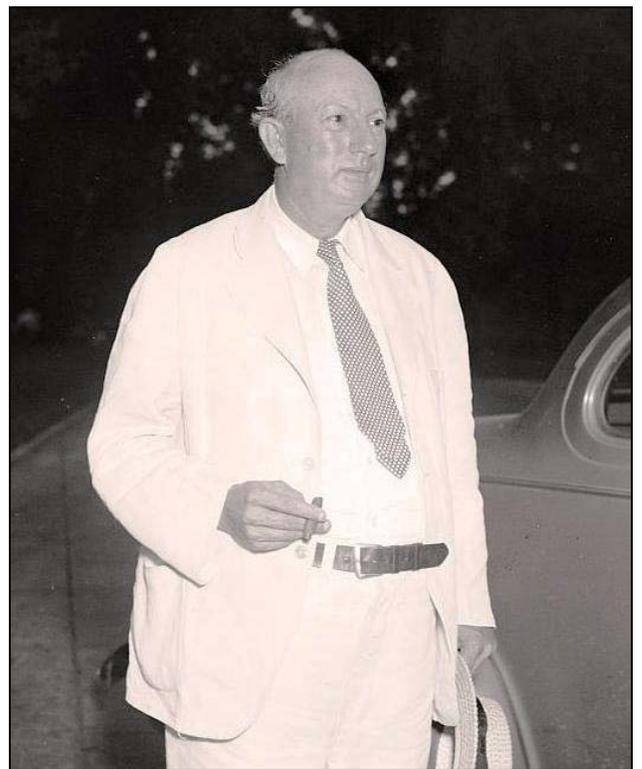


# Who was Pat Harrison?

Pat Harrison, who represented Mississippi as a Congressman and later as Senator, never lived to see the waterway district bearing his name. Yet his distinguished service inspired planners to name the project after him.

Following World War II, one of the greatest needs facing Mississippi's Pascagoula River Basin was effective flood control and water resource management. The region was undergoing rapid development and business and industry demanded careful planning to assure the region had a dependable, year-round water supply, collection of water for release during dry periods, water storage for recreation purposes and clear, navigable streams for barge traffic.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers conducted a study of the region's water resource needs during this period, and from this early planning the waterway district was formed.



SENATOR PAT HARRISON

Pat Harrison was honored as the namesake of the waterway district, having served with distinction during his political career. In addition to his contributions to issues of national interest, Harrison

always kept a keen eye toward the needs of his home state. As chairman of the powerful Senate Finance Committee, Harrison helped to pass such projects as a mammoth federal funding appropriation to develop Mississippi's highway system during the 1930s.

**“Pat Harrison was a man of keen intellect, sound in principle, shrewd in judgement, and with rare gifts of kindly wit, humor and irony which delighted all.”**

- Franklin D. Roosevelt

A respected and astute politician, Harrison as a younger man became known for his fiery speeches on the floor of the House of Representatives. But in his later years as a seasoned Senator, Harrison was known by his colleagues as “The Old Fox,” referring to backroom persuasive power and strategic maneuverings. He helped shape much of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's “New Deal” legislation, including the Industrial Recovery Act, Social Security Act, Agricultural

Adjustment Act, Income Tax Legislation and the Soldiers' Bonus Act. Harrison helped pass the Lend-Lease legislation that provided arms and supplies to Britain prior to America's entrance into World War II. In 1940, his colleagues unanimously elected Harrison President Pro Tempore of the Senate.

Pat Harrison was born in Crystal Springs, Mississippi, on August 29, 1881, and educated in the local public school system. He attended the University of Mississippi and Louisiana State University. After college, he began his studies in the legal profession and paid his educational expenses by teaching school in Leakesville, Mississippi. He passed the bar in 1902 and opened a law practice. He married Mary Edwina McInnis of Leakesville, MS, and they had three children (Pat Harrison, Jr. and daughters Mrs. James W. Cummings and Mrs. Irvin Miller).

He served as the local district attorney for six years and resigned that post in 1910 in his successful bid for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives of the 62<sup>nd</sup> Congress. He was also elected to the 63<sup>rd</sup>, 64<sup>th</sup> and 65<sup>th</sup> Congress, representing Mississippi's 6<sup>th</sup> District and was considered an effective aide to President Woodrow Wilson. In 1918, he defeated incumbent Senator James K. Vardaman and was elected to the United States Senate.

Pat Harrison was a varsity baseball player in college, and he also played semi-professional baseball. He was a Methodist and a member of the Woodmen of the World, Knights of Pythias, Elks Club, Freemasons and Odd Fellows.

Pat Harrison died at the age of 59 on June 22, 1941 from complications following an intestinal operation for cancer. He is buried at Evergreen Cemetery in Gulfport, Mississippi. In reporting his death, *Time Magazine* noted "There are still a few Southerners with his old-fashioned political creed left in Congress. But Pat Harrison was a symbol. A chapter was at an end."

President Franklin D. Roosevelt eulogized Harrison, describing him as a man "keen of intellect, sound in principle, shrewd in judgement and with rare gifts of kindly wit, humor and irony which delighted all."

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