



# Albert Lewis and Arthur L. Stull

## *Albert Lewis (1840-1923)*

Albert Lewis was the son of Abijah Lewis, a successful lumberman of Maine and Canada. The father married 1 Alzare Romaine of Montreal, and the couple was living there when Albert Lewis was born in 1840. The family later moved to Beaumont in Wyoming County where Abijah Lewis lumbered and tutored his son in the business. Subsequently, the family relocated to Bucks Township where Abijah Lewis acquired timber lands by 1850, and a mill in White Haven in 1852.

At that time, the Lehigh Valley Railroad was building a railroad between Mauch Chunk (now Jim Thorpe) and White Haven to serve the rapidly developing coal, canal, and lumber industry along the Lehigh River. Young Albert Lewis obtained work as a timekeeper on the railroad in White Haven. His diligent work gained the attention of the powerful Asa G. Packer, the millionaire magnate of the Lehigh Valley Railroad system, who permitted Lewis to take charge of the first train to run between Mauch Chunk and White Haven. Lewis subsequently became the chief train dispatcher in White Haven where he continued to cement potentially lucrative relationships with the railroad's hierarchy. Lewis married Elizabeth (Lizzie) E. Crellin (1853-1885), a schoolteacher in Mauch Chunk. She was the daughter of John P.

Crellin, who became the largest private landowner in White Haven, and the major lumber merchant to the Lehigh Valley Railroad. Crellin was married to Sarah Blakeslee, half-sister of Asa Packer's wife.

Lewis was able to avoid the service in 1864 during the Civil War because his railroad and lumber work was deemed essential to the Union War effort. Under the Civil War draft law, a "rich man's provision" permitted the hiring of a substitute to serve for a person conscripted by the Union. In Lewis's case, James Bryer, an Irish immigrant who worked for Abijah Lewis in the lumber business, served Lewis's duty.

Bryer served gallantly in the Union containment of Richmond, Virginia, the Confederate capital, and against Fort Fisher, North Carolina, a major southern supply depot. Wounded at the end of the war, Bryer returned to White Haven and presented Albert Lewis with a Civil War pistol. Lewis assured Bryer that he always had employment with his company.

In his late twenties, Lewis left the Lehigh Valley Railroad and acquired his first timber tract in Dennison Township in 1866. In the early 1870s, he began purchasing White Haven lands in earnest; by 1880 he was also purchasing land in Bear Creek. His timber tracts and mill sites along the Lehigh River, Hickory Run, and Bear Creek would soon total 30,000 acres. By 1870, he was associated with Allentown partners in timbering at White Haven. Lewis initially rafted logs on the streams and river in the Lehigh



Gorge with a small force of men. He later constructed logging railroads from the forests to his mills to reach the main line of the Lehigh Valley Railroad. He was also a partner in the Glen Summit Hotel, which was principally owned by the Lehigh Valley Railroad. The hotel opened along the Lehigh Valley Railroad line between White Haven and Wilkes-Barre in February 1884.

In 1876, Lewis and Lehigh Valley Railroad investors purchased 13,000 acres along Bowman's Creek, between Harvey's Lake and Ricketts Glen, from Col. R. Bruce Ricketts, who owned immense timber lands in Wyoming and Sullivan counties and the northwestern corner of Luzerne County. But the Lehigh Valley Railroad did not complete a railroad through the tracts until the early 1890s.

On August 11, 1885, Lizzie Crellin Lewis died at the Glen Summit Hotel after a long illness. Lewis erected a memorial, the beautiful Grace Chapel, which still stands at Bear Creek adjacent to the Lewis's private cemetery. There were no children from this marriage.

During the late 1880s and early 1890s, Lewis built a railroad from Wyoming Valley to Harvey's Lake, where he opened a lumber business at the village of Alderson. With business associates Adam and Arthur L. Stull, and the backing of the Lehigh Valley Railroad, the lands purchased in 1876 along Bowman's Creek were also opened to lumbering with the founding of the towns of Noxen and Stull. Ice production followed on the lakes Lewis and Stull built along Bowman's Creek above Stull.

During a business trip to England, Lewis met Lily Constance Westendert of London, whom he married there in September 1892. Her grace complemented Lewis's charity, and they were both recognized as national social figures. Lewis was known as "the lumber king." Children

also affectionately called him "Daddy." as he had a life-long habit of giving shiny new dimes (and later quarters) to youngsters.

Albert and Lily Lewis had a summer home in Newport, Rhode Island, and a winter home in St. Augustine, Florida, but their principal residence was a palatial Tudor residence in Bear Creek. The Bear Creek dam and lake were one of several Lewis had constructed to serve his Bear Creek Ice Company which he formed in March 1895. It was the major business enterprise of his later life.

By 1910, ice production was America's seventh largest industry. The Bear Creek and Mountain Springs operations were major contributors to the industry in the mid-Atlantic region. Lewis employed 125 men in his ice business in Bear Creek, which was a unique company village. Harvey's Lake and Bowman's Creek lumbering had ended in 1912, and the Lewis and Stull partnership was dissolved. Arthur L. Stull continued with the ice business on Bowman's Creek and Albert Lewis concentrated on his own ice plants at Bear Creek, outside of Wilkes-Barre.

The Bear Creek village was a social Mecca for Lewis's influential and wealthy business network. Former Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft each visited Lewis's estate in Bear Creek. The village also contained rent-free cottages where Lewis's fortunate employees lived, many of whom were immigrants. Lewis even supplied electricity to the homes from a powerhouse he constructed. He provided free housing at the village and other necessities to the aged and retired James Bryer, Lewis's Civil War substitute.

Lewis had his work force construct over one hundred miles of red-shale riding trails and driveways through the forests around Bear Creek. He had a personal stable of twenty-one fine driving horses. Lewis had an



aversion to automobiles which were forbidden on his private roads. Beginning in 1894, Lewis had the Old East End Boulevard constructed as a toll road, but automobiles were not allowed on it until 1907, when the Wilkes-Barre Automobile Club finally persuaded Lewis to sell it and it became a county road. In later years Lewis, too, became an automobile fan.

On December 18, 1923, Albert Lewis died at the age of eighty five in Bear Creek following a three-week illness. His showcase home had been destroyed in a fire six months earlier and a new Bear Creek home was only partially completed when he died. By the time of his death, his lumbering interests had been played out, but his ice industry was a huge success. In the winter of 1922-1923, his Bear Creek Company had shipped 100,000 tons of ice and would continue to operate until 1938.

The Lewis legacy today is primarily Bear Creek village, a private home development, and Bear Creek dam which preserves a Lewis ice lake.

### *Arthur L. Stull (1862-1942)*

Arthur Lewis Stull is widely regarded as the most prominent member of the Stull family connected with Albert Lewis and the lumbering and ice-cutting operations at North Mountain. But Arthur L. Stull's father, Adam Stull (1833-1909), was the actual founder of the Stull family enterprise. Adam Stull was the son of Lewis and Elizabeth Guinter Stull. Lewis Stull (1797-1867) settled in Bucks Township in 1817 on a 166-acre farm. Lewis and Elizabeth Stull had nine children; eight grew to adulthood, but a son, John Stull, died in the Civil War. The other children became well-known in the regional business and agricultural communities.

The heavily forested area along the Lehigh River where the Stulls settled became a major lumbering region. Adam Stull entered the lumber business along the Lehigh, as did a brother Albert who later founded a lumber business in Lackawanna County. Adam Stull married Melvania Lewis (1836-1896), the oldest daughter of Abijah Lewis, and two of their four children, Arthur L. Stull and Albert A. Stull (1871-1946) would work with their father Adam in the lumber business. Another family member in the lumber business was William R. Stull, a son of Daniel Stull, another brother to Adam Stull. William Stull, who died in 1918, was married to Eliza Lewis, another daughter of Abijah Lewis. William Stull was a shareholder in the Bowman's Creek Lumber Company, the Albert Lewis Lumber and Manufacturing Company, as well as the Bear Creek Ice Company; but he was principally the manager of the Preston Lumber and Coal Company in Oakland, Maryland, in which Lewis and the Stulls had joint interests.

Adam Stull was the brother-in-law of Albert Lewis and both spent their young manhood along the Lehigh River. In 1870, Stull became a manager in Lewis's lumber business in White Haven. Adam Stull relocated to Alderson in Harvey's Lake in the late 1880s when Lewis opened the Harvey's Lake and Bowman's Creek area to lumbering. Stull and Lewis were very close friends and associates until the latter's death in November 1909.

Arthur L. Stull was intimately associated with his father, Adam, and his uncle, Albert Lewis, in the lumber and ice business. He attended Wyoming Seminary, and upon graduation at the age of eighteen, he was employed by Albert Lewis as a timekeeper in the lumber business at Bear Creek until 1887. When Lewis opened the Harvey's Lake and Bowman's Creek lumber district in 1887, Arthur L. Stull was named superintendent of the



Alderson lumber mill operations. In August 1890, Stull became the general manager and treasurer of the Albert Lewis Lumber and Manufacturing Company, which was extending its operations to the new lumber mill in a town named Stull. Within the next few years, Stull was managing ice-cutting at two artificial lakes (Mountain Springs) built at Bean Run above Stull. Both Stull and Mountain Springs were along Bowman's Creek. Until 1902, the Albert Lewis Lumber and Manufacturing Company was only operating under a lease from the Bowman's Creek Lumber Company to timber the 1,000-acre tract purchased from Col. R. Bruce Ricketts in 1876. In May 1902, the Bowman's Creek Company sold its land holdings for \$87,996 to the Albert Lewis Lumber and Manufacturing Company.

In August 1907, the Albert Lewis Lumber and Manufacturing Company was reorganized to provide Arthur L. Stull a partnership interest in the company. The company controlled 22,400 acres in Noxen and Monroe townships in Wyoming County and Fairmont, Ross and Lake townships in Luzerne County. Albert Lewis retained a three-quarter interest in the lands, with Arthur L. Stull a one-quarter owner in a partnership titled Lewis and Stull. Adam Stull was seemingly retired from the business.

The Lewis and Stull arrangement continued business operations in Alderson, Stull, and Mountain Springs, but by the years 1911 and 1912, the lumber tracts were nearly exhausted. The ice cutting industry, however, was still booming, but apparently relations had strained between Lewis and the Stull brothers, Arthur L. and Albert A. Stull, particularly after the death of Adam Stull in 1909.

In December 1912, the Lewis and Stull partnership was dissolved. Lewis retained 15,000 acres in Noxen, Forkston, Lake, Ross, and Fairmont Townships-now played out for lumbering purposes and Arthur L. Stull retained 6,800 acres encompassing the Mountain Springs and Beech Lake ice plants and the Alderson property at Harvey's Lake, a substantial busi-

ness with three decades of life left to it. By this time, too, Albert Lewis was seventy-two and was content to oversee his incredibly active Bear Creek ice plants, spending his winters in Newport, or more likely, St. Augustine, where he was also a notable social figure and community benefactor.

In early 1927, three years after Lewis's death, his heirs sold the tracts Lewis had retained in 1912 to Arthur L. Stull and his brother Albert A. Stull. Five years later-in 1933-the Stull brothers and Robert A. Stull, a son of Arthur L. Stull, created a separate partnership to operate the ice business at Mountain Springs. The Stull family also operated a supply store at Alderson for some time and they sold considerable real estate from their holdings. The Stull farm at Harvey's Lake was sold to State Senator Andrew J. Sordoni in 1931-1933

On May 22, 1942, Arthur Lewis Stull died of a heart attack in Oakland, Maryland. Ironically, he had traveled there to attend the funeral of Atty. Frederick Thayer, a close friend and a prominent lumber dealer. Stull resided at 182 South Franklin Street in Wilkes-Barre with his wife Mary Edie Stull. An elder in the First Presbyterian Church, he was closely associated with the Salvation Army, serving on its board of directors for thirty years. Even earlier in 1901, he helped in the fund-raising campaign to build the original Salvation Army Citadel on South Pennsylvania Avenue in Wilkes-Barre. He was also a director of the Miner's National Bank (now the United Penn Bank).

The Stull lands in Wyoming and Luzerne Counties which were not sold to private interests have become state game lands adjacent to Ricketts Glen State Park. Stull's Ice Dam Number 2 (formerly Mountain Springs) is now Mount Springs, a lake owned by the Pennsylvania Fish Commission.



*Albert Lewis (1840-1923) and his wife Lily C. Lewis (1868-1950) are shown on a boating cruise in later life at an unidentified location.*