

Glenn Rupp

Joint Session of Congress

Account of a Joint Session of Congress in which President Franklin Delano Roosevelt addressed the House and the Senate.

Interview recorded May 3, 2005

I know it was in 1933, and we're all anxious to hear the new President address the Joint Session of Congress, and Johnny McCabe was along with me, sitting in front of the Speaker's Rostrum at that time. I just sat there for a...actually, I was on duty. I just sat there for a little bit. I didn't know they were taking the picture while I was sitting there. He [Franklin Roosevelt] had a very good technique of reading from a prepared speech, and giving it almost as if he were speaking without notes or anything. And Jimmy Roosevelt sat to his left, listening on the platform and, immediately behind him, were the Vice President, sits right behind, to the right, and that would have been, at that time it would have been Jack Garner, who had been Speaker before that. So, Joe Byrns was sitting in the Speaker's chair, with the presiding officer at the time.

So everything—Did I tell you that we always had a platform built, and we'd take it in, and put it at the Speaker's Rostrum, so President Roosevelt could walk up the steps to get to the podium to speak? There's no way in the world he could have done it without this. And he always used that. He walked, passed us in the Speaker's Lobby, and we'd speak to him and so forth, and we'd open the doors so he could go on in. And I forgot to tell you this, it was always my job to have a glass of water and one of our House of Representatives towels on the Speaker's Rostrum so he could drink whenever he felt like it.