

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

Page 1

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Stevenson, Adlai E. II, Farm

Other Name/Site Number:

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 25200 North Saint Mary's Road

Not for publication:

City/Town: Mettawa

Vicinity:

State: Illinois

County: Lake

Code: 097

Zip Code: 60048

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: ___

Public-Local: X

Public-State: ___

Public-Federal: ___

Category of Property

Building(s): ___

District: X

Site: ___

Structure: ___

Object: ___

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

3

1

1

5

Noncontributing

___ buildings

___ sites

1 structures

___ objects

1 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 4

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing:

ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ____ nomination ____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ___ Entered in the National Register
- ___ Determined eligible for the National Register
- ___ Determined not eligible for the National Register
- ___ Removed from the National Register
- ___ Other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: Domestic
Agricultural/Subsistence

Sub: single dwelling
agricultural

Current: Recreation and Culture

Sub: museum

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: Modern Movement: Moderne, International Style

MATERIALS:

Foundation: concrete

Walls: wood

Roof: slate

Other:

ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 4

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.Summary of National Significance

The Adlai E. Stevenson II Farm meets the requirements of NHL Criteria 1 and 2 for its association with Adlai Stevenson, a nationally significant individual who was importantly associated with mid-twentieth century diplomatic and political history. He is best known as the twice-nominated Democratic candidate for the presidency during the 1950s, and as the Ambassador to the United Nation during the most dangerous conflict in Cold War history—the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. However, Stevenson’s nationally significant associations with the United Nations and the Democratic Party are broader still. His involvement with the United Nations began in 1945, when he served in several important positions that influenced the establishment, organization, and operation of this new global organization. Additionally, not only was Stevenson his party’s presidential candidate in 1952 and 1956, but he also had a major influence on post-World War II American politics between and beyond those presidential campaigns. Stevenson brought highly enthusiastic supporters into the party, many of whom eventually became its next generation of local, state and national leaders. Stevenson and his supports kept the out-of-power political party relevant by developing new position papers that not only challenged Republican administration policies, but influenced the course of future election campaigns and subsequent Democratic presidential administrations. As the titular head of the party, he led the way as the Democratic Party transitioned from its New Deal focus of years past, to the point when the next generation took the reins in 1960. This farm near Libertyville, Illinois, was Stevenson’s home for most of his adult life (1936 to 1965).

Description

The Stevenson Farm is in the northeast portion of Lake County, Illinois, approximately 35 miles north of Chicago.¹ Along the east bank of the Des Plaines River, this 44-acre farm is located in the town of Mettawa, north and west of Libertyville.² The Stevensons acquired this parcel in 1935. The nominated property is currently owned by the Lake County Forest Preserve District. The proposed National Historic Landmark contains five contributing resources and one non-contributing resource: the farm landscape; the house (1938); the service building (1937/1939), the tennis court (post World War II); a corrugated steel storage barn (1958); and a paved parking lot (ca.2005). [See Figure #1]

Farm Landscape

The nominated NHL boundary contains the original 40-acre parcel purchased by the Stevensons in 1935, plus an adjacent 3.5-acre riverfront parcel that was part of a 30-acre parcel the Stevensons later purchased.³ The nominated property is rectangular in shape, and runs from east to west. The narrow end on the east side fronts on St. Mary’s Road, which was a gravel road during Stevenson’s occupancy.⁴ The west end of the property is formed by a bend in the Des Plaines River. The buildings on the farm are clustered in the center of the parcel, set back more than 1300’ from St. Mary’s Road. [See Photograph #1] The front (east) half of the parcel is

¹ Portions of Section 7 are derived from information in the National Register of Historic Places nomination prepared in 2003 by Susan Benjamin and Gwen Sommers-Yant.

² Mettawa was not incorporated until 1960. When Adlai Stevenson acquired his property in the mid-1930s the post office address was Libertyville.

³ Even though the 30-acre parcel was sold to other parties after Stevenson’s death, the 3.5-acre riverfront portion of it was subsequently deeded to the Stevenson Farm’s current owner (Lake County Forest Preserve District). This 3.5-acre parcel is included within the proposed NHL boundary because it was part of Stevenson’s farm during his life, and it is currently owned and operated as part of the historic site operated by the Lake County Forest Preserve District.

⁴ The gravel road was not yet built in 1935, and Stevenson and his wife canoed down the Des Plaines River to see their new property. Email correspondence from Nancy and Adlai E. Stevenson III, to NHL historian Robie S. Lange, October, 1, 2012.

ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 5

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

primarily a 14-acre field that is currently planted with native prairie species planted to replicate the historic appearance of this area when hay and oats were grown there for the Stevensons' sheep. Along the east and south perimeters of the property, and along the long gravel drive that leads to the house, stand clusters of trees, primarily oak and maple. The area immediately in front (east) of the buildings features some landscaping with gravel drives and paths. [See Photograph #2] When Stevenson lived here, the area northeast of the house included a small orchard, two gardens, and a line of grape vines (the vines remain in place). The half of the parcel behind (west of) the buildings is a broad lawn that leads to a more heavily wooded area near the river. [See Photograph #3] During Stevenson's occupancy, the trees along the property's west end were less dense, and the adjacent Des Plaines River was visible from the west lawn and the house. The property has not been farmed since shortly after Stevenson's death.⁵

Stevenson House

The Stevenson house was designed in 1938 by the firm of Perkins, Wheeler and Will, to replace a 1936 house that burned in 1938. The new house was built almost entirely on the concrete foundation of the 1936 house. Like avant garde International Style European domestic architecture of the 1920s, the house is composed of a series of rectilinear block-like elements, has large roof terraces with simple balustrades and corner windows. [See Photograph #4] The use of exterior ornamentation or detail is highly restrained. Nevertheless, some characteristics similar to early Prairie School architecture give the house a generally horizontal emphasis. These include the shallow hip roof with broad overhangs, wide second-story windows, horizontal wood siding, and two string courses that create a broad horizontal band that surrounds the house. Streamlined Moderne elements appear on the interior in a variety of places, including the living room fireplace wall, curving woodwork in the study and detailing in the master dressing room/bath.

The building is long and narrow, with overall dimensions of 106' x 37', oriented north-south. It is approximately 6,600 square feet. The entire exterior is sheathed in flush horizontal wood boards. Originally painted a soft yellow, the exterior walls were painted white at some point during Stevenson's occupancy.⁶ The front elevation faces east, towards St. Mary's Road. The house is made up of three sections, a large two-story center section, plus single-story wings to the north and south. The center section is topped by a low pitched hipped slate roof. This section contains the living room, dining room and bedrooms, plus a rear screened porch on the first floor with a large open-balustraded roof-top deck above. The single-story wing to the south contains Stevenson's study. [See Photograph #5] Atop this wing is a roof-top deck with low parapet walls. This deck connects to the master bedroom, and was the one from which Stevenson enjoyed sun bathing. The single-story wing north of the center section includes the kitchen, a prep area, and a bathroom for the two nearby servants' bedrooms. This wing is also topped with a roof-top deck with low parapet walls that is accessed via two of the Stevenson sons' bedrooms. A small single-story screened porch is attached to the northernmost end of this wing. [See Photograph #6]

Stevenson House--Interior

Stylistically, the overall impression of the interior is similar to that of the exterior. The geometric simplicity of the International Style dominates. The first floor contains 13 rooms including the entrance hall, two bathrooms and the service porch. [See Figures #2 and #3] The public area includes the entrance hall, the living room, the

⁵ Email correspondence from Susan Hall (Landscape Architect, Lake County Forest Preserve District) to Robie S. Lange, September 28, 2012.

⁶ In a March 26, 2003, interview by the authors of the National Register nomination, Adlai Stevenson III, noted that yellow was his mother's favorite color.

ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 6

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

living porch, the dining room, Stevenson's study, and a guest room and bath. The service area contains a servants' bedroom and living room, a servants' bathroom, a pantry, kitchen and service porch.⁷

The main entrance hall walls are covered with unpainted vertical wood paneling made up of alternating wide and narrow boards with a splayed chamfer. Two watercolors by Diego Rivera were displayed in the entrance hall when Stevenson lived here.⁸ The large living room is two steps down from the entrance hall, and is entered through a pocket door. Windows are liberally used in the living room, as well as in the dining room, study, and in the second floor's west-facing bedrooms. In the center of the west wall of the living room is a pair of double doors that opened onto the screened porch. The primary interior wall of the living room features a Moderne-style fireplace. [See Photograph #7] The opening has no mantel and is framed by three wide wood boards. In this room's north wall a pair of double doors open into a passageway, which has a bar with a counter and a sink that is topped by curving shelves. The house is mostly unfurnished today, but according to one 1960s visitor:

Many of the original furnishings had been brought from Europe. The living room looked quiet, lived in, comfortable: leather armchairs at the fireplace, kidney-shaped end tables, and antique burl walnut desk, a grand piano, odd tables and chairs, some rickety. Some of the furniture needed reupholstering. Subdued pictures hung on the walls, and green plants stood in a brass "Imperial standard half-bushel" made in London long ago.⁹

At the south end of the living room is the double-door entrance to Stevenson's study. The study is 20' x 16', and has low bookcases or cabinets around most of its perimeter. The three walls that enclose the northern half of the study contain ceiling-height bookcases atop the low cabinets. [See Photograph #8] The three walls around the southern half of the study contain low bookshelves along the perimeter, but are mostly comprised of tall windows (including those that meet at the room's two southern corners). The only solid wall in the southern half of the study is where the fireplace occupies the center of the southern wall. As elsewhere in the house, unobstructed views were an essential part of the overall design. To minimize the modest obstruction created when drapes were pushed to the fireplace side of the windows, Stevenson's study featured small cutout spaces behind both ends of the central fireplace wall. This allowed the opened curtain to disappear into those voids. An exterior double door is in the study's west wall. Outside these doors are stairs leading to a second-floor walkway connecting the west and south decks.¹⁰

The centerpiece of the study is the wooden table Stevenson used as his desk, and the chair he used in the White House Cabinet Room during the early 1960s. The bookcases behind his desk contain several shelves of books owned by Stevenson and his family, as well as some of the political memorabilia related to various Stevenson-family campaigns which he kept at the Libertyville home. When Stevenson lived here, he had a record player here, and "the library was a working library. The books closest to his desk were the books one needs to write speeches—an encyclopedia, a Bible, an anthology of quotations, plus three shelves of books on Lincoln. Nearby were numerous family books, including campaign biographies of President Cleveland and Vice President Stevenson [Adlai II's grandfather and namesake]."¹¹

The room north of the living room is the dining room. The west (river) side of the dining room has a large plate glass window flanked by folding doors.¹² When the Stevensons lived at the farm, the east wall of the dining

⁷ The 1938 drawings show the two servant spaces as two bedrooms. Adlai Stevenson III, in an interview on March 26, 2003, said that one was a servant's bedroom and the other room served as a servants' living room.

⁸ John Barlow Martin, *Adlai Stevenson of Illinois: The Life of Adlai E. Stevenson* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1976), 128.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Outside the window to his study, Stevenson buried his beloved Dalmatian, Artie, in 1958.

¹¹ Martin, *Adlai Stevenson of Illinois: The Life of Adlai E. Stevenson*, 128-129.

¹² The 1938 elevation drawings show that the large window was flanked by double-hung windows, with a window at the west end of the north wall.

ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 7

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

room had a piece of furniture with a large mirror. Their son, Adlai Stevenson III, recalled that his mother wanted the guests on either side of the table to enjoy the view across the west lawn toward the Des Plaines River.¹³ Under the table is a floor buzzer that was used to summon servants.

North of the dining room is the prep area/food pantry. This room retains its original wood cabinets with period countertops. The kitchen to the north of the prep area was gutted at some point after 1965, but cabinets, tiles, sinks and appliances that follow the historic configuration were recently installed. A doorway leads from the kitchen to the screened service porch.

Between the study and the main entrance hall (along the east side of the house) are a guest room and a guest bathroom. Like all the public first-floor rooms, the guest room has corner windows. To the north of the main entrance hall is the service passageway that leads to two servant's rooms and bathroom.

The second floor of the central block of the house contains six rooms: the master bedroom, the master dressing/bath room, three family-member bedrooms and a hall bath. Three rooftop deck areas are accessed from the second floor. To the south of the staircase is the entrance to the master bedroom. The west wall of this room has corner windows, which afforded beautiful views of the lawn extending down to the Des Plaines River. In the center of the west wall are a pair of double doors; these open onto the west deck. This deck is also accessible by a doorway from the upstairs hall that opens onto an exterior walkway. The east wall of the master bedroom has a fireplace, as well as doors that open into a closet, and to the master bath/dressing room.

The master bath/dressing room is stylistically Moderne. Everything in this room dates to Stevenson's occupancy of the house. Opposite the passageway door is a built-in chest of drawers that is connected to shelves with rounded corners. There is a mirror image set of drawers and shelves under the south window. In the southeast corner is a three-sided floor-to-ceiling mirror. [See Photograph #10] The closet on the east wall has built-in drawers, one with long narrow slats that accommodates neckties. The north wall of the room has a pair of sinks, resting on chrome legs. A bathtub is set into an alcove in the west wall. Between the bathtub and sinks is an opening to the toilet room. During Stevenson's time, "the dressing room suggested luxury—vast initialed towels, a shoe shiner, a silent valet, a full-length mirror, leather cases and silver brushes embossed and engraved AES."¹⁴

The north end of the master bathroom connects to a north-south hallway that is lined on the west side by closets. On the east side of this hallway are two family bedrooms, separated by a bathroom. The youngest Stevenson child, John Fell, had the first bedroom (closest to the master bedroom), and the second bedroom belonged to the eldest son, Adlai III. On the west side of the hallway was the bedroom of middle son, Borden. The bedrooms for the two older sons each have double doors that open onto the north deck. The attic is unfinished.

Stairs located in the first-floor passageway between the living room and dining room lead to a basement hallway with a wine closet that still has the bottle racks and a preserves closet. Two steps down from there is the recreation room, which was where Stevenson kept his memorabilia. The recreation room's walls are made up of vertical panels of knotty pine. A fireplace in the center of the east wall is flanked by shelving. [See Photograph #11]

¹³ March 26, 2003, interview of Senator Adlai Stevenson III, and Nancy Stevenson, by the authors of the National Register nomination.

¹⁴ Martin, *Adlai Stevenson of Illinois: The Life of Adlai E. Stevenson*, 128.

ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 8

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Service Building

The service building is a "U"-shaped one-story building with overall dimensions of 103' x 74'. [See Photograph #12] It contains four garages, a stable, storage areas and a caretaker's apartment. Long painted white, the service building was originally a soft yellow. Its design began in January 1937, shortly after the Stevenson's first home was built. The architect for the service building's original L-shaped section was Anderson & Ticknor. Architects for other country homes and gentleman farms, they were known for their Georgian Revival-style buildings. Designed with a curving entrance in the northwest corner and a flat roof, the service building was decidedly Moderne, in keeping with the Stevenson's original avant garde home, and was considerably different from Anderson & Ticknor's typical work.¹⁵

In September 1939, Perkins, Wheeler & Will, who designed the second Stevenson house in 1938, added on to the original "L", replicating Stanley Anderson's design. The addition was designed to include an equipment room with a rounded bay that had shelves to start plants, a tool room and a room to store hay. Except for the area around the northwest entrance, the original Anderson & Ticknor section is sheathed in horizontal wood siding with beveled edges. The Perkins, Wheeler & Will addition is sheathed in flush horizontal boards like those on the main house. The northwest and northeast corners, where the walls are concave and where the main entrances are located, have vertical wood siding.

The front (south) side of the service building is nine bays wide. The first three bays are in the original 1937 25'-wide west wing. The door and windows open into the south garage space. The west wing contains four 16-panel garage doors (which no longer open into the garage because an interior wall was recently built behind them). The entrance into the caretaker's apartment, located in the northwest corner of the courtyard, also accessed the garage spaces and the stable area.¹⁶ The center section of the south facade of the building is recessed, creating a broad protected entrance porch. In the center of this facade is the door to the stable area. The short east wing forming a "U" contains an entrance in the northeast corner that is a mirror image of the entrance designed by Stanley Anderson in the northwest corner. The space inside originally housed a tool room. The west facade of this section contains a six-paneled garage door. At the end of this wing, facing south, is the curved section. It is divided into five equal size vertical units, each with three divided tiers of rectangular window panes.

Service Building--Interior

The interior is divided into four parts: the garages, the caretaker's apartment, the stable, and a storage area containing a tack room, feed rooms and equipment store room. [See Figures #4] Although they were once connected, today there is no interior connection between the stable areas.

The four garage spaces are located in the west wing, an area divided into two rooms. The south garage area is accessible by the doorway in the south exterior wall. The garage spaces are all accessed from the inside by a door in the northwest corner vestibule.

The caretaker's apartment is also accessed from the northwest vestibule. The interior door directly in front leads to the apartment living room, which has a fireplace in the southwest corner. To the north is a second room, presumably the bedroom, with entrances to a bathroom and closet. The other area, not drawn in Anderson's

¹⁵ Paul Bergman, an expert on Stanley Anderson, owns the Anderson papers and drawings. In a March 25, 2003, phone interview by the authors of the National Register nomination, Bergman commented that the firm only designed three structures in this style.

¹⁶ A wall has been built that creates a large kitchen; this space originally accessed a paneled space that was possibly a tack room and the stable area.

ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 9

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

plans, contains two rooms which are accessed from the living room. The room to the north was probably a porch.¹⁷ The walls are wide wood boards, all the walls and ceilings are painted white.

Today, the stable area contains two stalls in the center room. The 1937 plans show the stable as having an additional stall to the west. Currently, dry wall separates the west stall area from the other two. The walls of the stable area consist of wide boards with beveled edges up to the sill line of the south window and with narrow boards with beveled edges above and sheathing the ceiling. The two stalls are separated by wood partitions topped by iron railings with vertical pickets. The floors at the south end of the room are scored concrete. In the stable area the concrete is not scored. The stall doors are beadboard with flat boards around the edges and diagonal boards connecting the corners. The room to the east of the horse stalls served as a tack room, and its walls and ceiling are sheathed in narrow boards with beveled edges.

At the east end of the stable area is a passageway connecting to the entrance vestibule that was part of the 1939 addition. Before remodeling, this vestibule served as a tool room. North of the passageway is a small room that was shown on the 1939 plans as an existing room, used to store feed. The large space at the southeast end of the addition is the equipment room. In 2009 the Lake County Forest Preserve District installed exhibitions on the political legacy of the Stevenson family. These exhibitions, which were funded by the Save America's Treasures initiative administered by the National Park Service, are open to the public seasonally from April to October. At the south end of the room is the curved wall with three rows of windows (with five windows each). At the north end of the equipment room is a paneled wood door that is boarded at the top. It opens into a large room that was used to store hay. Like the adjacent equipment room, the walls are sheathed in varnished narrow horizontal boards, and the ceiling is covered in narrow wood boards.

Other Resources

North of the service building is a 26' x 60' machine shed that was built in 1958. [See Photograph #13] It is a wood frame building and is rectangular, sheathed in wood at the bottom with corrugated steel above. The roof is gabled and also made of corrugated steel. Inside are two spaces accessed by large south-facing openings. Built during the period of national significance, it is a contributing building.

The tennis court is a 50' x 120' structure, and is located approximately 200' southwest of the house. [See Photograph #14] The court is a composite material made of asphalt.¹⁸ Built at some point after World War II, it was used by Stevenson, his friends, and the family. Stevenson was known to exploit his familiarity with his home court by aiming for cracks in the court's surface so the ball would take unpredictable bounces.¹⁹ The contributing structure includes a fence which was covered with wisteria during Stevenson's occupancy. The fence retains its original configuration, as well as most of the original fence posts.²⁰

¹⁷ Frank Holland, the caretaker for the Stevenson's property, went to work for them in 1940. The two rooms were likely added when he and his wife Beatrice, and their two children (Carol Ann and Jim) lived there. Before this addition, the apartment only contained a living room, a bedroom and bath. The recess in the living room contained a Dwyer kitchen. In an April 7, 2003, interview, Robert Speckmann, architect and facility development manager with the Lake County Forest Preserve District, told the authors of the National Register nomination that there was a concrete slab, that probably served as a patio, located in the spot where there is now the two room addition. The Lake County Forest Preserve planning office has an undated blueprint for a "proposed porch" for the service building. The structure built, however, does not exactly match this blueprint.

¹⁸ John Barlow Martin, *Adlai Stevenson and the World: The Life of Adlai Stevenson* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1977), 202.

¹⁹ Email correspondence from Nancy and Adlai Stevenson III, to Robie S. Lange, October 1, 2012.

²⁰ Email correspondence from Susan Hall to Robie S. Lange, September 28, 2012.

ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 10

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

A paved parking lot for 40 cars was added northeast of the service building in 2005. The eastern portion of the parking lot sits where a portion of a garden was located during Stevenson's lifetime. Built after the period of national significance, the parking lot is a noncontributing structure.

The Stevenson farm contained two other structures that were removed by the Lake County Forest Preserve District. One was a fiberglass swimming pool, dating from c. 1970. It was located between the house and the service building. The second was a 3' x 4' wood structure over a well pit. Both structures were removed in the mid to late 1990s.

Integrity

From 1982 to 2000, the house served as a day center for the Lake County Health Department. Minor changes were made during this period, such as the installation of fire doors. At some point before the Lake County Forest Preserve acquired the property in 1974, a minor modification was made to the interior of the service building when a wall was constructed between two of the three stable stalls. In 2007 and 2009, the house and the service building were rehabilitated following the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and restored to their appearance when Stevenson lived here. Despite the addition of the parking lot in 2005, the three buildings, tennis court, and the overall landscape retain a high degree of integrity in relation to the Stevenson farm's period of national significance (1945 to 1962).

ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 11

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
 Nationally: X Statewide: Locally:

Applicable National

Register Criteria: A B X C X D

Criteria Considerations

(Exceptions): A B C D E F G X

NHL Criteria: 1, 2

NHL Criteria Exceptions: N/A

NHL Theme(s):

IV. Shaping the Political Landscape
 1. parties, protests, and movements
 VIII. Changing Role of the United States in the World Community
 1. International relations

Areas of Significance: Politics/Government

Period(s) of Significance: 1945-1947
 1952-1962

Significant Dates: 1945, 1952, 1956, 1962

Significant Person(s): Stevenson, Adlai E., II

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Perkins, Wheeler and Will (architects)
 Anderson & Ticknor (architect)

Historic Contexts: IX. Political and Military Affairs After 1945

ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 12

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.Summary Statement of National Significance

The Adlai E. Stevenson II Farm meets the requirements of NHL Criteria 1 and 2 for its association with Stevenson, a nationally significant individual who was importantly associated with mid-twentieth century diplomatic and political history. He is best known as the twice-nominated Democratic candidate for the presidency during the 1950s, and as the Ambassador to the United Nation during the most dangerous conflict in Cold War history—the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. However, Stevenson’s nationally significant associations with the United Nations and the Democratic Party are broader still. His involvement with the United Nations began seven years before his first presidential campaign, and 16 years before he returned to the United Nations as his country’s ambassador. Between 1945 and 1947, he served in several important positions that influenced the establishment, organization, and operation of this new global organization. Additionally, not only was Stevenson the Democratic Party’s twice nominated presidential candidate (1952 and 1956), but he had a major influence on post-World War II American politics between and beyond those presidential campaigns. Even though he wielded no formal authority after either of those defeats, he was the titular head of the party. Stevenson brought highly enthusiastic supporters into the party, many of whom eventually became its next generation of local, state and national leaders. Stevenson and his supports kept the out-of-power political party relevant by developing new position papers that not only challenged Republican administration policies, but influenced the course of future election campaigns and subsequent Democratic presidential administrations. During the 1950s, he led the way as the Democratic Party transitioned from its New Deal focus of years past, to the point when the next generation took the reins in 1960.

This 43.76-acre farm²¹ near Libertyville, Illinois, was Stevenson’s home for most of his adult life (1936 to 1965), including the periods during which he had a nationally significant impact on U.S. history (1945-1947 and 1952-1962).²² In addition to serving the typical domestic functions for his family, this home was where he conducted a great deal of his work. Stevenson often worked on articles, position papers, and speeches at home, as well as his many correspondences. This house also hosted political brainstorming meetings with advisors, and meetings and social gatherings with potential political allies. Even though Stevenson’s dynamic career caused him to spend weeks or months at a time living in such places as Springfield, Washington, New York and London, his Libertyville farm was the one place he considered home, and the one place to which he always returned. [See Figure #1 and Photograph #2]

The Early Years

Adlai Ewing Stevenson II was born in Los Angeles, California in 1900. He was named after his paternal grandfather, who had served as vice president under Grover Cleveland from 1893 to 1897, and who sought to regain that position as William Jennings Bryan’s running mate shortly after Adlai II was born. In 1906, Adlai II moved with his parents and older sister to Bloomington, Illinois, where both branches of his family were well established. In 1915, after the governor of Illinois appointed Adlai’s father, Lewis Stevenson, as Secretary of

²¹ Stevenson’s original 1935 purchase was 40.26 acres. He later purchased a 30-acre parcel immediately to the north. Even though the 30-acre parcel was sold to another party after Stevenson’s death, the 3.5-acre riverfront portion of it was subsequently deeded to the Lake County Forest Preserve District, which currently operates the 43.76-acre historic site.

²² The end date for the latter period of national significance (1962) is drawn to include the high point of Stevenson’s tenure as U.N. Ambassador—the Cuban Missile Crisis, a year which remains within the general provision requiring NHLs to have historic associations more than 50 years old. Nevertheless, this nomination recommends that after 2015, consideration be given to extending the period of national significance through 1965, in order to incorporate the remainder of Stevenson’s important tenure as U.N. Ambassador.

ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 13

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

State, the family moved 65 miles southwest to Springfield. At age 16, Adlai left Illinois to attend the Choate School in Connecticut, and then Princeton University in New Jersey. After graduating from college, he attended Harvard Law School. Lacking the requisite focus, Stevenson dropped out. Instead, he rekindled the passion he had developed for journalism while working on school newspapers at Choate and Princeton, and went to work for an Illinois newspaper founded and operated by his mother's family. Finally ready to resume his legal studies when he was 24, he entered Northwestern Law School in nearby Chicago, making it possible for him to work on the Bloomington newspaper on weekends. In both law and journalism, he developed a keen interest in foreign affairs. After graduating from law school in 1926, he toured Europe. He was able to use correspondent's credentials to get a rare, first-hand view of life in the Soviet Union.²³

Later that year, Stevenson went to work for the prestigious Chicago law firm of Cutting, Moore and Sidley. In 1928, he married Ellen Borden, the young daughter of a high society Chicago family. After an international honeymoon trip, they moved into a brownstone house on Chicago's Gold Coast, and in 1930 upgraded to a more luxurious apartment on Lake Shore Drive. The young couple was among the fortunate few who were left relatively unscathed by the Great Depression, but the impact of the economic disaster was evident all around them. Appreciative of his luck in avoiding the deprivations so many others experienced, he made time for charitable community work in addition to his thriving legal work.²⁴

Stevenson's growing interest in political affairs brought him into personal contact with local and national Democratic Party officials, including 1932 presidential nominee Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt. After the election, family connections to high level officials in the newly elected Democratic administration proved helpful, and the 33-year old Stevenson accepted a job with one of the Federal agencies created at the beginning of the New Deal. He moved to Washington to serve as a special attorney and assistant to the General Counsel in the new Agricultural Adjustment Administration. Six months later he moved to an even newer Federal agency, the Federal Alcohol Control Administration. He served as the chief attorney for this agency that had been established to institute regulations following the repeal of Prohibition. After only several months in that position Stevenson left government service and returned to Illinois, and his Chicago law firm. While there, he was president of the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations. In that capacity he polished his trademark public speaking style--erudite presentations sprinkled with witticisms. In 1936, Stevenson became a partner at his law firm; expanded his family to three children; and, expanded community service work that helped raise his visibility through state and national Democratic Party appointments. A year earlier, the Stevensons bought a farm in Libertyville, a rural area north of Chicago.²⁵

As Europe plunged into war, the question of whether the United States should get involved in the crisis was heatedly debated across the country. As president of the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, and chairman of the local chapter of the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies, Stevenson came to believe that the dangers of non-involvement in the war were greater than the dangers of involvement. He became a visible opponent of the isolationist viewpoint that was still so prevalent throughout much of the nation, especially in the Midwest, where that perspective was vigorously championed by his hometown *Chicago Tribune*. As the situation in Europe worsened, Stevenson's activities in the debate led some anti-interventionists to withdraw their business from Stevenson's law firm. He was soon able to exit this cauldron of public opinion after the publisher of the other hometown newspaper, the *Chicago Daily News*, offered Stevenson a job in Washington. Frank Knox, an interventionist himself, was impressed with Stevenson's efforts. After President Roosevelt

²³ Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., "Adlai Ewing Stevenson II," *American National Biography* 20 (1999): 723; Porter McKeever, *Adlai Stevenson: His Life and Legacy* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1989), 17, 33, 36-54.

²⁴ McKeever, 56-60.

²⁵ Schlesinger, "Adlai Ewing Stevenson II," 723; McKeever, 61-68. The Stevensons had three sons: Adlai III, born in 1930, Borden in 1932, and John Fell in 1936. Adlai II and his wife Ellen were divorced in 1949. The eldest son, Adlai III, later served as a U.S. senator from Illinois (1970 to 1981).

ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 14

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

appointed Knox (a Republican) to be his Secretary of the Navy, Knox induced Stevenson to come to the Navy Department as his “Principal Attorney” and special assistant.²⁶

With the United States officially at war only five months after Stevenson arrived in Washington, his work for Secretary Knox expanded to include a wide array of important duties, including several international trips. One assignment led Stevenson to take temporary leave from the Navy Department to head an overseas mission for the Foreign Economic Administration in late 1943, early 1944. In this capacity, Stevenson travelled through the recently liberated portion of southern Italy to develop plans for the relief and rehabilitation of that war-ravaged country. Shortly after Stevenson returned to his Navy job, Secretary Knox died. Not long after, Stevenson resigned from the Navy, and returned to Illinois. Some Illinois political leaders encouraged him to run for governor that year, but Stevenson spent the next several months focused on an effort to get back into the newspaper business. Knox’s widow had put the *Chicago Daily News* up for sale, but the group Stevenson joined to purchase the paper was outbid.²⁷

Another international mission soon captured Stevenson’s attention, and he spent much of the Fall of 1944 in wartime England and France, where he conducted an assessment of the military, economic, social, and political impacts of strategic bombing. Stevenson completed the project and was back home before the end of the year, but within another two months he was recruited to work for the State Department. A former Washington associate, Archibald MacLeish, was now the Assistant Secretary of State for Public and Cultural Affairs, and he wanted Stevenson’s help “for a few months” with a temporary, but very important, project.²⁸

The Beginning of the United Nations

Even before the Allied victories in Europe or Japan were achieved, efforts were underway to establish a world organization to minimize the types of conflicts that led to World Wars I and II. In many ways, the United States was the primary player in the establishment of the United Nations. An impressive roster of Americans played important roles in the establishment of the United Nations, from Presidents Roosevelt and Truman, to top State Department officials, to leading members of Congress.²⁹

Upon his arrival in Washington in February of 1945, Stevenson was put to work on a campaign to strengthen public support for the establishment of the United Nations before its Charter Conference began in San Francisco in late April, 1945.³⁰ The U.S. delegation to the U.N. Charter Conference was led by Secretary of State Edward R. Stettinius, and included congressional leaders from both political parties. Below the level of “delegates,” were “advisors.” Stevenson’s boss was one of the latter. As staff to an “advisor,” Stevenson ranked relatively low among the U.S. participants at the Charter Conference.³¹ As it turned out, Stevenson’s most important contribution at the Charter Conference was unplanned, but resulted from the fact that since the U.S. delegates represented opposing political parties, they were often at odds with one another.

²⁶ Schlesinger, “Adlai Ewing Stevenson II,” 724; McKeever, 71-79.

²⁷ McKeever, 83-90.

²⁸ Adlai E. Stevenson, *Major Campaign Speeches of Adlai E. Stevenson* (New York: Random House, 1953), xvii-xx; McKeever, 91-93. MacLeish was previously a Pulitzer Prize winning poet and the Librarian of Congress.

²⁹ Among U.S. officials associated with the establishment of the United Nations were: Ralph Bunche, James Byrne, Alger Hiss, Cordell Hull; Edward Stettinius, Eleanor Roosevelt, and leading senators and representatives.

³⁰ The San Francisco Conference came a year after the United Nation’s preliminary planning meeting was held at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, D.C.

³¹ Some State department staff had higher level roles at the San Francisco conference. For example, Alger Hiss (who a decade later was convicted of perjury after being accused of spying for the Soviet Union) served as the Secretary General for the U.N. Charter Conference. John Bartlow Martin, *Adlai Stevenson of Illinois: The Life of Adlai E. Stevenson* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1976), 233-237.

ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 15

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Because the delegation could never agree on press statements and refused to allow Stettinius to speak on its behalf, the release of information came to a virtual standstill. American reporters often had to seek reports on United States policy at the conference from the Soviet, British, and French delegations. Relations with the press and radio corps became so strained that at one point Stettinius and *Washington Post* editor Eugene Meyers exchanged blows. At the behest of *New York Times* correspondents Arthur Krock and James Reston, Stettinius established a 'leak' office. On 10 May he appointed Stevenson to manage it. From a room in the Fairmount Hotel, Stevenson kept correspondents advised of American positions, and reported on and interpreted Conference developments. Since 'Operation Titanic' was unofficial, the delegation could repudiate any information Stevenson dispensed.³²

After the San Francisco Conference adjourned in late June, Stevenson returned to Washington where he played a staff role in helping the administration secure Senate approval of the U.N. Charter. After it was overwhelmingly approved, Stevenson returned home to Libertyville. Although Stevenson gave the impression that he wanted to return to private life, he hoped to secure a presidential appointment as a delegate to the next United Nations conference, scheduled to meet in London at the beginning of September. In fact, rather than resign from the State Department when he left Washington, he changed his employment status to "leave without pay," and he made sure incoming Secretary of State Byrne had his Libertyville telephone number. He was soon asked to return to Washington, and on September 4, President Truman formally appointed him as an alternate delegate to the U.N. Preparatory Conference. His appointment directed him to serve as the "first deputy" to the head of the U.S. delegation, Edward R. Stettinius (who had recently stepped down as Secretary of State).³³

Arriving in London on September 10th, Stevenson settled into his supporting role on the Conference's Executive Committee, which included representatives of the Big Five countries (the United States, the Soviet Union, China, France, and Great Britain), plus nine other countries. Established as a precursor to the full U.N. Preparatory Commission, the Executive Committee worked "to establish provisional agendas for the first meetings of the General Assembly, the Security Council, and the Economic and Social Council. It was also to draft rules of procedure and work out organizational structures for those organs as well as for the Secretariat."³⁴ Early in the Executive Committee's deliberations, the head U.S. delegate, former Secretary of State Stettinius, became ill, and had to return to the United States. As "First Deputy, Alternate Delegate," Stevenson was elevated to acting head of the U.S. delegation.

Stevenson's unexpected rise to the top of the U.S. delegation came at the most critical point in the London conference's deliberations. It occurred not only as the overall chairmanship of the Executive Committee rotated to the U.S. delegation, but just as that Committee was beginning to meet daily, instead of weekly, as it prepared to deal with its most vexing issues, such as: the role of the veto in the Security Council; the process for electing U.N. officials; the makeup of the International Court of Justice; and the status of "trustee states" (recently independent countries that operate under outside control until they become stable). Seeking to advance its own particular interests, the Soviet Union commonly took stands contrary to those advocated by the U.S. delegation.³⁵ Executive Committee chairman Stevenson was now officiating not only for the U.S. delegation, but for the entire United Nations conference. He proved not only adept at representing the U.S. position (as

³² John W. Roberts, "Cooperation and Cold War: Adlai E. Stevenson at the United Nations, 1945-1947," *Mid-America: An Historical Journal* 65 (January 1983): 32.

³³ Martin, *Adlai Stevenson of Illinois*, 238-40; McKeever, 96.

³⁴ Roberts, "Cooperation and Cold War," 33.

³⁵ In most instances the Soviet delegation wanted to empower the U.N. Security Council, rather than the General Assembly, with the authority to decide most future conflicts. In the Security Council, the Soviets were assured of retaining their veto power. Roberts, "Cooperation and the Cold War," 34.

ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 16

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

acting head of that delegation), but at finding ways to keep the Soviet delegation engaged in the work of the Executive Committee even when many of their prime objectives did not receive enough votes to be favorably recommended by the Executive Committee to the full Preparatory Commission. By the time the full Preparatory Commission convened in late November, Stevenson's abilities were widely and highly regarded. Several years later, in 1953, Stevenson assessed what this experience meant to him: "It was the most exacting, interesting and in many ways the most important interval of my life. After almost four years of preoccupation with war, the satisfaction of having a part in the organized search for the conditions and mechanics of peace completed my circle."³⁶

Even once his role as the overall chair of the Executive Committee had concluded, Stevenson remained the acting head of the U.S. delegation. Much of Stevenson's activities during the full Commission's month-long session focused on one of its eight technical committees—the one deliberating which country should host the permanent home of the United Nations. The Preparatory Commission adjourned on December 23, 1945, after finalizing its recommendations for the next phase of U.N. development, the First Part of the First Session of the General Assembly, which would convene in London after the holidays.³⁷ With Stevenson's appointment officially concluded, he lobbied for another appointment to the first regular session of the General Assembly. With the leading role he played in the U.N. Preparatory Conference in mind, he hoped President Truman would appoint him as a full delegate this time, or at least as an alternate delegate. However, the great interest in the first regular session of the United Nations meant that higher profile individuals secured the coveted delegate appointments.³⁸ Instead, Stevenson was appointed as one of the Senior Advisors to the U.S. delegation, and as such, he worked primarily behind the scenes to support the delegation during the five-week session in London.³⁹

Stevenson sailed back to the United States in late February, and when he returned to Washington, Secretary of State Byrnes offered him Ambassadorships to Brazil or Argentina. Hoping instead to be appointed as a full delegate to the second half of the General Assembly's first meeting in the Fall, Stevenson declined the foreign posts, and returned home to Libertyville. His star clearly rising, he also declined offers to become the chairman of the Securities Exchange Commission, and president of either the Foreign Policy Association or the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Instead, he busied himself for several months with an assortment of professional meetings and public speaking engagements.⁴⁰

In July 1946, Truman appointed Stevenson to be one of four alternate U.S. delegates when the second half of the First Session of the General Assembly convened at the former World's Fair Site in Queens, New York. His duties included sitting on two committees (one selecting which U.S. site would be the United Nation's permanent home, and another that dealt primarily with improving conditions in areas ravaged by World War II). He also served as the U.S. delegation's public spokesman and political liaison officer. In this capacity, Stevenson made a couple of nationally broadcasted radio speeches about the important role of the United Nations. After the General Assembly adjourned in December, Stevenson returned home to Libertyville, and resumed work at his old law firm. In January of 1947, Stevenson declined U.N. Secretary-General Trygve Lie's offer to become the Assistant Secretary-General for Administration and Finance.⁴¹

In July 1947, Stevenson was again appointed to serve as an alternate delegate at the Second Session of the General Assembly, to be convened in Queens, New York in September. This was his fifth United Nations

³⁶ Stevenson, xx.

³⁷ McKeever, 97; Roberts, "Cooperation and Cold War," 34-36; Martin, *Adlai Stevenson of Illinois*, 246.

³⁸ The U.S. delegates were: Secretary of State Byrnes, former Secretary of State Stettinius, the senior Democrat and Republican on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt.

³⁹ Martin, *Adlai Stevenson of Illinois*, 247-248; Roberts, "Cooperation and Cold War," 36-37.

⁴⁰ McKeever, 102; Martin, *Adlai Stevenson of Illinois*, 248-250.

⁴¹ Martin, *Adlai Stevenson of Illinois*, 252-254, 259; Roberts, "Cooperation and Cold War," 37, 41, 42; McKeever, 104.

ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 17

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

meeting, and the third for which he was appointed by the president to serve as an alternate delegate. On his way to New York he stopped in Washington, where he resisted strong pressure from the new Secretary of State, George C. Marshall, to return to the State Department office he worked in two years earlier, this time as the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs. Back at the United Nations, Stevenson served on two committees, one responsible for administrative and budget matters, and another for political and security matters. On these committees, Stevenson spent much of that fall dealing with such important and contentious matters as debates over the admission of new member nations, efforts to circumvent the Security Council's veto power, and the partition of Palestine. His U.N. work came to an end after the General Assembly's December 16th adjournment.⁴²

One history of Stevenson's role in the establishment and early operation of the United Nations noted:

Stevenson toiled to make the United Nations a successful venture in international cooperation. He tried to quell Soviet fears, worked to create the machinery of rules and procedure for the United Nations, helped to find a permanent site for the organization's headquarters, strove to ensure adequate funding for vital United Nations programs, and sought to rally public and congressional support for the world body.⁴³

Political Life

The Illinois Years

Even before Stevenson returned to Illinois, some Democratic activists thought he would make a strong candidate for governor in 1948. In response, Stevenson noted: "It's not my field. All my experience has been at the U.N. and in the State Department. I've never given it a thought. I don't think I'd be interested."⁴⁴ He was, however, interested in running for the U.S. Senate, where he hoped to play a role in international relations. Regardless, those state Democratic activists wanted Paul Douglas as their candidate for Senate, and Stevenson for Governor. While he and his allies worked behind the scenes to advance his chances for the Senate nomination, his public comments and actions conveyed far less certainty about whether he was interested in politics at all. Left with the option of governor or nothing, Stevenson withheld any commitment to run for that post until the last possible day nominations could be submitted. Despite his late entry, he made a favorable impression on the party regulars, and he had no challengers in the April primary election. During the general election campaign, Stevenson significantly emphasized his claim that the state's affairs were plagued by government corruption. Stevenson fared better at the polls than expected, receiving 572,000 more votes than the incumbent Governor. Not only did Stevenson receive the widest margin of victory in an Illinois gubernatorial race, but he received substantially more votes than his fellow victorious Democrats at the top of the ticket: Harry Truman for president, and Paul Douglas for Senate. A *New York Times* columnist wrote that some people thought the Governor-elect might be a strong candidate for president in 1952.⁴⁵

Even though Stevenson had initially resisted the idea of running for Governor, once elected, he found the job much to his liking. Having assembled a strong team, he built a solid record, and established effective relationships throughout the state. Reflecting his international orientation, he often viewed his efforts to attack public corruption, and improve education, worker safety, and civil rights as providing a clearer choice to the world's emerging nations about whether to emulate democratic societies or communistic ones. During this

⁴² Roberts, "Cooperation and Cold War," 42; Martin, *Adlai Stevenson of Illinois*, 270-271; McKeever, 105.

⁴³ Roberts, "Cooperation and Cold War," 45.

⁴⁴ McKeever, 110.

⁴⁵ Martin, *Adlai Stevenson of Illinois*, 270-276; McKeever, 104-113, 115-120, 126-127.

ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 18

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

period when Cold War anxieties threatened civil liberties across the country, the Governor took a political risk in order to defend his view of democracy; he vetoed a bill that would have required state workers and teachers to take loyalty oaths.⁴⁶

The 1952 Presidential Campaign

Stevenson wanted to run for a second term in 1952 so he could oversee the programs and policies he had already put into place, and begin to address additional pressing state issues. Nevertheless, his success in Illinois continued to attract interest among national Democratic Party leaders who were surveying the field of potential presidential candidates. While most Americans expected President Truman to run for another term, some political handicappers suspected he might not (he did not announce his withdrawal until after the primaries had begun). Before Truman revealed his intentions, he secretly encouraged the Illinois Governor to seek the nomination. The Governor maintained that he was more interested in running for re-election than running for president, and to Truman's annoyance, Stevenson declined the proposal. Nevertheless, in the months before the Democratic convention, Stevenson and his supporters worked to keep him highly visible in case the party turned to him.

During the 1950s, presidential primary elections were fewer, and less influential in the nomination process. Lining up endorsements and securing pledges of support before the conventions were important, but the decisive campaigning and horse trading usually took place at the convention. The major Democratic candidates of 1952 were Vice President Alben Barkley of Kentucky, Senators Estes Kefauver of Tennessee, Richard Russell of Georgia, and Robert Kerr of Oklahoma, as well as former Secretary of Commerce Averell Harriman of New York. Even before the delegates to the Democratic convention arrived in Chicago, they knew that their eventual nominee would run against the popular, politically-enigmatic war hero, General Dwight D. Eisenhower. In the days leading up to the convention, Stevenson supporters hoped that the Governor would openly indicate a willingness to accept the nomination if the party needed him. They must have been frustrated when, on the day before the convention opened, Stevenson asked his fellow Illinois delegates to "abide by my wishes not to nominate me, nor to vote for me if I should be nominated."⁴⁷

As the governor of the convention's host state, it was Stevenson's responsibility to make the traditional speech welcoming the delegates. This turned out to be far from the usual poorly attended welcoming speech. Stevenson's 14 minute speech was interrupted by strong applause 27 times. In top form, he inspired the delegates to believe that the nation still needed Democratic leadership. The resounding response to his speech brought an end to his Shermanesque disclaimers, and he was now ready to compete openly for the presidential nomination. Since many of the delegates had pledged to support specific candidates, Kefauver, Stevenson and Russell remained in first, second, and third place (respectively) during the first two ballots. Once fourth-place Harriman withdrew his nomination and backed Stevenson, the third ballot left the Illinois governor only 2-1/2 delegate votes short of the number required for nomination. Senators Russell and Kefauver then withdrew from contention, and Stevenson was nominated by acclamation. [See Figure #5] To shore up support from Southern states, Stevenson's choice for his running mate was Alabama Senator John Sparkman.⁴⁸

It should be noted that in some ways Stevenson's political ideology in 1952 was different from what it became in later years. Throughout his political career he was consistently an internationalist, but aspects of his domestic policy ideology evolved during his public life. In 1952 he was not yet aligned with the northern

⁴⁶ John W. Roberts, "Cold War Observer: Governor Adlai Stevenson on American Foreign Relations," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* (Spring 1983): 54-55, 60.

⁴⁷ McKeever, 193.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 194-198, 201-202.

ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 19

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

liberal wing of his party, and sought to find a way to keep the southern Democrats from fleeing the party. Even though he was a big-state governor, he was not seen as being in the pocket of labor or big party bosses. Also, for those insiders who knew that he had earlier passed up President Truman's endorsement, it was clear that Stevenson was not indebted to Truman.⁴⁹ As summed up by noted historian Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., "Stevenson was still a conservative Democrat, uneasy with organized labor, reluctant to appeal to minorities, and on prickly terms with President Truman."⁵⁰

Stevenson's late entry into the race, and his desire to distance himself from the experienced Democratic campaign officials associated with Truman, left him with a less seasoned team. Locating his campaign headquarters in the Illinois capital somewhat eased his ability to carry out his ongoing gubernatorial responsibilities, and had the added benefit of being geographically and symbolically removed from the more established leadership of the Democratic Party.⁵¹

In Adlai Stevenson, his supporters saw an intellectual and statesman. Some Republicans faulted him for those same qualities, and derided him as an "egghead." In regard to U.S./Soviet relations, he had more first-hand knowledge about Soviet intentions than most. Stevenson's early travels to the Soviet Union, and his close dealings with them while setting up the United Nations, made him decidedly anti-communist. However, he did not believe the red-baiting tactics used by so many others were healthy for a free society, nor would they enhance U.S. influence abroad. An example of candidate Stevenson's ability to convey statesmanship-like qualities was manifested in a speech at the American Legion's national convention. The convention had given General Eisenhower a rousing welcome only a few days earlier, and it clearly supported Republican positions. In the midst of the Korean War, and the broader Cold War, Stevenson offered the Legion his thesis on what patriotism was, and was not. "True patriotism", he said "is based on tolerance and a large measure of humility." It should not be used "as a club for attacking other Americans." He added: "The tragedy of our day is the climate of fear in which we live, and fear breeds repression. Too often sinister threats to the Bill of Rights, to freedom of the mind, are concealed under the patriotic cloak of anti-communism..." Reflecting the political divide at the time, Republican vice presidential nominee Richard Nixon criticized Stevenson's speech because it "made light of the menace of communism."⁵²

While Stevenson's supporters admired his efforts to take the high road, they noted that even though General Eisenhower remained somewhat above the fray, Senator Nixon waged a far less lofty campaign. For example, in one speech Nixon implied that the sitting Democratic president, his Secretary of State, and their party's presidential nominee were essentially threats to the nation's security, when he said: "...the word of Truman and Acheson, as well as that of Acheson's former assistant, Adlai Stevenson, gives the American people no hope of safety at home from the sinister threat of Communism."⁵³

In addition to highlighting differences of ideology and tactics, this mid-century presidential campaign also highlighted the role of visual images in mass media. The well-established role of photojournalism was evident by the inordinate attention given to a newspaper photograph showing a hole worn through Stevenson's shoe. The influence of the nascent medium of television was demonstrated when, after Senator Nixon became embroiled in a scandal about using a political slush fund, his televised "Checkers" speech generated enough sympathy to protect him from being dropped from the Republican ticket.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 196-197.

⁵⁰ Schlesinger, "Adlai Ewing Stevenson II," 724.

⁵¹ McKeever, 202-209.

⁵² Scott Farris, *Almost President: The Men Who Lost the Race But Changed the Nation* (Guilford, Connecticut: Lyons Press, 2012), 152-153; Stevenson, 17-22; McKeever, 214-217.

⁵³ McKeever, 228-230.

ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 20

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

In General Eisenhower, the Republican Party had a man who was widely admired. During a time when the nation was at war in Korea, and anxieties about spreading communism were reaching extreme levels, Eisenhower appeared to many as the man best suited to lead the country. Furthermore, after 20 years of Democratic control of the White House, many thought it was time for a change in leadership. On Election Day, the tallies were not close. Stevenson received only 44% of the popular vote, and only 89 electoral votes (compared to Eisenhower's 442 electoral votes). Not only did the Republicans win the White House, but they secured control of the House and Senate, as well. Despite the scale of his defeat, Stevenson was not yet relegated to the dustbin of history. As one biographer noted: "To his admirers, his resounding defeat underscored the nobility of his sacrifice and of his refusal to compromise his own ideals." Even a frustrated President Truman observed that "Stevenson lived up to his reputation as a man of eloquence. He did not trade principles for votes."⁵⁴

The defeated presidential candidate had two more months left in his term as governor. After that, it was unclear to the 52-year old Stevenson what he should do next. Prior to both his success as a governor and his failure as a presidential candidate, Stevenson had dabbled in journalism, been a somewhat reluctant attorney, and been most interested in international affairs. Many of his supporters recommended that he run for president again; but 1956 seemed a long time away. Passing on nearly all of the numerous proposals coming his way, he accepted an offer from *Look* magazine that allowed him to immerse himself in foreign affairs. While on a six month world-wide study tour, he submitted articles about his experiences and observations. Even though he was travelling as a private citizen, he was briefed by U.S. embassy staff in many of the countries he visited, and was treated as a *de facto* visiting official by many foreign governments. This extended trip had the dual benefits of freeing him from pressure to comment on each policy change made by the new Republican administration, while affording him a platform from which to comment on the state of the world. At a press conference immediately upon his return to the United States, he began his remarks to the 250 assembled reporters and photographers by noting that he had visited 30 countries, and talked to "everyone...from cobblers to kings," and "what I have seen and heard is both encouraging and sobering."⁵⁵

Titular Leader of the Democratic Party

After losing the White House, the Senate, and the House, the Democratic Party needed leadership. Many in the top tier of the party, including outgoing President Truman and Senator Estes Kefauver (Stevenson's main contender for the 1952 nomination), called for Stevenson to be the party's leader. As was often the case with Stevenson, he sent conflicting signals about whether he wanted the mantle of party leadership. Regardless, it was neither possible nor prudent for Stevenson to openly assert any such authority without the risk of creating tensions with various factions he hoped to eventually win over. Although there was no consensus about who should lead the Democratic Party, a few individuals were already vested with actual authority over parts of it, such as elected Democratic leaders, and official representatives of the Democratic Party's political apparatus. Trying to lead the loose consortium of groups that made up the Democratic Party had always been something like trying to herd cats, but after the 1952 election it was like trying to do so while a few of the cats were trying to lead the herd themselves. Meanwhile, Stevenson and his supporters decided to utilize some of the party's brightest minds to help redefine their party beyond the outdated agendas of the Roosevelt and Truman years. To show that the minority party had more to offer than just criticism of Republican initiatives, this ad hoc group

⁵⁴ William A. DeGregorio, *The Complete Book of U.S. Presidents*, 5th ed. (New York: Gramercy Books, 2001), 534-535; Jeff Broadwater, *Adlai Stevenson: The Odyssey of a Cold War Liberal* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1994), 130-131.

⁵⁵ John Bartlow Martin, *Adlai Stevenson and the World: The Life of Adlai E. Stevenson* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1977), 5-7, 17-18, 36-77.

ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 21

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

of advisors (known as the Finletter Group) developed new solutions to domestic and international problems. Stevenson incorporated ideas from these position papers into his speeches.⁵⁶

The 1952 elections that gave Republicans control of the U.S. Senate turned committee chairmanships over to Republican senators. One of them, Joseph McCarthy, used his chairmanship of the Subcommittee on Investigations, to continue his quest to root out alleged communists from government service. Far too few public figures associated with either party dared challenge the powerful senator, even when they believed his methods and accusations were unfair and reckless. Stevenson may not have been the first to speak out against McCarthy's demagoguery, but when he did so in a major speech in March of 1954, his status helped spur McCarthy's eventual fall. Several major newspapers commended Stevenson for his speech, but one minor newspaper, Daytona Beach's *Evening News* contained perhaps the best assessment: "Adlai Stevenson was not just making a political speech....Adlai was looking to the future of America....Here, then, is a leader."⁵⁷

In addition to his extensive nationwide speaking schedule, Stevenson threw himself into direct campaigning for Democrats running in the 1954 midterm elections. Former President Truman reiterated that he viewed Stevenson as the party leader. Stevenson increasingly voiced his displeasure with a myriad of the administration's domestic and international policies. One biographer described Stevenson's impact on the midterm campaigns this way:

His effectiveness surely had helped draw President Eisenhower into the most extensive off-year campaign any president had ever made; and Eisenhower had been unable to transfer his own popularity. Stevenson had put his prestige on the line and thus forced Eisenhower to do the same. And all this put Democrats around the country in Stevenson's debt and greatly strengthened his position as his party's leader.⁵⁸

From the living room of his Libertyville house, Stevenson and his friends watched the election returns on television. The election returned control of the Senate and the House to the Democrats, which they retained uninterrupted until 1980 and 1994, respectively. After the election, Stevenson's prospects for support within the Democratic National Committee were solidified after a Stevenson ally was selected to replace the outgoing Committee chairman (who was also a Stevenson ally). Hoping to spend at least some of his time away from politics, Stevenson began 1955 as a senior partner of a new Chicago law firm he established with a few of his loyal aides. Meanwhile, his frequent speaking engagements continued, and he took a month-long tour of Africa.⁵⁹

A quarter century later, in the *American National Biography* entry for Stevenson, historian Arthur Schlesinger described Stevenson's role following his failed 1952 campaign: "During the next four years, Stevenson was the

⁵⁶ Robert A. Caro, *The Years of Lyndon Johnson: Master of the Senate* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), 480-481; McKeever, 313; Martin, *Adlai Stevenson and the World*, 8, 78-89. Biographer John Martin commented on the Finletter Group's impact on history (p. 89): "After 1956 the Finletter Group as such dissolved—but a Democratic Advisory Council sprang up to take its place and continued to hammer out papers on issues. And then, when the Democrats returned to power in 1960, these position papers, with their roots in the Finletter Group, became the basis of the New Frontier and the Great Society....It was not that all the ideas produced by the Finletter Group were original. Many had been in the air a long time. But these men got them on paper in agreed language, and Stevenson gave them public currency."

⁵⁷ A Gallup poll conducted in early 1954 showed that only 29% of Americans had an unfavorable view of McCarthy. Stevenson gave his speech three days before the broadcast of Edward R. Murrow's influential television program critical of McCarthy. Martin, *Adlai Stevenson and the World*, 104-109.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 9, 148.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 146-148, 153-157, 177-183.

ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 22

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

preeminent Democratic spokesman, defending civil liberties against McCarthyism and indicting the Republican administration as controlled by business.”⁶⁰

The 1956 Presidential Campaign

By the time Stevenson returned from his African trip, many of his supporters had increased their activities in support of an expected bid for the nomination. While publicly uncommitted to a second bid for the nomination, Stevenson was discretely involved in some of the planning, and he was kept informed of most of his supporters' efforts. In August of 1955, Stevenson's closest political advisors came to his Libertyville home for a strategy meeting to discuss whether he should run again. Policy and politics were thoroughly discussed, and Stevenson's advisors told the uncommitted candidate that he was their party's strongest choice to defeat President Eisenhower. The group mapped out a campaign plan for the next 15 months. In the days after that meeting, his home was the venue for several meetings with some of the Governors who were in Chicago for their national Governors' Conference.⁶¹

Although Eisenhower had not yet indicated whether he would seek a second term, it was assumed that whoever won the Democratic nomination would be running against an incumbent president who was polling record-setting job approval ratings of 70% and higher. This expectation became less clear during the fall of 1955, after the president suffered a heart attack while vacationing in Colorado. Eisenhower spent seven weeks in a Denver hospital, followed by an additional month of recuperation at his Gettysburg farm. When Stevenson announced his candidacy for president, on November 15, Eisenhower was still recuperating. Many now wondered whether the winner of the Democratic nomination might be running against someone other than Eisenhower in the general election. While that suspicion was laid to rest three months later, when Eisenhower announced that he would seek re-election, concerns about the president's overall health soon resurfaced. In June, Eisenhower underwent surgery to address an intestinal blockage, followed by five more weeks of hospitalization and recuperation. This second extended period of convalescing in less than a year left some unsure about reelecting even a popular president if that would leave the far less popular vice president only a heartbeat away from the presidency.⁶²

It became clear during the 1956 primary campaign that Stevenson's views on civil rights were still cautious and pragmatic. He accepted the gradualist approach to integration (allowing district courts time to figure out how to accomplish the Supreme Court's mandate), fearing that more expedited change would push the South faster than they were prepared to move toward racial progress. Ultimately he would disappoint southern white Democrats by coming out with stronger support for desegregation, but his initial acceptance of slow reform disappointed many of his northern supporters.⁶³

Stevenson was far more forward thinking on the issue of nuclear weapons testing. His proposal to end atmospheric testing was motivated by concerns about the effects of nuclear fallout, and a desire to slow the nuclear arms race. However, America was not yet ready for the candidate's proposal in 1956, and the

⁶⁰ Schlesinger, "Adlai Ewing Stevenson II," 724.

⁶¹ Martin, *Adlai Stevenson and the World*, 195-200, 204; McKeever, 352-354. Stevenson's Libertyville home also hosted his friends and advisors three months later, on the night before he announced his second campaign for the presidency; Martin, *Adlai Stevenson and the World*, 227.

⁶² <http://www.gallup.com/poll/8608/reflections-presidential-job-approval-reelection-odds.aspx> (accessed August 19, 2011); <http://www.eisenhowermemorial.org/presidential-papers/first-term/chronology/index.htm>, see October, November and December, 1955, and June and July, 1956 (accessed August 19, 2011); Martin, *Adlai Stevenson and the World*, 208.

⁶³ Martin, *Adlai Stevenson and the World*, 257-259; McKeever, 364.

ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 23

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Republicans were quick to discredit the idea. Despite the lack of support for his idea, Stevenson remained passionate about this subject for years, and public and governmental opinion eventually caught up with him.⁶⁴

In March and April, the Stevenson campaign was caught off guard when Senator Kefauver's more impassioned campaigning created sufficient enthusiasm for him to win a few of the early primary elections. Shaken from the presumption of victory, the Stevenson campaign became re-energized. The candidate's interactions with the voters became less formal and aloof. He also made several speeches addressing issues that concerned voters (including increasing federal support of medical research, and making private health insurance more affordable). Stevenson quickly surged ahead, and Kefauver had little chance of catching up in the remaining primaries.⁶⁵

When the Democratic convention began in mid-August, Kefauver still held committed delegates, and former President Truman had recently announced his support for New York Governor Averill Harriman. Nevertheless, soon after Senator John F. Kennedy made the speech formally nominating Stevenson for the Party's consideration, the man from Libertyville won nomination on the first ballot. [See Figure #6] The next day Stevenson decided to let the convention delegates select his ticket mate. In a close contest between Senators Kennedy and Kefauver, the more senior politician from Tennessee received the most votes.⁶⁶

Once the campaign shifted from an intra-Democratic contest to one challenging the incumbent Republican, the 1956 presidential campaign was largely an uphill battle for Stevenson. Chief among these challenges was the fact that President Eisenhower had an uncanny ability to be popular even among those who felt they were hurt by his policies. Stevenson once asked a farmer why his fellow farmers supported the president even when they disliked his agricultural policies, and the farmer replied: "Oh, no one connects *him* with the administration."⁶⁷ At another campaign appearance, when a supporter called out: "Governor, all the *thinking* people are for you," the egghead candidate replied, "Yes, madam, but I need a majority to win!"⁶⁸

Stevenson promoted such policies as a nuclear test ban, and the end of the military draft. Within only a few years these and other Stevenson campaign issues became more popular, but not in time for the 1956 election. Furthermore, in the final weeks before the election, support for the current Commander-in-Chief increased when the Soviet Union crushed internal liberation movements in Hungary and Israel attacked Egyptian areas in the Sinai Peninsula. Although the United States was not a direct actor in these conflicts, this global instability only increased voters' appreciation of *General* Eisenhower.⁶⁹

The 1956 election was one of only a half dozen presidential elections when both political parties re-nominated the same candidates in back-to-back elections, and only the second time such elections ended with the same man winning. Back in 1952, Stevenson had received 44% of the popular vote, and only 89 electoral votes to Eisenhower's 442 electoral votes. In 1956, Stevenson received an even smaller percentage of the popular vote (42%), and even fewer electoral votes (73). Curiously, Eisenhower's national popularity did not carry the Republicans in either house of Congress, where the Democrats enlarged their majorities in both houses.⁷⁰

In addition to returning to his law practice, Stevenson spent the next few years writing, speaking, and making several international trips. Shortly after the election he became a leading figure in the Democratic Advisory

⁶⁴ McKeever, 370-372.

⁶⁵ DeGregorio, 535; Martin, *Adlai Stevenson and the World*, 303-304, 337.

⁶⁶ Martin, *Adlai Stevenson and the World*, 348-350.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 345.

⁶⁸ Farris, 153.

⁶⁹ Broadwater, 172-173; McKeever, 380-388.

⁷⁰ DeGregorio, 534, 536; Martin, *Adlai Stevenson and the World*, 391.

ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 24

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Council, a group established to offer “constructive opposition” to the Eisenhower administration. Largely made up of Stevenson supporters, this group sought to formulate Democratic policy positions that were typically more liberal than those of Senate Majority Leader Lyndon Johnson, and other Democratic congressional leaders who seemed overly cooperative with the Republicans.⁷¹ Nevertheless, only a year after the 1956 election, Stevenson was enlisted by the White House to serve as a temporary Special Assistant to President Eisenhower to help prepare for a special NATO conference. When asked at a press conference why Stevenson was selected to help with this project, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles replied: “Well, we picked him because he was the titular head of the Democratic Party, and, in addition, has had a considerable amount of international experience.”⁷² The following Fall, the Standard Bearer campaigned for several Democrats around the country, and watched his party further increase the size of their majorities in both the U.S. House and Senate.

The 1960 Presidential Campaign

True to form, Stevenson repeatedly stated that he was not a candidate in 1960, yet he did not stop supporters from organizing a Draft Stevenson movement. He also worked behind the scenes to increase the possibility that he would be nominated. He gave major speeches, published widely-read articles, and continued to go on international fact-finding trips.⁷³ After the embarrassing U-2 spy plane incident in May of 1960, many believed that a presidential nominee with solid international experience would be attractive to Democratic voters. Nevertheless, in the weeks leading up to the convention, Senator John Kennedy won a string of state primary elections, and was clearly the front runner. On May 21, 1960, the morning after Kennedy’s important win in the Oregon primary, the young senator visited Stevenson at his home in Libertyville. After having breakfast, Stevenson and Kennedy moved into the study for a private discussion. This meeting proved frustrating to Kennedy and his advisors, because Stevenson was unwilling to endorse the front runner. As the titular leader of the Democratic Party, Stevenson sought to walk a fine line in which he would do nothing to harm or benefit any of the candidates, yet, he still hoped the convention would deadlock, and turn to him.⁷⁴

As the convention neared, it appeared that Stevenson’s stealth candidacy might still stand between Kennedy and the nomination. Appearing on the *Face the Nation* television show the Sunday before the convention, Stevenson said that while he was not pursuing the nomination, he would accept it if the convention turned to him. Then, after arriving at the convention in Los Angeles, Stevenson told supporters that he was not a candidate, and they were free to commit to one of the announced candidates. The result was that most potential Stevenson delegates moved to their next choice, and for many, that was Senator Kennedy. Nevertheless, whenever Stevenson spoke to delegates, enthusiasm for him remained strong, and many loyalists were waiting for a sign that the twice-nominated Stevenson was ready to ask the delegates to vote for him. If there had been any chance for Stevenson to seize the convention, it floundered on the ambiguity he showed his supporters. It was clear to most that the ship had sailed. In fact, Robert F. Kennedy passed word to Stevenson that his brother wanted the Governor to make one of the formal speeches to nominate Senator Kennedy. Stevenson replied that as the party’s titular leader it was his duty to remain neutral, and thus undermined his standing within Kennedy’s inner circle.⁷⁵ Even still, after nominating speeches were given for Johnson, Kennedy and Symington, Senator Eugene McCarthy made a speech formally adding Stevenson to the list of nominees.

⁷¹ McKeever, 393-394; Martin, *Adlai Stevenson and the World*, 365-400.

⁷² McKeever, 403-406; Martin, *Adlai Stevenson and the World*, 420. When asked in a September, 1957 appearance on “Face the Nation” whether he considered himself the titular head of his party, Stevenson said no; but when asked who was, he offered no answer. Martin, *Adlai Stevenson and the World*, 417.

⁷³ McKeever, 429-435.

⁷⁴ Martin, *Adlai Stevenson and the World*, 506-511.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 526-527; telephone conversation between William McCormick Blair, Jr. (the former Stevenson aide John F. Kennedy used as his intermediary with Stevenson) and NHL historian Robie S. Lange, August 17, 2012.

ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 25

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

McCarthy's speech received the strongest reaction from the convention, setting off a demonstration nearly a half hour long—long even by convention standards. If cheering equaled votes, Stevenson might have had the nomination by acclamation. However, organizational strength beats momentary enthusiasm every time, and Kennedy won the nomination on the first ballot. Stevenson then agreed to introduce the new standard bearer of the Democratic Party for his acceptance speech.

During the general election campaign, Stevenson worked hard for Kennedy, making at least 75 speeches. He would have supported his party's nominee under any circumstances, but he must have been even more enthusiastic to campaign against his former nemesis--Vice President Richard Nixon. Securing a very narrow margin of victory in the popular vote (49.7% vs. 49.5%), the Kennedy-Johnson ticket returned the Democrats to the White House in 1961.⁷⁶

U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations

Stevenson hoped the president-elect would offer him the position of Secretary of State. Instead, Kennedy offered Stevenson his choice of three other administration positions: Attorney General, ambassador to Great Britain, or the role Kennedy most wanted him to have, ambassador to the United Nations. These discussions very quickly focused on the United Nations job. Although Stevenson had great affection for the institution where he enjoyed such success early in his career, this was not a job he wanted. Stevenson understood more than most that U.S. policy was made in Washington, and that the role of U.N. Ambassador was largely one of carrying out the orders made at the White House or the State Department. With reluctance, Stevenson accepted the post.⁷⁷

His tenure at the United Nations was marked by numerous major conflicts. Much of Stevenson's time was spent confronting challenges to U.N. efforts to assist new African nations such as Congo and Angola make the transition from colonial rule to independence. Also, the incessant tensions of the Cold War were evident in such high profile matters as the debate over the admission of communist China into the United Nations; the rise of the Berlin Wall; concerns about nuclear weapons testing; and efforts to replace the U.N.'s Secretary General with a three-person board (which was preferred by the Soviets).⁷⁸

After less than three months on the job, Stevenson was drawn into an unfortunate role during the U.S.-backed invasion of Cuba's Bay of Pigs. The planning to clandestinely support an invasion by Cuban refugees had been initiated under the Eisenhower administration. It was ready for implementation in the first months of the Kennedy administration. Only partially brought into the loop at the last minute, Stevenson was against the plan. Yet, it was his duty to present whatever messages the administration wanted delivered to the United Nations. At one key point, Stevenson was directed to deny U.S. involvement in the invasion, and show photographic documentation to support its case. Unbeknownst to him, the photographs had been doctored by the CIA to bolster the cover story that two military planes that landed in Florida after bombing Cuba were Cuban Air Force defectors (rather than U.S.-provided B-26s which had been flown by U.S.-trained Cuban refugees). However, when U.S. involvement and efforts to hide that involvement quickly became clear, it seemed that Ambassador Stevenson was either a complicit party or a dupe. Either way, it complicated his relationships with his U.N. counterparts. Not only was the U.S. involvement in the invasion exposed, but the invasion itself was a complete failure. Despite his personal opposition to the invasion, Stevenson was inextricably tied to the Kennedy

⁷⁶ Farris, 190; McKeever, 463, 471; Martin, *Adlai Stevenson and the World*, 526; DeGregorio, 553.

⁷⁷ McKeever, 472-6; Oral History Interview of William McCormick Blair, Jr., June 19, 1964, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, sections 20-22; telephone conversation between William McCormick Blair, Jr., and Robie S. Lange, August 17, 2012.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 481-486.

ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 26

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

administration's low point of international credibility. This would not be the last time events in Cuba would shape Kennedy's and Stevenson's standing in international affairs.⁷⁹

The Cuban Missile Crisis

On October 16, 1962, eighteen months after the Bay of Pigs debacle, the CIA gave President Kennedy top-secret U-2 spy plane photographs showing that the Soviet Union was placing medium and long-range missiles in Cuba. These missiles were capable of launching nuclear warheads to a large portion of the United States. From the American perspective, the Soviet action represented a reckless and provocatively destabilizing threat to the balance of power. From the Soviet perspective, the introduction of missiles to Cuba was little different than U.S. missiles at NATO bases outside Soviet territory, such as those recently installed in Turkey. During the week following the discovery of the missiles a group of top officials and advisors who made up the Executive Committee of the National Security Council (known as ExComm) began to meet secretly to help the president consider how to respond.⁸⁰

U.N. Ambassador Stevenson played an important role in what was perhaps the most dangerous crisis of the Cold War. Even though his prosecutorial-like exchange with his Soviet counterpoint was Stevenson's most well-known moment on the world stage, he also played an important, yet frequently misrepresented role in the secret ExComm meetings with President Kennedy and his top advisors.

Since the secrecy of these meetings required that its participants appear to maintain their regular schedules, the New York-based ambassador was able to attend only a few of the meetings in person, but he remained in close contact throughout the crisis. Reflecting his diplomatic role and his long experience with Soviet foreign policy, Ambassador Stevenson recommended that open negotiations be initiated before executing any military actions. He noted that such diplomatic efforts would also secure broader international support if U.S. military action became necessary. Stevenson proposed that in exchange for the removal of the Soviet missiles, the United States should pledge not to attack Cuba; remove outdated U.S. missiles from Italy and Turkey; and, make Cuba a demilitarized zone. Within the confines of the secret ExComm meetings, these proposals were harshly criticized by some. Stevenson also recommended that the United States make more concerted diplomatic efforts to secure the support of the United Nations, NATO, and the Organization of American States.⁸¹

Six days after the missiles were detected Kennedy announced to the world in a televised speech that Soviet offensive weapons had been detected in Cuba. He declared that the United States would place Cuba under "quarantine" to block the delivery of additional offensive weapons and insisted on the removal of the weapons already in place. With the president's course of action stated, the world turned its attention to the forum designed to defuse such conflicts---the United Nations. Ambassador Stevenson became the public face of the U.S. response to the crisis. As it turned out, Stevenson's earlier recommendation to seek the support of the Organization of American States proved particularly helpful early in the public phase of the crisis when it voted unanimously to support a resolution calling for the immediate removal of the Soviet missiles from Cuba.⁸²

As the first Soviet vessels neared the blockade of U.S. ships, blame for setting off this crisis was hotly debated within the U.N. Security Council. Soviet Ambassador Zorin asserted that the United States had no evidence of

⁷⁹ Ibid., 486-490.

⁸⁰ Philip Nash, *The Other Missiles of October: Eisenhower, Kennedy, and the Jupiters, 1957-1963* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 94-95, 106, 118-125; Sheldon M. Stern, *Averting The Final Failure: John F. Kennedy and the Secret Cuban Missile Crisis Meetings* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2003), 15-18, 21, 31.

⁸¹ Martin, *Adlai Stevenson and the World*, 720-724; Stern, 271-277; Nash, 129-130; McKeever, 520-521.

⁸² McKeever, 523.

ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 27

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

missiles in Cuba and insisted that any so-called “evidence” was “faked.”⁸³ Rather than become sidetracked, Stevenson focused on the Soviet contention that no such weapons were being installed in Cuba. In perhaps the most famous of all U.N. Security Council exchanges, Stevenson declared: “All right, sir, let me ask you one simple question: do you, Ambassador Zorin, deny that the U.S.S.R. has placed and is placing medium- and intermediate-range missiles and sites in Cuba? Yes or no? Do not wait for the interpretation. Yes or no?” Zorin replied: “I am not in an American court of law, and therefore do not wish to answer a question put to me in the manner of a prosecuting counsel. You will receive the answer in due course in my capacity as representative of the Soviet Union.” To which Stevenson countered: “You are in the courtroom of world opinion right now, and you can answer ‘Yes’ or ‘No.’ You have denied that they exist—and I want to know whether I have understood you correctly.” When Zorin again tried to brush off Stevenson’s question, the U.S. ambassador followed with his most memorable declaration: “I am prepared to wait for my answer until hell freezes over, if that is your decision. I am also prepared to present the evidence in this room.” With the rest of the world now focused on the bold U.S. Ambassador, Stevenson then revealed top-secret U-2 photographs of Soviet missiles, facilities, and bombers in Cuba.⁸⁴ [See Figure #7]

Meanwhile, out of public view, stern letters went back and forth between Kennedy and the Soviet Union’s General Secretary, Nikita Khrushchev. After preliminary exchanges, on October 26th, Khrushchev sent a confidential proposal for resolving the crisis that seemed reasonable to Kennedy, but before the United States could reply, Khrushchev quickly (and publicly) followed up with a more hard-line proposal.⁸⁵ While Khrushchev’s earlier letter proposed to dismantle the missiles if the United States promised not to invade Cuba, the new letter added the additional demand of removing NATO missiles from Turkey. Even though the United States had recently explored the option of unilaterally removing the outdated Jupiter missiles from Turkey, the political implications of removing U.S./NATO missiles in order to strengthen the security of the U.S. homeland would be seen as breaking faith with our allies.

According to the version of the Cuban Missile Crisis long presented by Kennedy administration insiders, and thus history, Kennedy simply ignored Khrushchev’s second letter and communicated his acceptance of the less hard-line offer contained in the earlier letter. To the world, that is what appeared to happen, because on October 28, Khrushchev publicly announced that the Soviet weapons would be removed from Cuba. However, Khrushchev’s capitulation was not quite so one-sided. The actual details of the agreement were concealed for decades. Meanwhile, Kennedy’s management of the Cuban Missile Crisis was broadly viewed as a great victory for the young president (especially after his earlier failure at the Bay of Pigs).⁸⁶ Unfortunately for Stevenson, the initial acclaim he had received for his confrontation with the Soviet Ambassador was soon tarnished. In one of the first published accounts of what transpired in the secret ExComm meetings, Stevenson was portrayed as an appeaser because he was willing to negotiate concessions with the Soviets, while all the other participants reportedly stood firm until the Soviets backed down. Apparent White House involvement with this article solidified the impression that Kennedy would never appease the aggressor.⁸⁷

⁸³ This reminded everyone of Stevenson’s 1961 U.N. speech, when he presented doctored photographs prepared to give the impression that the United States was not involved in the Bay of Pigs invasion.

⁸⁴ James G. Blight and David A. Welch, *On the Brink: Americans and Soviets Reexamine the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1989), 380-382; McKeever, 525-528; Martin, *Adlai Stevenson and the World*, 724-734.

⁸⁵ Just as military preparedness was escalating, and Khrushchev’s second letter was received, the first U.S. death of the crisis occurred when Major Rudolf Anderson’s U-2 spy plane was shot down over Cuba. Another incident occurred when Soviet fighter jets unsuccessfully tried to intercept a different U-2 plane that inadvertently strayed into Soviet airspace. Blight and Welch, 383.

⁸⁶ Martin, *Adlai Stevenson and the World*, 736-739; Nash, 109-110.

⁸⁷ Stewart Alsop and Charles Bartlett, “In Time of Crisis,” *Saturday Evening Post*, December 8, 1962; “The Stranger in the Crowd,” *Time*, December 14, 1962. Nash, 156-160, 166-168.

ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 28

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

By the late 1980s, details about a secret deal with Khrushchev started to come out, revealing that Kennedy was more accommodating than previously acknowledged. It was learned that in secret discussions between Attorney General Robert Kennedy and Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin (the substance of which were not even shared with half of the ExComm members), the United States pledged not to attack Cuba, and to remove the U.S./NATO missiles from Turkey in the coming months. The president's brother also told Dobrynin that this secret agreement to link the removal of missiles in Cuba with those in Turkey would be void if this trade was made public by the Soviets. Khrushchev and his government honored that secret for decades, as did the eight Kennedy advisors who knew anything about it. One student of the Missile Crisis concluded: "The Kennedys were clearly prepared to accept the cost of peace; they simply weren't willing to admit their acceptance."⁸⁸

Even once the secret deal to remove the missiles from Turkey became known, some Kennedy loyalists sought to blunt the significance of this revelation by portraying the Kennedy/Khrushchev agreement as something other than a quid pro quo.⁸⁹ Some may accept such a distinction, but the fact that the Kennedy administration went to such efforts to hide this agreement suggests otherwise. Interestingly, the most authoritative documentation of the trade was found in the Soviet archives shortly after the Soviet Union collapsed. In Khrushchev's file copy of the confidential letter he sent to Kennedy on the day the agreement was reached, the General Secretary wrote: "In my letter to you of October 28, which was designed for publication, I did not touch on this matter because of your wish, as conveyed by Robert Kennedy. But all of the offers, which were included in this letter, were given on account of your having agreed to the Turkish issue raised in my letter of October 27 and announced by Robert Kennedy, from your side, in his meeting with the Soviet ambassador that same day."⁹⁰

Since secret concessions, rather than steely reserve, ended the crisis, the public, scholars, and even subsequent presidents, may have developed unrealistic expectations about how to act in an international crisis. Some speculate that the incomplete version of how the Missile Crisis was resolved may have led later presidents to try to live up to a degree of fortitude that we now know Kennedy himself did not actually exercise.⁹¹ Similarly, Khrushchev's willingness to let the world believe that the Soviets received no concessions for removing their missiles from Cuba weakened his political standing within the Kremlin. This situation likely encouraged Kremlin hardliners who pushed for more aggressive positions in the ongoing U.S./Soviet arms race.⁹²

The eventual disclosure of the secret deal between Kennedy and Khrushchev allows a more accurate understanding of Adlai Stevenson's role during the crisis. The acclaim he received for his public actions in the

⁸⁸ "C. Douglas Dillon, Oral History Interview, June 18, 1970," Transcript. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library; Eric Alterman, *When Presidents Lie: A History of Official Deception and Its Consequences* (New York: Viking Press, 2004), 128; Anatoly Dobrynin, *In Confidence: Moscow's Ambassador to America's Six Cold War Presidents* (New York: Random House, 1995), 86-91; John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 270-272; Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *One Hell of a Gamble: Khrushchev, Castro, and Kennedy, 1958-1964* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997), 278-287; Nash, 141-143.

⁸⁹ Blight and Welch, 172-173, 191; also see: Robert McNamara's 2002 statement in "13 Days: An Insider's Perspective with Roberts S. McNamara and Theodore Sorenson," www.jfklibrary.org/Research/Ready-Reference/Biographies-and-Profiles/~media/assets/Education%20and%20Public%20Programs/ (accessed June 3, 2009).

⁹⁰ As quoted in Fursenko and Naftali, 286; Dobrynin, 89-90. An English-language version of the Soviet leader's Russian-language file copy of the letter is available at <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/nikita5.htm> (accessed June 3, 2009). Robert Kennedy reportedly returned this politically dangerous letter back to the Soviet Ambassador the following day. Sheldon M. Stern, *The Cuban Missile Crisis in American Memory: Myths Versus Reality* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2012), 52.

⁹¹ Vice President Johnson, an ExComm member, was intentionally excluded from the small group of officials informed about the secret deal to remove the U.S./NATO missiles from Turkey. There is no evidence that any of the eight Kennedy advisors who knew of the secret missile trade ever informed Johnson of this important detail after he became president. Robert A. Caro, *The Years of Lyndon Johnson, The Passage of Power* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012), 220-221, 223; Alterman, 158-159; Stern, *The Cuban Missile Crisis in American Memory: Myths Versus Reality*, 149.

⁹² Email message from Nancy and Adlai E. Stevenson III, to Robie S. Lange, August 15, 2012.

ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 29

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

U.S. Security Council was soon offset when early characterizations of his role in closed-door ExComm meetings portrayed Stevenson as timid and overly diplomatic. Stevenson's recommendation that the United States negotiate a settlement with the Soviets was portrayed as the equivalent of appeasement, and thus out of step with the president and all the other unflinching ExComm members. However, not until long-secret tape recordings of the ExComm meetings were released more than 30 years later did it become clear that President Kennedy was closer to accepting Stevenson's thinking than perhaps any other ExComm member. The tape recordings reveal the president himself repeatedly trying to convince the rest of the ExComm members that the Soviet demand for the removal of NATO missiles from Turkey was probably an unavoidable concession.⁹³

While Kennedy concealed this trade for reasons more consequential than whether or not Stevenson would appear wise or weak, the Kennedy administration did little if anything to counter the misimpression that Stevenson was the only ExComm participant proposing any sort of trade of missiles.⁹⁴ By concealing the fact that he engaged in the sort of negotiations Stevenson had recommended, Kennedy minimized discord with NATO allies who would have objected to trading NATO missiles for Soviet missiles. This also bolstered the perception that the president's management of the crisis demonstrated unflinching "brinksmanship." By implying that Stevenson's willingness to offer concessions to the Soviets was unacceptable to the president, the Kennedy administration diverted suspicions that the Soviet withdrawal was achieved by trading away the U.S./NATO missiles in Turkey. Unknowingly, Stevenson helped President Kennedy conceal a politically impossible concession that was necessary in order to back the world away from the nuclear precipice.⁹⁵

Remaining Tenure as U.N. Ambassador: 1963-1965

Even after the Cuban Missile Crisis subsided, the rest of Stevenson's ambassadorship was consumed by a string of challenges exacerbated by the Cold War tensions of the early 1960s.

He was a fervent supporter of nuclear disarmament, a cause he had begun to champion when he led the Democratic Party in the 1950s. More than ever, he showed a keen appreciation of and a genuine concern for the needs, interests, and dignity of the developing countries emerging from decades of colonial existence. And he remained committed to the United Nations as an intermediary to keep peace, an agency to master the struggle against world poverty, a forum to enable the smaller states to exercise their sovereign independence, and as an 'experiment of living together as a single human family...'. Because Stevenson did not always enjoy much influence over the foreign policies of Kennedy or Johnson, however, he often found himself giving eloquent speeches supporting hard-line policies with which he strongly disagreed. Two examples were America's increasingly militaristic policies in Vietnam and the Dominican Republic. Sadly, because of his public and official support for such policies, much of the liberal intelligentsia which had admired him for so long now turned against him, feeling that he had betrayed them....Nonetheless, Stevenson had sufficient influence and energy to help direct the United States toward his goals. Stevenson's efforts both inside and outside the United Nations brought the world body into greater repute among his fellow countryman. He worked successfully to preserve and even strengthen the peace-keeping

⁹³ In response to their reluctance to accept Khrushchev's offer to remove the missiles in exchange for the removal of U.S./NATO missiles from Turkey, the long-secret audio tapes of the ExComm meetings recorded the president cautioning his advisors: "We're going to be in an insupportable position on this matter if this becomes his proposal....He's got us in a pretty good spot here. Because most people would regard this as a not unreasonable proposal....I think you're gonna have it very difficult to explain why we are going to take hostile military action in Cuba, against these sites...when he's saying, 'If you get yours out of Turkey, we'll get ours out of Cuba.'" Michael Dobbs, *One Minute to Midnight: Kennedy, Khrushchev, and Castro on the Brink of Nuclear War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), 235; Stern, 310-372; Nash, 127-131, 134-135, 146-148.

⁹⁴ See Stern, 41-47 for a discussion of shifting opinions about a missile trade among ExComm participants.

⁹⁵ Fursenko and Naftali, 321-322; Dobbs, 343-345; see Nash for a detailed discussion of NATO IRBM missiles in Europe.

ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 30

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

abilities of the United Nations. And Stevenson's diligence contributed to the framing of the Limited Nuclear Test Ban Treaty of 1963.⁹⁶

The never-ending pressures of global affairs were briefly put aside while the nation, and the world, mourned the November 22, 1963, assassination of President Kennedy.⁹⁷ Stevenson rushed to Washington, where he helped draft President Johnson's address to a Joint Session of Congress. During a private moment with Stevenson during that hectic weekend, Johnson commented on his accidental ascendency to the presidency. He told the man who was twice-nominated for president and who might have been the nominee in 1960, or might have been Kennedy's choice for vice president, "You should be sitting here. You carried the banner when the going was hard."⁹⁸

Nevertheless, it soon became evident that Stevenson's tenure under Johnson left him even more out of the decision-making process than he was under Kennedy. Even so, during the summer of 1964, there was speculation that Johnson might ask Stevenson to join his ticket. However, a few weeks before the Democratic nominating convention, Johnson stated that he would not select any member of his administration to run with him to fill the vacant vice president position. It was widely believed that this was Johnson's round-about way to exclude Attorney General Robert Kennedy from consideration.⁹⁹

Increasingly frustrated with his role in the administration, Stevenson nevertheless maintained a hectic work and social life; leaving some concerned that he was not taking adequate care of himself. In the Spring of 1964, he briefly considered running for the U.S. Senate from New York. He also passed on offers of distinguished professorships at Columbia and New York universities, as well as an offer to work for a New York City law firm.¹⁰⁰

Perhaps the most critical issues requiring Stevenson's involvement at the United Nations were those related to U.S. military actions in Vietnam and the Dominican Republic, which were initiated to contain the spread of communism. The anti-war sentiments that eventually gained wide support had not yet materialized. Even if Stevenson had begun to undergo such a transition during this early phase of the war, his role as President Johnson's representative at the United Nations made it difficult for him to publicly express any such misgivings. Nevertheless, he worked (unsuccessfully) to encourage the administration to participate in negotiations among the superpower nations and South and North Vietnam.¹⁰¹

In the summer of 1965, Stevenson was home in Libertyville for a long Independence Day weekend enjoying time with friends and family, while also finding time to work on a speech he would give in Geneva. On July 6, he left Libertyville to make that overseas trip. After three days in Geneva, Stevenson spent a day in Paris, and on July 10th, he went to London for a few more days. While there, he told friends he was considering resigning his ambassadorship. He spoke of returning to Libertyville, where he could do a little legal work, and spend time with his grandchildren. On July 14th, after walking with a friend to find the house he had lived in while serving on the U.N. Preparatory Commission, he suffered a severe heart attack and died. He was 65 years old. Vice President Humphrey led a delegation of officials that flew to London to bring the Ambassador's body home. President Johnson and Secretary of State Dean Rusk met the plane in Washington. After a funeral service at

⁹⁶ Roberts, "Cooperation and Cold War," 45-46.

⁹⁷ Stevenson lamented that he had not done more to dissuade Kennedy from going to Dallas four weeks after he himself had been assaulted there by right-wing extremists after delivering a "United Nations Day" speech. Martin, *Adlai Stevenson and the World*, 774.

⁹⁸ This quotation was noted in Stevenson's daily planning schedule. *Ibid.*, 781.

⁹⁹ Robert Kennedy wryly noted that he was sorry to have taken so many good men out of the running with him. *Ibid.*, 806.

¹⁰⁰ Broadwater, 218

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 219-226.

ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 31

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Washington's National Cathedral, Stevenson's body was flown to Springfield, where it lay in state in the Illinois Capitol's rotunda. He was buried near other family members in a cemetery in Bloomington.¹⁰²

Conclusion

The Career

Adlai Stevenson's post-World War II associations with the establishment and early operation of the United Nations are not widely known. At the U.N. Preparatory Conference he led the U.S. delegation at the moment when the overall chairmanship of the Conference's Executive Committee rotated to the U.S. delegation. During this period, Stevenson demonstrated great skill in overcoming Soviet resistance to securing the rules and structures necessary to give the United Nations any chance of becoming a viable international institution. Fourteen years later, Stevenson returned to the United Nations he helped build and served as its U.S. Ambassador for four and a half years. During the Cuban Missile Crisis he not only played a vital public role on the floor of the Security Council, but his less visible participation during the secret ExComm meetings was also very important. Ambassador Stevenson recommended a negotiated settlement to the crisis, and was heavily criticized for doing so. It took decades before it was revealed that President Kennedy's highly acclaimed resolution of the Cuban Missile Crisis secretly required the type of negotiating for which Stevenson had been so maligned.

In the other realm of his career, Stevenson was a key figure in mid-twentieth century U.S. political history. From 1952 to 1960, he was the Democratic Party's twice-nominated candidate for president, and he was broadly regarded as the titular leader of the party in the years between, and after, his two presidential campaigns. The passage of time has only further clarified the important role he played as the leader of the Democratic opposition during the 1950s.¹⁰³

Even though Stevenson lost two presidential elections, he played a key role in defining his party during those two campaigns, as well as influencing the direction of that party while it was out of office. In the most recent study of the historical impact of nominees who lost presidential elections, Scott Farris noted that a few of them:

have had a far greater impact on American history than many of those who became president. They created, transformed, and realigned our political parties. They broke barriers and taboos around religion and gender, ushered in new political movements, introduced sweeping policy changes that would, in time, become the law of the land, and changed our expectations of political candidates.¹⁰⁴

Farris added that:

A presidential campaign is a single battle in a much longer 'war' over the policies and direction of the nation....Like the scientific process, political struggles test hypotheses. Policies rejected by the public today often become the laws and regulations of tomorrow. New voter coalitions that seem to doom a political party to minority status evolve, sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly, into new governing majorities.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Martin, *Adlai Stevenson and the World*, 857-863.

¹⁰³ Broadwater, xiv.

¹⁰⁴ Farris, iv.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, iv-xii.

ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 32

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Farris places Stevenson's historical impact alongside thrice-defeated presidential nominee, William Jennings Bryan. Despite Bryan's own lack of success at the polls, he influenced the course of the Democratic Party during the early twentieth century.¹⁰⁶

One example of a way in which Stevenson influenced the trajectory of the Democratic Party is suggested by the creation of the Democratic Advisory Council by out-of-power Democrats after the 1956 election. The Council largely mirrored a group of policy wonks that had been established after the 1952 election to develop position papers for Stevenson (known as the Finletter Group). The Democratic Advisory Council had an important impact on Democratic policies during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, despite Stevenson's inability to win a majority of the votes, his impact in political history extended well beyond the 1950s because many supporters who were so passionate about his candidacies went on to help shape the future course of the Party.¹⁰⁸

The Democratic Party of the 1950s consisted of widely diverse blocks of voters, reflecting different values influenced by which region of the country from which they came, whether they were urban or rural, and whether they were liberal or conservative Democrats. Since U.S. senators and representatives were able to reflect the orientation of these specific states or local voting blocks, the Democrats were able to remain competitive in both houses of Congress. However, after five consecutive terms of Democratic control of the White House, it became harder to hold these divergent interests together on a nationwide basis.¹⁰⁹ Even if no Democrat could have beaten Eisenhower in 1952 or 1956, future Democratic success was dependent on convincing voters that the party represented positions a majority of them valued. In a period when the Democratic Party was being pulled in different directions, Stevenson was the closest thing the party had to a national leader. He often presented himself as a reluctant candidate and party leader, but he worked behind the scenes to influence the course of the party during its wilderness years as the loyal opposition. His eight years of official and unofficial leadership of the Democratic Party helped define its course as it evolved from Roosevelt's New Deal, and Truman's Fair Deal, to Kennedy's New Frontier.

As President Johnson noted in 1963, Stevenson had "carried the banner when the going was hard." In Arthur Schlesinger's Pulitzer Prize winning book about Kennedy's presidency, *A Thousand Days*, the Kennedy insider concluded:

...in a sense, Stevenson had made Kennedy's rise possible. The Democratic party had undergone a transformation in its eight years in the wilderness....By 1960, the candidates for the Democratic nomination, and Kennedy most of all, were talking in the Stevenson idiom and stressing peril, uncertainty, sacrifice, purpose. More than either of them ever realized or admitted, Kennedy was emerging as the heir and executor of the Stevenson revolution.¹¹⁰

Stevenson became the political leader around whom the liberal wing of the Democratic Party coalesced. On such issues as the dangers of McCarthyism, nuclear fallout, the pro-business Republican agenda, and his support for such issues as affordable health care, and United Nations efforts to protect nations emerging from

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., iv, xi. It should be noted that William Jennings Bryan's home in Lincoln, Nebraska (the home he occupied during his third presidential campaign) is a designated NHL.

¹⁰⁷ McKeever, 393-394; David S. Broder, "The Challenge for Dean and the Democrats," *The Seattle Times*, July 10, 2005.

¹⁰⁸ Farris, ix-x. Farris' book offers an example of late-twentieth century popular culture that humorously suggests the long-term passion of many Stevenson supporters. Two decades after Stevenson's death the popular *Doonesbury* comic strip depicted a man who was still longing for the type of high-minded campaigns waged by Stevenson, reminding his wife that if he should die, "You must tell our son about Adlai Stevenson!"

¹⁰⁹ Broadwater, xiv.

¹¹⁰ As quoted in Martin, *Adlai Stevenson and the World*, 95.

ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 33

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

colonial rule, Stevenson was an articulate and poignant spokesman for liberal ideology. Long after his death he is regarded by supporters and adversaries alike as the individual most representative of that element of the American political spectrum.

According to one historian of the modern presidency, despite Stevenson's electoral losses, he "had a singular position in both American politics and international affairs—that of a statesman who held no elected public position yet had much respect throughout the world."¹¹¹ In sum, Adlai Stevenson is a nationally significant figure for his major impact on mid-twentieth century U.S. history in the dual areas of political and diplomatic history.

The Libertyville Home

Stevenson and his wife purchased this farm north of Chicago in 1935. Located beside the narrow Des Plaines River, the original 40-acre purchase was partially wooded and soon included an extensive vegetable garden, a few fruit trees, and grape vines. The prairie grass near the house was kept in check by a herd of sheep. Hay was grown in the eastern half of the parcel to provide feed for the sheep. In winter it was manually forked into an old hay wagon, with Stevenson and his family pitching in when they were home at harvest time. During World War II the Stevensons also raised pigs, chickens and a few cows on the property.¹¹² After purchasing an adjacent 30-acre parcel to the north, Stevenson grew soy beans there. This lawyer, diplomat, politician viewed himself as a farmer too and he carefully reported each year's profits or losses on his income tax returns.¹¹³

This was Stevenson's home for nearly thirty years. The original house was destroyed by fire only a few weeks after it was completed, but the current one was quickly built. "When he was a young lawyer and not long married, he used to drive down the long lane and on to Lake Forrest, drop his children off at school, park his car at the railroad station, and take the commuters' train to his LaSalle Street law office. In later years hundreds of tourists found their way here, and even if he was working in seclusion, he received them courteously."¹¹⁴ Stevenson enjoyed taking long walks through his 70-acre property, picking up sticks along the way to place into low wet areas. Proximity to the river allowed him to fish, canoe, and ice skate not far from his back door. When possible, this gentleman farmer welcomed the opportunity to help with chores alongside the property's long-time caretaker, Frank Holland.¹¹⁵ [See Figure #8]

Throughout his career, this was an ideal place to meet with friends and advisors, host supporters and other national and international political figures, and convene political and policy brainstorming meetings.¹¹⁶ In

¹¹¹ Vincent P. De Santis, "The Honorable Adlai E. Stevenson," *The Review of Politics* (April 1978): 286.

¹¹² Email correspondence from Nancy and Adlai E. Stevenson III, to Robie S. Lange, August 15, 2012, October 1, 2012.

¹¹³ John Bartlow Martin, "The House that Adlai Loved," *Life*, March 28, 1969, 24. Only the 3.5-acre riverfront portion of the subsequent 30-acre purchase is currently owned and operated (along with the original 40.26-acre parcel) by the Lake County Forest Preserve District as the Stevenson historic site.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ Email correspondence from Nancy and Adlai E. Stevenson III, to Robie S. Lange, October 1, 2012; http://www.lcfdp.org/docs/map_29240.pdf (accessed December 8, 2011).

¹¹⁶ The following biography which focuses only on the period from 1952 to 1965 contains more than two dozen references to Stevenson's use of his Libertyville home to host advisors, supporters and other important individuals: Martin, *Adlai Stevenson and the World*, 24-25, 137, 147-149, 195-200, 204, 208, 213, 227, 231, 235, 243, 249, 301, 337, 389, 445, 449, 463-464, 468, 501, 506-509, 517, 540, 660, 750-751. Some of the visitors to the home included: Alistair Cooke (journalist), Philip and Katherine Graham (*Washington Post* publishers), George Keenan (foreign policy advisor), Senator John F. Kennedy (presidential candidate), Aga Khan (prince), Alfred Lunt and his wife Lynn Fontaine (actors), "Soapy" Martin (Michigan Governor), Bill Mauldin (cartoonist), Walter Reuther (labor union leader), Abraham Ribicoff (Connecticut Governor), Eleanor Roosevelt (diplomat and party leader), Mort Sahl (comedian), John Steinbeck (author), and Barbara Ward (economist). Email correspondence from Nancy and Adlai E. Stevenson III, to Robie S. Lange, October 1, 2012; <http://www.truthaboutcharley.com/road-blog/hitting-the-steinbeck-highway-week-3>; Katherine Graham, *Personal History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997) 236. A critique of one of the brainstorming sessions at Stevenson's

ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 34

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

speeches, televised campaign advertisements and interviews, and documentaries, Stevenson was publicly linked with his Libertyville home.¹¹⁷

The week after Stevenson's death, a recent photograph showing him enjoying a beautiful fall day at his Libertyville home graced the cover of *Life* magazine. [See Figure #9] The magazine's editor began that issue with an article about this national figure, but quickly shifted the focus to Stevenson's life at home.

Stevenson was most at home in his white rambling house off dusty St. Mary's Road in Libertyville, Ill. Here, in tennis shoes, open necked shirt and baggy slacks, he loved to work in a comfortable easy chair or at a little desk surrounded by his books. Here he would angrily slash away at a lawyer's yellow pad, writing his speeches and articles, ever fascinated by the play of words, the turn of a graceful phrase, and clarity in self-expression. Here he always returned to the gentle land falling off to the quiet Des Plaines River wandering at the foot of his property, where sheep roamed and children played.¹¹⁸

Most residences of nationally significant individuals are little more than a place where that person ate and slept, but some homes are more integral to a person's life and work. For the man derided by his opponents as an "egghead," yet praised by his supporters as an intellectual, his Libertyville home was also a place where important contemplative work was done. From this home, Stevenson wrote books, articles, speeches, position papers, as well as his never-ending correspondences.¹¹⁹ [See Figure #10] As noted in a *New York Times Magazine* article after his 1952 defeat, Stevenson was "taking his ease on the Libertyville terrace, reading and talking and thinking, but most importantly, thinking."¹²⁰ Even though Stevenson's career required him to spend weeks or months at a time in other cities, or perhaps because of that fact, Libertyville was the home to which he always returned.¹²¹ This is the property best associated with him throughout his long nationally significant career of public service.

Other Properties Associated with Adlai Stevenson

Born in Los Angeles during the few years his parents lived on the West Coast, Stevenson's primary childhood home was in Bloomington, Illinois, at 1316 East Washington Avenue. Owned by his family long before he was born, it subsequently became the home of Stevenson's older sister, and was visited by Stevenson throughout his life. In addition to attending family gatherings there, he used it for several activities during his campaign and tenure as governor, and for a few social and political events in later years.¹²² The Bloomington home has a

home during the 1956 general election campaign was prepared by Robert F. Kennedy. The 30-year old Kennedy benefited by this exposure to the inside of a presidential campaign. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *Robert Kennedy and His Times* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1979) 145-146.

¹¹⁷ Television viewers saw Stevenson in his Libertyville home when he was interviewed there in a 1954 episode of Edward R. Murrow's nationally broadcast "Person to Person" program. At the televised 1956 Democratic Convention, Senator John F. Kennedy formally introduced Stevenson as "The Man From Libertyville." During the general election campaign, that same reference became the title of a series of television campaign advertisements (some of which showed the candidate at his home). In 1990, this reference also became the title of a documentary film. *Ibid.*, 99; www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/1956/the-man-from-libertyville-tv-campaigning (accessed February 29, 2012); Richard M. Fried, "Adlai Stevenson: The Man from Libertyville," *The Journal of American History* (December 1991): 1179-1181.

¹¹⁸ George P. Hunt, "A Bureau Chief's Memory of Stevenson," *Life*, July 23, 1965, 3.

¹¹⁹ The second volume of Martin's biography includes several specific references to Stevenson engaging in his voluminous writings while at his Libertyville home: Martin, *Adlai Stevenson and the World*, 89, 117, 444, 533, 550, 817, 856-857.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 78.

¹²¹ Martin, "The House that Adlai Loved," 24.

¹²² Martin, *Adlai Stevenson of Illinois*, 303-304; McKeever, 24, 478. Stevenson was buried elsewhere in Bloomington, near other family members. Martin, *Adlai Stevenson and the World*, 863; Mary Ann Ford, "Adlai Stevenson II's Home Sold," *Pentagraph.com*,

ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 35

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

notable association with Stevenson's life, but is not as deeply and importantly associated with his extended periods of national significance as is his Libertyville home.

As a young man, Stevenson attended Choate preparatory school in Connecticut; Princeton University in New Jersey; Harvard Law School in Massachusetts; and Northwestern Law School in Chicago. Later, in the decade before moving to Libertyville, Stevenson and his wife lived at various Chicago-area residences.¹²³ Early in the New Deal, Stevenson spent a year in Washington, D.C., during which he rented a house in Georgetown after his family joined him. A few years later, in the months before Pearl Harbor was attacked, Stevenson returned to Washington, and remained there for three years, living with his family north of Dupont Circle.¹²⁴ Any extant properties associated with these aspects of Stevenson's life did not have long-term, or especially consequential, associations with his future roles as diplomat and politician. Stevenson's activities had not yet risen to the level of national significance, and none of the work or residential properties associated with this period have nationally significant associations.

After several months back in Illinois, Stevenson returned to Washington in 1945, where he worked for the State Department. For part of this period he spent several weeks at the U.N. Charter Conference in San Francisco, importantly leaking information to the media from room 576 of the Fairmont Hotel.¹²⁵ Any properties associated with Stevenson's State Department activities in Washington or San Francisco are notable as representing his work shortly before he become an important diplomatic figure. However, since his activities had not yet risen to the level of national significance, any extant properties would not be strong NHL candidates.

Properties associated with Stevenson's early United Nations activities in London (in late 1945 and early 1946) are of greater historical consequence. If not for the fact that they are located outside the United States, places he lived and worked might represent Stevenson's initial rise to national significance.¹²⁶

After several months back home in Illinois, Stevenson resumed duties with the United Nations, spending the second half of 1946 working with its General Assembly, which was meeting in Queens, New York. In late 1947, Stevenson returned to New York to serve at the General Assembly. The facility used during this period (the former New York City Building at the 1939 New York World's Fair site) remains, but has undergone interior and exterior modifications over the years.¹²⁷ If these modifications did not result in a loss of integrity, this building might be nationally significant as the site of General Assembly meetings before the U.N.'s permanent facility was built in Manhattan. Regardless, the temporary home of the U.N.'s General Assembly, or any New York residences or offices occupied by Stevenson during this period, are not as consequentially representative of Stevenson's multiple periods of national significance as is the Libertyville home.¹²⁸

December 1, 2011, <http://www.pantagraph.com/news/local/adlai-stevenson-ii-s-boyhood-home-sold/article-e6b3e914-1c4f-11e1-b484-0019bb2963f4.html> (accessed May 2, 2012).

¹²³ Before getting married Stevenson lived in a brownstone on Chicago's Gold Coast, at 70 East Elm Street. In 1929 the newlyweds lived in another brownstone a few blocks away, at 76 Walton Place. A year later they upgraded to an apartment on Lake Shore Drive. By 1936 they lived at 1246 North State Parkway. They next lived on Astor Street while waiting for the Libertyville home to be completed. Broadwater, 25; McKeever, 56; Martin, *Adlai Stevenson of Illinois*, 143, 150.

¹²⁴ McKeever, 62-63, 75, 80, 84; Broadwater, 57-58. Stevenson was sent on several overseas trips during his periods. Before moving to the Dupont Circle neighborhood (1904 R Street), Stevenson resided at the Hay-Adams Hotel, and with a friend in Georgetown.

¹²⁵ McKeever, 93-96; Roberts, "Cooperation and Cold War," 32.

¹²⁶ For example, Stevenson and his family lived at 2 Mount Row, in Berkeley Square, London. Martin, *Adlai Stevenson of Illinois*, 244.

¹²⁷ www.queensmuseum.org/about/aboutbuilding-history (accessed February 24, 2012).

¹²⁸ When the General Assembly met in Queens in the Fall of 1946, the U.S. delegation occupied the fifth floor of the Pennsylvania Hotel (for either office or lodging purposes). Martin, *Adlai Stevenson of Illinois*, 253.

ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 36

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Between 1949 and 1953, the Governor's Mansion in Springfield served not only as the chief executive's official residence, but he maintained his primary office there as well (in addition to the one he had at the Statehouse).¹²⁹ Stevenson's role as governor of Illinois represents an association of less than national significance. However, during the several months while he was running for president he inevitably conducted campaign-related activities within the Governor's Mansion. The relatively brief associations the mansion or the Statehouse had with Stevenson's 1952 bid for the presidency do not possess the type or strength of association his Libertyville home had with his extended periods of national significance.¹³⁰

During those times in Stevenson's adult life when his energies were not directed toward political or governmental activities, he worked as an attorney. Despite frequent and extended leaves of absences to pursue the work he found most exciting, at several points he worked out of a few different law offices.¹³¹ Also, various properties were used as official and unofficial campaign headquarters during Stevenson's state and federal campaigns.¹³² He likely spent some time in these law offices monitoring or conducting political activities, but any such associations with any particular law office were relatively brief. As Stevenson's national significance in the political sphere derives from his role as the titular leader of the Democratic Party between 1952 and 1960, rather than from any single election campaign, his long-time home, which was associated with the extended period of his political leadership, is a stronger NHL candidate.

Finally, between 1961 and 1965, Ambassador Stevenson spent much of his time in Manhattan. For obvious reasons, the United Nations complex possesses the highest levels of significance for associations broader than those related to Adlai Stevenson. However, its special territorial status raises questions about U.S. authority to designate it as an NHL. In addition to working directly at the U.N. complex, Ambassador Stevenson had offices at the nearby U.S. Mission headquarters. The building that housed the U.S. Mission during the first few months of Stevenson's ambassadorship still stands at 2 Park Avenue. However, its brief association with Stevenson's U.N. tenure does not make it a strong NHL candidate within this historic context. The new building into which the U.S. Mission moved in 1961 (across First Avenue from the U.N. complex) was recently demolished to make way for the current U.S. Mission building. While in New York, Stevenson resided in the traditional ambassador's residence, a penthouse apartment on the 42nd floor of the Waldorf Towers (100 East 50th Street).¹³³ The Waldorf Towers is part of the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, one of the world's most famous hotels. In addition to still containing the residence of the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel has hosted a long string of U.S. presidents and other notable guests and residents. If it retains a high degree of integrity in relation to its broader role as a premier hotel and residence, further consideration of NHL nomination might be appropriate. Nevertheless, despite the Waldorf-Astoria's association with

¹²⁹ Baker, 19; McKeever, 133.

¹³⁰ When possible, Governor Stevenson spent weekends and holidays at the Libertyville home. Ibid., 140-141; Jean H Baker, *The Stevensons: A Biography of an American Family* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1996), 20.

¹³¹ For example, after his term as Governor ended, he worked on the 19th floor of his old law firm's offices at 11 South LaSalle Street in Chicago. Two years later he opened his own firm on the 8th floor of 231 LaSalle Street. Another two years later his firm moved to the Field Building at 135 South LaSalle Street. Since his law office attracted too many unscheduled visitors, Stevenson worked several days of each week out of his Libertyville home. McKeever, 342, 376; Martin, *Adlai Stevenson and the World*, 154, 406.

¹³² For example, during Stevenson's brief campaign for the U.S. Senate at the end of 1947, his campaign headquarters was at 221 North LaSalle Street. When he ran instead for governor, his new headquarters was at 7 South Dearborn Street. Before the 1952 Democratic Convention, the "unauthorized" headquarters for the "Draft Stevenson" committee was in a three-bedroom suite at Chicago's Conrad Hilton Hotel. His campaign headquarters after his 1956 nomination was in Washington D.C. In 1960, the unauthorized "Draft Stevenson" office was located at 100 Indiana Avenue, NW, in Washington. McKeever, 191, 444; Martin, *Adlai Stevenson of Illinois*, 276, 293; Martin, *Adlai Stevenson and the World*, 354.

¹³³ Ibid., 579; Caroline Seebohm, *No Regrets: The Life of Marietta Tree* (New York: Simone & Shuster, 1997), 261.

ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 37

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Stevenson's four years as ambassador, it does not compare to the Libertyville home's stronger association with the full span of his dual periods of national significance (1945-1947 and 1952-1962).¹³⁴

¹³⁴ During Stevenson's years as ambassador he continued his practice of spending many weekends and vacations at his Libertyville home (several times having to return to New York ahead of schedule to deal with international emergencies). Martin, *Adlai Stevenson and the World*, 596-597, 660, 690-691, 704, 750, 755, 758, 786, 803, 817, 822, 825, 840, 844, 852, 855-856.

ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 38

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 39

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

Previously Listed in the National Register.

Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.

Designated a National Historic Landmark.

Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #

Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State Agency

Federal Agency

Local Government

University

Other (Specify Repository):

ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 40

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: 43.76 acres

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	16	423780	4675560
B		423100	4675100
C		422700	4675640
D		423080	4676100

Verbal Boundary Description: The historic district nominated for NHL designation is the 40.26-acre parcel included in the 2003 National Register property, plus a smaller 3.5-acre riverfront parcel immediately to the north.

The legal description for the original 40.26-acre property is as follows:

That part of the south 1/2 of Section 3, Township 43 North, Range 11, East of the 3rd Principal Meridian, Lake County, Illinois, are described as follows: beginning at a point on the east line of said south 1/2 of Section 3, 1255 feet south of the northeast corner thereof; thence west along a line parallel with the north line of said south 1/2 of Section 3, 2236 feet more or less, to the center line of the Des Plaines River; thence southerly and southwesterly along said center line of the Des Plaines River to a point 2015 feet south of the said north line of the south 1/2 of Section 3; thence east along a line parallel with said north line of the south 1/2 of Section 3, 2611 feet, more or less, to said east line of the south 1/2 of Section 3; and thence north along said east line of the south 1/2 of Section 3, 760 feet to the point of beginning subject to the rights of the public in State Aid Route 41 according to the plat thereof recorded as Document #1063309 on March 15, 1960---containing 40.26 acres, more or less.

The legal description for the adjoining 3.5-acre parcel is as follows:

The south one-half of that part of the following described property taken as a tract to-wit: That part of the southeast quarter of Section 3, Township 43 North, Range 11, East of the 3rd P.M., in Lake County, Illinois, lying easterly of the center line of the Des Plaines Rivers, south of the north 690 feet of said quarter Section, north of the south 760 feet of the north 2015 feet of the said quarter Section, and west of a line beginning at a point 500 feet east of the west line of the southeast quarter of Section 3 and 690 feet south of the north line of said quarter Section; thence southeasterly to a point which is 1950 feet west of the center line of St. Mary's Road on the north line of the south 760 feet of the north 2015 feet of said southeast quarter, in Lake County, Illinois.

Boundary Justification: The nominated resource is the original 40.26-acre parcel purchased by Stevenson in 1935 and owned by him for the rest of his life, as well as a 3.5-acre riverfront parcel that was part of a larger 30-acre property immediately north of the original parcel which Stevenson subsequently purchased and used. Both of these nominated parcels are currently owned by the Lake County Forest Preserve District, and operated as the Adlai E. Stevenson Historic Home. Immediately north of (and outside) the proposed NHL boundary is the rest of the 30-acre parcel once owned by Stevenson (mentioned above), but which has been owned by other parties since shortly after Stevenson's death in 1965. Though partially open, that parcel is currently dominated by large modern agricultural buildings.

ADLAI E. STEVENSON II FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 41

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

11. FORM PREPARED BY

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Date: February 7, 2012

Edited by: Dr. Alexandra Lord
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NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS PROGRAM
February 7, 2013

STEVENSON, ADLAI E. II, FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Photos

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



Photograph #1

Looking west, up the long drive that leads to the house from St. Mary's Road.

Robie S. Lange, September 20, 2012

STEVENSON, ADLAI E. II, FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Photos

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

**Photograph #2**

Facing north, with the house at left (and Stevenson's study at far left) and the Service Building at right.

Robie S. Lange, September 20, 2012

STEVENSON, ADLAI E. II, FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Photos

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



Photograph #3

Facing north, showing the open lawn west of the house.

Robie S. Lange, September 19, 2012

STEVENSON, ADLAI E. II, FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Photos

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



Photograph #4

Front (east) elevation of the house.

Robie S. Lange, September 20, 2012

STEVENSON, ADLAI E. II, FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Photos

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



Photograph #5

Facing northeast, Stevenson's study at right, and the living room porch/master bedroom deck at left.

Robie S. Lange, September 19, 2012

STEVENSON, ADLAI E. II, FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Photos

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

**Photograph #6**

Facing south along the house's rear (west) elevation, showing (left to right) the service porch, the kitchen/prep area (with the sons' deck above), the dining room, and the living room/porch. Robie S. Lange, September 20, 2012

STEVENSON, ADLAI E. II, FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Photos

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



Photograph #7

Looking south through the living room, toward Stevenson's study.

Robie S. Lange, September 20, 2012

STEVENSON, ADLAI E. II, FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Photos

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

**Photograph #8**

The northeast corner of Stevenson's study, showing his desk, Stevenson-family books and memorabilia.

Robie S. Lange, September 20, 2012

STEVENSON, ADLAI E. II, FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Photos

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

**Photograph #9**

The south end of Stevenson's study, showing the windows on three sides, plus the fireplace along the south wall.

Robie S. Lange, September 20, 2012

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United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Photos

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



Photograph #10

Facing southeast in the second floor's master dressing room, showing the built-in dressers and the pivoting three-sided mirror.

Robie S. Lange, September 20, 2012

STEVENSON, ADLAI E. II, FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Photos

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



Photograph #11

The basement family room, showing the fireplace on its east wall.

Robie S. Lange, September 20, 2012

STEVENSON, ADLAI E. II, FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Photos

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



Photograph #12

View facing north (at the Service Building), from the east (front) area of the house.

Robie S. Lange, September 20, 2012

STEVENSON, ADLAI E. II, FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Photos

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

**Photograph #13**

Facing northwest from the front (east) of the house, showing the Service Building (left) and the Machine Shed (right).

Robie S. Lange, September 20, 2012

STEVENSON, ADLAI E. II, FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Photos

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



Photograph #14

Facing southwest, the tennis court located in the wooded area southwest of the house.

Robie S. Lange, September 19, 2012

STEVENSON, ADLAI E. II, FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Figures

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

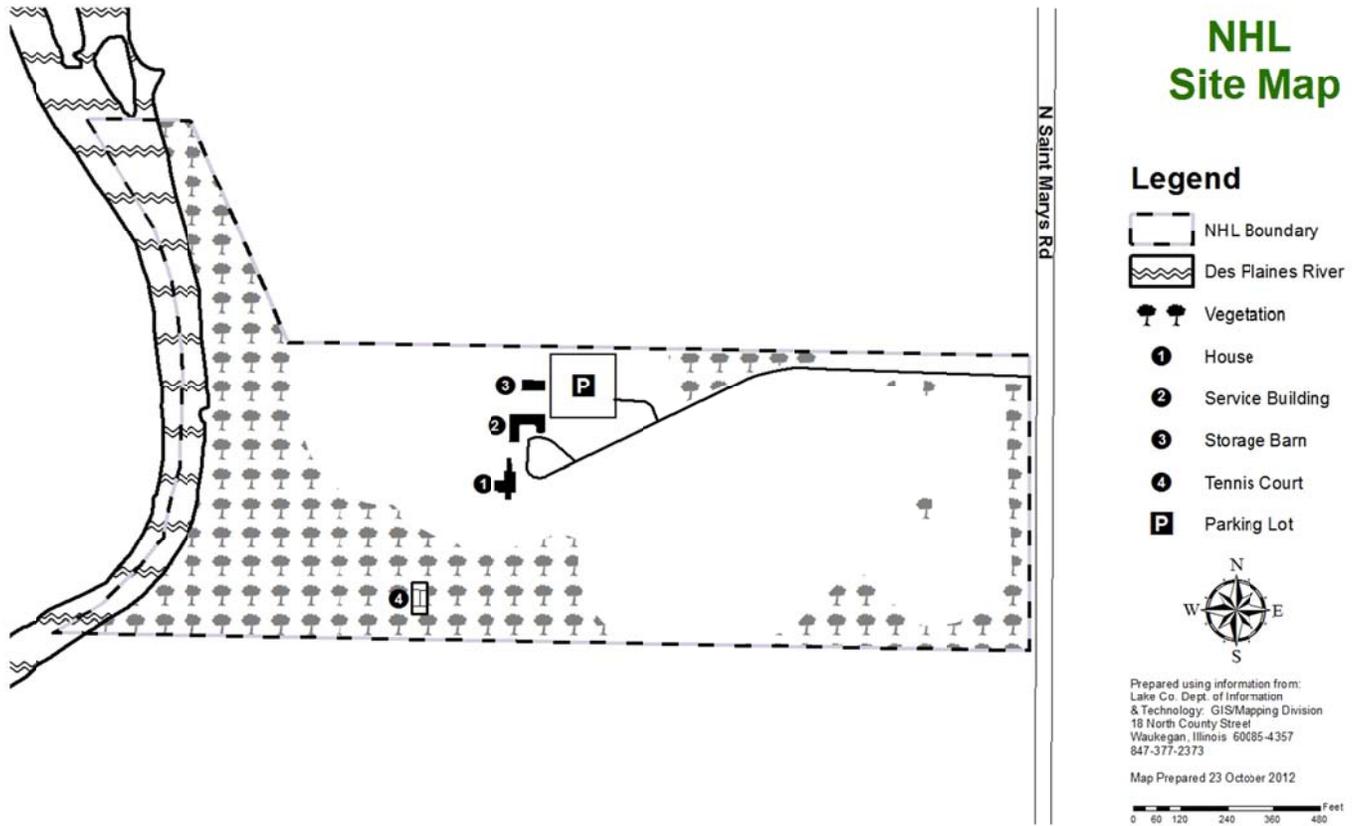


Figure #1:
 National Historic Landmark boundary and site plan.
 Source: Lake County Forest Preserve District, 2012

STEVENSON, ADLAI E. II, FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Figures

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

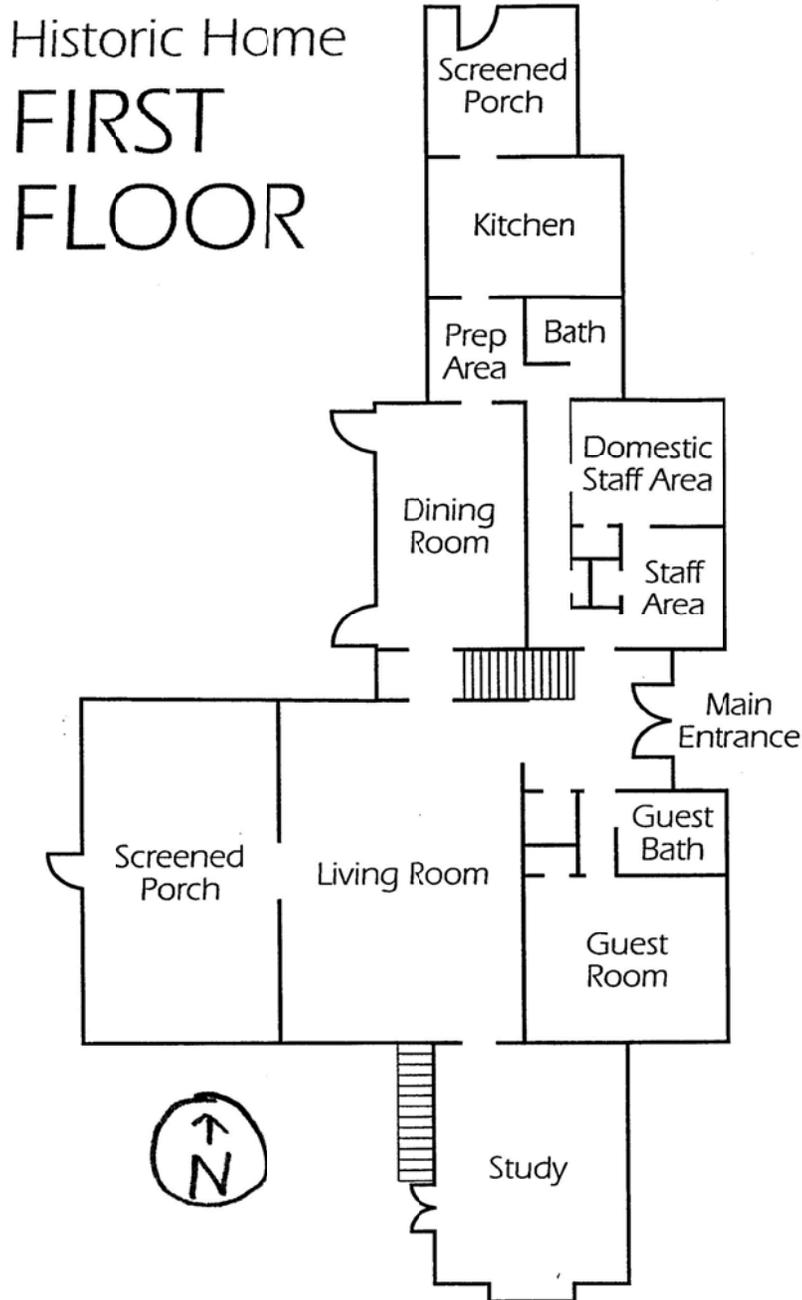


Figure #2:
Stevenson House, floor plan, first floor.
Source: Lake County Forest Preserve District, 2012

STEVENSON, ADLAI E. II, FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Figures

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Historic Home SECOND FLOOR

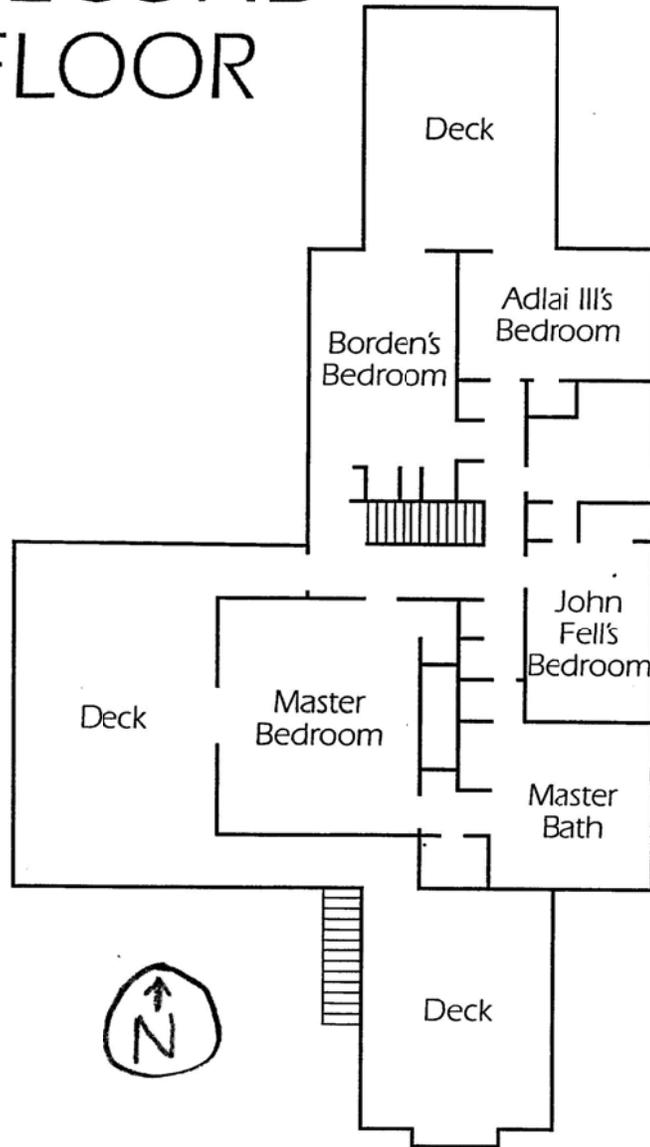


Figure #3:

Stevenson House, floor plan, second floor.

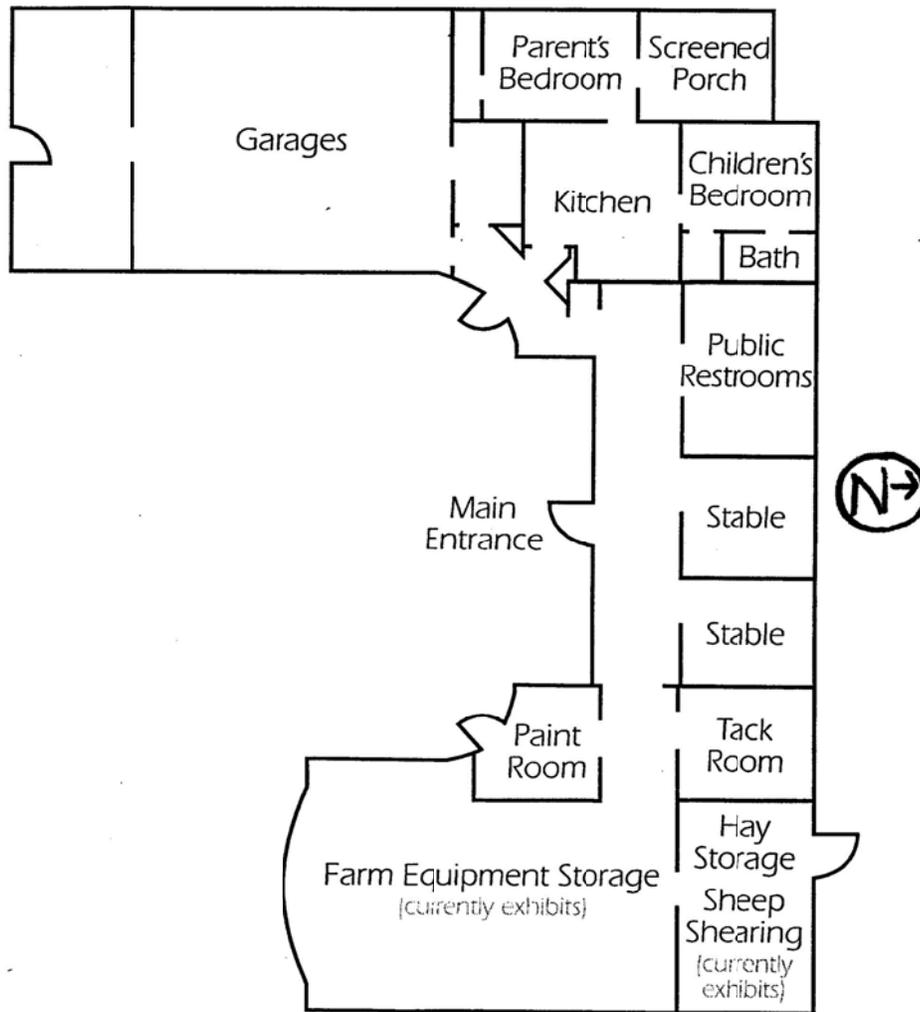
Source: Lake County Forest Preserve District, 2012

STEVENSON, ADLAI E. II, FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Figures

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



SERVICE BUILDING

Figure #4:

Service Building, floor plan.

Source: Lake County Forest Preserve District, 2012

STEVENSON, ADLAI E. II, FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Figures

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



Figure #5:
Stevenson accepting his party's nomination in 1952 (shown with President Truman).
Source: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

STEVENSON, ADLAI E. II, FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Figures

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



Figure #6:
Stevenson accepting his party's nomination in 1956.
Source: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

STEVENSON, ADLAI E. II, FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Figures

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

**Figure #7:**

Ambassador Stevenson (seated at right) presenting photographs of Soviet missiles in Cuba to the U.N. Security Council, October 25, 1962.

Source: United Nations Archives

STEVENSON, ADLAI E. II, FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Figures

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



Figure #8:

Stevenson and Frank Holland (caretaker) tending sheep at the Libertyville farm, 1948.

Source: Jim Holland and the Lake County Forest Preserve District

STEVENSON, ADLAI E. II, FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Figures

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

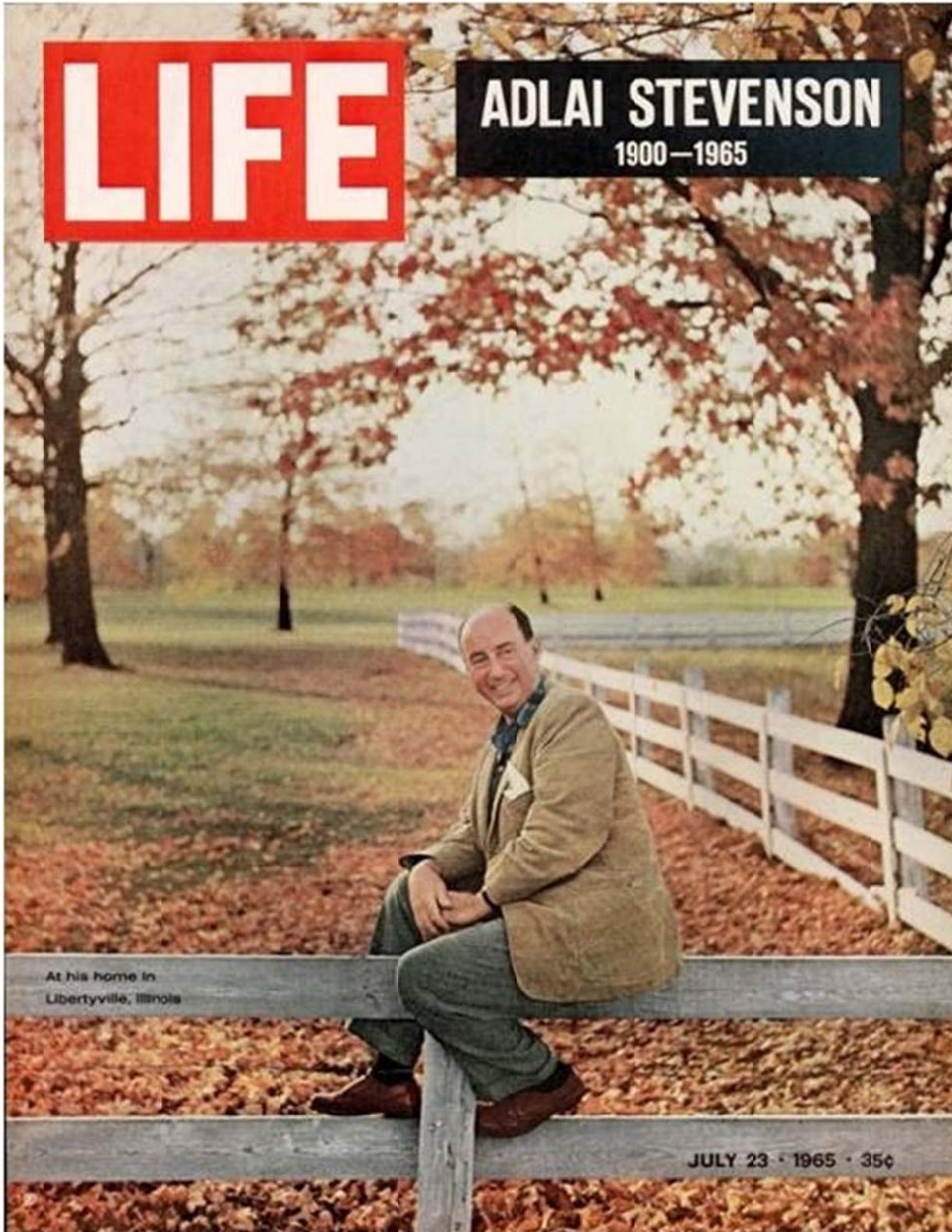


Figure #9:

The cover of *Life* magazine (July 23, 1965) showing Stevenson at his Libertyville farm.

Source: Lake County Forest Preserve District

STEVENSON, ADLAI E. II, FARM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Figures

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

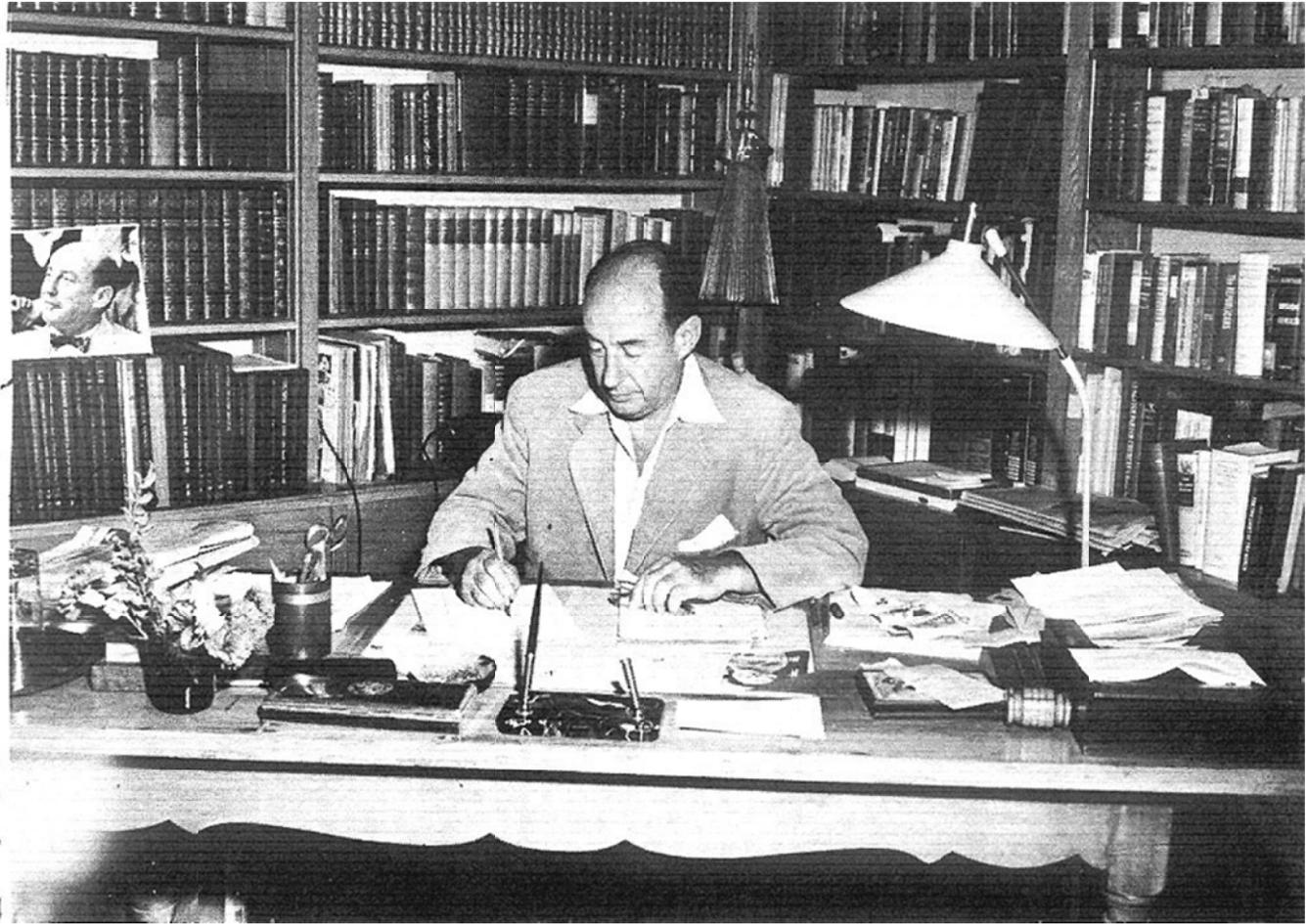


Figure #10:

Stevenson in his study at his Libertyville home (undated).

Source: Jim Holland and the Lake County Forest Preserve District

