

Virginia on May 18, 1863. As a very small child, he moved with his parents to Augusta, Georgia. After attending the University of Virginia, Lewis studied law privately in Savannah, Georgia. Lewis decided to move west to find his fortune and relocated in Washington State while it was still a territory of the United States. Lewis arrived in the Washington Territory knowing virtually no one and almost penniless, yet it proved to be a wise move for young Lewis as within a few years he had been elected to the Territorial legislature and when Washington achieved statehood, J. Hamilton Lewis was elected to Congress as Congressman-At-Large. Lewis only served one term in Congress, losing his reelection bid, although his ability as an orator made him so formidable in debate that even the famously spe-

who supported President William Howard Taft and the progressives, who favored former President Theodore Roosevelt. Lewis was elected to the Senate from Illinois, making him one of the very few individuals to serve in the Congress representing two different states. Known affectionately as either "Ham" or "J. Ham", Lewis was the first to serve as a party "whip" in the Senate. The whip was responsible for helping to line

would appear inside the Senate chamber without his toupee on very hot days, although he didn't seem to ever allow himself to be photographed without his hairpiece. J. Hamilton Lewis was also something of a clotheshorse and many enjoyed waiting for his appearance on the Senate floor to see what he was wearing on a given day. Lewis frequently wore spats long after they were out of fashion. Senator Lewis clearly enjoyed adding

J. Hamilton Lewis bided his time, waiting for the opportunity to make a comeback. That opportunity came in 1930 when the Illinois Republican Party tore itself asunder. Lewis's successor, Medill McCormick, had been defeated in the 1924 Republican primary by former Governor Charles Deneen. McCormick was so distraught over his defeat he committed suicide, a fact that was carefully hidden from the public. McCormick's widow was

election contest, Lewis beat her badly, ending her electoral career. James Hamilton Lewis returned to the United States Senate in 1931 and quickly resumed his old position as Democratic whip. Chicago Mayor Anton Cermack promoted Senator Lewis as a "favorite son" candidate for the presidency in 1932, largely to keep Franklin D. Roosevelt from winning the Democratic nomination and giving the powerful boss lawyer

Official Washington and his fellow senators. Lewis wisely told Truman, "For the first six months you'll wonder how the hell you got here. After that you'll wonder how the hell the rest of us got here." The 73-year-old J. Hamilton Lewis intended to stay in the Senate and sought reelection in 1936. His Republican opponent was Otis F. Glenn, himself a former member of the United States Senate. Glenn was still a supporter of the unemployed and unpopular former President Herbert Hoover, while Lewis was an unabashed advocate of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. 1936 was the same year FDR carried every state in the union in his reelection campaign, excepting Maine and Vermont. Lewis easily won another term in the Senate. J. Hamilton Lewis and his wife, fondly known as "Ginger" to friends



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*Senator J. Hamilton Lewis*