



ALBERT LEWIS:
**The Bear Creek
Lumber and Ice King**

THE BEAR CREEK ICE COMPANY

F. CHARLES PETRILLO



ALBERT LEWIS:

The Lumber and Ice King of Wyoming Valley

"The Bear Creek Ice Company"

F. Charles Petrillo
Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania



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**F. Charles Petrillo
Wilkes-Barre
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Author's Dedication

Arthur Adam Stull
(1898-1991)

Kenneth E. Hawk

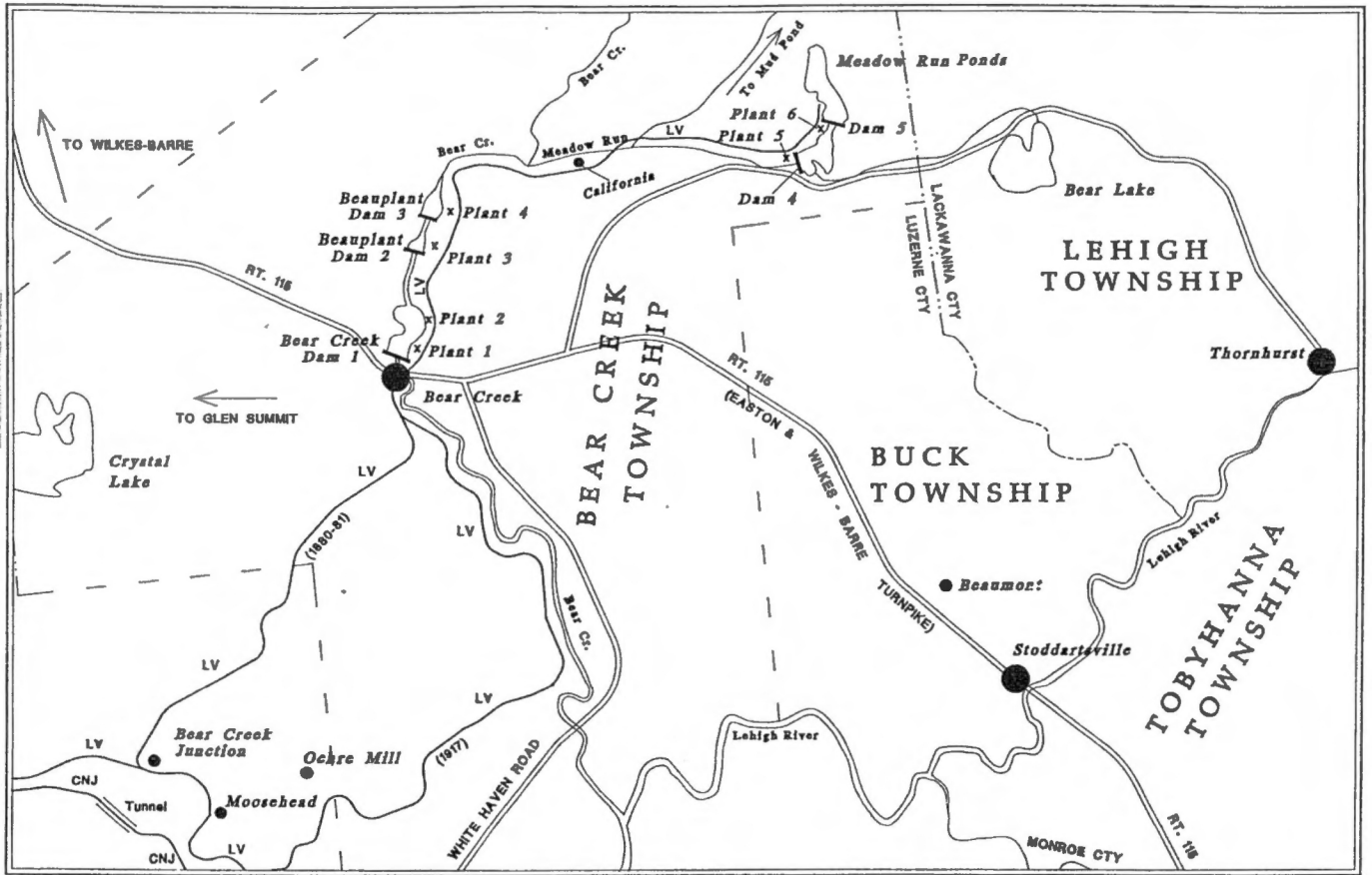


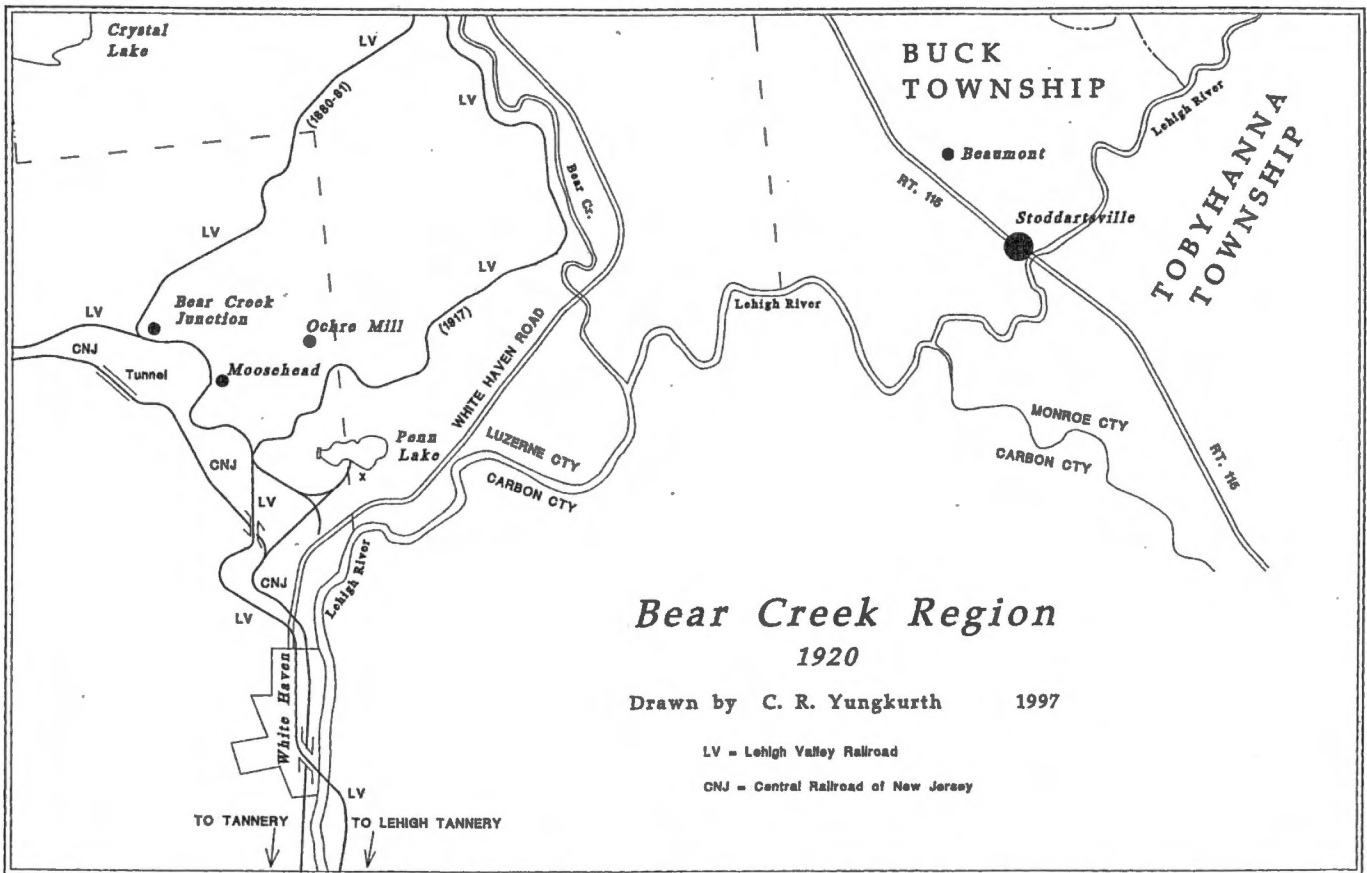
Hugh Romaine Lewis

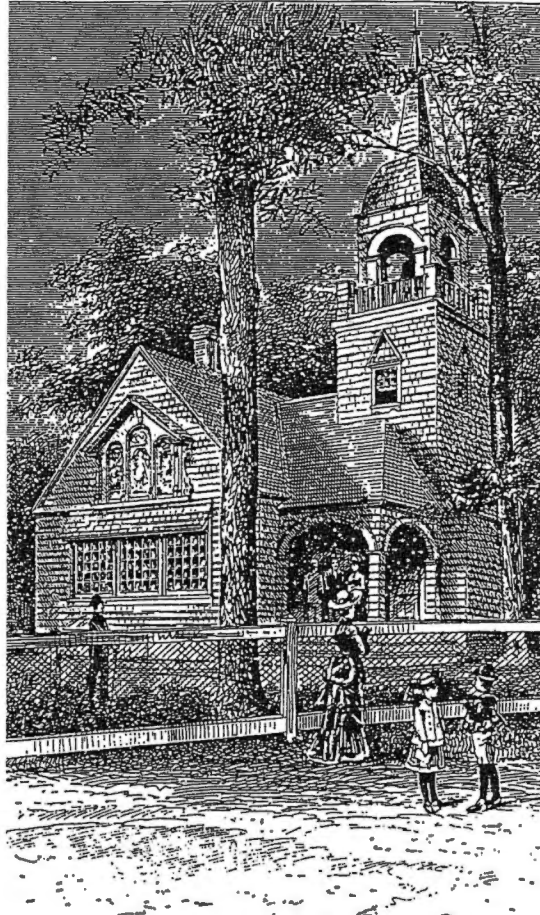


**In Loving Memory
of my Father
Hugh Romaine Lewis**

Ann Romaine Lewis







CHAPEL AT BEAR CREEK.



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Notes To E-Edition

The original 1998 printed edition of this work sold out. This 2021 E-Edition will now make Bear Creek's fascinating history more available.

This edition retains on pages 215-221 the list of photographs in the original edition and their credits. This edition reproduces most, but not all, of the original photographs from 1998. Contributors of photographs retain their ownership and/or any applicable copyright.

Since the publication of the 1998 work, St Elizabeth's Catholic Chapel, the ice workers' church, was razed.

In October 1999 the Bear Creek Village Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places. Its nomination form and supporting documentation may be accessed on the internet.

An abridged version of this work also is available on this website.

The abridged edition enlarges and corrects a 1937-1938 discussion on page 183 of the 1998 history. The abridged edition also clarifies page 185 regarding the end of the Bear Creek ice-harvesting industry. The 1947-1948 winter season is confirmed as the last ice harvest at Bear Creek. These revisions are only noted in the abridged version not in this E-Edition of the 1998 book.

In the Poconos, ice- harvesting, in any significant way, would end by the mid-1950s.

FCP
October 2021

**Part I - Albert Lewis:
Lumber King**



Albert Lewis: The Bear Creek Lumber and Ice King

Part I



I. Introduction

In his lifetime Albert Lewis (1840-1923) of Bear Creek, Pennsylvania, was known as "the lumber and ice king of Wyoming Valley." Lewis was the largest lumber manufacturer in the Wyoming Valley and the greatest natural ice producer in Luzerne County. Between the mid-1870s and the early 1890s, Albert Lewis owned major lumber mills near Hickory Run and at White Haven along the Lehigh River and also at Bear Creek, near Wilkes-Barre. Lewis also lumbered at Harvey's Lake and Noxen, and beyond Noxen he created the lumber town of Stull along Bowman's Creek.

Lewis also began to harvest ice at Bear Creek in the 1880s and at Mountain Springs, another town he built, near Ricketts Glen in the 1890s. He also had ice plants at White Haven and Penn Lake. The ice industry had peaked at the time of his death in 1923, but it was almost three decades before the ice industry itself closed at Mountain Springs and Bear Creek in the post-World War II era.

During his life very little was published about Albert Lewis. One brief biographical article appeared in 1919 and it was republished as his obituary in 1923. He left no personal correspondence, although

most of his business records, particularly from 1907 to 1930, from the Bear Creek ice industry have been deposited with the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society in Wilkes-Barre. Given Lewis's "passion for anonymity" and few secondary sources for information, primary sources, for example, court house, census, and other records, had to be covered to treat one of the Wyoming Valley's most remarkable entrepreneurs.

II. The Lumber Industry

The American lumber industry began in Maine in 1634 and was centered there for two hundred years, but in the 1830s New York State became the expanding nation's lumbering leader. In 1860, Pennsylvania, with over twenty-eight million acres of land, most of which was densely forested, became the industry leader. From 1870 to 1890, Michigan was the leading lumbering state. But between 1870 and 1890, Pennsylvania was among the nation's top three lumber producers and was still fourth in 1910.

Pennsylvania's forests were initially stripped for white pine, in great part for the nation's ship-building industry. Prior to 1880, the principal means of transporting felled timber was by rafting or log drives on the state's rivers and streams. For a time, Williamsport (1838-1909), on the West Branch of the Susquehanna River in Lycoming County, was the "lumber capital of the world," with log drives descending the river until 1909 to Williamsport's mills.

By 1885 lumber companies were increasingly using small "logging railroads" to reach into

Pennsylvania's timber lands. Steam saw mills were also developed to be constructed in the forest lands. Both developments ended the dependence of the industry on stream-side mill sites using water power. At the same time, the Pennsylvania lumber industry was greatly revived by the quest for hemlock trees and particularly for hemlock bark, an important source of the chemical tannin which was used to process animal hides in the expanding leather industry.

The production of leather goods from animal hides grew into a substantial American industry during the nineteenth century. Between 1850 and 1899, the nation's tanning industry grew from \$40 million to \$200 million dollars in value, with major industry conglomerates emerging by the end of the century.

The vast hemlock forests in Pennsylvania generally were not cut in the 1860s and 1870s. With the value of hemlock recognized in later decades, logging production for hemlock, remaining pine, and other timber increased greatly in the state. Indeed, capital investment in the state's lumber industry grew from nearly \$11 million in 1860 to \$24 million dollars in 1870 and to \$45 million dollars by 1890, when nearly 2,000 lumber mills still peppered the state's forest lands. The number of mills had actually declined from a high of 3,700 in 1870 because of larger mill operations and consolidation of land ownership by timber land speculators in the 1880s.

In our region major lumbering occurred along the upper Lehigh River in Carbon-Luzerne counties, with the industry's headquarters at White Haven, and at other old lumbering sites including Hickory Run and Tannery, towns along the river below White Haven.

Coal in the Lehigh River Valley was exploited as early as 1792. In 1823-1829 the renowned Lehigh Canal was constructed by the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company. Designed to haul coal from the Mauch Chunk (now Jim Thorpe) region to Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton and from Easton by other canal systems to New Jersey and Philadelphia, the canal also hauled incredible quantities of lumber from the upper Lehigh River to serve the region's coal mine, manufacturing and home construction industries. Originally, the canal was planned to reach upstream to Stoddartsville in Buck Township (near Blakeslee). But ascending and descending (two-way) canal traffic was built only between Easton and White Haven. From White Haven upstream to Stoddartsville, the river was improved but only to provide descending (one-way downstream) traffic for lumber and agriculture products to White Haven for shipment on the canal. By 1841 the company also built the Ashley Planes (a series of stationary inclined railroads) outside of Wilkes-Barre, and an accompanying railroad from the top of the Penobscot Mountain (Mountaintop) to White Haven, to haul coal from the Wyoming Valley to the Lehigh Canal's port at White Haven.

In the spring of 1862 an immense flood destroyed the upper Lehigh Canal system. The Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company abandoned the canal and built a railroad along the east bank of the upper river from White Haven to Mauch Chunk (now Jim Thorpe) by 1864. The Lehigh Coal and Navigation rail line later was operated by the Central Railroad of New Jersey (CNJ). In the meantime, the competing Lehigh Valley Railroad also built a rail line from Mauch Chunk along the west side of the river to White Haven and over the mountains to Wilkes-Barre. From the 1860s

to the early 1890s, the river trade drew a number of capitalists, including Albert Lewis, to exploit the timber lands of the river system and its canal-railroad links to Philadelphia and other markets.

When the upper Lehigh River forests were becoming exhausted in the 1880s, Lewis's attention was drawn to other areas of our region to exploit new timber resources. Sullivan and Wyoming counties were covered by vast timber tracts supporting only small lumbering operations until the late 1880s and early 1890s when the towns of Jamison City, Lopez, Stull, and Ricketts were created by lumbering firms to harvest the forest lands. In the more populous Luzerne County, drained by the Susquehanna River, anthracite mining became the principal industry. However, lumbering was significant at Harvey's Lake on the Hollenback Estate lands during the 1840s through the 1870s. In the 1890s, a major lumbering industry was revived at Harvey's Lake and extended along Bowman's Creek to Noxen and Stull by Albert Lewis and partners associated with the Lehigh Valley Railroad. They had purchased large tracts of timber in Ross and Fairmont Townships in 1876 from R. Bruce Ricketts. Lewis was also associated with Adam Stull and his son Arthur L. Stull in the Bowman's Creek lumber and ice business.

A contemporary of Albert Lewis was the remarkable Col. Robert Bruce Ricketts, after whom Ricketts Glen State Park is named. A Civil War hero, Ricketts was an immense land speculator in the timber lands of Luzerne, Sullivan, and Wyoming Counties. Col. Ricketts once owned nearly 60,000 acres in the region. Much of his land was principally drained by Mehoopany Creek. Ricketts was on the verge of

financial disaster for two decades until the Lehigh Valley Railroad was constructed through his lands. In the early 1890s, the Trexler and Turrell Lumber Company leased Ricketts' land for lumbering and created the town of Ricketts, a few miles north of Lake Jean, which was a "boom town" from 1890 to 1913.

III. Abijah and Isaac Lewis: Forebears of Albert Lewis

Albert Lewis was the fifth child of Abijah and Alzare R. Lewis. Lewis's father Abijah and an uncle, Isaac Lewis, were lumberman who generally followed the shift of the lumber trade from Maine to Pennsylvania. Abijah Albert Lewis (1800-1875) was born in Maine, but his wife Alzare (Eliza) Romaine Lewis (1806-1859) was born in England. The family was in New York State in the early 1830s where their eldest child Sarah was born. The family relocated to the Montreal area from 1834 to 1847 where the other children Eliza, Melvania, Matilda (or Mae), Charles, Albert, and Mary were born. Isaac Lewis (c. 1808-1887), a brother of Abijah Lewis, was also born in Maine. Eight years younger than Abijah, Isaac Lewis seemingly was the financial manager for the elder Lewis generation in the lumber trade.

By the early 1850s Abijah and Isaac Lewis would settle in Buck Township in Luzerne County. Buck Township was initially settled in 1792 by John Nagle who had a cabin near the Lehigh River along the old Sullivan Trail, fourteen miles from his nearest neighbor. Another early settler, George Buck, after whom the township was named, built the first tavern

at Shades Glen. In 1806 Hugh Conner built the first sawmill in the township (formed in 1833) at Stoddartsville on the Lehigh River. In 1810 Philadelphia speculators developed a land fraud scheme to create the city of Rome in the township, but it collapsed after exposure by Charles Miner, the crusading editor of the Gleaner, a Wilkes-Barre newspaper. Stoddartsville was laid out in 1815 by John Stoddart and the town originally had forty homes and a major grist mill and saw mill, the ruins of which are still visible. The town was designed as a major shipping port on the projected canal of the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company. But two-way traffic on the canal system to the far upper reaches of the river was not completed, and the town failed to flourish, particularly after the flood in 1862 destroyed the canal along the upper Lehigh River. Still, a number of water-powered sawmills were located at sites in the township with lumber hauled to tributary streams or the Lehigh River itself for shipment, but Buck Township's prosperity as a lumber area peaked at the end of the Civil War.

In June 1847 Isaac Lewis obtained a mortgage to purchase over 2,400 acres of timber land for \$13,680, principally in Buck Township, from Eli Lindsley of Morristown, New Jersey. The acreage also covered lands surrounding Bear Lake and included a section of Bear Creek Township. Lewis bought on credit additional timber lands in Buck Township in July and October 1847 and lands in Luzerne and Monroe Counties bordering along the Lehigh River in March 1848. The October 1847 sale included a two story tavern and adjoining home known as Terwilliger's tavern and located at Beaumont, an old village in the township. During 1847-1848 Isaac Lewis was still

living in Maine but by 1850 he was in Bethlehem and then Allentown. His brother Abijah Lewis was in Buck Township in the late 1840s to manage the lumbering of Isaac Lewis's lands. In mid-summer 1850 Abijah purchased Terwilliger's tavern from his brother Isaac. The tavern was leased to Frank Horton in 1850-54. But Isaac and Abijah Lewis incurred unpaid debts, and the tavern land was sold at sheriff sale in 1854 to Henry M. Fuller. [Evidence suggests Fuller may have leased back the tavern to Abijah Lewis in 1854-1858, but in 1863 it was sold to Garrick M. Harding who leased and later sold it to William and Caroline Tucker when it became Tucker's tavern.] The sheriff sale of Lewis's property in 1854 suggests difficulty in profiting from lumber in areas too removed from a major transportation stream or canal, or at least difficulty in managing a tavern in the remote wilderness along a crude mid-nineteenth century turnpike.

During the late 1840s through the mid-1850s, Isaac Lewis's speculative purchases of timber lands, particularly along the Lehigh River in Luzerne and Monroe Counties, were mortgaged heavily to the sellers of these lands, most of whom were absentee owners. In the interior of Buck and Bear Creek Townships, and in Coolbaugh and Tobyhanna Townships in Monroe County, the expense of hauling timber and cutting roads to the Lehigh River in undeveloped territory challenged a small lumberman. By 1850 he lost the Bear Lake properties when the former owner foreclosed on Lewis's mortgage. But along the Lehigh River, which was a ready transportation link to markets, Isaac Lewis sold shares in the lands to a variety of partners.

A significant purchase was made by the Lewis brothers in November 1852 when they purchased a sawmill in White Haven from the Brown and Douglas lumber firm. The mill was probably intended for use in milling timber from Luzerne-Monroe lands along the upper Lehigh watershed. But, here, too, there was financial trouble. A creditor sued Abijah Lewis and an execution sale was scheduled by the county sheriff on Abijah Lewis's half interest in the White Haven mill. Isaac Lewis paid the \$3,000.00 claim and purchased his brother's share in the mill.

In the mid-1850s Isaac Lewis was engaged in stripping bark from hemlock trees over a 13,000 acre tract to sell to the Gouldsboro tannery of Pratt and Gould. This may have been Isaac Lewis's most successful venture. A youthful Jay Gould (1836-1892) and a wealthy New Yorker, Zadock Platt, created a partnership in 1856 to exploit the hemlock lands in the Poconos. They created the town of Gouldsboro along the Lehigh River in lower Lackawanna County and built a huge tannery. A recession in 1857 caused financial difficulties, and Gould's business practices had already caused Platt to question Gould and shortly Gould bought out Platt's interests. Another New Yorker, Charles M. Leupp, joined Gould but Leupp, too, fell out with Gould, and in a depressive bout Leupp committed suicide in October 1859. A dispute over ownership at the tannery between the contending gangs of Gould's men and representatives of the Leupp estate in February 1860 left three men wounded and Gould in control. The tannery operated through the Civil War era but it was abandoned in December 1868. Gould later became the most feared of the Wall Street "robber barons" of the nation's Gilded Era. The town

of Gouldsboro, embarrassed by the town name, changed it to Thornhurst in 1893. But a nearby village, Sand Cut, adopted the name Gouldsboro which it retains to this day.

The brothers Isaac and Abijah Lewis during this time seemingly settled into business as small lumbermen along the upper Lehigh River. In 1860 there were seven lumber operations in Buck Township and the Gouldsboro tannery. The major lumberers were the \$1.5 million dollar David H. Taylor firm which processed hemlock, and Brown and Brother, which cut hemlock and pine. At Bear Creek Pursell and McKeen employed 150 men. Lumber was hauled to Port Jenkins above Whive Haven for shipment down the Lehigh Rivery Isaac Lewis generally financed the brothers' lumber operations but increasingly he was unable to manage his extensive land investment. Isaac Lewis lost numerous properties to foreclosing creditors in Luzerne County in 1857-1861 and in Monroe County in 1856-1867.

Since settling in Buck Township in the late 1840s Abijah Lewis had purchased far fewer lands in his own right. In July 1851 he did purchase at tax sales acreage in Bear Creek Township and Blakeley Township (Lackawanna County). The largest township in Luzerne County, Bear Creek covers sixty-seven square miles. It was not opened until 1779 when Gen. John Sullivan opened a trail through the area on a military expedition from Easton through Wilkes-Barre to central New York State. This trail became the Easton and Wilkes-Barre Turnpike in 1806 and passed through the later site of Bear Creek Village. Once densely forested with pine and hemlock trees, there is little farmable land. Oliver Helme built the first

sawmill on Bear Creek in 1800, but others followed elsewhere in the township, particularly the mill of Amandus Kresge at Kresgeville, a former village somewhat near Bald Mountain. Until the time of Albert Lewis the township experienced little growth, with only 343 people as late as 1890.

Abijah Lewis lived in the Beaumont-Stoddartsville area. Beaumont, between Shades Glen and the Lehigh River in Buck Township, was a small village recognized with its own post office in 1841 with Charles Terwilliger as postmaster. Stoddartsville was the principal village in Buck Township. When the Lewis brothers arrived, Stoddartsville was largely settled by the Stull family. Lewis Stull (1797-1867) settled in the town in 1817 as a young man. By the 1840s he was in the lumber business as would several of his descendants in the Poconos-Lackawanna County area. Two of Lewis Stull's nine children married two of Abijah Lewis's daughters, and these two sons of Lewis Stull became brothers-in-law to Albert Lewis. Daniel Stull (1837-1899) married Eliza Lewis and Adam Stull (1833-1909) married Melvania or Malvina "Vinnie" Lewis (1836-1896). [A son of Daniel Stull and Eliza Lewis, Oscar Stull, became an actor and adopted the stage and family name "Worthington Romaine." Albert Lewis sent financial support to the actor during lean times.] Both Daniel and Adam Stull would work for Albert Lewis at Bear Creek, and Adam Stull would later serve Lewis's Harvey's Lake - Bowman Creek lumber interests in the 1890s, with the town of Stull, near Noxen, named for Adam Stull. In turn a son Arthur L. Stull became, like his father Adam, Lewis's closest business associate.

Abijah Lewis's major purchase of timber

properties did not occur until July 1866, near the end of his career, when he purchased immense acreage in Bear Creek Township, and sold a half-share in it to Edwin Shortz, Sr. These lands were south of the old turnpike (Route 115) along lower Bear Creek. But Lewis and Shortz may not have timbered the lands in any significant way. The partners Abijah Lewis and Edwin Shortz, Sr., sold the Bear Creek lands to the Spring Mountain Coal Company in September 1869. This coal company was based in Jeansville and largely mined in Carbon County. The company later came under the control of the Lehigh Valley Railroad. These Bear Creek lands may have supplied timber to the mines but, in the absence of railroad, timber had to be hauled to the Lehigh River for shipment to mills or hauled overland to mills. (Spring Mountain Coal resold the property to Albert Lewis in September 1883.) By the late 1860s an aging Abijah Lewis was now engaged in farming and living with Adam Stull, his son-in-law, in White Haven. Isaac Lewis was in Gouldsboro (now Thornhurst) in October 1872 when he made his last purchase of timber land in Buck Township. The following February 1873 Isaac Lewis declared bankruptcy. Abijah Lewis died on March 4, 1875, at age seventy-five. His wife Eliza had died years earlier, on June 16, 1859, at age fifty-three. They are buried at the Laurel cemetery in White Haven. Isaac Lewis died in 1887 at his Thornhurst farm.

IV. Albert Lewis: The Lumber King At Bear Creek and Lehigh Gorge

In 1860 at age twenty Albert Lewis was living in Penn Forest Township in Carbon County working as

a railroad clerk. He lived in the Thomas A. Bennet boarding house with laborers and sawyers (saw filers) from the area's lumber trade. In the 1860-1870 period over a dozen lumber firms cut along the Lehigh River in this area, mostly lumbering hemlock but some pine, too, with one firm producing oil of wintergreen.

Late in the Civil War in 1864, Albert Lewis was drafted, but he engaged an area laborer George Bryer to take his place for a \$300.00 fee under the "rich man's exemption." Bryer enrolled as a private in Company F of the 97th Pennsylvania Infantry and served in the Union Army from August 25, 1864, until August 28, 1865. He fought in several battles, particularly in North Carolina. At the war's conclusion Bryer claimed to have lost his army pistol and he was docked \$19.35 to pay for it. When Bryer returned from service, he presented the lost pistol to Albert Lewis. In 1866 Bryer married Catherine Morrison of Parsons and began to work in area mines.

During the Civil War years, Lewis was working for the Lehigh Valley Railroad at White Haven. Indeed, an ambitious and lucky Lewis was a favored employee of Asa Packer, the millionaire owner of the railroad. Lewis was the conductor of the first Lehigh Valley train dispatched between Mauch Chunk and White Haven on July 4, 1865. When the train reached the Lehigh and Susquehanna Railroad Station in White Haven (the Lehigh Valley did not have a station built yet), Lewis had a finger crushed while coupling two railroad cars. He resolved never to couple railroad cars again. The Lehigh Valley was snaking up the Lehigh Gorge in competition with the Lehigh and Susquehanna (the railroad built by the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company-later leased to

the Central Railroad of New Jersey). In a short time Lewis became the chief train dispatcher for the Lehigh Valley Railroad at White Haven, cementing ties with the railroad hierarchy which later served his lumber and ice interests at Bear Creek and in the Harvey's Lake - Ricketts Glen area in the 1890s.

After the Civil War, Lewis entered the lumber business with the support of the Lehigh Valley Railroad. As early as February 1866 Albert Lewis purchased a small investment property with his father's partner, Edwin Shortz, Sr., in Dennison Township but sold it a year later. In 1866-67 Lewis created his first major lumbering operation at the village of Lehigh Tannery in Kidder Township in Carbon County. Here in 1860 Thomas Small and Company built a 600 x 80 foot tannery, the largest in the United States. Eighty thousand hides were processed there annually for the leather industry. In 1866 a partnership consisting of Robert H. Sayre, Robert Lockhart, E.P. Wilbur, Robert A. Packer, and Frederick Mercur, all Lehigh Valley Railroad officials, and Albert Lewis with Edwin Shortz, Sr., built a steam sawmill by a surviving canal dam near the tannery. Lewis and his partners purchased timber lands in August 1867 in Coolbaugh and Tobyhanna Townships in Monroe County. Operating as Lewis, Shortz and Company, it processed six to seven million logs annually, principally from Tobyhanna Township. This mill was lost to fire in 1874 and was not rebuilt. Before the tannery, too, was destroyed by fire in 1875, Lewis also had a substantial "bark contract" to strip and sell hemlock bark to the Lehigh Tannery. Additional Monroe County timberlands along the Tobyhanna Creek were purchased in 1870-71. By 1872, Lewis also had a second lumber mill at Tannery,

opposite Lehigh Tannery, on the Lehigh River below White Haven in Luzerne County. Here he operated as Albert Lewis and Co., Limited.

In 1873 Albert Lewis and Edwin Shortz, Sr., were joined in the lumber trade with a third mill in White Haven as Shortz, Lewis and Company. Other partners in the firm were again Lehigh Valley Railroad interests represented by Robert Lockhart, R.A. Packer, E.P. Wilbur, and Robert H. Sayre. There were larger lumber firms in place and the largest lumber firm in White Haven was Keck, Childs & Company (Charles L. and Andrew S. Keck, Bradley Childs and William Saeger).

Sawmills were prone to fire loss. The saw and planing mill of Brown & Lowall in White Haven was destroyed by fire on October 15, 1869, at a \$84,000.00 loss. In November 1874 the White Haven mill of Shortz and Lewis, valued at \$40,000.00, was destroyed. They carried only \$10,000.00 in insurance, but they rebuilt the mill.

In 1873, 1875, and 1878 Lewis purchased additional timber lands in Kidder and Lehigh Townships in Carbon County. The Kidder Township tracts were in Hickory Run and in 1877 Lewis joined Calvin E. Brodhead in a partnership to lumber these properties at the Tannery saw mill. Some lands were already lumbered over by earlier timbermen and Lewis purchased lands for investment purposes. During the 1870s Albert Lewis also entered into various contractual arrangements with land owners for cutting timber, particularly for the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company, in the White Haven area. Lewis retained Adam Stull to manage rafting and timber crews

totaling about thirty-six men. In the fall they rafted timber down the Lehigh River to Lewis's lumber mills at both White Haven and Tannery. The men earned \$2.00-\$2.50 a day, which was usually a six day week in the rafting season from late September to late November. The raftsman could also earn an extra twelve cents per day as incentive pay for good work. In the winter the crews were stripping bark from hemlock trees, but most of the year the crews earned \$2.25 a day (\$50-\$60 monthly) chopping timber and driving teams of lumber wagons to the river. The Lewis crews also worked at ice houses and mills at Tannery for sixteen to twenty cents an hour.

There is informal evidence Albert Lewis was active in the 1870-1880 period as a contract lumberman in Bear Creek and Stoddartsville. Lewis cut lumber for various tract owners, hauling the lumber to the nearest water artery to market. His labor teams also had some work in the Bear Creek - Meadow Run area cutting roads to Bear Lake to reach lumber. A Stoddartsville historian suggests Lewis would have been active, too, with Lewis Stull after 1870:

Logging operations were the biggest activity of the area. Between 1848 and 1870, Lewis Stull had acquired lands in and around Stoddartsville for this end. Logging camps were [run] by Lewis Stull, John Winter, Sam Hayes and Jacob Blakeslee who evidently had contractual arrangements with Albert Lewis, the lumber king of the area. Timber was cut in the fall, the

logs were hauled to the Lehigh by horse teams in winter and floated down the river to the mills after the ice broke in the spring. The lumber camps were communities unto themselves where the men elected their representatives to manage public affairs, constables to keep order, and women did the cooking. Life in the camps was robust and colorful, punctuated by rough fighting and hard drinking after the long day's work. The big event was breaking the log jams, a dangerous but exciting undertaking which sometimes took the lives of some men. The fires of the 1870's destroyed much of the virgin pine forests of the area.

But the bulk of the timber of Bear Creek and Buck Townships could not be widely harvested until steam-driven mills and a railroad were built a decade later.

Lewis's partner in these early years was Edwin Shortz, Sr. (1841-1924). He was born in Mauch Chunk and was trained as a civil engineer in charge of constructing the Lehigh Valley Railroad from Rockport along the upper Lehigh River to Wilkes-Barre. Edwin Shortz, Sr., Bradley Childs, and John Brown, representing the major lumber interests along the upper Lehigh River, collectively incorporated the Lehigh Boom Company in April 1868 to control logging on the river. The lumber boom was a string of logs chained together and attached to the shore or anchored to the river bottom to channel timber rafts

in their downstream journey, or to corral timber on the river beside the stream side mills. Shortz was a partner with Abijah Lewis in earlier years and now a lumber partner with the son Albert, but Shortz became a Wilkes-Barre lawyer in 1880 and dissolved his partnership with Albert Lewis in 1883.

After Lewis's partner Edwin Shortz, Sr., entered law, Albert Lewis and John R. Crellin formed a lumber partnership in 1883-1884. John R. Crellin (c. 1815-1885) was a pioneer lumberman in the Lehigh Valley and, at one time, he was a treasurer of the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company. John Crellin lost his father John early to pleurisy, and his mother Dorothy and his three sisters Hester, Sarah and Dorothy, died from tuberculosis. A brother Thomas survived and he and John worked for the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company, although John Crellin later became a well-known lumber merchant. In White Haven, Crellin was the station agent for the Lehigh Valley Railroad in his later years. His wife Eunice was a half-sister of Sarah M. Blakslee, the wife of Lehigh Valley Railroad magnate Asa Packer. [Her name was spelled differently than the community of Blakeslee.] Crellin was also the largest property owner in White Haven.

On December 19, 1872, Lewis married Crellin's daughter Elizabeth "Lizzie" E. Crellin. The Lewis wedding occurred on a snowy Thursday morning amid lamp light in St. Paul's Church in White Haven. [This church was relocated to Eckley in 1974.] The wedding party arrived by horse-drawn sleigh. The bride wore a white silk dress and white illusion veil; her only decoration was orange blossoms. The ceremony was performed by Rev. Leighton Coleman,

the church rector who used a prayer book presented to the bride by area school students. The ceremony was the largest and most fashionable in the history of White Haven. Lewis presented his bride an exquisite watch. An aged Abijah Lewis, father of the groom, presented the couple a marble clock. Other wedding guests presented an array of silver gifts. The couple left by train for Philadelphia and a wedding trip to the southern United States and Florida. They returned to White Haven in late January 1873 for a reception at the Crellin mansion in White Haven.

White Haven was settled in 1824 by John Lines but is named after Josiah White who, along with Erskine Hazard, organized the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company and built the canal from Easton to Mauch Chunk in 1829 and extended it to White Haven in 1835. The company built a saw mill at a canal basin in White Haven. The river gorge was a virgin forest of pine trees and by 1860 ten mills in White Haven annually cut thirty million board feet of lumber. Additional saw mills operated up the river to Stoddartsville and along tributary streams. Allied industries at White Haven included an iron foundry and machine shops. Twenty years later there were still four major saw mills, four hotels, and five churches, along with the passenger and freight lines of the Lehigh Valley Railroad and the Central Railroad of New Jersey. From the 1830s to the 1880s White Haven was the center of the lumbering industry of the upper Lehigh River.

White Haven was a "boom town" fully dependent on the lumber industry. The area attracted many rough workmen, including newly arriving southern and eastern European immigrants to work in

the mines and the timberlands of northeastern Pennsylvania. White Haven was a prosperous town with its own bank and water company. A Law and Order League sought to control the community, a difficult task where the town of 1,500 had one saloon for every eighty-eight inhabitants in the borough. The borough and surrounding villages had 2,500 people, with twenty-one drinking places, or one for every 119 people. [Wilkes-Barre had one saloon for every 161 persons, and the county had one bar room for every 289 people.]

White Haven was also the hub of a Lehigh River ice industry. Ice was cut on the river pools by several firms, the largest of which were the Knickerbocker Ice Company of Philadelphia and the Delaware Ice Company of Easton. These two firms were principally based at Lehigh Tannery. Two dams on the Lehigh River at White Haven and a third dam at Lehigh Tannery created pools on the frozen river to facilitate the ice industry. In 1873 there were at least two large ice depots along the river at White Haven managed by T.L. McKeen. The firm of Shortz and Lewis also cut ice on the river as early as February 1874 when they were shipping nearly 300 tons of ice daily from the river harvest. It was not unusual to harvest ice from rivers a century ago. In 1875 ice was harvested from the Susquehanna River at West Nanticoke behind a canal dam on the river.

In mid-May 1875 the Great Fire swept over the entire region between White Haven and Sand Cut (later Gouldsboro) destroying immense quantities of virgin timber lands. White Haven was threatened with destruction until the community organized to save it. At Evergreen, a community near Gouldsboro (now

Thornhurst), a school, saw mill and five homes were destroyed. At Stoddartsville, only the three homes of the Stull, Hoffman, and Kinney families survived, and an elderly Cox woman was killed. At Hickory Run Abel Kelsey lost his mill and farm house and farm animals. Another twenty families in the area lost their homes. The Shortz and Lewis firm had five million feet of sawn logs ablaze. The fires even reached into Daleville and Moscow in Lackawanna County. At Bradersville, outside of White Haven, the Brown and Brader mill was threatened with fire loss, and the firm lost three homes to fire. Late in the year, Brader would retire and Lewis would purchase his one-half interest in the firm. The following month, in early June, a fire, ignited by embers from a passing Lehigh Valley Railroad train, started another huge fire at Hay's Creek near White Haven destroying vast quantities of Keck, Childs & Company lumber stock. But other timber lands survived and in July 1875 the Albert Lewis company obtained a contract to clear cut a twelve mile coal-hauling railroad path for the Sandy Run Branch of the Central Railroad of New Jersey below White Haven and just above the Carbon County boundary line. While Beach and Company would complete the grading, Lewis would build shanties along the line to house laborers.

The timberlands at Bear Creek and along the Lehigh Valley gorge, once stripped of timber, are too rocky to generally support farming and have little value. Lewis had the foresight to purchase new timber lands as a reserve for future lumbering, and when lumbering would cease to convert to ice-cutting, an industry without a clearly foreseeable end. In the mid-1870s, Lewis made a substantial leap from his normal lumbering base to the wild lands at the

opposite corner of Luzerne County. In 1876 Lewis and Lehigh Valley Railroad investors purchased 13,000 acres along Bowman's Creek, between Noxen 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 Lewis and the Lehigh Valley Railroad did not complete a railroad through the tracts until the early 1890s. In addition to his White Haven investments, Lewis was lumbering in New Jersey. For at least six years between 1875 and 1881 the Albert Lewis Lumber Company was very active in Lansdown, New Jersey.

By the late 1870s Albert Lewis was the lumber king of Hickory Run. In early 1877 he channeled Hickory Run for the stream's first log drive to the Lehigh River. He purchased the home of A.S. Gould on top of a hill overlooking the Lewis lumber mill on the creek. He built a park and trout pond at the junction of Hickory Run and Sand Spring Run, and provided for various charitable and entertainment activities in the area. Lewis also ran the first telephone line between Hickory Run in November 1877 and extended it in June 1878 to White Haven when the company of J.W. Levan and son built a larger sawmill for Lewis at White Haven.

At this time it was estimated that the lumber reserves along the upper River still held 171 million board feet of lumber. The Lewis companies owned 73 million feet or forty-three per cent of the timber crop. However, Lewis carefully managed his mill output as weather conditions and trade fluctuations greatly impacted actual production. Area mines were heavy purchasers of lumber and if mine production fell - or

strikes halted coal mining - demand for lumber fell. When miners did strike, Lewis would offer them work around his lumber operations. Despite Lewis's huge holdings, his mills were not always among the top producers of lumber. By the late 1870s, good production years, it was clear the timber reserves would become exhausted in time, and a few of the older firms were withdrawing from the trade. By the turn of the decade, Lewis would be purchasing smaller lumber firms, including a mill at Audenreid to serve the lumber needs of its mines. Lewis's ties to the Lehigh Valley Railroad also drew remarkable sales. In early 1879 Lewis had contracts to sell two million feet of lumber, one million of which was shared in sales to the Lehigh Valley Railroad and the Central Railroad of New Jersey.

The precarious nature of the lumber trade along the upper Lehigh River was described in the Carbon Democrat on February 2, 1878, after an interview with Albert Lewis and Edwin Shortz:

And now perhaps a mere mention of the several processes or steps through which the tree passes in its conversion into plank or board may not be entirely without interest. The first, then, is the bark peeling process, which is performed generally between the 10th of May and tenth of June, when the sap is abundant; for the same reason that Young America has a set time to make his chestnut whistle, we presume the intelligent lumberman chooses this season of the year for

harvesting his crop of bark, which by the way, is quite a significant item in connection with the lumber business. Next comes sawing the timber into the longest lengths possible, long logs being more desirable than short ones, and the longer the log the longer the board, and the longer the board the longer or better the price. Starting is the next step, which consists of getting into shape for loading; the logs are gotten in on slides or sleds. Snow is about as important a facility to this process as it is to the exuberant youth in coasting; therefore do not start if we make the somewhat startling disclosure that the fall of snow this winter has been barely sufficient to start the lumberman in that process known as "starting." Then follows the driving process, which consists in getting the logs into the booms. This it is said is frequently an expensive step, occasioning the outlay of considerable money in blowing up rocks, etc., preparatory to booming. The fifth item is "rafting;" all logs similarly marked are rafted together and taken to different mills. Each individual owner has a certain mark by which his timber is known, and all timber bearing the same mark is put into the same pocket in the boom and delivered to the proper

mill by the Boom Company, they charging the owner from 16 to 18 cents per thousand for the trouble, besides a tax of 10 cents a thousand for boom repairs. The next process is sawing, which is more or less familiar to all. It is surprising to note the amount of refuse wood that is consumed about these mills, simply in order to get it out of the way and save hauling and handling wood, which in this section would bring a good price as fire-wood. But unfortunately the cost of transportation here so great as to make it expensive kindling, even if furnished gratis at the mills. There is still one more process, which was almost forgotten, and which is too good to be lost (according to our good-natured informant), shipping the lumber and taking promissory notes therefore, which too often now-a-days prove to be not worth the paper they are written on.

The Wyoming Valley planned a massive celebration on July 3, 1878, to honor the centennial of the Battle of Wyoming. In attendance would be President Rutherford B. Hayes. The settlers' fort at Forty-Fort was to be reconstructed. Lewis sent lumber from Hickory Run to Plains which the Lehigh Valley delivered at no charge. From Plains the lumber was ferried across the river to Forty-Fort.

Albert and Lizzie Crellin Lewis lived in South

Kidder Township at Hickory Run in the late 1870s and in 1880. Lewis had four lumber plants in 1880 in Luzerne-Carbon counties. Lewis's largest operation in Luzerne County was at Tannery. Lewis employed twenty-five people with an annual payroll of \$90,000.00 producing six million board feet of lumber and 2.4 million feet of lath. At White Haven the firm of Lewis and Crellin was the smallest of four lumber manufacturers along the Lehigh River. But by late July 1881 Lewis and Crellin would build a new mill in White Haven. A.F. Peters and Son, C.L. & H.S. Keck, and Jacob Stauffer, each greatly out produced (and sometimes doubled) Lewis and Crellin's annual production of two million feet of lumber and three hundred thousand feet of lath. The typical labor day was nine to eleven hours at a day wage of \$2.50 for skilled mechanics and one dollar daily for laborers. Lewis was a major player along the river and now served on the board of directors of the Lehigh Boom Company with the other prominent lumbermen: John Brown, William D. Brown, C.L. Keck and John Stauffer. Most of these lumber men were based in Lehigh County, without personal roots along the Lehigh River. Well known in the area, however, was C.L. Keck. Charles L. Keck and his brother Andrew S. Keck were pioneer lumberman in the Lehigh Valley. A.S. Keck lived in Allentown, but C.L. Keck arrived in White Haven in 1849, helped found the White Haven Savings Bank in 1872, and was the long-time president of the White Haven Water Company.

In Hazle Township in lower Luzerne County, Albert Lewis and Company was the major manufacturer at 3.5 million feet. The next largest competitor was Pardee and Sons at 1.0 million feet. At another mill in Kidder Township in Carbon County

Albert Lewis and Company employed eighty-one people, one-third of them fifteen or under, to produce lath and shingles. Here Lewis had a \$35,000 investment and an \$11,000 annual payroll.

But by 1880 it was time to exploit major new timber lands. During a mild winter in late January 1880, Albert Lewis and partner Calvin E. Brodhead met at Thornhurst with Thomas McKeen of Easton to negotiate a large purchase of Bear Creek lands. McKeen and Edward S. Fox were the executors of the estate of James McKeen who owned thirty-three tracts totaling 12,400 acres in Bear Creek Township.

On February 4, 1880, the firm of Lewis and Brodhead purchased the McKeen tracts for \$70,000.00. Lumber prices were rising and lumber interests along the Lehigh River anticipated an especially good year. There was twenty-five million board feet on hand from 1879 and White Haven firms expected to add over forty-two million additional board feet in 1880 with 22.6 million feet already on the river. Lewis and Brodhead overly estimated another 1.5 million feet could be added during the year from the Bear Creek tracts. However, the mild winter season also caused problems. Snow was needed for sleds to haul bark and logs to the river or shipping points. Supplies of ice were also low and prices were rising. White Haven ice firms were harvesting less than half of the usual ice crop. Lewis and Brodhead also acquired additional lands in Dennison Township from an old firm, Brader and Brown, including property now owned by the Wilkes-Barre YMCA for its Camp Kresge off Route 487 above White Haven. Brader and Brown were the principal timber men in Dennison Township and their timber

lands were nearly exhausted, although scrap timber remained. Lewis largely wanted their steam machinery.

The 1880 Bear Creek sale included most of the timberland north of the Easton and Wilkes-Barre Turnpike (Route 115) in the Bear Creek - Meadow Run area. These lands were originally owned by the Hollenback family in the early years of the 1800s. In 1849 the Hollenback interests sold the lands to Vanschalkwyck Beaupland (Vincent S.K. Beaupland) of Chatham Township in Morris County, New Jersey. Beaupland sold the lands to James McKeen and Peter Pursell in 1851. Using a mill pond and saw mill at Bear Creek McKeen lumbered at the mill pond at Bear Creek Village. Pursell operated the Bear Creek Hotel, originally built in 1836, from 1859 to 1877. In 1871 several investors, led by McKeen, created the Bear Creek Improvement Company to create a series of dams to the creek's mouth on the Lehigh to float logs to market, but the plan apparently failed to attract sufficient investment.

With the McKeen tracts from Bear Creek to Meadow Run, Lewis held most of the timberlands in the township between the old turnpike and Lackawanna County. [In 1883 he would also purchase the lands south of the turnpike to Carbon County.] In late 1880 Lewis and Brodhead also had timber rights to much of the Bear Lake lands which Isaac Lewis had lost in the 1847-1850 period.

The Lehigh Valley Railroad agreed to have Lewis construct a branch line from Bear Creek Junction near Moosehead, above White Haven, through the lower half of Bear Creek Township to Bear

Creek Village on the Easton and Wilkes-Barre Turnpike. Lewis and Brodhead would also construct an extension of the railroad from the village through the McKeen tracts to Beaupland. Any extension of the logging railroad to reach further into the timber lands was the responsibility of Lewis and Brodhead. Lewis would grade the extension at \$2,500.00 a mile and the Lehigh Valley would lay the rails. By late June 1880 the Lewis firm had cut 4,000 railroad ties from its Brader and Brown timber lands and had graded the initial five miles of railroad.

During 1880 Lewis reconstructed the lower pool on Bear Creek (now Bear Creek Village) and built middle pools for the village of Beaupland. Along the stream of Meadow Run, another lumber town, California, was built. The cutting of lumber and bark was active even while the railroad was pushed to completion. In addition, Lewis and Brodhead were acquiring either timber rights to additional tracts or purchasing adjacent timber lands. In mid November 1880 a tornado-like storm (windfall) ripped through the Meadow Run area and men were pressed into service to salvage the bark, cut the fallen trees into logs, and haul the logs to California for milling.

Along the Lehigh River at Tannery near White Haven, Lewis was also building a new steam saw mill to supply the mining firm of Coxe Brothers & Company with 4 million feet of lumber for each of the next two years. Coxe planned to erect three new coal breakers with additional lumber needed for miners' housing. Lewis would use the mill machinery taken out of the former Brader and Brown mill which Lewis had recently purchased.

When Lewis and Brodhead moved into Bear Creek with only about seven employees, the firm's estimated annual lumber production of 600,000 board feet in 1880 immediately outstripped the existing Amandes Kresge production rate of 400,000 feet. Amandes M. Kresge was engaged in lumbering along the Lehigh River until he joined the Union Army during the Civil War. After the service he joined a lumber firm in Moosic but in 1875 he purchased a tract in Bear Creek Township and built a sawmill in 1876 near Bald Mountain and created the town of Kresgeville. He would lose the mill in a fire in 1882 and convert his land to farming. Kresge hauled his lumber to Mill Creek in Plains for marketing in Wilkes-Barre. In the 1880s Lewis and Brodhead also sold lumber in Wilkes-Barre but they principally shipped by railroad along Bear Creek and the Lehigh River to Allentown, Easton and other markets.

By the close of 1880 Lewis and Brodhead had completed the 5.35 mile branch line from Bear Creek Junction outside White Haven through the timber lands of lower Bear Creek Township to Bear Creek Village. The railroad would also authorize a 1.28 mile spur from Moosehead Junction to the Moosehead ochre works about six miles from White Haven. Ochre is a reddish clay mined for its pigment which was used as a coloring agent. The Luzerne Ochre Manufacturing Company at Moosehead was the largest in the nation. It employed twenty men and had a capacity of fifteen tons daily.

In early 1881 Albert Lewis built an extension of the railroad from the village along Bear Creek to Beaupland (named after the area's former owner) where Dams No. 2 and 3 were built. In time the name

Beaupland became Beauplant as ice plants were constructed by Lewis. The railroad then ran along the stream of Meadow Run to the lumber towns of California and Meadow Run. Immediately below Meadow Run pond Lewis built a dam on the stream and utilize the artificial pond (Dam No. 4) and a reconstructed dam on the small natural lake of Meadow Run (Dam No. 5) for lumbering - and in later years for the ice-cutting industry.

By 1881 Lewis had built three mills along the railroad above Bear Creek - at Beaupland, California, and Meadow Run. Lewis was also cutting timber at Mud Pond and at Bear Lake, hauling it to the railroad at Meadow Run for shipment out. Late in the year Lewis purchased another 400 acres in Buck Township and in Lackawanna County - which would be reached by extending his logging railroad. During the year Lewis would haul 19,000 tons of lumber products from Bear Creek.

By 1882 the branch railroad had been extended 6.73 miles from the Bear Creek Village. It would seem 1.9 mile of track from the village to Beaupland belonged to the Lehigh Valley Railroad. The balance of the trackage to Meadow Run was built of lighter rail as a logging railroad for Lewis. It extended beyond Meadow Run to Panther Creek outside the township line into the newly acquired timberlands of Lackawanna County towards Spring Brook. Lewis would acquire by lease and purchase lumber lands in 1884 in Clifton and Spring Brook Townships in Lackawanna County. But these lands may have been out-of-reach to Lewis's mills and he sold them for \$33,000 in May 1885 to the Spring Brook Lumber Company in Lackawanna County.

To serve his lumber industry Lewis had either modified existing dams or built new dams on Bear Creek and Meadow Run. The harvested timber was hauled by wagon or railroad and dumped into mill ponds. Men on the floating logs sorted them and drove the logs up a chute into the mill works for sawing into lumber or wood products. The dam at Bear Creek Village (Dam No. 1) at an elevation of 1,570 feet was made of timber cribbing and was 215 feet long, seventeen feet high, and created an artificial lake of sixty-three acres with a typical depth of ten to twenty feet. The pool was 3,830 feet long and 1,000 feet wide. Beaupland (Dam No. 2) at a 1,600 foot elevation was 250 feet long, twenty feet high, and its timber crib dam created a 1,710 foot long pool with a 600 foot width and a nine to twelve foot depth. Immediately above Dam No. 2, at a 1,615 foot elevation, was earthen Dam No. 3 which created a fifteen acre pool. These dams were on Bear Creek. Further along the railroad line, Dam No. 4 on Meadow Run created another thirty-three acre artificial lake at a 1,955 foot elevation with a depth of twelve to seventeen feet. The dry stone wall dam was 325 feet long and fifteen feet high. The pool length was 3,050 feet. [In later years, the ice men referred to this pond as "No. 5" since it was the ice company's fifth ice-cutting facility.] Lastly, Dam No. 5 [or "No. 6" to the ice men] supported a natural lake fed by Meadow Run. At a 2,005 foot elevation the dry stone wall dam was 450 feet long, eighteen feet high and held a fifty-seven acre pond with a nine to fourteen foot depth. The pond had a length of 3,330 feet and a width of 1,060 feet.

Lewis sold the completed railroad from Bear Creek Junction to Beaupland for \$20,000.00 to the

Lehigh Valley Railroad in February 1882. The sale included a reversionary clause. The right-of-way to the railroad reverted to Lewis (or his estate) whenever the railroad abandoned operations. In 1882 Lewis was already shipping out increasing quantities of lumber, slabs, sawdust, mine ties, ceiling lath and bark.

In late February 1882 the Bear Creek Branch of the railroad had its first fatality. Samuel S. Bush, a Jeanesville machinist, was seated next to the fireman on a locomotive headed towards Bear Creek Junction. The engineer saw a large tree had fallen across the tracks. Fearing the locomotive would upset Bush jumped from the moving engine. But he fell on to a large tree root and he was thrown backwards under the train's wheels and he was instantly killed.

Lewis's mortgage to McKeen for the purchase price of the Bear Creek lands was the only substantial mortgage Lewis obtained in his lifetime. He and Brodhead did so well in the business the mortgage was fully paid on January 10, 1883. Lewis seemingly had no cash problems during the balance of his career, as there is no record of any other substantial mortgage of lands, at least in Luzerne, Monroe or Carbon counties, by Lewis during the forty year balance of his lifetime.

On September 20, 1883, Brodhead retired from the partnership at Bear Creek and received a \$62,000 settlement from Lewis. Brodhead (1846-1907) was also a protege of the Lehigh Valley Railroad. As a youth he joined the office of the Valley's chief engineer, Robert H. Sayre, and Brodhead, too, became chief engineer but left the Valley to be an independent

railroad engineer to build railroads with a variety of partners. He was identified with the growth of Mauch Chunk and its political, social and charitable life.

In addition to the McKeen lands at Bear Creek, Lewis also gained sole control of various lumber contracts the partnership had acquired to substantial tracts on both sides of Bear Creek with Brown and Brown, Thomas McKeen and Company, and other area timbermen. On September 24, 1883, Lewis also acquired from the Spring Mountain Coal Company the immense lands in lower Bear Creek Township between Bear Creek and White Haven. These lands were once owned by Abijah Lewis. There is no evidence Lewis had lumber mills in this area. However, limited evidence suggests Lewis may have had a log railroad which ran from Bear Creek Village alongside Bear Creek towards the later Penn Lake area where the log railroad dead-ended in the woods. Lewis may have hauled timber from the lower township lands to the Lehigh River or to his mills above Bear Creek Village in the 1880s. Possibly, this limited log line served as the grade for a new Bear Creek Branch the Lehigh Valley Railroad built in 1917.

With his increasing wealth Lewis began to assemble certain badges of prestige then current among the new moneyed elite. In March 1884 Lewis had a private railroad car named Evelyn built at the South Easton shops of the Lehigh Valley Railroad. He would also create a company town at Bear Creek Village as a patriarchal showcase.

On March 3, 1884, the single-story, 30 x 90 foot frame saw mill at California, built in 1880, was destroyed when the boiler exploded a few minutes

after 6:00 A.M., just after men had arrived to begin work. Three men inside the mill were instantly killed; two outside men were injured by the explosion. Rudolph Sipler, the mill shipper and head man, was thirty-five years old, and the father of six children, and would be buried in White Haven. Whitmen Whitehead, mill engineer, was forty-five years old, and also resided in White Haven. Jessy Knecht was a young widower at age thirty-two and he was buried at Bear Creek. The injured men were Joseph Stiner and William Hendrick. A coroner's jury determined the explosion was an accident and no blame was attached to anyone.

Lewis, with his usual foresight, was already exploring other timber lands to serve his upper Lehigh River investments. By the close of 1883 Lewis was the second largest lumber producer on the Lehigh River. The Lehigh Boom Company handled twenty-two million board feet of timber on the river. The Lewis firm shipped five million feet, second only to the Tobyhanna and Lehigh Lumber Company's 5.3 million feet. Other major lumber firms at White Haven and Tannery were A.S. Keck at 3.9 million feet; B.F. Gould at 2.1 million feet; A.F. Peters and Son at 1.7 million feet; and J.R. Crellin at 1.9 million feet. In late April 1884 Albert Lewis and Company purchased 1,600 acres of pine and hemlock timber land from B.F. Gould in Kidder Township in Carbon County. These lands were on the eastern side of the Lehigh River, nearly opposite the mouth of Bear Creek. With an estimated 28,000,000 board feet to be harvested, Lewis expected it would serve his Tannery mill until the end of the decade.

In early May 1884 forest fires broke out in

White Haven and at Bear Creek. White Haven was threatened with complete loss. The mills were closed and all the work forces in the region were employed to fight fires. A steam fire engine from Wilkes-Barre was sent by railroad to the town but the fires were under control when the steamer arrived. At Hickory Run, across the river in Carbon County, three homes were lost to fire as well as farms in the area.

At California the remains of the mill, wrecked by the March explosion, were destroyed by fire, along with twelve of the town's seventeen homes. The residents of the destroyed homes lost everything. The community of California never recovered from the disasters in 1884. The mill was not rebuilt but a handful of families - Smith, Stout, Inman, Hans, Mecke, Knecht, and Seiner among them - continued to live there.

Between California and Meadow Run was the smallest community, Stitchertown. But this was not a mill site and no accounts of the town have been uncovered.

The communities of Meadow Run and Beaupland were described in 1885-86 by Charles D. Linskill, editor of the Wilkes-Barre Telephone newspaper:

It is a strange sight to see a railroad, engines, cars, and a little town [Meadow Run] right here in the hemlock forest where a short time ago was silence and solitude, only occasionally interrupted by a hunter or woodman, a hooting owl or a prowling bear. The locomotive had

just came down out of the dark woods bringing a great train of logs which were rolled into the pond from which machinery drags them easily and quickly up into the great saw mill where two powerful circular saws run by steam soon cut them into boards, planks, scantlings or timbers. They informed me that this mill, which is say 130 feet long by 60 feet wide, can in a day of 24 hours, produce 60,000 feet of lumber.

The sights and sounds of a great mill are interesting. The logs anywhere from 10 to 50 inches in diameter and from 10 to 60 feet in length are rolled on the carriage and firmly fastened [and] the swiftly revolving saws soon slice the logs into nice white lumber. The slabs or rough outside pieces are carried to smaller saws where they are cut into pickets and laths. Here on one side is a planer running and over there are shingle mills turning out many shingles each hour, and the picket cutter that forms several thousand pickets each day.

A.Y. Transue, formerly of Gouldsboro, and Phillip Saar, Wm. Reese and R.G. Wescott, old friends, were found here. Adam Stull is the superintendent, Edward Transue is

foreman at the mill, J. E. Bush has charge of the picket machine, Wilson Hoodmaker is in charge of the planer, Wm. Reese and son and daughters have charge of the boarding house and shingle mill, Harvey Newman is stable boss, Egbert Stull is night watchman and Daniel Ravert is blacksmith.

A man said there are about four million feet of lumber in these thousands of logs here in the dam, but they won't last till winter. The railroad runs several miles farther up into the woods and reaches to within about three miles of Spring Brook.

There is a school house here where Miss Roth is teacher.

Meadow Run is less than three miles from Bear Lake, which is a favorite resort for some Wilkes-Barre people.

[At Beaupland] is another large mill and quite a number of dwelling houses, and a busy scene is witnessed. William Shaffer is foreman at the mill. The mill has one large saw capable of turning out nearly five million feet of lumber in a year. Lewis Frank is the night watchman, and Mrs. Ben Britton

looks after the boarders.

Boyd Trescott teaches the school between here and California.

Linskill travelled by bicycle all over the Wyoming Valley and Back Mountain to record his impressions from the mid 1870s to the early 1920s. For many rural communities, his weekly reports are the only recorded history of the country towns for this period. In 1885 he also described the new community of Bear Creek:

After walking a mile or more [from Beaupland] I came in sight of a pond and after a walk or about three-fourths of a mile further I arrive at the hotel at Bear Creek on the old turnpike, in time for dinner. The hotel is kept, and well kept, too, by Hiram Bush and wife. After an excellent dinner I took a look around the place and noticed some astonishing improvements. The hotel has been much improved in appearance. The roads have been put in first-rate order and a number of new and delightful drives, along the pond, over the hills, through the woods and along the creek have been made by Albert Lewis & Co., of whom Mr. Lewis is the active and enterprising leader.

East of the creek and by the ice houses are the depot and store

of Daniel Stull. East of the creek and south of the turnpike on a beautiful knoll among a fine grove of pine stands the handsome house of Daniel Stull [in later years the Reynolds Estate - author note]. The top of this high knoll is level and covers about an acre of ground and forms one of the finest building sites imaginable. The house is handsomely finished off and is richly furnished within and is supplied with fine spring water.

Looking west above the hotel is the richly painted and elegant cottage of Albert Lewis [sometimes known as the White House]. The hard wood work and frescoeing in this house are fine and rare and the grounds around it are neatly dressed and full of fine flowers and shrubbery. A little farther west and on both sides of the street are the pleasant cottages of Mr. [Cotton] Smith, W.J. Harvey, John T. Phillips, W.S. Parsons and Adam Stull. Above the depot are the residences of two railroad men and the old houses along the turnpike are occupied. Nearly across from the hotel stands a neat office building occupied by the bookkeeper and the postoffice.

Entering the store I found it

to be large and well kept. I met Mr. Stull and bookkeeper, S.S. Johnson and clerk Charles Hatmaker. This lumbering company have nearly 300 employees.

Frank Kent, a son of the old dry goods merchant, Wm. C. Kent, of Philadelphia has charge of the depot here.

Over on the hill there at the ridge of the woods and beyond the green meadow stands the neat little "Grace Chapel," which is a gem of architecture.

Half a mile down the creek is Mr. Lewis's farm which is in charge of Jos. M. Pruner. Away up on a high peak is a cool summer residence [Top Knot] which Mr. Lewis built for his invalid wife during the hottest days of summer.

Look on the mountain yonder, the train comes down a steep grade and stops awhile at the depot and then rushes up a hill and goes toward Meadow Run. One wonders at and admires the enterprise which threw a railroad over such a swamp. This railroad in a few years will carry out all the lumber from here and leave a wagon road and a number of farms

between here and Spring Brook. Some company may find it advisable to run a railroad this way to Scranton and thus cut off ten or twenty miles of the distance. There is a pleasant driving road from here to Glen Summit.

In August 1885 Lizzie Evelyn Lewis, Albert Lewis's wife, died after a long bout with tuberculosis. Her funeral services were held at Grace Chapel. Linskill also described the Lewis cemetery, adjacent to the chapel, which Lewis created for Lizzie Crellin Lewis:

Going into Mr. Lewis' cemetery opposite the chapel on a pleasant eminence, I found Mr. Bryer improving the place. Again I gaze for a long time at the beautiful monument erected to the memory of "Lizzie E. Crellin, wife of Albert Lewis; Born June 30th, 1853; Died Aug. 11th, 1885." This very fine monument is in light gray stone and imitates most wonderfully a large oak tree broken off about twelve feet from the ground. The bark and the broken branches and the ivy vine, and the ferns, toad-stools scrolls, birds, bird's nest, wreaths of flowers, and the rustic cross bound on near the top by a large rope, all in one solid piece of stone is a pleasing study for hours. Stone chairs and vases stand about within the

enclosure, which is a fence representing logs of oak with the bark on. The enclosed portion being say 24 x 30 feet. Growing flowers and cut flowers were there in liberal quantities. It is indeed a pleasant burial place.

The Lehigh Valley Railroad provided daily passenger service on the Bear Creek Branch to Bear Creek Village and Beaupland, except on Sundays. It seems, too, the train also extended its run to Meadow Run in the early years of the branch operation. But there may have been only one or two runs a day from Bear Creek Junction. By 1913-1917 the fifteen mile-per-hour twenty-five to thirty minute trip from the Junction to Bear Creek only ran in mid-morning at 9:25 A.M., and the return trip from the village was at 11:00 A.M. The train to Bear Creek was quite circuitous unlike today's highway from Wilkes-Barre, up Bear Creek Boulevard, to Bear Creek. The train trip from Wilkes-Barre travelled through the Mountain Top area (not quite to White Haven) to isolated Bear Creek Junction, and then up through the lower half of Bear Creek Township to Bear Creek Village. Some young people used to race the train from Bear Creek to Wilkes-Barre by a fast hike from the village down Laurel Run or the Lewis turnpike and they could meet the Bear Creek train arriving at the city station.

Lewis's earliest logging locomotive was the Baldwin-built "A. Lewis" which hauled lumber and ice from Bear Creek. The logging railroads were cheaply built. Sometimes the rails spread and a locomotive or trailing cars spilled off the tracks. In October 1883 the "A. Lewis" fell off a trestle at Bear Creek.

Wrecking crews from the Lehigh Valley Railroad would be needed whenever these events occurred. If the "A. Lewis" required service, it was sent to the Lehigh Valley's locomotive repair shop in Wilkes-Barre, and the Lehigh Valley provided Lewis a substitute locomotive. Later, the "A. Lewis" was sent to the Preston Lumber Company field in West Virginia - another Lewis timbering operation, and Lewis's No. 2 "Spot" locomotive was commissioned for Bear Creek.

In mid-July 1886 Albert Lewis opened his Bear Creek Village grounds to the annual encampment of 430 men of the Pennsylvania Ninth Regiment, an area military organization and forerunner of today's 109th Field Artillery (Kingston Armory). The weeklong encampment was enlivened by a major fire at the Meadow Run mill in the late afternoon of July 12, 1886. Regimental men forced marched six miles to Meadow Run and were able to save the lumber stock but the entire mill was lost at a value of \$28,000.00. The following day Albert Lewis ordered a morning Wilkes-Barre Record for each man in the regiment for the balance of their stay. Pennsylvania Governor Robert E. Pattison visited Camp Albert Lewis, taking the train from the Lehigh Valley Station in Wilkes-Barre to Bear Creek. The encampment at Bear Creek was a major success for Lewis.

A new saw mill was built at Meadow Run. With one circular saw it was capable of sawing 25,000 board feet daily. The mill had an interior elevator which automatically carried saw dust from under the saw to underneath the boilers. The engineer no longer had to shovel the dust into the boiler fire, only attend to the water level and the mechanics of the boiler room. In 1887 Meadow Run

supported twenty-five families with its own school and Sunday School. Beaupland had thirteen to fifteen families. Lewis provided free housing and wood fuel to his employees at the two sites.

A year later the Bear Creek railroad had a fatality. In mid September 1887 eighteen year old Edward Seiner from California, a fireman on the Bear Creek Branch, jumped from a flat car to the engine tender but he fell to the tracks. The train wheels crushed his legs, and later in the day physicians amputated them. But he died from shock. A year earlier the Seiner family lost its youngest daughter Eudora to scarlet fever. In his last words to his mother Eddie said "Please don't cry for me; I am going to see Dora."

Fatalities in the woods or on the Bear Creek railroad were very uncommon. There were, however, drownings in the dam pools. In August 1885 a young Ashley boy, Earl Ross, was visiting Bear Creek and while boating on the village pond the boat upset and Ross drowned. Years later in early August 1906 a double drowning occurred when the brothers William Newcomb, age twenty-seven, and George Newcomb, age nineteen, also had a boating accident on the village pond. In early December 1914, Marshall Berry, a fifty year old locomotive engineer for the Bear Creek Ice Company, was on the Beaupland pond in a rowboat with other men as they were freeing the early winter pool of ice obstructions. The boat upset and Berry drowned.

In the late 1880s the timberlands were declining in worth, and White Haven, center of the immense Lehigh River lumber industry, was closing.

Lewis's mill at Tannery was totally destroyed by fire on February 20, 1887, and after initial thoughts to rebuild, Lewis elected to abandon it. He was already building a new mill at Dallas, which was along the line of the Wilkes-Barre and Harvey's Lake Railroad he was constructing to reach new timberlands at the Lake and the 13,000 acres of Ricketts lands he purchased in 1876 along Bowman's Creek. Soon he would also have new mills at Harvey's Lake, Noxen (originally called Lewis), and Stull.

In September 1887, too, Lewis incorporated the Wyoming Valley Lumber Company with offices in Pittston and West Pittston. This firm actually was formed in April 1884 by Lewis with John T. Phillips and E.G. Mercur, the latter a construction engineer for the Lehigh Valley Railroad. The expanded company served the Wyoming Valley and could receive lumber shipments from Lewis's Back Mountain mills.

In 1892 the great lumber industry of the upper Lehigh River ended at White Haven. The only remaining lumber mill on the river at Tannery was owned by the Tobyhanna and Lehigh Lumber Company. In June 1892 a reporter for the Wilkes-Barre Record surveyed the closure of the industry:

A view of what is claimed will never be seen again on the Lehigh River was presented on Saturday last at about 4 o'clock in the afternoon as a long raft of logs, manned by two stalwart lumberman, gracefully swept from the lock at White Haven dam and floated down stream towards Tannery, where the

last of the lumber mills in this one flourishing lumber county are situated.

A Record man stood looking upon the scene when he was approached by an old resident, who was armed with a pikepole and evidently an authority. A commonplace remark opened a reminiscent vein of thought in him and he said: "You behold there the last raft that will ever float down the Lehigh River, for the logs that compose it are the gleanings of the lumber camps along the Tobyhanna. The men have loosened all the dams between here and Tobyhanna to float these logs into the Lehigh, and now nothing remains for us to do but remove the boom logs and the chains that hold them in place and wait for decay and dry-rot to wipe out all evidence of what was once a great industry. I remember the time when White Haven was the headquarters for over a thousand hardy lumbermen. Many of their descendants live here still, but the old stock is rapidly passing away. How much lumber did we handle on this river every year? No two years were alike, so near as I can remember, [it] varied in amounts from 20,000,000 to 35,000,000 feet. You ought to go up and take a

look at that dam and lock if you have never seen them. The ruins of the old mills and their wheels will soon be torn down and removed," said our informant, Mr. Albertson, as he moved onward towards the town.

Two months later the last log was cut along the upper Lehigh River:

Lumbering may be said to have been the first industry White Haven had. As soon as a settlement was made here, the pioneers saw the enormous value of the forests of this vicinity, and lumbering operations began, says the *White Haven Journal*. The canal, which was built from Easton to this place about 1838, afforded an outlet for manufactured lumber. For a long time the head waters of the Lehigh and its tributaries were the sites of many mills and lumber was floated down the river to White Haven and loaded upon boats. However, the lumbermen saw and appreciated the value of the great water power and the facilities for shipping lumber, and moved their mills to this place. About 25 years ago, this industry reached its zenith and White Haven with her heavily timbered mountains, her splendid water power and her unsurpassed shipping facilities, was in truth a

lumber city. At that time there were in White Haven and vicinity not less than 20 mills, and from 30,000,000 to 40,000,000 feet of logs annually came down the river at the spring freshet. Such an enormous quantity of timber was cut that it began to disappear from the mountain, and accordingly the lumber interest began to decline. About 10 years ago there were five or six mills here and for the last two or three years there has been but one.

Monday, August 1, marks the end of this important industry. On that day, at 3 p.m., at the mill of the Tobyhanna and Lehigh Lumber Company, their last log was sawed and the lumbering interest on the Lehigh was at an end.

In March 1893 the Bear Creek Branch of the railroad from Bear Creek village to Meadow Run was declared unsafe and passenger traffic was halted on March 31. The lumber business at Bear Creek was at an end and the mills closed. Rails on the railroad line from the village to Beaupland were removed by the Lehigh Valley Railroad in June 1893. Lewis had to retrack the line between the village and Beaupland as a private railroad to serve his ice plants at Beaupland and Meadow Run.

In May 1892 only Edward Transue and two other families lived at Meadow Run and by July 1895 only Mr. and Mrs. William Hopper lived there where

they kept some cows and sold milk. By June 1894 only a few families remained at Beaupland - including Mr. and Mrs. Charles Newcomb and daughter Lizzie; the John R. Morris family; and Henry Swainbank.

In June 1894 a new but small saw mill was constructed at Bear Creek by H.C. Driggs, a well-known mill builder and long-time associate of Lewis. The mill furnished lumber for Lewis's village and business needs, including construction of the Mokawa Inn in 1895 and the company's later ice plants, in addition to limited outside sales of lumber. Lewis's new mill was built along Bear Creek pond near Sand Spring Run and continued to serve Lewis until 1914 when it was dismantled. This mill was used to cut rough lumber. There was no planing mill to finish lumber and Lewis now purchased finish products from local concerns. By 1895 only three homes remained in the stretch between Meadow Run and Bear Creek. Only one of these homes remained at Meadow Run. Some of Meadow Run's housing was removed and relocated elsewhere to serve the Lewis company, and Meadow Run became one of Lewis's farms.

The end of commercial lumber operations at Bear Creek, however, did not end Lewis's role as a major lumberman. He had not even peaked as yet at Harveys Lake, Noxen and Stull where he had mills. Indeed, while Lewis's ice companies at Bear Creek and along Bowman's Creek were profitable, he enjoyed far greater wealth from his lumber companies. But Pennsylvania's forest reserves were playing out. With his usual vision at play, he now sought out new timberlands.

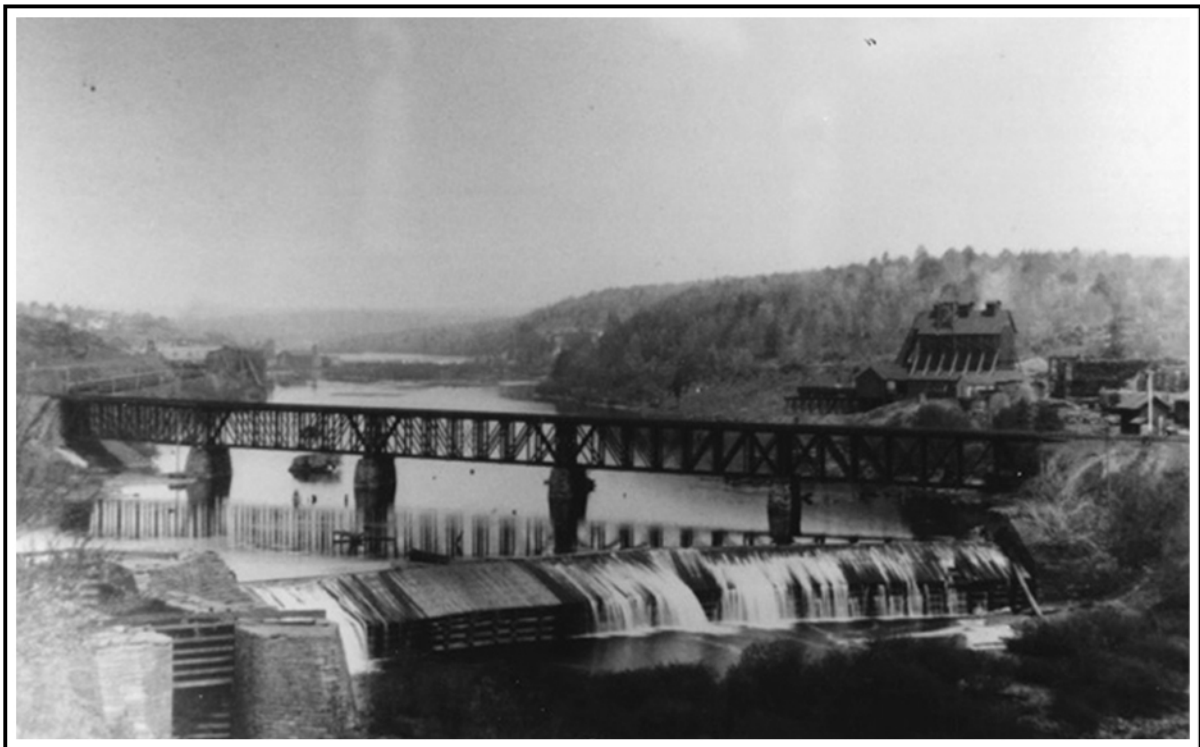
In 1891 Rolland P. Crellin of White Haven

visited western Maryland on the West Virginia border and found a site for a new, major lumbering industry in an area called Sunshine along the Big Youghiogheny River. He was the son of John R. Crellin, and a brother of Lizzie Crellin Lewis, the first wife of Albert Lewis. He represented Albert Lewis, Arthur L. Stull, and other Pennsylvania investors. In 1892 the area became the town of Crellin and the Preston Lumber and Coal Company began operations which would stretch into Preston County, West Virginia, by 1904. The earliest logging locomotive was the "A. Lewis" (probably sent from Bear Creek) and in 1897 the company also owned the Preston Railroad Company to serve the boom area. Their company controlled 18,000 acres, had eight million feet of standing timber and was drawing revenue from coal and land sales, and had no debts. In 1918 Lewis and his partners sold the Preston company to the Kendall Lumber Company for over \$600,000.00.

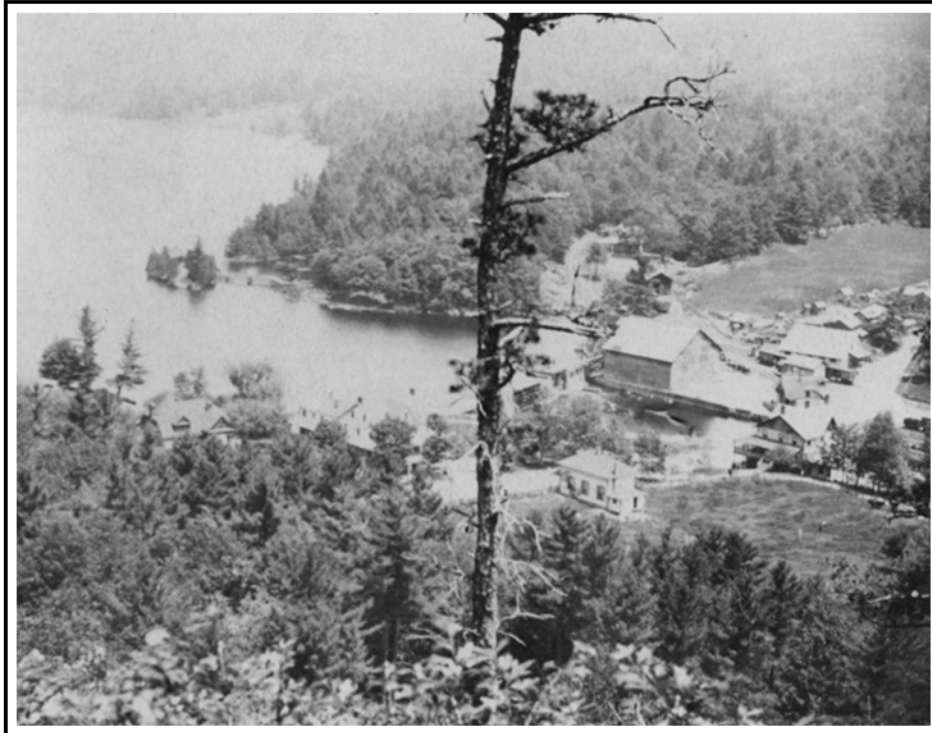




The Gould and Saylor Lumber Mill – White Haven 1880



Lehigh Coal and Navigation Dam on Lehigh River – White Haven –1880



Bear Creek Dam and Ice Plant 1881



Terwilliger's Tavern 1885



Albert Lewis's No. 2 locomotive at Bear Creek



Bear Creek in 1890 – Club House in background



Horse Drawn Ice Plows at Dam No. 1



Bear Creek Ice Company Office 1911

