

## Benjamin C. West

### Keeping a Log of the House Proceedings

Historical overview of the practice of keeping a legislative activity log in the House press galleries.

*Interview recorded August 24, 2005*

In 1947, as things were taking on, sort of, new dimensions, and the government is obviously expanding, it's expanding, and, so, the suggestion was made on both the Senate side and the House side, to maintain a log of activities. Proceedings of the House of Representatives: the date Tuesday, or whatever. And the one-minute speeches were listed, and the subject matter. You didn't attempt any verbatim note-taking, but it was the subject matter that sort of opened the door to a reporter who may have been elsewhere. He comes in at 1:30, he's leafing through the one-minute speeches and, say he represents the *Omaha World Herald*. Well, Mr. [Roman] Hruska of Nebraska. One minute, dash, subject matter. Well then he knows...Generally, he would turn to you and say, "You remember kind of the substance of what he said?" Which usually you did.

And oh, he said, "I am going to go down and talk to him." Well, then he would go downstairs. And there was a Republican door to the Speaker's Lobby and a Democratic door to the Speaker's Lobby. And the head Page, you would send your card in or something, you want to talk and the fellow would come out and talk to you. And, so that helped him. Well, that became very popular, almost immediately.