

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.