

Butler's Store

**Compiled and written by Ed Butler
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Although the title of the article is Butler's Store, it covers more than the period of time that the Butler family owned it. I have named it such because they owned it the longest, 43 years, in its almost 100 year history. The history of Butler's Store goes back to 1898, when the Northern Pacific Railroad Co. received the patent, from the U. S. Government, for the land the store sits on. The land is part of Government lot 3, Section 35, T57N, R1E, B.M.. Eliza Crowder purchased Lot 3 and the Northwest quarter of the Northeast quarter of Section 35 from the railroad in 1900 for \$108.00, comprised of approximately 54 acres. She in turn sold this property to her brother, Wellington F. Sharai (My grandfather) in 1902. Mr. Sharai then sold a portion of Lot 3 to the Donovan, Hopka



Photo Courtesy of Francis Donovan

Donovan, Hopka, Ninneman Store

Ninneman Co. for \$100 in 1904. The Donovan, Hopka Ninneman Co. built the first store on the site. The store handled general merchandise. The Donovan, Hopka Ninneman Co. also had a sawmill in Ellisport Bay near the mouth of Riser Creek. In 1920, the Donovan, Hopka Ninneman Co. sold the property back to Mr. Sharai.

Sometime after that, W. J. Hilligoss leased the property and operated a garage there. In 1924, a fire started in Mr. Hilligoss's residence, which was attached or near the store, and both buildings burned to the ground. There was another building near where the current post office is that was made of 10" x 10" timbers. This building survived the fire. Chester Sharai recalls helping tear this building down, in the early 1930's. He said "The people who lived there, Troutman, liked to shoot their guns inside the building, because the inside walls were riddled with bullet holes". Wellington F. Sharai died in 1927 and the property was left to his wife, Agnes, who soon married Ray M. Lewis. This was the beginning of the current building.



Photo Courtesy of Chester Sharai

R. M. Lewis's First Store circa 1930

In about 1928, Mr. Lewis built a small shack, with cedar bark siding, and began selling fuel, groceries and other confections. He later improved on the building from lumber salvaged from another building located on Lot 2, Block 4 of Sharai's addition to East Hope, along the current Strong Creek avenue. He also built some



Photo Courtesy of Vernise Butler

**Cedar Bark Cabins
E. M. and E. W. Butler**

small cabins, with cedar bark for siding, to rent to tourists. It was called The Lakeview Tourist Park and Service Station. In 1931, Agnus Sharai Lewis and R. M. Lewis were divorced and Mr. Lewis received title to the property through a quit claim deed. Mr. Lewis floated some promissory notes with L. Maie Ebbets Cadore and hence lost the property to her for lack of payment. Bill Jeanott operated the store during this period.

In 1933, Eugene M. Butler (My grandfather), of Spokane at that time, while on a trip to East Hope with one of his brother-in-laws to pick up some sawmill machinery, saw the small store. He returned with his wife, Lillian, to see it and to talk to the owner, who was quite willing to sell. They entered into an agreement with Mrs. Cadore to purchase the property. The purchase was finalized in early 1934. Mr. Butler then began a long period of upgrading the facilities. He changed the fuel dealership from the Shell Oil Co. to the Continental Oil Co.. The old Lewis building was either tore



Photo Courtesy of Chester Sharai

Lakeview Tourist Park circa 1933

down or remodeled, and a newly painted building emerged by the end of 1934 called Butler's Tourist Camp. They also sold groceries, fuel, and other general merchandise. A community bath house was built at the rear of the store. The Butler's purchased more property , where the post office now stands, from Albert McNorton in 1935. The old cabins were torn down and 5 new cabins, 4 that still exist today, were built over the years.



Photo Courtesy of Chester Sharai

Butler's Tourist Camp circa 1934

The Butler's son, Eugene Jr. (My father), recalled "When we came to East Hope, I had my first sight of the dilapidated store, where I was to spend so much time. The store was a veritable treasure of antiques, but were considered junk at the time. There were women's high buttoned shoes and old shells for guns, that were no longer in use. The old man did not take long in putting me to work. He was fond of saying "This ain't no summer resort". I soon found out that it wasn't. I started digging a basement under

the store. I wheeled the gravel out in a wheelbarrow, filling up a big hole in the yard that the previous owners had used to dump all their garbage into”.

“ The old man built a flat bottomed boat, which I used to pull driftwood. As there was an exceptionally high water year, there was a lot of drift on the lake. I had a lot of logs tied up by the time the water started down, so there was a lot to cut up. I would usually put in half a day digging basement and the rest trying to cut wood with a crosscut saw. Dad fixed up some old cedar bark cabins, that were on the place, with the intention of renting them out to whatever susceptible sucker who stopped in and needed a place to stay. He also built a building with showers and rest rooms for the wandering nomads. There was a heater in the rest rooms to heat the water for showers. Each cabin was also equipped with a small wood heater. The store was heated by a large wood heater and the cooking was done on a wood range, so it took quite a bit of wood to keep them all going. As soon as it warmed up enough, I was allowed a couple of hours off in the afternoon to go swimming. I really enjoyed this, as there were a lot of those female type creatures indulging in the same pastime. When fall came, I had the basement dug and the wood cut, so my chores lightened up a bit”.

“ A lot of old timers used to gather around the store to reminisce about old times, so I heard quite a bit about the good old days. Aug Rojan used to run a tugboat and he had some wild stories to tell. It was really interesting to listen to these tales, even if they sometimes varied a little, according to who was doing the telling”.



Photo Courtesy of Vernise Butler

Butler's Tourist Camp circa 1937

Sometime in the mid 1930's the fuel dealership was changed back to the Shell Oil Co. The next major change came in 1941. The Butler's completely revamped the store by adding more living quarters, an improved



Photo Courtesy of Vernise Butler

Butler's Tourist Park Fishing Boats

automobile service bay, and remodeled the structure to look much like it does today. The fuel franchise was then changed to the Standard Oil Co. of California. They also rented fishing boats and motors from their son Gene's property across the tracks. Eugene and Lillian operated the store until 1945, when they sold it to their son and daughter-in-law, Guy and Helen Butler. Guy and Helen originally met in the store.



Photo Courtesy of Vernise Butler

Happy Campers

The business was renamed to Butler's One-Stop. In 1949, Guy hired Jack Yaryan and Nick Ponack to expand the basement, to accommodate his growing family of five children. The dirt went out shovel full by shovel full onto a conveyor belt. They encountered rubble from the old store that had burned down. It contained bed springs and other rubble that hadn't burned. This was completed in 1950.

Guy and Helen's daughter, Marilyn, relates "When they first took over the store, ice boxes were still used. Dad would take the pickup into Sandpoint and pick up a load of blocks of ice, which were cut with a chain saw, filling up the back of the pickup. There was a feed room out back of the store and that's where the blocks of ice were kept, probably covered with burlap sacks and sawdust."

"Often groceries were charged, with the amount written down on little receipt books, and were paid on a monthly basis when their check came. My brother, Bruce, remembers coming home from Church in Sandpoint and Dad stopping to collect from someone. Mom would always remember those who had less

and around the holidays would fix up baskets of food for some of those families. It was that "bad" winter (1948 or 1949?) when only the main roads were plowed that we ended up going up to the houses on foot, pulling the baskets of goodies on a sled. One family was a father (Johnson) who was raising two sons. They lived up Spring Creek. One son died of a heart attack when he was in the 8th grade. Years later she saw the remaining son at a funeral and he told her that she would never know how much that it meant to them to receive her basket of food."

"Although Mom and Dad worked long hours in the store (she was so glad when they finally closed on Sundays! -- but then later opened on Sundays), Mom always found time to work in her flower garden. She enjoyed giving bouquets to Hurschell's Lighthouse, churches, etc. She had a large flower bed near where the post office is now, a rose garden and a wonderful, big cherry tree out back."

Guy and Helen and children lived in the store until 1955, when they began building a new home in another part of town. Thus began more remodeling of the building. The living quarters and automobile service bay were eventually converted to merchandise space, with the basement being used for storage. A small meat market was added. In 1963, the Butler's won the contract to provide the lease for a new post office. It was formerly in (West) Hope. The cabin, that sat on the site of the current post office, was moved from the south end of the site to the north, where it stands today and is being used as a pet grooming shop, to make room for the new post office. This cabin was later converted into a Laundromat. Another cabin was demolished. Guy and Helen operated the store until Guy retired in 1976. They

sold the business to Darrell and Helen Dishaw.

The business then became the Hi Hopes Market. The Dishaw's moved a mobile home to the back of the lot for use as living quarters. The Dishaws sold the business to Gary and Sue Tipps in 1979. The cabins were no longer rented to tourists. One became an artist's studio, another became a



Photo Courtesy of Ed Butler

HI HOPES MARKET 2002

beauty shop and another a pet grooming shop. The remaining cabin is used for storage. The bath house was torn down. They sold the store in 1984 but regained it

back in 1987. Because of a gradual decline in business, the store became more of a convenience store rather than a full service grocery store. Gary remembers, "Before she became ill, Lillian Butler used to stop by and visit every evening. She would reminisce about the old times. I regret never taping any of these conversations" They eventually closed the fuel pumps because of the cost of upgrading the underground storage tanks. The Tipps closed the store in 1999. The store building sat unoccupied until 2002, when the current occupant opened a retail and wholesale coffee grinding business called Lakeside Coffee.



Photo Courtesy of Ed Butler

Lakeside Coffee 2003