

"Man-on-the-Street", Dallas, Texas, December 9, 1941

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John Lomax: This is Dallas, Texas, December the ninth, 1941. John Lomax speaking. Professor Charles S. Potts is before the microphone, dean of the law department of Southern Methodist University at Dallas. And I'm going to ask Mr. Potts to introduce himself and tell a little bit about his previous record before he became a law professor and then tell me what his reactions were when he heard that the Japanese had attacked America.

Charles S. Potts: Mr. Lomax, I am a native Texan. I grew up on a farm near the city of Weatherford. I taught in the public schools and later attended the University of Texas. Taught in the A & M college of Texas, later took the law course in the University of Texas and entered the law faculty of that institution. Later, I attended Harvard University Law School for one year and then taught law for one year in Washington University at St. Louis. I've been at Southern Methodist University since 1927.

Now, as to my reactions in regard to the Japanese attack, I will simply state that I was not surprised that treachery marked the beginning of this war. I recall that in nineteen hundred and four, the attack on Russia was made while friendly relations were still being maintained and several of Russia's strongest battleships in the east were sunk before any declaration of war was issued. I expected, therefore, treachery and a sudden attack. I was surprised, however, that it succeeded at Pearl Harbor. How they could have approached so close to our great naval base without being discovered by our patrol airplanes is beyond my understanding.

Now, as to the result of that attack, my judgment is that Japan has done herself no good whatever by that attack. I believe that it has served to unify American sentiment and anger our people to the extent that we will do a very much better job of arming and carrying on the war that has been thrust upon us, than we would have done had it begun in some less spectacular fashion.

My belief is that Japan is in no position in the long run to sustain the war that will come as a result of their action on Sunday. How they'll be able to meet the British force, the Dutch, the Chinese, the United States, and perhaps Russia in a long drawn out war is beyond my comprehension. But, we're going to suffer losses, probably grievous losses. We're a long way from the scene of battle and our lines of communication will therefore be difficult to maintain. I hope that congress will move forward and recognize the fact that in this war we are fighting three nations and not one. And not leave it for Germany to say when and where the shooting war will begin. I hope congress will declare war on the both of the other Axis powers at once.

John Lomax: That's as far as you can go?