

George E.M. Lewis

2025 Inductee (posthumous)



George Lewis was born in Economy N.S. of Scottish immigrant parents who had been shoe makers in Scotland before coming to Canada in 1837. His parents began making shoe pegs and lasts by hand in Economy and later established a factory in Truro under the name of J. Lewis and Sons; George went to sea for a number of years and later returned to join his father's business.

The business was relocated to the Sheet Harbour area in 1898 by George, along with his brother John, to take advantage of the white and yellow birch available in that area. A lumber division was established in 1934 under the name of J. Lewis and Sons, Lumber Division, which later became known as Sheet Harbour Lumber Company, one of the largest lumber mills in Nova Scotia at the time.

As resources depleted in Nova Scotia, another factory was established in 1900 in Brownsville, Maine under the name of U.S Peg and Shank Company by the two brothers, John and George Lewis. They also established a new factory in Stewiacke in 1914 because of the white birch in the area and its proximity to the rail line.

Because of the world wide popularity and demand for their products, two four mast ships were constructed. The Glencovey Shipping Company under which these two vessels operated later expanded to a fleet of 8 vessels which carried the products of their manufacturing plants, lumber and other commodities to many parts of the world.

George Lewis, in association with Warren Ogilvie and others began the construction of a textile business manufacturing caps and hats, known as The Eastern Hat and Cap Company Ltd. They later expanded into hosiery and felt hats as well as other clothing lines with sales covering all of Canada. Lewis and Ogilvie bought out the other investors in 1911, and George became president. With the passing of Warren Ogilvie in 1916 George took over full control of the company and eventually amalgamated several divisions together in 1938 under the banner of Lewis Ltd. At its peak the plant employed 1,000 people.

George became a majority shareholder in Moir's Chocolates, later becoming President. He was also a significant shareholder in Stanfield's Limited in Truro. As a result of his entrepreneurial activities he was involved in the operation of 5 separate companies employing more than 1000 people.

The people of Truro and Colchester County benefitted in many ways. George served on the Town Council overseeing many improvements in Truro's beautiful Victoria Park. George paid to build a roadway on the west side of the park ravine in honour of his son Earl, who tragically passed away in his early 20's, which is still known as Lewis Rd. and enjoyed by walkers and cyclists.

When George died, in 1949, his generosity continued, leaving gifts for the Truro Legion, Robie St. Cemetery, Truro Fire Brigade, the local hospital, First Baptist Church, VON, YMCA, Protestant Orphanage, Maritime Home for Girls, and the Boy Scouts. He matched the fundraising efforts of the Truro Legion for the construction of their new building, which still stands today. A monument, in his name at Camp Malagash, includes an inscription which reads: in Memory of George E.M Lewis who in his lifetime did so much to encourage the Boy Scouts Association in Colchester County.

George established himself as a business leader of the early 1900s with a strong legacy in the Truro and area business community. He was recognized in the Who's Who of Canada in 1924. A write up in a local paper, at the time of his death, stated: "He was best known, of course, in Truro, where he made his home for so long, and there he was held not only in regard but affection, for George Lewis was one who had the common touch".