

A Brief History of East Hope

By Ed Butler and Hal Bunderson



2002 Aerial view of East Hope
Photo Courtesy of U.S. Forest Service

The City As It Is Today

Located in eastern Bonner County of Idaho's Panhandle, approximately 50 miles due south of the Canadian border, you will find the picturesque City of East Hope. The city is nestled between Idaho's largest lake, the 344 square mile Lake Pend Oreille (pronounced pon-der-ay) on the south, foothills and heavily wooded mountains on the north and contiguous to its sister city, the City of Hope, on the west.

East Hope is positioned along the lakeshore and on the terraced benches above the lake. Residents in the area often disregard the separate city names of Hope and East Hope and simply refer to both cities and the surrounding area as the "Community of Hope."

The foothills and mountains in the north, which overlook the lake, have been shaped and terraced by geologic processes of former lakes and glaciers. The land area is covered by lush pine and fir forests and a wide range of other vegetation. The elevation of the City of East Hope ranges from 2,062 feet at the lakeshore to 3,120 feet in the terraced foothills. Many homes are now built along these terraced benches and on the hillside.



**View of East Hope and the
Strong Creek drainage, circa 1995**
Photo courtesy of Ed Butler

For its northern setting, the community enjoys a surprisingly moderate climate. It has an average of 86 sunshine days annually. High and low temperatures range from 73 to 34 degrees Fahrenheit in the spring; 82 to 47 in the summer; 57 to 28 in the fall and 46 to 20 in the winter.¹ Total precipitation averages 32 inches per year. The amount of snow that falls in any one month during the winter season ranges from 6 to 22 inches.²

Today, the city has over 200 permanent residents.³ When the tourist and recreation seasons arrive the population swells considerably. The majority of permanent residents are retirees who have found a quiet

and beautiful place to call home. The balance of the residents either own or work in the local businesses or commute to Sandpoint for employment.

All of the residents and visitors have one thing in common. They love the beauty and fabulous outdoor amenities of the area. They are able to enjoy the pristine Lake Pend Oreille for boating and fishing. They can go to the nearby Idaho Panhandle National Forest with its abundant lakes, streams, wildlife and scenery. Backpacking, fishing and hunting are popular outdoor sports. In addition, the City of Sandpoint, a regional retail shopping center and home of Schweitzer Ski Resort, is only a thirty-minute drive away.

The Montana Rail Link railroad and state Highway 200 run through the city, separating the lakeshore from the rest of the community. The city has a small business district consisting of two marinas, three eating establishments, a small orchard and vineyard, a marina store, and an art gallery.

The elementary school students in the area attend Hope-Clark Fork Elementary located just east of the city limits. High school students attend Clark Fork High School located in the City of Clark Fork, about ten miles to the southeast.



Lakefront and state Highway 200 in 2002
Photo courtesy of Ed Butler

The Two Cities Named Hope

Even though the cities of Hope and East Hope have always been separate communities, their early histories are entwined. Both cities owe their origin and name to the railroad but for different reasons.

In 1882, the Northern Pacific Railroad built a rail line along the north bench of Lake Pend Oreille. The plan was to bring rail service to the lakefront for new wood products and tourist industries. That location became the City of East Hope.

In 1888, six years later, there was a drought in Heron, Montana, the then location of the railroad's division office. The railroad decided that because of the abundant water supply near Lake Pend Oreille, they would move the division headquarters there. They sited their rail facility about 1/2 mile northwest of the lakeshore businesses. That location became the City of Hope.

At the time of the move from Montana, the railroad employed a veterinarian whose last name was Hope. His name became associated with the new railroad location. As people moved into the area, this intriguing name was adopted by the community.

In 1901 the owners of the large sawmill that was constructed in what is now East Hope, named their sawmill Hope Lumber Company. The Hope name designation carried over to the area that was platted around the sawmill. In an effort to differentiate between the two communities, the East Hope designation was applied to the community that grew-up around the sawmill.



Railroad locomotive in Hope, circa 1900
Photo courtesy of Bonner County Museum

The common interests of each community were not fully explored at the beginning. Consequently, the communities grew apart. Today, economies of scale and scarce resources are causing elected officials in both cities to cooperate and find ways to cut costs by consolidating certain services.

Years Pre-Incorporation

In September 1809, just three years after Lewis and Clark and the Corp of Discovery completed their exploration of the Northwest, two frontiersmen, David Thompson and his associate, Finan McDonald arrived at Lake Pend Oreille on the peninsula and established Idaho's first trading post. The trading post was one in a small chain of trading posts started by Thompson. He was an explorer, mapmaker and trader for the Canadian North West Company, a rival in the fur trade with the Hudson Bay Company.

Thompson named the log trading post, the Kullyspel House after the Kalispell Indians. In 1811, he abandoned the trading post. Thompson found it was too far off the main line of travel between his other trading posts.

In 1882, the Northern Pacific Railroad built a rail line on the bench area overlooking the north side of the lake. On land deeded to it from the federal government for building the railroad, Northern Pacific began building a tourist and resort settlement in area now known as Hope and selling some of its land to residents and businesses in the area now known as East Hope.

One of the first businesses in the area was a wood shingle manufacturing mill named Berry and Benton. This mill and many other structures were built near the shoreline and mouth of the creek that would be later named Strong Creek.

In 1884, Northern Pacific began building resort facilities near the shoreline and promoting guided fishing and hunting packages to its rail passengers. By 1885, it had built a guesthouse facility named the Highland House, a train depot and other buildings.

The facilities were managed by Mr. J. J. Strong, Superintendent of Dining Cars and Hotels for the railroad. Strong Creek, named after J. J. Strong, supplied fresh water. The creek still flows through what is now the western portion of East Hope and continues to supply the city's domestic water.



Highland House hotel in Hope, circa 1900
Photo courtesy of Bonner County Museum

Strong was a bit of an entrepreneur in his own right. He purchased a ranch located near the mouth of the creek and opened a guide service that was operated by his two sons, Lewis and Sam. Sam said he and Lewis, "spent many happy days taking out fishing parties on the lake and hunters back up in the mountains."⁴

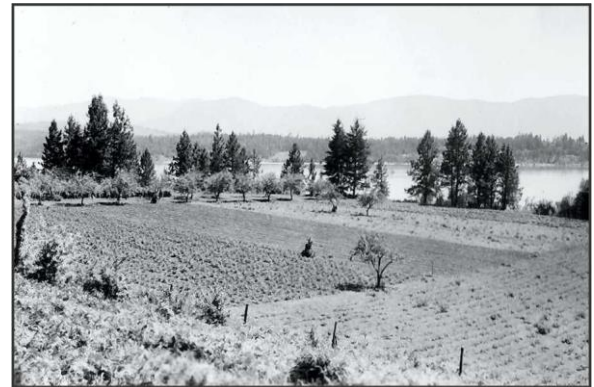
Sam further wrote of the area, "Deer were abundant near Hope, also bear and further back up toward the Canadian border were moose and caribou. Trout were abundant in the lake and brook trout in Strong Creek...up on the benches of Hope Mountain were plenty of grouse and pheasants to be had...we batched in the old log cabin and lived off the fat of the land. The most enjoyable time of my life was spent there and I often wish I were young again and could spend it over."⁵

In 1883, one individual, who would later figure prominently in the history of the city, moved to the area.

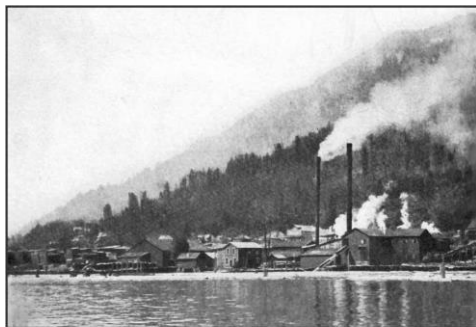
W. T. Crawford purchased a tract of land from the railroad for \$166 and looked for opportunities to develop his real estate.

In 1889, W.F. Sharai moved to the area. He was a prospector who had been employed by the railroad as a meat hunter. 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 mountains behind what is now East Hope. 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. Work progressed until 1899. Then the company financiers, from Boston, Massachusetts, refused to spend any more money, having laid out twenty-nine thousand dollars Wellington later located the ground and renamed it the Wellington Mine. He mined it himself for several years, but with little success.

In 1902, Wellington purchased 54 acres of 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 acquired irrigation water rights from a diversion dam across Strong Creek and went into the commercial orchard fruits, berries and vegetable business. In 1915, the local Hope Herald news described Sharai's strawberry patch, "a wonder." Upon Sharai's death in 1927, East Hope purchased his water rights and system. The creek still flows through what is now the western portion of East Hope and continues to supply the city's domestic water.



**Vegetable field and orchard in
Sunset Park area, circa 1935**
Photo courtesy of Chester Sharai



Hope Lumber Company Circa 1910
Photo Courtesy of Francis Donovan

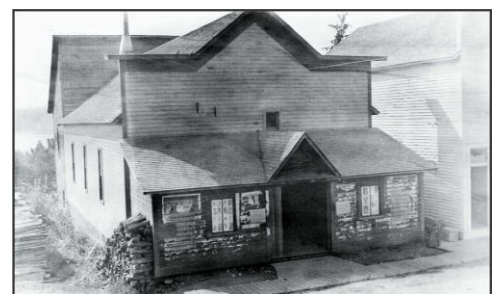
Following W. F. Sharai's lead, other fruit orchards and a variety of berry farms were established. They became a commercial source of fresh produce throughout the region.

In 1901, entrepreneurs came to the area to build a sawmill. With \$75,000 borrowed from a Michigan company, owners purchased the lakeshore land from Crawford for \$500 and built the sawmill. They named the sawmill Hope Lumber Company.



Krem Kau Boatworks
Photo Courtesy Of Bonner County Museum

In 1902, Crawford, Sharai and a Mr. C. A. Ferguson platted the land around the new sawmill for residential and commercial development. These homes and businesses would later become part of the City of East Hope and the three men would become members of East Hope's first city council.



Empress Theater in East Hope, circa 1920
Photo courtesy of Joyce Marks

The sawmill became the economic anchor of the community. At its peak it had 100 employees. The growth of the sawmill brought other business including retail, a boat manufacturer and a wood pole processing facility.

Formation of the City

In 1913, eleven years after the land around the sawmill was platted and developed, the city was incorporated as the City of East Hope.

The location of the city was perhaps best described in 1890 by E. V. Smalley in Northwest magazine as “a handsome and almost level point jutting out into the lake which will afford ample building space for a town of 5,000 people”

The population of the city at the time of incorporation is not known, however the 1920 census reported a population of 223.

W. F. Lutton was the first Mayor (then termed Chairman) with W. F. Sharai, W. T. Crawford, C. A. Ferguson and Jack Root as City Councilmen (then termed Trustees). In 1914, the East Hope Chairman and Trustees petitioned the US postmaster to establish a Post Office in East Hope. They argued that “most of the post office business” originated and “the bulk of the population” was located in East Hope. Their request acknowledged the similarity of the names between the two communities and stated that if their petition was granted, they would change the name of East Hope to Ellisport or other acceptable name. Their petition was denied. In 1963, the post office was moved to East Hope; however, it retained the name “Hope Post Office.”



East Hope, Circa 1915.
Denuded mountain is a result of forest fires.
Photo courtesy of Ed Butler

Hope School

Prior to 1924, the Hope area was comprised of two school districts, the Hope school district in Hope and East Hope and the Thornton school district to the east of the towns, in the Spring Creek area. In 1914, the Hope district proposed a school bond to construct a new school. It was heavily defeated. The proposed location was to be on Brenamans Hill on the site of an old sanitarium building, which is on the west end of the bench where the Sunset Park area is now located. For some this location was not near enough to East Hope and to others in Hope it was located too far up. When the old school, the Highland House, was condemned as fire hazard in 1918, a second school bond was proposed in 1919 with the location to be on Sharai's Flat on land to be sold to the district by Wellington Sharai. This time the bond issue passed. This was to be a two story red brick building. The building was completed and turned over to the school district in 1920.



Hope School, 1928
Photo courtesy of Janie Van Stone

There were then proposals to consolidate the Hope and Thornton districts. The first proposal was defeated by voters in the Thornton district, with much bitter debate. In 1924 the Thornton school mysteriously burned down and another consolidation election was held. This time it passed and the two districts were consolidated as the Hope school district.

The county independent school districts were reorganized in 1952 and Hope became part of the larger school District 82 which encompassed the whole county. In 1983, the Hope school was condemned. A New school was built three miles east of Hope and teachers and students moved into the new building in the fall of 1988. Ironically, the new school is located about ¼ mile from where the Thornton School was located.

Turning Points

By the time East Hope was incorporated as a city in 1913, the Hope Lumber Company was twelve years old. Everything was going fine. However, any community whose economic fortunes rest on a single business is at risk.

In East Hope's case the risk turned to disaster in the early 1920s. The Hope Lumber reduced, then shut down its operation. There were undoubtedly multiple business reasons for the closure, but that doesn't matter, it happened. As a result of the closure East Hope homes and properties that were valuable one year became nearly worthless the next. The job loss caused massive disruption in the city operations as well. For example in May 1922, three city councilmen resigned. One of whom was the sawmill superintendent.

In 1921 fire broke out in the East Hope hotel and spread through the town destroying many homes and businesses. Some properties had some fire insurance; others did not.

The city hall was one of the buildings that burned. For lack of a meeting place, meetings were held in rented space until a new city hall could be found. In 1928, an existing building was purchased on Lookout Boulevard, for \$175, for use as the city hall.

Property could be purchased just by paying off back taxes. Most businesses had to either close or cut back severely. The Hope Lumber Company property became essentially worthless and was sold in 1930 for \$100.

Most lakefront property remained vacant until after World War II. In the meantime, a real estate developer, A. L. Pringle purchased the old sawmill property. In 1946, he applied for annexation into the city. Within a few years, three resorts, two marinas, two tourist camps, a restaurant, a motel, a grocery store, a garage,



East Hope Hotel, Circa 1915.
Photo courtesy of Janie Van Stone



1935 Aerial view of East Hope
Photo Courtesy of U.S. Forest Service



1958 Aerial view of East Hope
Photo Courtesy of U.S. Forest Service

another sawmill, and lakeshore homes were developed. In 1950, East Hope had a population of 152.

In 1962, the city hall building was condemned as a fire hazard so the City purchased the lot where the former Empress Theater was and built a new city hall and fire station. A fire truck was also purchased. The building was dedicated in 1963.

In 1971, the construction of state highway 200 along the lakeshore improved traffic flow but also changed the character and usability of the lakefront. It reduced the amount of lakeshore land available for commercial use. After the highway was constructed, the second sawmill closed down, the resorts closed and much of the remaining land reverted to private residences.

Tourism is now the primary commercial activity within the city. Retirees continue to move into the area and now constitute the majority of city residents. Most of the working population commutes to Sandpoint for work. The remainders are either owners or employees of local businesses.



Lakefront and 2nd Hope Lumber Company, 1953
Photo courtesy of Phil Driesbach

Time capsule vision of the city in 2050

To provide a time capsule vision of what the City will be like in 2050, one must first look at a few key goals in the comprehensive plan. The first goals to likely affect the future are “To guide the future growth so as to maintain an overall low-density character that retains the existing qualities of a unique rural community” and “To identify suitable present and future land use needs that will establish an orderly and predictable pattern of development, which will ultimately serve as protection and enhancement of property values and the environment”. For the City to grow and meet these goals, the only way it can is to expand to the east. I foresee that the City will expand up to one mile further east with mainly residential development and light industrial and commercial activity along the transportation corridor. This will require substantial expansion of the current water and sewer systems.

Another key goal is “To maintain the residential character of East Hope, while providing the necessary diversity of housing types”. Currently, lakeshore property is zoned commercial and residential. Its value is at a premium and I expect the demand for this property to continue in the future. I predict that as of the value of this property escalates, that more of the existing private residences will be converted to condominium type development or service oriented commercial businesses. The hillside residential area will remain as a low density residential area.

Finally, another goal is “To maintain and promote a healthy economic and social climate for the residents of East Hope”. Since there is very little commercial property currently available within the City, I predict that any new commercial development will occur in the expanded eastern area transportation corridor, but that the citizens will continue to rely mainly on services provided in Sandpoint and the surrounding area. The social climate will remain as is.

Administration

Since its incorporation, the city has had 26 mayors or chairmen and **20?** City Clerk/Treasurers. Currently, mayors and city council members each serve for four-year terms and the City Clerk/Treasurer is appointed.

List of East Hope Mayors/Chairmen

Term	Name
1913 - 1914	Lutton, W. F.
1914 - 1919	Ferguson, C. A.
1919 - 1922	Boyington, E. I.
1922 - 1927	Hayes, F. S.
1927 - 1931	Reem, Frank
1931 - 1933	Yaryan, F. B.
1933 - 1935	Hayes, G. L.
1935 - 1936	Henrichs, Ralph
1936 - 1937	Yakley, M. F.
1937 - 1938	Berkey, H. N.
1938 - 1945	Butler, E. M.
1945 - 1946	Pringle, A. L.
1946 - 1949	VanStone, Fred
1949 - 1950	Rojan, W. A
1950 - 1951	VanStone, Fred
1951 - 1953	Rojan, W. A
1953 - 1954	Sherbacker, Jerry
1954 - 1970	Pedersen, Art
1970 - 1973	Sisson, Stan
1973 - 1978	Butler, Guy
1978 - 1994	Yaryan, Elona
1994 - 1999	Harris, Bob
1999 -	Moon, Lawrence
	Madden, Paul
	Both, Jake
	Fleischer, Vern

List of East Hope City Clerks/Treasurers

Term	Name
1913 - 1915	Root, Jack
1915 - 1923	Root, H. F.
1923 - 1925	Wood, R. F.
1925 - 1928	Yakley, Elizabeth
1928 - 1940	Tuiniga, Viola
1940 - 1940	Bennett, J. H.
1940 - 1945	Yakley, Elizabeth
1945 - 1947	Crisp, Orville
1947 - 1949	Pierce, Marion
1949 - 1953	Diefenbach, Wm.
1953 - 1955	Butler, Lillian M.
1955 - 1961	Diefenbach, Eleanor
1961 - 1963	Phillips, George F.
- 1997	Ruen, Teri
1997 -	Butler, Sandy
	Franck, Christy

Bibliography

1. Sandpoint Experiment Station 1910 – 2004
2. Ibid.
3. 2000 Census
4. Unpublished recollections of Sam Strong
5. Ibid