

Donald Mitchell oral histories, Archives and Special Collections, Consortium Library, University of Alaska Anchorage. Hugh Gallagher interview, 1992 September 12. Transcript completed by Andrea Atkins.

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MR. GALLAGHER: Think that will be quiet enough?

MR. MITCHELL: Yeah. I think we'll probably be okay.

MR. GALLAGHER: We can go sit out in the front or some thing.

MR. MITCHELL: No. No. I think this is okay.

MR. GALLAGHER: Oh, but I can't -- who was the founder of National Forest and -- Teddy Roosevelt's principle conservation?

MR. MITCHELL: Oh, Gifford Pinchot.

MR. GALLAGHER: Pinchot, yes. And Rowe told me that in -- in prepping ICAI, one of the questions Rowe asked him was, "What do you think of Gifford Pinchot?" And Wally said, "What is" -- "what is a Pinchot?" You know, and he says, "We've got problems."

MR. MITCHELL: Well --

MR. GALLAGHER: Oh, no. I don't know -- I really don't know anything about that.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay. Okay.

MR. GALLAGHER: It was interesting. And I know that -- I've always heard that Nixon didn't think much of the Wally and didn't think -- care about the Secretary of Interior position at all.

MR. MITCHELL: All right. Well, the way I hear it, Nixon didn't -- think Bush doesn't care about domestic policy, but Nixon really cared much, much less.

MR. GALLAGHER: Yeah. But Nixon was a much better domestic president.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. Well, Bobby Kilgore's view on that is that the reason why is because Nixon, unlike Bush, made John Ehrlichman President of the United States for the domestic policy.

MR. GALLAGHER: Which is a rather decent man, and --

MR. MITCHELL: Right. And competent.

MR. GALLAGHER: -- (indiscernible) Native affairs.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. And he was competent in things and -- and the Bushes had no interest in it. Plus, he didn't bother to, like, give it over to somebody else before -- but any way, that's a

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whole other subject. Well, one of the things at the time that you come on in '68 with BP, Alyeska did not get formed, I guess, until '70, right?

MR. GALLAGHER: Something like that.

MR. MITCHELL: I mean, so this was (indiscernible) --

MR. GALLAGHER: (Indiscernible) the three President -- the three oil company pipeline subsidiaries. Each had a little private jet and they just sort of jet around the nation meeting -- endless meetings.

MR. MITCHELL: And that's what they're doing before Alyeska?

MR. GALLAGHER: Uh-huh.

MR. MITCHELL: And one of the things that -- that I find phenomenal, and maybe I just have not found the correct paper trail. But Native Claims, obviously, starts in earnest in '69 when Stevenson, Gravel get into the Senate. And, you know, there's a bunch of hullabaloo and -- and it's a major issue, major white back- -- backlash in Alaska, et cetera, et cetera. And you -- you finally get a -- a bill out of -- out of the Senate Interior Committee in the spring of '70 and -- and it's on the floor in the summer of '70. And -- and, of course, ends in ruin in the Aspinall committee in September of '70, when Aspinall refuses to move the bill. And --

MR. GALLAGHER: Nineteen -- you're killing me with all these dates.

MR. MITCHELL: Oh, no, I understand that. But -- but what -- the reason I say all that is because all through that congress, I see no presence of the oil industry, really, until the fall of '70. And -- and what makes that interesting to me is that -- first of all, I guess my question is, is that really true? Because Foster -- Foster, of course, who I want to ask you about in a second, did not get involved in this thing until the fall of '70. But I don't know whether --

MR. GALLAGHER: It was very amateur and it was very -- it was done by the -- John O'Dell (phonetic), who was the Exxon lobbyist, and Phil Helnag (phonetic) was the ARCO lobbyist, and little me. For several months my office was a basket which I had in my lap because I didn't even have a desk. It took a long time for the oil companies to -- to cotton to the fact that this was very important business and was costing them a great deal of money and would continue to do. So -- and I had -- before I came to work for oil, I thought oil was all powerful, all knowing. And in fact, I found it was just the reverse. I mean, that they were -- the hierarchy of yes men. And it was like the Vietnam War. You know, the, you know, chairman of the board is worried about getting the pipeline approved and -- and still looks -- right on -- right on it, it's going to be done, and it all went down the line. So people would tell everybody else and mislead them. It was a -- not -- it was a very inefficient -- very inefficient (indiscernible).

MR. MITCHELL: Well, what makes it --

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MR. GALLAGHER: Quinn O'Connell is the man who was steady, honest, solid, and consistent, and he represented the pipeline as early as when I went to work for them, and he still does. Sort of became a lifetime career. And he was doing quite well. I mean, I think at the beginning they hoped they could keep out of Native Claims.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. But you see what makes it -- what makes that strange is that's absolutely correct, that all through '68, '69, land claims is sort of perking along. But there's a whole separate effort downtown to get the right-of-way permit issue in.

MR. GALLAGHER: That's right. And I was the only one of the three that kept saying -- and that was my mission, I felt, and one of the ways I could justify in terms of my conscience working for the oil company, was that you cannot escape the resolution of Native Claims, the title, the (indiscernible) you're not going to be able to borrow the money, you not going to be able to get the permit and so forth.

MR. MITCHELL: Well, but --

MR. GALLAGHER: And Quinn came along to feel that way, too.

MR. MITCHELL: All right. But what makes it doubly strange is that -- is that belief in the sort of the two tract theory of this, ended or should have ended quite dramatically. Remember, the Alaska Legal Services had filed a lawsuit in early 1970 on behalf of the Stevens Village, who was in the middle of the right-of-way. And on -- and on April Fool's Day, which David Wolf (phonetic), who was the lawyer that handled that case, thought it was always -- if they were going to issue that opinion, it should have been on April Fool's Day. On April Fool's Day of 1970 was when whatever this judge was here in town issued an injunction against the Department, which said you're enjoined from issuing the pipeline right away until this aboriginal title thing is cleared up. Now, from that point, looking at it from a lawyer, perhaps with the benefit of hindsight, if I had been a lawyer representing BP or ARCO or one of the leaseholders, if I ever needed a demonstration that this deal was dead in the water until it's resolved, that was it. But that's April of '70. And still, all that summer when all the action's going on, you know, you did not see any --

MR. GALLAGHER: When was it that McCutcheon was trying to get village by village to sign off approval on constructing the pipeline over their claims?

MR. MITCHELL: That was in '69. See what they --

MR. GALLAGHER: He kept disappearing. The oil company president's pinning their faith on this man, and he was out in a little boat going somewhere and no one knew where he was for days at a time.

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MR. MITCHELL: See -- see, that was their -- that was -- I don't know whether you remember or not, that was their original approach. They -- they had been organized in '66, so there was now at least somebody to go talk to. And so -- and again, Alyeska hadn't been organized.

MR. GALLAGHER: Ewonati (phonetic), is he still alive?

MR. MITCHELL: Yeah. He's from Anchorage.

MR. GALLAGHER: He's a nifty guy.

MR. MITCHELL: Yeah. He's in Anchorage.

MR. GALLAGHER: He's so quiet and gentle.

MR. MITCHELL: Hasn't changed much, still -- probably just -- hasn't aged much either. Probably looks just about -- about the way he did, probably the last time you saw him.

MR. GALLAGHER: He was afraid of flying.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. And he would drive back here if you could imagine such a thing.

MR. GALLAGHER: That was -- that was one of the reasons everything was so slow. Everybody kept disappearing.

MR. MITCHELL: But anyway, it is -- I mean, you don't recall that lawsuit really jolting these people? Because --

MR. GALLAGHER: I remember -- you know, I don't remember the -- the date, the details. I remember the -- it did have tremendous impact, but how long it took for that impact to take hold, I don't know. I mean, I don't remember April 1st, 1970.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. It's a cataclysmic --

MR. GALLAGHER: No.

MR. MITCHELL: -- thing.

MR. GALLAGHER: No. But I do remember going to, what was it, we appealed to the circuit and then the circuit court heard (indiscernible) bank or with three --

MR. MITCHELL: And --

MR. GALLAGHER: I remember going to the first hearing of that and being totally frustrated because the Department of Justice was handling it for Interior.

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MR. MITCHELL: Right.

MR. GALLAGHER: And their attorneys didn't know how to answer basic questions about the geography of Stevens Village or -- or the -- the soil. Or I mean, they -- hopeless. It was hopeless.

MR. MITCHELL: Well, one thing that -- that does happen at the end of 1970 -- I mean, this whole project, in terms of them getting the Native Claims through Congress, ends in ruin in -- in September of '70 when Aspinall goes home without --

MR. GALLAGHER: You know, I worked for Aspinall, too.

MR. MITCHELL: Oh, really?

MR. GALLAGHER: Yeah. When I had polio in the summer of '52, and I was in the hospital two years. In spring of '54, I came back and I worked for Aspinall from January until September, starting just two hours a day and then four hours a day. He is -- our family is from Western Colorado. He was an old friend of the family. He gave me a job because -- to make me feel like I was somebody and I was not just a hopeless cripple. And he was always kind of like a grandfather to me. And that was another one of the reasons why I think BP hired me, why I was useful to the oil companies. And not only did I have -- contrary to the Natives and my knowledge of Alaskans -- but I also knew Aspinall quite well. And if push come to shove, I could call Aspinall. I very seldom -- hardly ever did, but I could have an impact on that.

MR. MITCHELL: What were your impressions of Aspinall? Somebody told me that he had gone -- probably from about the time you first went to work for him to sort of by the end. That at the beginning he was sort of a -- almost a populous anti-big bank, anti-railroad liberal. And by the end he seems to become sort of autocratic curmudgeon, at least that's how --

MR. GALLAGHER: Well, he was both. I mean, he was both. His -- his -- his votes on public policy issues unrelated to Interior were always fairly liberal. In fact, I think he was in favor of (indiscernible) which was a big issue back then. He ran that committee like Napoleon would have been proud of him. That's the ways committees were run in those days, too. He was remarkably efficient and I always thought remarkably fair. He was from, you know, Western Colorado and the views of miners and farmers and the use of water for -- by citizens, all those things he saw quite differently than New York Times. And every year, every election, the New York Times would run an editorial against him, and he always said that, that -- that editorial got him reelected. He wouldn't have to do another thing. He would just have to reprint it, mail it throughout his district. And everybody would say, "Hey, Wayne's pretty good."

MR. MITCHELL: Well, in terms of the -- the first sighting that I have of -- of real oil industry acknowledgment of -- of their involvement with Native Claims is in about October of '70. By that time, Alyeska's finally been formed. And Ed Patton goes in front of the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce and sort of gives them a speech about how life is going. And that's when he

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announces, he says, "Look, gang, there will be no pipeline until Native Claims are settled." And, of course, this is like news to Atwood, right? I mean, and everybody goes, "What?" And it sort of changed the whole mood. Now, all of a sudden when Ed Patton says the claims and -- and the pipeline is linked to it -- at home, it changed the whole -- whole configuration of the pieces on the chessboard. Do you have any recollection of that or who put Patton up to doing that, or what Patton's view of this would have been when he came on at Alyeska?

MR. GALLAGHER: Is he still around?

MR. MITCHELL: No. He died a couple years ago.

MR. GALLAGHER: I think when he came on to Alyeska, he came on because he was hard -- hard-skinned, hard-boiled engineer, get things done type, and he was that. But I think he grew in terms of social policy. I think he -- he was -- he was educated and he got educated. And he put up with a lot of frustration and confusion. One of the things -- I think BP had a role in making the oil companies more aware of Native hire and more aware of Native Claims. One of the things I got BP to do is the -- and it must have been right around that time. The chief executives of BP Alaska, who were then stationed in New York, flew with me up to Barrow and met with Barrow Native leadership at their invitation. I got them to invite us and we stayed as their guests. And we dressed neckties, coat and tie, like we would in New York. I learned this from (indiscernible) he said, "They know how you dress for business. This is business." And they know we travel in little jet planes, so we did that. And then, I don't know how long, six months later, we invited them to New York, paid their way back, and set up next process of -- of talking back -- between one -- one-on-one. And I don't know if it had much impact on the Inupiat, but it had impact on the BP executives. On Frank Rickwood (phonetic) who was -- who is a very key player in this, he was President of BP in Alaska. He is a geologist from Australia, and his first 15 years with BP, right after World War II, was in New Guinea where he just disappeared. And he lived with New Guinea, Papuan, for years and years. And he still goes up there, and he -- he loves it. And he was the one that believed that there was oil in Alaska. And throughout the late '50s and early '60s, as well. But -- so he was -- his mind was oriented towards Native Claims, aboriginal rights. He'd seen it in New Guinea, and he was simpatico. He was hard-nosed, he was a running a company, but he was simpatico. And his young assistant, who later became president of the company, Mike Savage, Cam- -- Cambridge University, good family, English, he was bowled over by the Natives he met, he was extraordinarily impressed by their -- by them. You know, he - - he didn't patronize them and he was on that first trip up to Barrow, I believe.

MR. MITCHELL: But you don't recall putting Patton up to that speech?

MR. GALLAGHER: No. No. But I -- the reason I bring this up is -- this is the kind of thing that Rick would and Savage would have pushed. And it was also -- Patton worked very closely with Quinn O'Connell. He was -- he wanted to understand the affect of the oil company policy. You've got -- he was the very center, and there -- there were hordes of lawyers making tons of money (indiscernible). And Quinn O'Connell is the one who did the work and Quinn O'Connell essentially was the one who got people to go in this direction or that. And Quinn became quite

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close to Patton. And, you know, Patton had his offices here for some time, and they were in Quinn's suite for quite a while. So I'm sure -- and Bill Foster by that time, if that was '70, would have been involved in this, too.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. Well, that's actually the next thing I wanted to ask you about is that -- I've not talked to Charlie about it yet, but I've talked to Adrian Palmer (phonetic), I don't know if you remember him.

MR. GALLAGHER: Oh, yeah.

MR. MITCHELL: A while back. And he said that the quick chronology is that Don Wright gets elected president of (indiscernible) in October of '70, really in response to Native discontent with the mess that they thought people had been making of things in the last Congress. And -- and Wright, for all of his many vagaries, I guess, one of the things Don realized was that he really didn't know what he was doing. He'd been elected, but he didn't know what to do next. And he happened to know Parmenter and -- and Parmenter knew Charlie. And Adrian told me that -- that Charlie had then taken him over to see you to talk about all this. And I guess the first -- and that that led, ultimately, to -- to Foster being retained on your recommendation to do all this. So I guess in terms of backing that up, the first thing becomes, where did you bump into Charlie?

MR. GALLAGHER: You know, it may be -- it may be that the other guys didn't write their book on Alaska claims like you said. Charlie -- but you know, Charlie -- throughout my entire experience with Alaska, Charlie was always there at the inception of things. Charlie worked on Quinn O'Connell before Bill Foster. Charlie, you know -- you know, he was around. And he -- he would have a hand in getting Foster involved too. You know, Foster had been in Bartlett's office and he and I had shared a room, and so we were quite close. And we used to strategize together. And I was never very good at action, I mean, I couldn't walk up and down the halls and stuff and run around. But I was very good at -- I mean, I think I'm pretty good at strategy. And Foster has to talk out a policy, and so we would game things out, and I -- I think that Foster is a remarkably effective persuader.

MR. MITCHELL: Everybody says that, actually.

MR. GALLAGHER: Remarkably persuasive, remarkably good. I mean, he's a good man. You know, and he -- I think he very is effective.

MR. MITCHELL: Now --

MR. GALLAGHER: -- (indiscernible) seeking.

MR. MITCHELL: Now, do you remember, then, how Foster actually got involved? Did -- was that on your recommendation or was --

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MR. GALLAGHER: Yes. It would have had -- I mean, Foster was with Patton. Pipeline was a big thing, big contract, you know? I think Foster wanted in. But I certainly wanted him in, too. And the -- Foster worked very closely with Patton after Patton came to take his measure. And that's when I met Charlie. I met him when he first came to Washington to testify, must have been '16 or '17 on Alaska Native Housing.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. The Department Housing Bill.

MR. GALLAGHER: That's right. That's right. And I -- they -- evening after he testified, we went out to dinner, all the Natives who testified, and I just cottoned onto him. He had a very severe stutter and stammer, and I -- I'm visibly handicapped. And we developed -- and we had a kind of empathy and a kind of trust that developed over the years. And so that -- I think that we served a useful function in Native Claims and the pipeline. And I had a way of behind the scenes, finding out what the Natives were saying or talking about and -- or passing messages back and forth or ideas or something. We could take readings on both sides.

MR. MITCHELL: You and Charlie sort of meeting at the bridge?

MR. GALLAGHER: Yeah. And there was a feeling, I think, amongst the more conservative oil people that I wasn't quite trustworthy because I'm meeting with these strange people, you know?

MR. MITCHELL: Well, actually the -- the major break point, at least in my present thinking on the whole land claims project in 1971, was the Nixon Administration coming out and in April, committing the President to a 40-million acre, billion-dollar bill.

MR. GALLAGHER: Yeah. And overruling the Department of Interior.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. And -- and the story of that is quite interesting, far beyond this tape this afternoon. But basically -- I'm sure you know the basic outline is that -- is that Parmenter --

MR. GALLAGHER: It was Charlie, too.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. And I was going to say is that -- is that they went to -- they developed this White House strategy and they made contact with Bobbie Kilberg and then she got Brad Patterson involved and eventually, in March, it all floated up to Ehrlichman, and maybe Nixon, maybe not. But in that period, the -- the introduction of the White House was made in December and really the lobbying that went on inside the White House before the Ehrlichman or Nixon decision was all in January and February of '71. Now, when you look at a lot of the paper, and I've been over to the Nixon archives and done it. The stuff that Patterson is sending around internally in the White House, really, very strongly makes the link between -- between, you know, we ought to do this Native Claims thing because it's the right thing to do and the President's committed to just. And oh, by the way, we got to do this before we can clear up the pipeline. Now, at the same time that Patterson and -- and Bobbie Kilberg are doing all that, there's a lot of interest in the pipeline at the White House and I guess John Whittaker was a



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fellow who was keeping an eye on that for Nixon, and also I guess Peter Flanagan. And so that long-winded introduction, I guess, is a way to ask, did -- I know that Charlie was around in that because Kilberg and Patterson both speak quite highly of him. And -- but were you guys -- you guys being BP and the oil people -- were you in any way involved in that in terms of dealing with John Whittaker and Flanagan or did -- or even Brad Patterson?

MR. GALLAGHER: I never -- I mean, Quinn always tried very hard to keep other people from monkeying with -- he represented the pipeline. And when he talked to Whittaker, he was the one who did and then Patton. As for the Native contacts with the White House, I knew all about that from the very beginning. I thought, "Charlie you're nuts. You're nuts." And he would say -- no. He would say, "No. This Ehrlichman, you know, he represented Sierra Club and he's got a soft spot for Indians." And I guess -- was it Parmenter who introduced him to Kilberg?

MR. MITCHELL: Right.

MR. GALLAGHER: But he -- he had to be in the spot, and he -- he couldn't get anything out of the Interior.

MR. MITCHELL: But you don't -- you don't recall if there had been a --

MR. GALLAGHER: A --

MR. MITCHELL: -- oil play into the White House it would have been through Quinn?

MR. GALLAGHER: I think so, yes. And now, you never know about Robert Anderson, he would be in town every now and then. And he did have (indiscernible) to Nixon personally.

MR. MITCHELL: Right.

MR. GALLAGHER: But I -- I have never heard any story. I mean, that the oil companies never gave a damn about the content of Native Claims. And they were prepared to have it generous (indiscernible). And the -- the oil companies were never -- what do you call it -- all united. You know, ARCO was always much more socially, and genuinely socially, concerned than Exxon, which was never. And (indiscernible) was not, but BP was. Within the English context of the -- the -- I'll tell you an anecdote now that everybody's dead, I suppose. This is just within the context of British petroleum. I went over to London after this had dragged on for some time, I don't know how far. And the chairman, Sir Erick Drake (phonetic) and the board of directors had me for lunch, on a platter, they were so angry. And, you know, I gave them a briefing of all that was happening in the court trial that would -- and the -- the chairman of the board of directors of British petroleum, which is 50 percent owned by the British government said, "Isn't there some way of getting to the judge? I mean," and you could literally hear everybody go -- and I said, "Oh, is that the way you do it here?" He got beet red, very angry.

MR. MITCHELL: But --

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MR. GALLAGHER: He was willing to bribe.

MR. MITCHELL: He was quite serious, you think?

MR. GALLAGHER: Yeah. I think -- no. I don't think he was kidding. No, he wasn't kidding. He was quite serious. I suppose that's what you could do and a lot of (indiscernible), and we have (indiscernible).

MR. MITCHELL: Well, once Nixon does that, then that completely breaks the -- breaks the log jam in Congress, because Scoop Jackson is running for President and Scoop's been running around saying, "Oh, yeah. I love Natives. And" -- and that's -- "my love and commitment to social justice is, you know, 70-million acres," or something. And now --

MR. GALLAGHER: And that's his jurisdiction.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. And now all of a sudden Richard Nixon says, "Well, I believe in social justice, too. It's 40." So once he did that, really, as a practical matter, it's over in terms of policy. But -- but it's not over in terms of procedure. And I'm told that -- that -- as you suggest, while they didn't --

MR. GALLAGHER: Yeah.

MR. MITCHELL: -- while they didn't care what was in the bill. That -- that the industry by --

MR. GALLAGHER: Wanted it passed.

MR. MITCHELL: -- 7 to 1 wanted -- right. And -- and was really quite helpful both -- both inside both the Interior Committees and with, say, the southern, you know, Louisiana senators on the floor and things like that. Do you recall, were you guys running --

MR. GALLAGHER: I recall -- yeah. We divided up in these -- we would meet the -- the ARCO man and Exxon man and I -- who can we -- you know, who do you got a contact with? Who do you got a contact with? And we were. We were lobbying hard with the Natives on parallel tracts --

MR. MITCHELL: Right.

MR. GALLAGHER: -- on Native Claims. Yeah.

MR. MITCHELL: And so the -- the message then just would have been, this is a good vote, take this bill, don't worry about it. We -- we the industry like --

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MR. GALLAGHER: That's my -- that's my general statement. I mean, whether specific, there was always deals. I really am going to have to --

MR. MITCHELL: Right. I know you've got to --

MR. GALLAGHER: And I feel bad about that.

MR. MITCHELL: No. Actually that's -- we're almost --

MR. GALLAGHER: Mike Gravel told me he was going to, you know, try to get it passed through legislation and what'd he do, offer an amendment to --

MR. MITCHELL: Oh, the pipeline.

MR. GALLAGHER: Yeah.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. By one vote.

MR. GALLAGHER: And I told him he was crazy. I said, "That's absurd. I said you're just going to kill -- ruin it for a generation, it won't work," and it worked.

MR. MITCHELL: Actually, I spent --

MR. GALLAGHER: Mike's so crazy.

MR. MITCHELL: I spent an afternoon with Mike and he's in Pebble Beach now.

MR. GALLAGHER: Yeah. He looks good.

MR. MITCHELL: Yeah.

MR. GALLAGHER: He used to live in (indiscernible).

MR. MITCHELL: Yeah.

MR. GALLAGHER: He's got a nifty new wife.

MR. MITCHELL: Yeah. Whitney. Right. The only -- the only other thing -- let me turn it off real quick. (Brief interruption.)

MR. MITCHELL: Let me turn it on real quick and I'll let you get out of here.

MR. GALLAGHER: Okay.

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MR. MITCHELL: Off of what we've just been talking about, in terms of Alaska statehood and how, I guess, the Southerners who had -- had opposed statehood for a number of congresses were persuaded not to do that. We were talking earlier maybe --

MR. GALLAGHER: Yeah. Well, they were persuaded by -- as a result of a deal that Bartlett had made with Dick Russel, who was leader of the southern forces. The session before the statehood session, in the closing days of the session, Alaska statehood is threatening to cause a filibuster on the floor of the senate. And the senate majority leader, Lyndon Johnson, came to Bob Bartlett and said, "Look, Bob, if you call off your forces this year I promise you that we will" -- it was -- it was -- no. He said it was Lyndon Johnson and Sam Rayburn together. Said, "We will get statehood for you next year but first you've got to make your peace with Dick Russel."

MR. MITCHELL: So they were both in the same meeting?

MR. GALLAGHER: Yep. They were in the same meeting.

MR. MITCHELL: Yep.

MR. GALLAGHER: And I know this because Bartlett told me this in '64 when the Civil Rights Act was before the Senate, and Bartlett was very troubled and acting, I thought, in a rather peculiar way and he told me he wasn't sleeping nights and then he told me why and it related to statehood. And he had met with Dick Russel, Russel had said that closure was the way that the southern states were fending off Civil Rights legislation, and that if he let Alaska become a state, would Bartlett promise to become a senator and to always vote against closure and Bartlett agreed. So in '64, after Kennedy assassination and Lyndon Johnson said, "We shall overcome," and tremendous pressure. And Bartlett came in one morning and said, "I've got to do it. I've got to go talk to Dick Russel." He said, "I represent a state and my people. And my people want this legislation. And my people are minorities," and so forth. And so he went to Dick Russel, told him that he would have to break the understanding, and indeed he did break it. And when he came back he told me that Russel was very angry, and that there would be no more favorable action on any legislation in the Armed Services Committee, I remember Bartlett saying, "For the rest of my life." I've told -- I'm -- I told that story after Bartlett died to Vidie (phonetic) and she -- she concurred. I -- I told it to Mary Lee Counsel (phonetic) years after that, and she denied it, "Absolutely insane. Oh, no. It's not -- never anything like that. Bob wouldn't do anything like that." But I -- there's corroborating evidence, and when Ted Stevens was appointed, I worked for him on a temporary basis and he came to me one day and said that Senator Thurman (indiscernible) who had been a Democrat and (indiscernible) Republican and a ranking one. Senator Thurman had come to Stevens and said, "Alaska senators have given (indiscernible) that Bartlett made a commitment for all Alaska senators that they would always vote with the south and (indiscernible)." And I told Ted the story. And that, no, that had been broken a long time since. And Ted said that he had told Thurman that he could not be committed to anything that any (indiscernible).

MR. MITCHELL: Well, great. Well --

Donald Mitchell oral histories, Archives and Special Collections, Consortium Library, University of Alaska Anchorage. Hugh Gallagher interview, 1992 September 12. Transcript completed by Andrea Atkins.

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MR. GALLAGHER: Okay.

MR. MITCHELL: Thanks very much. I appreciate it. (End of audio recording.)