

Alaska State Library  
Historical Collections

**Guide to Collection**

**Egan, Neva McKittrick**

**Neva Egan Papers and Photographs, 1937-1998**

**MS 265**

19 boxes  
10 albums  
8 cubic feet

Processed by: Jim Simard

**ACQUISITION:** The collection was donated by Dennis and Linda Egan. Accession number 2011-043.

**ACCESS:** The collection is open to research.

**COPYRIGHT:** Request for permission to publish or reproduce material from the collection should be discussed with the Librarian.

**PROCESSING:** The collection has been inventoried at a folder level.

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

REMEMBERING NEVA EGAN -- (Senate - February 17, 2011) Address by Senator Lisa Murkowski.

### Sen. Lisa Murkowski

Mr. President, today I honor the passing of the initial first lady of Alaska, Neva Egan. Desdia Neva McKittrick Egan was born in Wilson, KS, on October 3, 1914. The articulate, effervescent Alaskan served on hospital boards, school boards, worked diligently on community commitments, and continued to attend morning meetings of the Commonwealth Club in Anchorage for years. Although she was quick to downplay her role in Alaskan history, she had a key position as first lady. Neva also accompanied her husband to Washington, DC, for 19 months during the period when Alaska was being considered for statehood.

In DC it was a time of adjustment, traffic, "hot weather" and big-city living for the girl from small-town Kansas. After her husband, William A. Egan, was elected as Alaska's first Governor, she took great pride in supporting him, as well as all the Alaskan legislators and their families. She was known to invite legislator's children to the Governor's Mansion while living in Juneau during session. Although, Neva rarely spoke publicly about politics, she was the firm shoulder on which many legislators leaned. She was a strong woman that worked hard to care for others behind the scenes when it mattered most.

Neva was the third in a family of four girls and one boy. She graduated from high school in the midst of the Great Depression in 1932 and then worked for a year in her father's grocery store. After a year, she decided to continue her education and attended Kansas State College, but soon transferred to be closer to her sister and aunt at the University of Wyoming. Quickly, she was recruited to teach in Glenrock, WY, for the "fabulous" salary of \$1,000 a year, while her friends were making \$25 a month. Her musical background and teaching career led her to Valdez, where she expected to only stay a year and was told the town was "a little rough." Shortly after she arrived, one of the few local guys with a car, a quiet man, who read the *Congressional Record* for fun in junior high school, expressed interest in Neva. Apparently, the first date was disastrous, but friends recall "love at first sight."

William and Neva Egan were married on November 16, 1940, in Valdez. It was the same month that William was elected to the Alaska Territorial House of Representatives from the Third Judicial Division that started his drive into Alaskan political history. As a Representative, an advocate pushing for statehood in DC, a Governor, and as a family man, there was never any question as to whom William could look to for support. Neva was the rock that held up her family. While overseeing issues, her son, Dennis Egan who was born in 1947, once asked if since Neva is the first lady is he "the first kid?" Well, that "first kid" grew up to be a Juneau radio personality, the former mayor of Juneau, and now a State senator.

Neva was known to start the legislative session with buffet receptions for all the Senators and Representatives and their spouses. She was consistently the rock that others leaned upon; ironing shirts, making beds, and taking the initiative to perform any needed repairs on the Governor's Mansion.

Neva Egan worked hard every day and that resulted in a lifetime of contributions to Alaska. Neva is survived by her son Dennis and daughter-in-law Linda; her granddaughters and their husbands, Jill Egan and Sandy Vergano and Leslie Egan and Tyler Malstrom; and brother Richard McKittrick. Neva was preceded in death by her husband William Egan, daughter Elin Carol Egan, and sisters Helen Spiegelberg, Margaret McKittrick and Josephine Trowbridge. I extend my sympathies to the Egan family and feel blessed to come from the same state where she made such a difference. May she rest in peace.

[http://capitolwords.org/date/2011/02/17/S864-4\\_remembering-neva-egan/](http://capitolwords.org/date/2011/02/17/S864-4_remembering-neva-egan/)

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTES

The Neva Egan Papers and Photographs consist of materials documenting her public life as First Lady of Alaska, 1959 to 1966, and 1970 to 1974. The papers and photographs also include material on the Egan's activities in Valdez, William Egan's terms in the Alaska Territorial Senate, President of the Constitutional Convention in 1955, and activities related to the Statehood movement and the Tennessee Plan.

Significant items include incoming and outgoing correspondence, newspaper clipping files, and subject files. Boxes 6 through 9 contain unprocessed photographs from the Office of the Governor.

## INVENTORY

<b><u>Box 1</u></b>	<b>Neva Egan's correspondence and personal papers, documents relating to activities as First Lady and affairs of the Governor's Mansion.</b>
Folder 1	Biographical Sketches
Folder 2	Background and Memorabilia
Folder 3	Mrs. Egan's File (title from file) Includes correspondence to and from Governor-elect Egan, 1958 - 1959. Personal papers and letters. Significant items include John Hellenthal's speech at Governor Egan's Memorial Service.
Folder 4	Correspondence, 1957 - 1958
Folder 5	Correspondence of First Lady, 1959 - 1974
Folder 6	Governor's Mansion Documents and correspondence relating to maintenance of official residence.
Folder 7	Correspondence, 1978 - 1998

- Folder 8 '55 Club. Conference on the Constitution
- Folder 9 Speeches and Events
- Folder 10 "Belle of the Ball" Exhibit, Clippings and Letters
- Folder 11 Clippings
- Folder 12 Clippings

**Box 2 William Egan, personal papers and correspondence, 1937 - 1974  
Valdez, Territorial Legislature, Statehood, US Senate, Office of  
Governor**

- Folder 1 Valdez, Fire Department 1933, City Council 1937 and office of Mayor, 1946
- Folder 2 Correspondence, Territorial Legislature, 1940 - 1956
- Folder 3 State Constitutional Convention, 1955
- Folder 4 Senator Elect Wm Egan, correspondence, 1957 - 1958
- Folder 5 Senator Elect Wm Egan, correspondence, 1957 - 1958
- Folder 6 Senator Elect Wm Egan, correspondence, 1957 - 1958
- Folder 7 Senator Elect Wm Egan, correspondence, 1957 - 1958
- Folder 8 Statehood, 1957 - 1958  
Letters and papers relating to the Statehood effort.
- Folder 9 Statehood Delegation, 1957 - 1958  
Letters and papers relating to certification and functioning of the delegation.  
Includes invoices, payments, etc.
- Folder 10 Tennessee Plan  
Letters and papers relating to the Tennessee Plan. Includes invoices, payments,  
etc.
- Folder 11 Resolutions of Support for Statehood  
Alaska Territorial House and Senate Resolutions  
Legislature of the Territory of Hawaii, Concurrent Resolution
- Folder 12 Governor Wm Egan, Incoming Correspondence, 1959 - 1962
- Folder 13 Governor Wm Egan, Incoming Correspondence, 1962 - 1966
- Folder 14 Governor Wm Egan, Outgoing Correspondence, 1959 - 1966

Folder 15 Governor Wm Egan, Press Releases, 1958 – 1965

Folder 16 Governor Wm Egan, Incoming Correspondence, 1971

**Box 3 William Egan, personal papers and correspondence**

Folder 1 Personal documents

Folder 2 Speeches and written material  
Includes hand written and typed drafts

Folder 3 William Egan correspondence, 1967 – 1970

Folder 4 Re-election campaign, 1974

Folder 5 Wm and Neva Egan, correspondence, 1974  
Letters of thanks for public service, etc, after election of 1974

Folder 6 William Egan, correspondence, 1975 – 1981

Folder 7 Democratic Party

Folder 8 An analysis of political attitudes in the State of Alaska  
Prepared for Senator Mike Gravel, 1973

**Box 4 William Egan, subject files  
Letters and papers relating to specific issues or events.**

Folder 1 Washington Newsletter by Mary Lee Council, Secretary to E.L. Bartlett. 1957 - 58

Folder 2 Address by Senator Frank Church, May 5, 1958  
“Statehood for Alaska \_\_ Why we must have it now”

Folder 3 Transportation Issues  
Jones Act, Alaska Railroad

Folder 4 Ships

Folder 5 Ships

Folder 6 Valdez Vocational School

Folder 7 1964 Earthquake

Folder 8 Fisheries

Folder 9 Japanese Fisheries in Bristol Bay, 1965

Folder 10 Public Health

Folder 11 Associated Press 1957

**Box 5 Vietnam**

Folder 1 Address about Vietnam, William Egan and Senator Bob Bartlett  
Hand written drafts and typed speeches  
Includes:  
*Governor Egan's 30-minute presentation in defense of President Johnson's foreign policy, June 5, 1965.*

*Address of Senator E.L. (Bob) Bartlett, Alaska, Before the Philadelphia Committee for Sane Nuclear Policy.*

Notes and letters relating to debate between Governor Egan and Senator Ernest Gruening.

Folder 2 Vietnam (title from original folder)  
Letters and papers, including background information from US Government sources.

Folder 3 Letters and papers, including background information from US Government sources, relating to US involvement in Vietnam.

Folder 4 *Questions and Answers on Viet-Nam*  
52 leaves. Informational notebook, probably prepared by the State Department to explain the position of President Johnson in regard to combat operations and goals of the United States in Vietnam and Southeast Asia.

**Photographs:**

**Box 6 Photographs from the Office of the Governor**

**Box 7 Photographs from the Office of the Governor**

**Box 8 Photographs from the Office of the Governor**

**Box 9 Photographs from the Office of the Governor**

**Box 10 Audio Tapes**

**Box 11 Album 1** Launching U.S.S. Juneau, 12 February 1966  
**Album 2** Retirement Party, Alaska Standard, June 6, 1958

**Box 12 Album 3** **Tustumena**, sponsored by Mrs. Neva Egan  
**Album 4** Initial voyage M/V Malaspina, Guests

- Box 13**      **Album 5**      Governor William A. Egan,  
Armed Forces Day Ft. Wainwright, 1964  
Folder 1      Truman  
Folder 2      Eisenhower  
Folder 3      Kennedy  
Folder 4      Johnson  
Folder 5      Nixon
- Box 14**      **Album 6**  
'64 Governors' Conference, Cleveland, Ohio  
Daily News-Miner. Alaska, 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Progress Edition, March 18, 1965
- Box 15**      **Album 7**  
Documents on Viet-Nam From President Lyndon B. Johnson for William A.  
Egan, Governor of Alaska
- Album 8**      Governor William A. Egan, from Lyndon B. Johnson
- Box 16**      Oversized Photos
- Box 17**      Proclamations of Alaskan Governors, 1900 - 1956
- Box 18**      Voting Record, Territorial Legislature, 1943-1953  
  
Index cards, recording William Egan's votes and final results of House and  
Senate Bills.
- Box 19**      *Located in MS Oversize*  
Governor Egan's press clippings, 1959
- Album 9**      Governor Egan's press clippings, Jan 3, 1959 - Sept 23, 1959
- Album 10**      Governor Egan's press clippings, Sept 23, 1959 - Oct 31, 1959

*Books accompanying accession: (cataloged into Alaskana collection)*

Explorations in Alaska in 1898 (QE75.A5 No. 20 Pt. 7; no OCLC number)

The Yakutat Bay region, Alaska: physiography and glacial geology by Ralph Stockman  
Tarr; Bert S Butler (QE75.P9 No. 64; OCLC 633628037)

Travels in Siberia: including excursions northwards, down the Obi, to the Polar Circle,  
and southwards, to the Chinese frontier by Adolph Erman  
2 volumes (DK755.E71 V.1-2)

**Wickersham's bound volumes:**

Seal and Salmon Fisheries and general resources of Alaska

4 volumes

(SH361.U518 1898 Vol. 1-4; OCLC 17850697)

The fur-seal and other fisheries of Alaska: investigation of the fur-seal and other fisheries of Alaska ; report from the committee on Merchant Marine and fisheries of the House of representatives

2 volumes: 1889 and 1901

(SH361.U56; OCLC 14203443)