

Lewes – River Lot 65

John Lee Lewes became a legend in the Yukon as a chief trader and factor for the HBC.

Lewes or Lewis was born in 1792 in London. He began as a “writer” at Churchill on Hudson Bay at age 15. Over a long career, he worked his way up to Chief Trader and Factor in many of the HBC posts across the Northwest and the Arctic.

In 1844 he was given a leave of absence for the sake of his health because he had “shot off his left hand”. As an experienced officer in the northern reaches of the HBC fur trade empire, he was much valued. However, after postings at Stuart Lake and Cumberland House with other furloughs and another leave of absence, he was allowed to retire in 1853 after 46 years of service.

He and his Metis family settled near the Kennedy family property in St Andrews. He died in 1873. Lewes River in the Yukon is named for him.

For more information of the Lewes family, please go to: redriverancestry.ca, or the Memorable Manitobans section of the Manitoba Historical Society website: www/mhs.mb.ca