

“The Wellington F. Sharai Story”
Compiled and Written By Ed Butler
2003

Wellington F, Sharai, my grandfather and an early East Hope pioneer, was born in Berrien County, Michigan, on January 9, 1845. Wellington’s grandparents and family of 8 children originally immigrated from near Toronto and Montreal, Canada to Michigan in 1828. They were of French Canadian, German and Scottish ancestry that can be traced back to 1420’s France. Wellington’s mother was a distant relative of Robert Burns, the Scottish poet. The family surname at that time was “Charest”, but was changed to Sharrai and then Sharai, for unknown reasons. The Sharai’s were primarily fruit farmers in Michigan.

Wellington was the son of Peter and Eliza Sharai. They were the parents of five children: Dileo, Wellington, Eliza, Eugene, and Emma. He received little education. When seventeen, he enlisted in the 1st Colorado Infantry. He fought in New Mexico and other conflicts nearby. In 1863, an Indian war broke out and he was detailed to fight them. In 1864, a battle at Fort Lyons, Colorado was fought with the Indians. Five hundred of the Indians were killed. He was mustered out in 1865 with a \$60 bounty and \$2 premium pay.

Being honorably discharged, Wellington went to the mountains with Dave Brinson and hunted. He supplied the markets in Denver and other places for one year. Then he mined at Lead City and in 1867 journeyed to Green River, after which he went hunting again. In 1870, an Indian war broke out and he and his brother discovered a number of Indians driving off a band of stock and they had a pitched battle. Many shots were fired and one Indian was killed, but the balance departed. Wellington went

to the Black Hills in 1871 for awhile but returned again to the Cheyenne country. Hunting and fighting Indians occupied him for a time, then he went to the Black Hills

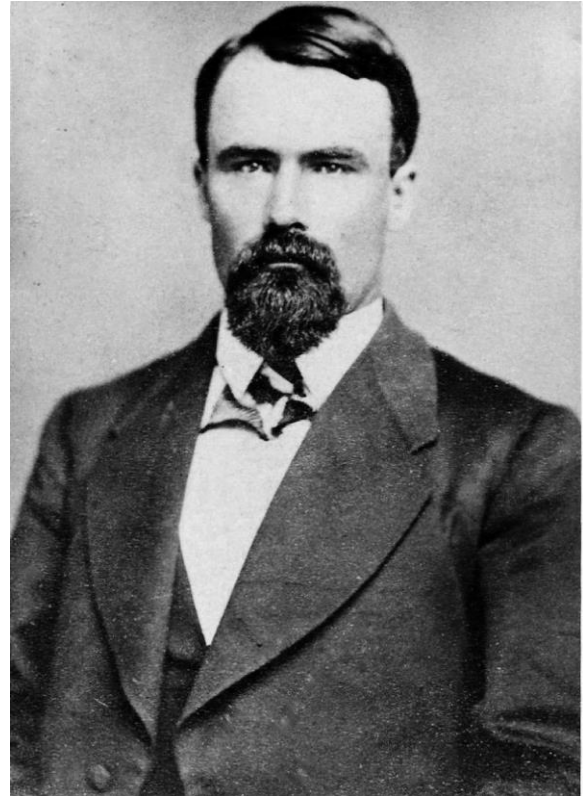


Photo Courtesy of Ed Butler

Wellington Sharai as a young man

again and there killed twenty-three elk in one day. Thence he went to work for the Union Pacific railroad as a meat hunter and initially killed eleven hundred buffaloes, one car load netting him nine hundred dollars. One afternoon he fired two hundred and fifty shots and killed sixty-nine buffaloes, sixty of which fell on two acres of ground. He later killed another eleven hundred buffaloes in five months in Colorado, and slew sixty buffalo bulls and ten cows in one day. “An Illustrated History of North Idaho”, Western Historical Publishing Company, 1903, summed up his trophies as

follows: “A summing up of his trophies of the chase of this real nimrod is about as follows: Deer, antelope and mountain sheep, four thousand, two hundred; buffaloes, two thousand six hundred; elk, seventy-two; bear, thirteen; Indians, one. These are what the trusty rifle of this famous hunter and intrepid fighter has brought down. It is a forceful reminder of the mercy of the man that in as many hard places with the redskins as he has been, he has refrained from slaying them, but only once did he cause one of the savages to bite the dust”.

After his hunting job ended, he returned to Michigan and farmed on the old homestead for about three years. In 1878 he came west, having just twenty dollars, he was compelled to hike by foot across Nebraska. He fell in with a teamster going to the Black Hills, where he worked in the mines. While in Michigan, Wellington had begun preaching the gospel. When he went to the Black Hills this last time he settled on a farm and all the time he spent there he preached the gospel.

In 1888, he was in Spokane, Washington and preached for one winter. In the spring he went prospecting and discovered the Silver Mountain Ledge Mines in the



Photo Courtesy of Ed Butler

Silver Mountain Ledge Mine Circa 1893

mountains behind what is now East Hope, Idaho. The mines were at the head of Bear Creek, which is a tributary to Lightning Creek. A company was formed, stocks were sold, and Wellington was chosen superintendent. Early plans were to build a town at the site as the mine developed. From Wellington’s record book, dated August 22, 1891, it appears there were four employees besides himself. They were P. B. Hossington, E. Hossington, J. Shaffer, and T. Fallon. The pay was \$2 per day. The following is a replication of a list of supplies purchased for the mine from Wellington’s record book:

<i>Aug 3rd 1891</i>	
<i>Sugar 33#</i>	<i>\$3.00</i>
<i>100# Potatoes</i>	<i>\$2.00</i>
<i>Beans 20#</i>	<i>\$1.40</i>
<i>Rice 10#</i>	<i>\$1.00</i>
<i>45# Bacon P</i>	<i>\$5.75</i>
<i>150# Flour</i>	<i>\$3.75</i>
<i>1 Paper Soda</i>	<i>\$0.15</i>
<i>2# Coffee</i>	<i>\$0.60</i>
<i>200 ft fuse</i>	<i>\$2.50</i>
<i>200 Primer</i>	<i>\$2.00</i>
<i>Scant Powder</i>	<i>\$6.85</i>
<i>3 Tin Pans</i>	<i>\$0.85</i>
<i>1 Can B</i>	<i>\$0.50</i>
<i>3 Cans 6 Milk</i>	<i>\$0.50</i>

The following is a replication of one of the letters sent by one of the financiers:

Boston March 15th 92

Mr. W. F Sharai

Dear Friend,

Yours of the 7th is received. I was glad to hear from you again. I note what you say about the last 26 feet of the tunnel. I shall leave that matter with you. I will send you the balance due for the 74 feet.

Shall I send the amount due for work on the Tunnel House to you?

I note what you say about going up to the mine as soon as you are able to go. While I am anxious to push the work as fast as possible, I do not wish you to risk your health by going too soon.

Mr. Hossington sent me some ore, which I had assayed. Enclosed, you will find the result. Also enclosed is a letter which I received from Preff Brown when he sent me the assays. I will also send you a little box of specimens of the ore, so you may know what kind of ore Mr. Hossington sent me.

I understand from his letter that he was finding quite a quantity of Galena or lead ore scattered through the ledge. Preff Brown says there is scarcely any Galena or lead ore in the sample.

When you go to the mine, I wish you would see if there is any of that rich ore (such as was found in the shaft), since you got through the Horse, and if so send me specimens. I wish you would write me often & freely & fully. I am depending on you to advise me, with regard to the work. You know what I want.

I wish you would kindly remember me to Mr. Crandall & family.

*Yours very truly,
L. A. Brackett*

The above mentioned 1892 assay certificate shows only a trace of silver. Work progressed until 1899. Then the company financiers, from Boston, Massachusetts, refused to spend any more money, having laid out twenty-nine thousand dollars.



Photo Courtesy of Chester Sharai

Wellington Mine Bunkhouse 1948

Wellington later located the ground and renamed it the Wellington Mine. He mined it himself for several years, but with little



Photo Courtesy of Chester Sharai

Wellington Mine Tunnel 1948

success. His son, Chester Sharai, recalls, "The last time my father headed to the mine, his horse bucked him off, so he decided to turn around and go back home". "Bonner County Place Names", Idaho State Historical Society, 1969, states that nearby

Wellington Creek was named after Wellington Sharai. Wellington Creek is a tributary to Lightning Creek and just south of Bear Creek.

In 1902, Wellington purchased 54 acres of

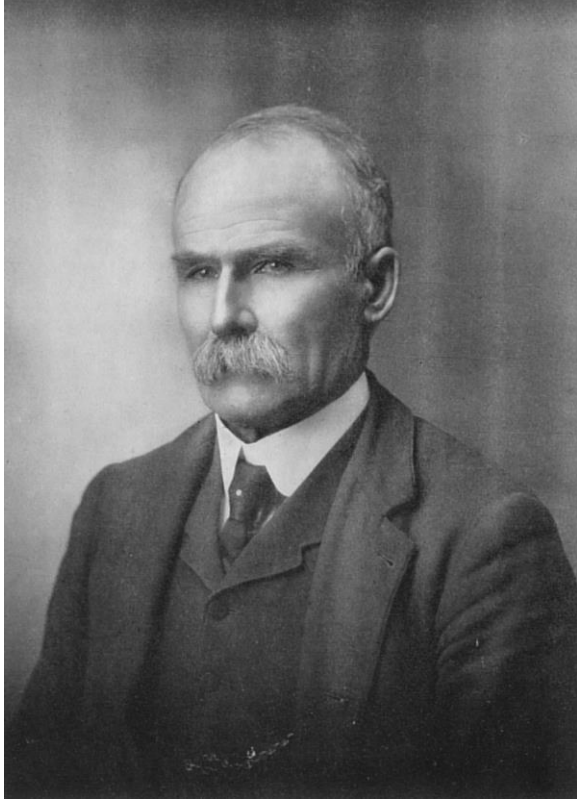


Photo Courtesy of Ed Butler

Wellington F. Sharai 1903

land, in what is now East Hope, from his sister, Eliza Crowder of Spokane, Washington. She had purchased the land from the Northern Pacific Railroad Company in 1900 for \$108. This property is what is currently platted as Sharai's Addition to East Hope. He proceeded to develop several acres of the land for farming, the remainder being platted and sold as building lots. He planted various fruit trees strawberries and vegetables and supplied the local markets. He also raised honey bees. A note in the September 25, 1915 Hope Herald newspaper states "W. F. Sharai's strawberry patch is a wonder, free from weeds, the vines in clusters about three

or four feet apart in regular rows, healthy stalks and give a promise of a big crop of early berries next spring. If you want to get some idea of how to care for strawberry plants, a visit to the Sharai patch will do you good." Sometime around 1900 he married a woman called Minnie. Little is known about this marriage except that it only lasted 2 to 3 years. Records show that he purchased some water rights in Strong Creek from her in 1902 for \$250. Later records in 1903 show him as a single man, so it appears this sale may have been part of a divorce settlement.



Photo Courtesy Chester Sharai

Sharai Farms Circa 1925

Water for his farming operations was provided thru ditches and flumes that originated at the current East Hope water diversion dam. Remnants of the ditch can still be found today. The ditch on the west side of Strong Creek was used up into the 1960's. The ditch on the east side was eventually replaced with a waterline. He applied for water rights from Strong Creek in 1910 and received them in 1911. It is unknown how many cubic feet per second these water rights were for. In 1912, he applied for and received, in 1913, additional water rights of 2 cubic feet per second in Strong Creek to provide water to the Village of East Hope. The work description was to construct a wood, stone, and dirt dam 4 feet high, a 100 barrel water tank, and 3000 feet of conduit flume to provide water for lawns, gardens, domestic use, and irrigation of 120 acres in East Hope. The estimated cost of the works was \$800.

In August, 1909, Wellington married Agnes Simmons in Spokane, Washington. Agnes was born on December 24, 1888 in Minnesota. Her parents surname was Piser or Pizer. Her mother died at about the time she was starting school. Her father felt that he couldn't raise her and she was adopted by the Simmon's. She also had a brother that remained with her father. The Simmon's moved to Hope, Idaho in 1909, looking for work and property. They worked for Wellington Sharai. Agnes was working in the Sharai strawberry field when she met Wellington. He was 64 and she was 21. They bore 6 children; Vernise, 1912 (My mother); Francis, 1914; Chester, 1916; Isabelle, 1919; and two girls who were stillborn or died shortly after birth. The girls' names were reportedly Edna and Alva. On July 14, 1921, tragedy struck the Sharai family. While the rest of the family was outside doing chores, Chester and Isabelle remained inside and Chester began building a fire in the kitchen range, using newspaper. While Chester's attention was diverted, Isabelle had a bundle of paper which she apparently tried to put in the cook stove. The paper ignited and caught her clothes on fire. She ran into the bedroom and caught the bedding on fire. Her screaming caught the attention of her mother, but it was too late. She was severely burned over all her body, except her feet, which were protected by shoes. She died the next morning in the Sandpoint City hospital.

Wellington continued to preach the gospel in the Hope area. He came to town every two weeks from the mine and conducted services in Manning's Hall in Hope. It was not until August 30, 1907 that a Methodist congregation of seven people was organized to consider building a church. At that time, Wellington F. Sharai, C. Hoppersted and Phoebe A. Wilson were appointed as

directors. Then on February 17, 1908, Wellington sold a lot to the Methodist Episcopal Church for one dollar. A covenant on the original deed states "It being a part and consideration of this deed that the above



Photo Courtesy of Ed Butler

Methodist Church 1969

bargained premises shall not be used for a saloon or any immoral purposes whatsoever". This covenant originated in the original deed he received from his sister Eliza when he purchased the land from her. The original invoice for the bill of materials for lumber came to \$143.82, from the Hope Lumber Mills. Then on August 10, 1909, Wellington sold another lot to the church for \$800, with \$425 down and the balance to be paid off by 1911. This lot was located along the current Strong Creek Avenue and had a house on it. It appears that this became the pastor's house. On February 28, 1929, Agnes Sharai Lewis (My grandmother), Wellington's widow at the time, sold four more lots to the church for the sum of one dollar.

East Hope was first platted in 1902 by William Thomas Crawford. On May 1, 1913, the town became a duly incorporated Village of the State of Idaho. The first Village board of trustees was W. F. Lutton, W. F. Sharai, W. T. Crawford, C. A. Ferguson, and Jack Root. Wellington only served on the board for one term until May 3, 1915. On April 20, 1920, a petition for exclusive water franchise of Wellington F.

Sharai was presented to the Clerk and read and ordered tabled for further consideration at a regular meeting. The records do not indicate if any action was taken on the matter, but the Village continued to use the Sharai water system until March 18, 1929, when Agnes Sharai Lewis, Wellington's widow at the time, sold the water system to the Village for \$650.

On April 1, 1919, School District #4, which served the East Hope and Hope areas, held a bond election for \$26,000 to build a new school. The site of the proposed school was to be on Brenaman's Hill, which is in Hope on the flat just west of the current Sunset Trailer Park. This first bond was defeated.



Photo Courtesy of Chester Sharai

Hope School 1937

Another bond election was held on April 21, 1919. This bond election was for \$30,000 and the location of the school was to be on Wellington's property on Sharai's flat. This bond issue passed and Wellington sold the school district the property on June 30, 1919 for \$5000. The school was completed in 1920 and still stands today, but is privately owned.

Wellington F. Sharai died in 1927 in Leavenworth, Kansas at the age of 85. He had suffered a stroke earlier and became disabled. Since there were no adequate facilities nearby that could care for his type of disability, it was decided to send him to

the Old Soldiers home in Leavenworth for care. Marion F. Yakely escorted him there.



Photo Courtesy of Chester Sharai

The Sharai Family in 1926
Agnes, Wellington, Chester, Francis
(Not pictured) Vernise

His widow, Agnes remained in East Hope and married Ray M. Lewis shortly thereafter. Ray Lewis was considered a thief and crook by many of the town's residents and was not very popular. Wesley (Pat) Rojan recalls, "Lewis was building a cabin on the lakeshore. He had the floor built on a wood log foundation. One night, a group of young men sawed the floor and foundation in half and pushed the two pieces out into the lake. I remember seeing the pieces floating in the lake the next morning with a wheelbarrow perched on top". Vernise Sharai Butler recalled, "One day a group of our neighbors called at our house and advised Lewis that he should leave town". Apparently, he got the message, because Agnes divorced Mr. Lewis in 1930 and he moved to Sandpoint.

Agnes married Robert M. Martin in about 1932. They had been friends in their younger years. Robert was working as a sawmill worker at Winthrop, Washington at the time, so they made their home near there in the Methow valley. Robert later went to work for another sawmill at Twisp, Washington. In 1945, the sawmill workers at

Twisp went on strike, so they moved back to Hope. Robert worked at another mill at Brewster, Washington until he retired. Agnes continued to live in Hope during this time. They lived in Hope until the mid 1960's, when Agnes began to have health problems, at which time they moved to Sandpoint. Agnes passed away in 1969 at the age of 81. Robert Martin passed away in 1979 at the age of 87.



Photo Courtesy of Chester Sharai

Chester, Vernise and Francis Sharai 1934

Vernise Sharai lived her entire life in East Hope. She married Eugene W. Butler in 1935. She raised five children; Janet, Leonard, Edward, Kenneth, and Sandra. Vernise passed away on August 24, 2001.

Francis Sharai lived in East Hope until going into the Army during World War II. He was a diesel fuel pumps and fuel injector mechanic and was a member of a tank corps that invaded Europe with Patten's Army. Francis married Tina Swartz in 1944. They raised four children as follows; Lynda, Sharon, Debra, and Dewayne. They lived in the Portland, Oregon area. He continued in the occupation of a diesel mechanic until his death in August, 1982.

Chester Sharai remained in East Hope and Hope until 1965, when he moved to Spokane, Washington, to attend a diesel operator's school. After finishing school, he went to work in a sawmill. After retirement,

he remained in Spokane until 2001. He now resides in Sandpoint, Idaho and has never married.