had been, they were all gone in the summer. But when they had pulled out of there for the summer and taken the stuff back to sort of a headquarters near Prudhoe Bay, they'd left behind everything they did not want. On those lakes, they'd left hundreds of gas barrels. Just laying right on the lake, the lakes were thawing, the barrels were floating around in the water. On some lakes they had run over the barrels with tractors, squashing them, those barrels ruptured. So they were leaking into

the lakes. Their lavatory trailer, wash trailer, they had toilets, but they weren't chemical toilets, the toilets were just a hole in the bottom of the trailer. So everything that went into that toilet, was on the ice in a big frozen pile. And all the garbage from the kitchen was the same way – out the back door of the kitchen on to the ice in a big frozen pile. And there wasn't just one lake like that, there were many. It was the worst mess I have ever seen. So I took a lot of pictures of that, in fact I hired a helicopter from Barrow, and got landed on a lot of those places because it was just the break-up time and you couldn't land with floats or wheels. And so I got lots of on-the-ground photos as well as aerals. Sent them down to the regional office which was in Portland then. I think they sent the photos to "Scoop" Jackson. But anyway the whole works went to Scoop Jackson and he did what ever he did to put a stop to that. The other route would have been to go to the newspapers. By going to Scoop, it brought it to a quick and dead end. And as far as I know it never happened again. Which is a desirable result, so it's a case of whatever works.

On another occasion, an aide to Ted Stevens was in our office, this was when I was refuge manager, the office on Airport Way, I hadn't been refuge manager very long. He was talking about that proposal for the gas pipeline across the refuge to Canada, remember that was some years ago. He pointed out, well all there would be was this thin line across the refuge. And I said, well that would be just like a thin razor cut across the Mona Lisa. He chuckled at that and then later on I heard Ted Stevens making that statement as if it was his own. I wasn't about to say: "I said it first." If he wants to claim that statement it has a lot more clout than if I say it. It's another case of you got the desired result.

FM: Its not so important who gets credit for it as long as the words get said.

AT: Yes, and get heard, who's going to listen to me.

FM: I think you will feel good to know that those words and that quote of Ted Stevens saying it, has come back to haunt him many times. People keep dredging that one up and I'm sure he rues the day that he ever uttered those words.

FM: Well I'm sure we 'll come up with some more things to talk about. You're kind of in the driver's seat on this, Ave.

AT: Well I'm open to questions but as I say, I was keen to get the background. It's a starting point.

FM: It's a good start here now and hopefully we'll be able to keep at this now, however long it takes to squeeze every ounce of information out of you, no, I don't mean it that way necessarily.

AT: Well, I'm currently hasseling the artists in Fairbanks who have worked up in the refuge, telling them that they need to have a display in Washington. I think they are going to do it, I've been nagging them about it.

FM: That's a good point – that's an excellent idea, it would rais awareness of what's being talked about.

AT: I've been telling people about the remarks you've made about how close the mountains are to the ocean in that Camden Bay region and you look at Carter Creek, there's all sorts of tilted formations in there and they come right down within fifty feet of the water. I think that to get all the recoverable oil, if there is any in there, then you take an oilfield it looks like the back of a porcupine, there'd be so many drilling rigs. It would be the "Porcupine Oilfield" because you are absolutely right, there's going to be a little bit here and a little bit there. And a lot of it won't come out, and that's trapped in the rocks and that's where its going to stay.

FM: I don't think it is fair to draw conclusions from the area farther to the west and just say well this is the same as that, its different country, its different country, its different geologically underneath as well. Just as you were saying because the more complicated buckling of the mountain building process.

AT: Well that whole formation dips steeply to the west. Over in Prudhoe Bay, those rocks you are looking at in the refuge are thousands of feet down there. I have often wondered why Murkowski is so keen on drilling (in the refuge), because he's sort of taken the lead on it, the oil industry is not pushing it. In fact he was bawling then out for not pushing it. He has some ulterior motive, I don't know what it is but because surely that can't be the last chance for more oil in the U.S. If it is we're really in trouble. You'd be walking home.

FM: I guess I can't predict what it is with him, but it must be just the winning of the contest or the issue.

AT: Well, or financial, he may have a big financial stake in it some place. Now he's talking about wanting to be Governor, I don't know why he wants to do that.

End of taping session