Morris K. Udall -- Selected Articles:

This Fella from Arizona
by James M. Perry

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Representative Morris King Udall of Arizona climbed out of the Army helicopter, took a long look at the Nizina and Chitina canyons below him, gazed at the snow-capped peaks of 16,000- foot mountains above him, spread out his arms in ecstasy, and said: "I want it all!" The occasion was Udall's first extensive trip to Alaska, two weeks that represent what he says were the "most exciting" days of his life. The visit led, ultimately, to Udall's proudest achievement, passage of the Alaska lands bill that set aside 104.3 million acres with some of the most spectacular scenery in the world for the benefit of all of us, forever.

He didn't get it "all," of course (though he did get what he saw from the plateau in the Wrangell Mountains that day). When the legislation was in place, containing weaker language passed by the Senate, he said he "shed a tear" for southeastern Alaska, because the bill allows timber interests to chop up 300-year-old trees and "send them to Japan to make plywood." But he figures he got 85 to 90 percent of what he was after, and he is enough of a philosopher to know that's better than what most people get out of life.

"Mo" Udall, the chairman of the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, may not be the best friend the environmental movement has in high places, but it would be difficult to find anyone more important. He is -- he remains, despite staggering reverses that would daunt most of us -- funny, smart, down-to-earth, honest, sassy, patient. He has become a national treasure.

"He's one of the real giants in public life today," says his old friend and Alaska sidekick, Representative John Seiberling of Ohio (who likes to boast he was hung in effigy one day in Sitka, alongside Udall). "Mo's pretty much the best shot we have at standing up to [Secretary of the Interior] James Watt and the rest of these people in the Reagan Administration," Seiberling says. Maybe, Udall's friends suggest, it will be his last great battle. He's fifty-nine years old. And now he has Parkinson's disease. With medication, he can control it, but it slows him down and causes him some physical distress.

Udall's story is a kind of American political classic. Born in a hamlet out in the desert, he came to Washington wearing funny suits and cowboy boots. He bucked against the tradition that the new boys keep their noses clean and their mouths shut. He ran against the Speaker and lost. He ran for the number two job -- majority leader -- and lost. Then he ran for President, in a spectacular effort to break out of the pack. When he lost again, he finally seemed to accept his fate. He became what he is -- one of the great legislators of our time.

It is important, Udall believes, to understand the land.

He understands it; he has no choice. His grandfather, David King Udall, was a pioneer. In 1880, he led fifty Mormon families to a place in the desert called St. Johns, halfway between Phoenix and Albuquerque. "Of all the places the Mormons picked," says Udall, "this was probably as harsh and as unproductive a land as they tried. The growing season was short, the soil wasn't all that good. But they stuck it out and made a community of it."

His grandfather, a polygamist, settled in Arizona about the same time Miles Romney, former Michigan Governor George Romney's polygamous grandfather, settled there. Udall and Romney knew each other, of course, and both were befriended by a Jewish merchant named Baron Goldwater, Senator Barry Goldwater's grandfather. All three of the grandchildren -- Morris, George, Barry -- ran for President; all of them lost.

The Mormons were not welcome in Arizona. Udall's grandfather was arrested on a trumped-up perjury charge and sent off to prison for three years. He was released when President Grover Cleveland wrote a full pardon.

"My grandfather was persecuted because of his beliefs, Udall told Ben MacNitt of the *Arizona Daily Star*. "I deeply understand these things."

Grandfather Udall came home from jail "fired up with carrying out the work of redeeming the desert." That wasn't all he was thinking about, for he went on to sire eighteen children, including Morris Udall's father, Levi (who, forsaking polygamy, fathered only six children).

Levi Udall studied law with a local judge and sent off to a correspondence school for lessons. He became a lawyer himself and ultimately rose to become chief justice of the Arizona Supreme Court. When he died in 1960, he left a few thousand dollars and a two-bedroom house to his widow, Louise Lee. She was a writer, with a keen interest in Indian life and culture. Her book, *Me and Mine*, is the story of a Hopi woman.

St. Johns was a town of about 1,325 church-going Mormons and Roman Catholics. 'The only paved road was the highway that passed through town," Ben MacNitt has written. "The movie changed twice a week at the Ritz Theatre, 100 pounds of sugar cost $5.80, everybody worked hard, and most thought life was pretty good."

Udall lost his right eye when he was six years old. He and two of his friends were making a wagon train out of Coke bottles tied together with string. Udall pulled out a small knife to cut the taut string; somehow, the knife jumped out of his hand and hit him in the eye. He was treated locally with hot compresses. By the time his family realized something was seriously wrong, it was too late. Doctors in Phoenix, 150 miles away, removed the eye.

For all of that, Udall went on to star in high school on both the basketball and football teams. The basketball team went to the state championship and lost in the first round. The players were awed by the size of the University of Arizona gym. "Think of all the hay you could store here," one of them said. The football team, with Udall at quarterback, was undefeated.

Udall remembers what it was like to grow up in that harsh desert environment. "You learned," he told MacNitt, "that nature had first laws, that nature was bountiful and generous if you handled it right.... We had no tractors. We had horses and plows. You learned the cycles, the seasons.... It's just a closeness with nature, a closeness to fundamental laws of nature that I guess you get in no other way. "

When World War II began, Udall joined the Army. He was assigned to a noncombat support unit at Fort Douglas, Utah, where he organized a basketball team. "On my starting five, I had seven good eyes," he recalls.

When he came out of the service, he went to the University of Arizona, starred on its basketball team, and opened a barber shop in the basement of the infirmary. Later, while he was at law school at the University of Denver, he played an 82-game schedule with the Denver Nuggets of the National Basketball Association. The team was awful, and Udall was not one of its stars.

By then, Udall was no longer a practicing Mormon. "When I went off to school, I began to read widely, philosophy and history, and my mind expanded. I lost a great deal of interest in the church and haven't really been active since I went off to World War II."

It was Mormon doctrine then -- it has changed since -- that black people are cursed. Black people, then, couldn't become priests in the Mormon Church, in which almost all the males become priests. Udall never accepted that dogma.

Of the six Udall kids, Mo was the one most interested in politics. He always wanted to run for Congress; sometimes, late at night, he fantasized about being President. When a vacancy occurred in the Second Congressional District (Tucson) in 1954, Mo wanted to run. But he had to give way to his older brother, Stewart, who had never shown any interest in holding elective office until that moment. Stewart won, and Mo for some time thereafter may have harbored a trace of resentment. Mo went back to his law practice, hoping for an appointment to the State Supreme Court. Magically, a vacancy occurred there, too -- and the governor appointed a Udall to it. Only it was Mo's ultra-conservative uncle, a Goldwater type, who got it.

In 1961, President Kennedy appointed Stewart Udall to the cabinet as his Secretary of the Interior. Mo ran for the vacant seat in a special election, barely won it, and came to Washington green as grass.

He must have been a sight. Here he was, one-eyed, six feet five inches tall, and, as author Larry King has written, "a month short of thirty-nine," looking "something like a rodeo hand in short burr haircuts, bow ties, and a wide leather belt studded with ersatz stones and a silver buckle. There was about him a disconcerting combination of country-boy shyness and a bawdy cowlot humor."

He brought with him his wife, the former Pat Emery, a Vassar graduate, and their six children. Mo loved it, the children more or less adjusted to it, and Pat Udall hated it. The marriage ended in 1965; Pat left town and took the children with her. Mo married a Capitol Hill secretary -- Ella Royston -- three years later. He calls her "Tiger" and gets out of the way when she's mad. It's a happy marriage.

Right from the start, Mo began doing something that most congressmen never would think of doing: writing long, eventually thoughtful essays once a month to his constituents back home. At first, though, he was simplistic, cautious, and very political. He tended to play to the worst yahoo sentiments of his readers, mindful that Arizona is one of the most conservative states in the nation, and getting more conservative every election.

"I am willing to risk a nuclear war rather than live under Communism," he wrote in 1962. But he doubted things would come to that, because he insisted we actually were winning the Cold War. In 1965, he suggested President Johnson might be wrong about Vietnam. It didn't matter, though, because "he is our President, and he deserves our loyalty and support." By the end of the year, he predicted, the comer would be turned in Vietnam.

Mo Udall came of political age the night of October 23, 1967, when he gave a speech in Tucson at the Sunday Evening Forum, one of the region's largest civic meetings. There were 2,800 people in the audience -- newspaper editors, party officials, businessmen. They were "important people," and hardly one of them opposed Johnson’s policies in Vietnam.

Udall got right to the point.

"I have come here tonight to say as plainly and as simply as I can that I was wrong two years ago, and I firmly believe President Johnson's advisers are wrong today." Unless the nation changed direction, he warned, "I predict we will have 750,000 troops committed to Vietnam within the next eighteen months. There will be more bombing, more civilian deaths in South and North Vietnam, more American casualties .... We are on a mistaken and dangerous road."

He said he had a plan, and he was willing to share it with his listeners, each of whom -- shocked -- was on the edge of his seat by now. "I propose," he said, "that the United States halt all further escalation and Americanization of this war and that it discontinue sending any more Americans to do a job that ought to be done and can only be done by Vietnamese. I am suggesting that we de-escalate and de-Americanize this war and that we begin the slow, deliberate, and painful job of extricating ourselves from a hopeless, open-ended commitment .... I am suggesting that we start bringing American boys home and start turning this war back to the Vietnamese."

When he was finished, there wasn't a sound in the hall. Then one or two people began to applaud; soon, the whole crowd was on its feet, giving Udall and his heresy an ovation. The speech, according to Robert Peabody, a political scientist who has edited Udall's newsletters, "made headlines across the land, from the *Nogales Herald* to the front page of *The New York Times*."

After all, he wasn't just any congressman. His brother was the Secretary of the Interior, and one of the better-known politicians in the country. Just before leaving for Tucson, Udall had given a copy of his speech to the President, with a note saying how much he regretted what he was about to do. The White House reacted almost instantaneously: Udall was offered a private briefing by Secretary of State Dean Rusk; McGeorge Bundy called him on the telephone. Even as he was dressing to go to the auditorium, his Washington neighbor, Nicholas Katzenbach, the Undersecretary of State, telephoned, in a final effort to dissuade him.

Udall says now, shucks, it wasn't much. "In the great chorus of oratory so characteristic of that time, mine was just another voice." He's too modest. He was, after all, one of the first, and quite possibly **the** first, regular Democrat to turn against Johnson and the war. It was an act of courage.

He wasn't always that courageous.

"Right-to-work," for example, has long been a special problem for Udall. "It's been an emotional subject," he says. "Two referenda and an act of the state legislature have rejected labor's arguments and embedded in our constitution a state 'right-to-work' law." Udall concedes he is out of step with the right-to-work philosophy, but he says he pledged in his first campaign to vote Arizona's way on right-to-work. And so, in 1965, he did, in a vote labor didn't let him forget for years.

Then there is the Central Arizona Project, which was started before his time and probably won't be finished until after he is gone. Environmentalists say it is a multibillion-dollar boondoggle. Udall has supported it, and has pledged to see it through. Uncharacteristically, he ducks responsibility for the most controversial part of it, the Orme Dam, by noting it's in someone else's congressional district.

Then there was his support of the Bridge Canyon (later Hualapai) and Marble Gorge dams smack in the Grand Canyon. Friends of the Earth's David Brower was executive director of the Sierra Club back then, and he and his organization were outraged by the idea of building the dams. The Sierra Club ran full-page ads asking, "Do you want to flood the Grand Canyon for profit?"

Brower believes Udall was so outraged by the Sierra Club's opposition to the dams that he triggered the Internal Revenue Service's investigation of the club's tax-deductible status. He believes Udall and the head of IRS met the day after the ads appeared, and that IRS sent a wire to the Sierra Club the day after that. As a result, the Sierra Club did lose its special tax status, and that situation remains unchanged today (although the club, like Friends of the Earth, maintains a separate foundation to which contributions are tax-deductible).

Udall concedes he supported the Grand Canyon dams. He argues they were part of the Central Arizona Project then, and he was elected with a mandate to support that project. He points out that power in the area is now supplied by polluting coal-fired generating plants. Thus, if the dams had been built to supply hydroelectric power, the air today would be cleaner. He concedes, too, that he wrote a letter to IRS about the Sierra Club. He says it wasn't the ads that offended him so much as the club's lobbying effort on Capitol Hill. But he does not agree that his letter triggered the investigation or played a major role in it. He insists the letter was mailed after IRS had decided to challenge the club's tax status.

Udall may have come to Washington wearing funny suits, but it didn't take him long to catch on. He wasn't willing, like so many of his colleagues, to wait his turn. He was ambitious and quickly became frustrated. He watched in dismay as so many of the best people in the House went home to run for governor or for the Senate, or just said to hell with it and went home - - or downtown -- to practice law.

Remembering his own confusion when he first came to Washington, he organized orientation seminars for the freshmen. Out of that came a book (written with Donald Tacheron), *The Job of the Congressman*, that includes all kinds of advice, some of it exotic (how, for example, to get plants for the office -- free, of course, from the Botanic Gardens).

He joined other young liberals in the Democratic Study Group and became something of a legislative specialist. But young members of Congress didn't enact much legislation then. Nobody, in fact, was enacting very much legislation. Twenty years ago, Udall says, "all movement seemed to stop, and the House became a sleeping giant."

First, as Speaker, was Sam Rayburn, an old man from Texas. Then came John McCormack, an old man from Massachusetts. "There was a Rip Van Winkle quality to the House," Udall recalls. "We were a case of arrested development."

It was on Christmas Eve, 1968, that Udall tried to break out of the trap. That day, he telephoned Speaker McCormack in Boston to announce he was going to challenge the old man for his job when the 91st Congress convened in January. Udall had trouble explaining what he had in mind because, according to writer Larry King, McCormack "kept hoo-hawing season's greetings." When McCormack finally got the message, he cut off the greetings, and the connection.

The challenge to McCormack was symbolic, mostly: Udall never expected to win. On the basis of private commitments, though, he did expect to get about 80 votes. In a secret ballot, he got 58; McCormack got 178. According to Larry King, "maybe a hundred statesmen" later sought out Udall to whisper that they had stuck with him in the voting.

He has done some other things he'd just as soon forget. He led the effort to get a whopping pay boost for his colleagues, and that at least earned him warm -- but private -- thanks. He played a key role in passing the Postal Regulation Act, which led to even drearier mail delivery. He led the fight for a land-use act, defeated because of a propaganda barrage laid down by his Arizona colleague, Sam Steiger, and every conservative organization.

In 1970, McCormack announced he was stepping down as Speaker, and he laid his bony old hands on Carl Albert, the majority leader, to succeed him. Udall decided to run for the number two job, thereby positioning himself on the succession ladder right behind Albert. This time, it wasn't symbolic at all: Udall and his strategists thought he would win. He prepared his ground as carefully as he could, studying in excruciating detail the history of earlier leadership fights. His principal opponent, it turned out, was the late Hale Boggs. Also running were Jim O'Hara, Bernie Sisk, and Wayne Hays. First ballot: Boggs, 95; Udall, 69; Sisk, 31; Hays, 28; O'Hara, 25. Hays pulled out, in favor of Boggs. O'Hara backed out, favoring no one. Second, and final, ballot: Boggs, 140; Udall, 88; Sisk, 17.

Udall and his aides turned their "MO" buttons upside down. Now they read "OW." And hurt it did.

That was eleven years ago, but Udall is the only one of those House members active in that fight still serving. Time is a sneak, and it has sneaked up on Udall. Slowly, with no one noticing, he gradually became one of the old lions himself. And, maybe, for the first time, he sometimes looked down the road at the years stretching ahead, leading, if he was lucky, to the chairmanship of the Post Office and Civil Service Committee. Maybe he could see himself becoming one of those old men in the Congress, cat-napping in their chairs on the House floor.

So having failed twice to win leadership posts in the House, he decided in 1974 he would try to lead the whole country. He decided to run for President, in a fairly spectacular last effort to break out of the encircling trap.

It wasn't actually his idea. Two of his colleagues, Henry Reuss and David Obey, both of Wisconsin, ruminated one day why so many senators run for President, and no members of the House. Who, they asked themselves, was qualified in the House to be President? That took some thought. Udall, they finally concluded. They told him what they had come up with, and Udall told them it wasn't a bad idea. If they could get 10 percent of the Democratic membership of the House -- 25 reasonably warm bodies to sign a letter of intent that he ought to give the idea a go, he would do it. (Of course, it didn't mean they would **endorse** him; that would have been far too risky.) Instead of just 25 signatures, Obey and Reuss came up with 44 (of whom only 18 are still serving), and the unlikeliest candidate joined the 1976 presidential race.

"When you buy a President," Udall's friend, Congressman Obey, said at the time Udall began running for President, "you buy his psyche. That's why I like Mo. He's fresh, he's sensible, he's smart, and he lacks all traces of pomposity. He has just the personal characteristics that should catch on. They'd have caught on by now if he had 'Senator' in front of his name instead of 'Representative.'"

But, having "Representative" in front of his name, Udall encountered a problem, right away. Outside of Washington (and, of course, Tucson), no one had ever heard of him. Running for President may have been, initially at least, Udall's most humbling experience. (To be sure, at the very same time, an obscure governor from Georgia, Jimmy Carter, was undergoing a similar experience.)

I remember being with him -- this is the first occasion I recall spending much time with Udall -- in Oklahoma City. It was a Saturday night, and he had been invited to speak at a big Democratic dinner. He thought he was going to be the main speaker, even if George Wallace was going to be at the head of the table, too.

But it wasn't a dinner at all. It was a rally in a shabby big room in the basement of a hotel that had seen its better days back when they first struck oil. Udall's wife and her mother had come all the way from Washington, Ella Udall to hear Mo, her mother to hear her particular hero, Governor Wallace.

It was awful, but this is what its like, campaigning for President when you're not famous. It is what Walter Mondale has called the "death match." First, the master-of-ceremonies auctioned off books autographed by Ted Kennedy, Ed Muskie, and Bella Abzug, whose names drew a prolonged chorus of boos.

All through the evening, thirsty Democrats kept slipping out of the hall and heading down a dingy corridor to "hospitality" rooms, where the liquor flowed. Finally, Wallace was pulled out of his wheel chair and helped to the lectern. He gave the same speech he has given a thousand times, and the crowd loved it. When he was finished, at least one-third of the people in the room got up and went home. It was almost eleven o'clock when Udall's turn came. By then, nobody wanted to listen to the kind of serious speech Udall had prepared. They thought they'd heard that speech -- from Wallace.

Udall did the best he could. He stuffed the speeches back in his pocket and started telling stories. He always talks loud, but he talked extra-loud even for him that night. The jokes began to bring the crowd alive. Good ol' boys nudged their wives. Hey, they seemed to say, catch this fella from Arizona. He ain't half-bad.

When it was over, Udall stumbled off to bed. It was after one in the morning. He got up in the dark, before six o'clock, to catch a plane for Kansas City and another speech, hoping somewhere along the line he would catch the eye of David Broder of *The Washington Post* or John Apple of *The New York Times* or columnists Evans and Novak, someone who would say that he was a serious candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination. It almost worked.

The trouble was, the liberal vote splintered, some of it going to Fred Harris, some to Birch Bayh, some to Jimmy Carter. Udall came in second to Carter in New Hampshire, second to Henry Jackson in Massachusetts. He went to bed thinking he had won in Wisconsin, only to awaken to the news that Carter had snatched victory away.

It was not what anyone would call a highly organized or rigidly disciplined campaign. Staff turnover was high -- Udall has never been very good at recruiting and keeping a first-rate staff. And his brother Stewart kept poking the fires, causing all kinds of flare-ups. When the election was over and the campaign managers for all the candidates gathered at Harvard to talk about it, two sets of managers appeared for Udall, each saying it was the truly legitimate one.

Udall's managers were mad at each other, but they never seemed to get mad at Udall himself. The campaign veterans call themselves "Mozos," and they still hold reunions. Robert Neuman, a leading "Mozo," says he couldn't believe his eyes when he saw members of Udall's Secret Service detail "cry when we told them the campaign was finished."

What kind of President would Udall have been?

No doubt he would have been more certain of his goals than Jimmy Carter ever was. Surely he would have known how to operate in Washington, his own city, better than Carter. He is irrepressible, and so almost surely he would have been fun to have around. But, even some of his best friends wonder if he would have been tough enough for that job. "He is a very accommodating man," says Neuman. "Maybe that wouldn't have been a good thing." Beyond that, he may not take himself seriously enough to maintain the kind of ego we demand of our Presidents.

So now, apparently, the trap had closed. Udall had tried everything, and failed. Then, suddenly, lightning -- two bolts of it -- struck. When Congress convened, Udall discovered he had a choice of being chairman of the

Post Office and Civil Service Committee or the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee. Interior was unexpected, for it should have gone to Harold (Bizz) Johnson of California. But Johnson chose to become chairman of Public Works and Transportation. Udall grabbed Interior.

Until then, Udall's track record as a legislator was not all that sensational. It included, after all, that "reform" of the postal system. It included, too, losing efforts to pass a land-use-planning bill, universal voter registration by postcard, and public financing of congressional elections.

In the 95th Congress, though, everything seemed to come into place. Why? Perhaps because Udall finally realized this would be his ultimate role. Perhaps because he finally had the power and the reputation to push ahead. Perhaps because it was simply time to do these things. One of his major successes didn't even involve the Interior Committee. He had to shepherd the civil-service reform bill through the Post Office Committee, because its aging chairman, Robert Nix, was preoccupied with a primary election.

Mo Udall, as much as any man, is responsible for civil service reform, the first overhaul of the civil service since the merit system was created in 1883. It wasn't his idea; it was a pet project of President Carter's, one of the few things the new President really felt deeply about. Udall had no love for Carter (and vice versa), but he pushed the bill against all the roadblocks thrown up by federal employees and the congressmen representing districts heavy with federal bureaucrats. It took an entire month to "mark up" -- or write -- the bill in committee. Committee members opposing the reform called up one crippling amendment after another. The same tactics were pursued on the House floor.

Udall cut a deal with troublesome members of the committee, saw to it that President Carter mollified a congressman who wanted action on his own pet bill, and finally took a consensus bill to the House floor. Once again, though, Udall was buried in a flurry of meaningless, time-delaying amendments. For three days and most of three nights, the debate droned on. The last session went on for five hours. In the end, though, Udall and the President got what they wanted. The legislation is designed to create incentives in the bureaucracy for exceptional work and to make it easier for departmental managers to fire the incompetents. It is still too early to tell if it's working.

What it did demonstrate is why Udall had become such a good legislator. He possesses the necessary qualities:

* Patience. Young members think you write legislation by tossing a bill together and issuing a press release. Wrong. It takes time, and endless patience. Udall is a patient man.

* A lawyer's mentality. Under that aw shucks, cowboy demeanor lurks a legal mind as sharp as a Wall Street managing partner's. Years earlier, his friends note, Udall wrote the book --quite literally -- on the laws of evidence in Arizona. He is a good lawyer; he appreciates distinctions some of us might call nit-picking.

* An extroverted personality. Udall likes people; people like him. No one gets very mad at him, so he can reach compromise and cut deals where others would never be able to open a conversation.

* Commitment. For all this, on some things he cares very deeply.

More up Udall's pet alley (and back in his own committee) was strip-mining legislation. Next to Alaska, it is probably his proudest accomplishment.

"It took me four Congresses before Carter finally signed it," Udall says. "It was really the first thing I became interested in when I joined the [Interior] committee [in 1961]. Among the senior members, nobody then really cared about it. And so I gradually became associated with it."

Congressman Seiberling says, "It was Udall's idea to give the states primary jurisdiction for regulating the mines under the bill -- unless they failed to follow the guidelines. Then, of course, the government would step in. It was that idea, I think, that made passage of the bill possible."

Udall is a forgiving man, but he has never forgiven President Ford for vetoing the strip-mining bill -- twice. "That really showed me where President Ford was," Udall says. "Ford never really had any feel for the land. Even Herbert Hoover, even Nixon did better."

Like all tough legislation, it was a compromise. Coal- mining people were unhappy about it. They argued it would be a roadblock to necessary production. Environmentalists regretted the bill didn't cover strip-mining for copper and other minerals and that it gives a partial exemption to small operators.

At about the time the strip-mining legislation finally was being enacted, Udall came up with what he thought was a marvelous idea. Given all the complaints about how long it was taking to build energy facilities, why not some kind of mobilization board to cut the red tape and get on with the necessary work?

"I'd been reading a book about when Jimmy Byrnes was in the Roosevelt White House during World War II and he had a staff of about ten people to run the War Mobilization Board. He'd get on the phone to the head of United States Steel and say, 'What the hell's going on here? They need steel in Philadelphia to build more battleships.' This was the idea I had when I talked to Carter at Camp David."

But, says Seiberling, "the White House tried to grab the idea from Mo and run with it. They came up with an Energy Mobilization Board that would have overruled federal and local laws."

"My God," says Udall, "I created a monster."

According to Seiberling, Udall dug in his heels -- so deep "the idea finally died." Udall has so much respect in the House, Seiberling says, "that he doesn't have to call on the Speaker or anyone else for help very often. But, when he does, he gets help. He got it here. The Speaker backed him up, and we don't have an Energy Mobilization Board."

Alaska is the gem in the Udall collection.

Not just Mo, Stewart, too. Mo boasts about the "famous -- or infamous -- Udall freeze," and he's talking about when his brother was Secretary of the Interior and he halted the parceling out of land in Alaska. "I arrived in Washington right after Alaska became a state. Chapter One was statehood; it gave 104 million acres to the people of Alaska.

"Chapter Two came later, when the natives said, 'What the hell's going on here? What about us? We were here first, and we want some land too.' So my brother clamped the 'freeze' on. It said, 'Hey, team, all you miners and folks in Alaska, stop picking off all the good land for yourselves.' "

Out of that, finally, came passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. "That gave another 55 million acres to the Alaska natives, set up regional corporations, and was intended to be a final land settlement," Udall says.

"John Saylor (the late Republican congressman from Pennsylvania and one of Udall's allies) and I got an amendment -- we lost in the House but we won in the conference committee -- which said, 'All right, the state got its land, the natives got their land, how about the people of the United States?'

"We said there are world-famous places in Alaska-Mount McKinley, the Brooks Range -- how about a settlement with the rest of us?"

That became one of the most famous numbers in environmental history, d-2 -- section d-2 of the native claims act. In it, the Secretary of the Interior -- Rogers Morton then -- was instructed to come up with a list of national parks, game refuges, and forests, for "all of us."

Udall and Seiberling and other members of the committee went to Alaska for two weeks to look at the property, to see what should be set aside. Recollecting that trip, Udall is almost euphoric.

"It really grabs you. Alaska is so big. We had support from the Army with helicopters, even amphibious planes. We could go anywhere. It's a stunning piece of real estate. Unless you've been there, you just don't realize the grandeur and majesty of it. It's fragile, but it's relatively untouched.

"I remember once a group of scientists who had been up there were all excited about a place called Noatak. Nobody had ever heard much about it, as far as I know, but it's the only ecosystem -- the only river basin -- that has not suffered from the hand of man. And we can preserve the whole thing.

"You'll see this or that one day and say it's the greatest. The next day, you'll see three other things that are even better. There are things like the Kobuk Sand Dunes, above the Arctic Circle. Due to some strange weather patterns, the way the wind works, there's an arid place that has basically the same climate as southern Arizona. It just takes your breath away."

Udall remembers the day he and Seiberling and a small group of staff members and newspaper reporters landed in a helicopter on one of those dunes. "Traveling with us," says Udall, "was Dora Trapkin, a staff person. She was sort of everybody's favorite. I put an arm around her on top of this dune and said, 'I do hereby declare this the Dora Trapkin Sand Dune.'"

Seiberling remembers when they flew into Umiat on the North Slope. "It was just a couple of house trailers. Someone told us we could take a short helicopter ride to look at some archeological sites, and three of us decided to do it -- me, Udall, and the little delegate from Guam, Tony [Antonio Borja] Won Pat.

"Well, we got there and looked around, and then when it was time to fly back to Umiat the pilot couldn't get the helicopter started. We could see Umiat -- it was just a speck on the horizon. I said, 'Well, Mo, I guess we better start walking.' And off we went. It was just tundra, with these little hummocks sticking out of the icy water. It was perfect for Udall, with those long legs of his. He could stride from one hummock to the next. It was hard for me, and it was just awful for poor Tony. Fortunately, after we'd gone a mile, another helicopter came and fished us out."

Seiberling says he and Udall "got an understanding of Alaska on that trip we might never have gotten any other way." He says they learned then that "the natives -- the people out in the bush -- have a right to live off the land. But there is a clash between the sport hunters and the subsistence people. The sport hunters go out and shoot moose for their deep freezers. So there's competition involved. The Alaska constitution says you can't make a distinction between types of hunters. But there is one greater power -- Congress. And we protected the natives in our legislation. We became determined on that trip we would honor our commitment to protect the natives. Mo's support on that point was indispensable."

Back in Washington, in a conference with members of the Senate, Udall says, "We finally reached an agreement on a bill at two in the morning" at the end of the session. "I said, 'Gentlemen, we've done something very historic here. Now let's get the hell out of the road and let the staff put it together so we can take it to the floor of the House and the Senate tomorrow.' "

Udall thought he had reached an agreement earlier with Alaska Senator Mike Gravel to go along with the arrangement. "But Gravel said to me, 'Mr. Chairman, I have a few changes I want in the bill.' 'All right,' I said, 'what are they?' The first one was a $5 billion Susitna hydroelectric project, the biggest in history. The next was a sea-level Panama Canal or something. That's how it went. It was impossible. He was just demagoguing it, killing the bill. People in there were just violent, because he'd sat there for six days without saying anything."

Udall had to do it all over again in the next Congress, and he treasures a headline -- he has framed it -- from the Anchorage newspaper "showing how we beat the hell out of them." The Udall bill passed the House, 360 to 65. But Gravel was still over in the Senate, and "this time it was an election year and he was going to get reelected whatever the cost."

Even with Gravel's opposition, the Senate passed a bill, not as good as the House's, but a plus on balance. "The strategy," says Udall, "was to keep it out of conference and make us negotiate informally with the Senate. Stevens [Ted Stevens, the other Alaska senator] always figured he'd get more out of an informal deal like that.

"Then came the shock of the Carter defeat. All of a sudden, we were in a position where we'd have to go back and do it all over again, and now the Republicans controlled the Senate. The only option was to take the Senate bill.

"There's an old country-western song that says, 'There's a time to hold 'em and a time to fold 'em.' I decided the time had come to fold 'em. And I was right."

It is astonishing, when you think about it, that **any** bill was passed. Alaskans generally opposed the legislation. Gravel, who was defeated for all his pyrotechnics, made a career out of opposing it. The entire state watched the final debate on TV, beamed to them by satellite. "I'll never forget it," Udall says. "In my closing speech, I said I've been through legislation creating twenty or more national parks and there's a pattern to it. At first, after you propose it, and you go visit the towns where it's going to be, they threaten to hang you. They say it will ruin the community. You go back five years later and they think it's the greatest thing that ever happened. You go back in twenty years and they'll probably want to name a mountain after you."

A few days after his speech, Udall received a letter from Fairbanks. "The guy called me an idiot and said he was attaching a picture of the only mountain in Alaska that would ever be named after me. I turned the page to a picture of this big, beautiful mountain. It said, in big type, 'Mount Bull _ _ _ _.' "

The new administration, Udall figures, can't do much about Alaska.

"It's very clear in the Antiquities Act -- it's been tested many times in court-that once something is in a national park, it takes the Congress to get it out. I remember Wally Hickel coming to town after the famous 'Udall freeze' and saying, 'Anything Udall can do I can undo.' He had to eat that."

Anyway, Udall says, the Alaska delegation doesn't want to fight that battle again. "I saw Don Young [Alaska's only member of the House] the other day, and he said it was all right for me to come back to Alaska. He said he wasn't sure about Seiberling, though."

Udall is more pessimistic about the strip-mining legislation.

"There's a kind of basic difference with this new administration, and it is bad news for conservationists. Republicans always have had some feel for conservation. It is, after all, an old tradition with them, going back to Teddy Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot. Even Hoover wasn't so bad. Nixon never had much feel for the outdoors. You'd find him walking the beach in San Clemente in a pin-stripe suit and a tie. But he sensed politically -- he'd served in the House and the Senate -- that the Republicans had a stake in conservation. And he believed it was a continuing one. Ford was bad for conservation, but at least he never fired Russell Train and other real conservationists he inherited in his administration.

"I really thought this administration might put a few people in there that had some feet for conservation. But I haven't found any. It's typical that the guy they've got to run the strip-mining program is out of the Indiana legislature and had a cozy little land thing with the coal companies. You just know how tough he's going to be on these folks who are screwing up the land."

Udall fears "the strip-mining bill could be mangled pretty badly by the administration. You get a tough guy down there and he won't hire good people, and he tells the inspectors to squint and not look too hard. Then he changes the regulations to allow unlimited departure from the approximate original contour. It's going to be very tough."

Seiberling agrees, although he says the administration can't completely "gut" the bill by regulation, as they have proposed to do. That, he insists, requires new legislation. He says Udall is planning a bigger, tougher fight than he's willing to admit, yet.

Udall is preparing a counterattack. First, he says, will be a quiet effort to form a majority of the House to restore some of the cuts and fight some of the regulations the administration has proposed. "Maybe," he says, "we'll do what we can to save the Land and Water Conservation Fund. A lot of people think what they want to

do there -- kill it -- is an outrage. They want to kill the Youth Conservation Corps, too. We can rally sentiment for that. In the western states, we have what's called payment in lieu of taxes, which is federal payment to those people because we have so much of the land. They're trying to eliminate it.

"We'll see what we can do."

There has been talk that Udall will retire at the end of this term. After all, even as he has become a national figure, he has become suspect to the increasingly conservative voters back home. Then there is his struggle with Parkinson's disease. He's paid his dues, friends say, and he deserves a rest.

I asked him about that.

"I'm sticking around," the man who christened the Dora Trapkin Sand Dune replied. "You bet. Yes. Damn right. I'll fight them to the last breath."

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