

Myles Garrigan

The House Floor on December 8, 1941

Recollections of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's "Day of Infamy" speech.
Interview recorded May 25, 2012

And, of course, the following day, I'm up on the Hill for a Joint Session of Congress, where FDR, of course, makes his "Day of Infamy" speech. The place was packed. And I just saw a recent picture of that Joint Session, and it's taken from the House Gallery looking at the Republican side, towards the Page area. And the Pages— and I had forgotten this— the Pages are standing on the benches. And— where they— and the place was packed with people. And then, looking at the pictures, there were people there that, today, probably shouldn't have been there. And there were a lot of women there. It must have been the wives of a lot of the Congressmen, and so forth. So the place was packed. It was very dramatic, as you can imagine. And it— I think I mentioned this to you, as the vote came out, Jeannette Rankin, Republican— first woman elected to Congress. And she was from Montana. She came out of the Republican Cloakroom, I remember. And took those two or three steps up to the floor. And I was standing there and she voted no. And recorded— I do this bit. And the House Members— they had— a lot of them had voted. And it wasn't a crowded House Chamber at that time. And she just voted no, and I was, "Oh, wow!" She lunged back into the Republican Cloakroom. I didn't know it then, but she had to be escorted from the cloakroom back to her office.