Benjamin C. West  
Superintendent, Press Gallery, U.S. House of Representatives  

Events: 1954 Shooting  

Eyewitness to History  
Benjamin C. West provides a detailed account of the shooting in the House Chamber on March 1, 1954.  
*Interview recorded December May 23, 2007*  

The Press Gallery was just inundated with human beings. Our 10 or 12 telephone booths were occupied. You couldn’t get a line out, you couldn’t get a line in and it became apparent some 12, 15, 20 minutes later that the story was now unfolding elsewhere, and the Press Gallery was not a prime location to cover it, except for, perhaps, individuals like me who were a bit of an eyewitness. So, it finally dispersed, and in 44 years, I never witnessed another day . . .I have seen some crushing crowds in the press galleries, but not to equal that moment and that drama.