

Myles Garrigan

A Trip to the White House

Memories of a Page trip to visit President Franklin D. Roosevelt at the White House.

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Mrs. Roosevelt invited us—the Pages—to the White House. And, of course, we all went—I went down, and I don't know how many others were there. A gang—a gang of us were there. And we sat at round tables—I think about eight to a table, or so. Senate Pages and House Pages. And she—the menu was chicken, mashed potatoes, and peas. Why do I remember that? That was standard Washington fare. Anyway, what the dessert was, I can't remember what the... But anyway, she came to each table. Chatted with the group. And after lunch, she got up and announced that we were going up to meet the President. Wow! In hindsight—wow! So we all got up. Filed out. And the White House—and I assume it's still there—they have an elevator. And I happened to ride up in the elevator with Mrs. Roosevelt. And it only held about three or four people. And it deposited us outside the President's office. And the door was slightly ajar, I remember. And I was standing right next to Mrs. Roosevelt. And she pushed it in gently, so she could get her head in. And she said, "Franklin, I have some boys here to see you." And it's like she—I can hear her saying it like it was yesterday. "Franklin..." And then he replies, "Show them in, Eleanor." I mean, here we are, on first-name terms with Eleanor and Franklin. {laughter} That's why I kiddingly call Mrs. Roosevelt, "Eleanor..." And that connection—I'll jump ahead a little—well, let me finish that part of it. So, after meeting the President, we were there maybe 15 or 20 minutes, and he explained some of the memorabilia on his desk. And after that was over, she announced that we were going down to the theater in the White House, and see a movie, which turned out to be *Keeper of the Flame*, with Spencer Tracy and Katharine Hepburn.