

ARCHIVE

Safety Glove Innovator Dies at Age 102

Best Gloves founder Neil Tillotson was an innovator in the field of hand protection, earning a patent for N-DEX gloves at the age of 93.

EHS Today Staff

Best Gloves Founder Neil Tillotson Passes Away at Age 102

Neil E. Tillotson, founder of Best Gloves, Menlo, Ga., died on Oct. 17, 2001 at the age of 102.

Tillotson's life spanned parts of three centuries, during which he formed the Tillotson Corp., which he actively led until recently. In addition to Best Gloves, Tillotson Corp. holdings include Tillotson Rubber Co., The Balsams Grand Resort Hotel, Heveatex, Borden and Remington Chemicals, Alden Yachts, and forests and rubber plantations in New Hampshire, Quebec and Guatemala. He previously owned Textile Rubber and Chemical Co. in Dalton, Ga, Tillotson-Pearson Yachts, and Pilgrim Latex Thread Co.

Tillotson had a life-long dedication to innovation and invention. Post World War I, after working with the manufacturing of products from natural rubber, he invented and received his first patent for the world's first novelty shaped toy balloon, the Cat Balloon. This invention led to the formation of Tillotson Rubber.

Tillotson then focused his inspiration on more practical ideas, founding Best Manufacturing in 1951 to produce rubber-coated work gloves and Textile Rubber and Chemical to apply natural rubber coatings to the back of carpets. His innovations spanned decades, including the invention of the N-DEX, the world's first nitrile examination glove for which he was awarded a U.S. patent at the age of 93.

Tillotson was remembered by many in Northwest Georgia as a caring employer who gave back to the community. A staunch patriot, he was the nation's first voter in

presidential elections for the past 40 years.

During W.W.I, he served as a corporal under General John Pershing in the campaign against Pancho Villa along the U.S.-Mexico border. During W.W.II, he searched the jungles of Colombia for natural rubber sources to supply the U.S. war effort, and later established rubber plantations in Guatemala to supply his own operations.

A native of Canaan, Vt., he returned to the land homesteaded by his great-great-grandparents in Dixville Notch, N.H., in 1954 and revitalized the landmark Balsams Hotel, making it his final home. He was a member of the Society of Colonial Wars and an 80-year member and past High Priest of the Masonic fraternity. He was laid to rest in a private ceremony in Dixville Notch on Friday, Oct. 19, 2001.

Tillotson is survived by his wife of 43 years, Louise; two sons, Thomas of Dixville Notch and Rick of Colebrook, N.H.; two daughters, Janet Tillotson Munchak of Atlanta and Neila Tillotson Monaghan of Brewster, Mass.; 22 grandchildren; 23 great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild.

edited by Sandy Smith

Source URL: <https://www.ehstoday.com/archive/article/21905407/safety-glove-innovator-dies-at-age-102>