## **SARGENT, George & Charlotte**

George Sargent was born on 22nd March 1859, at Foleshill, Warwickshire, England, the son of James Sargent, grocer, and his wife Ann, nee Coates. He trained as a baker.

[Another source states that he was born in Birmingham, his father having carried on business as a baker in that city. George, in either case, followed the baking trade, in association with his father.]**1**

He arrived In Sydney as a young man and continued in the baking trade, He is said to have obtained employment in Sydney under various firms, working in a George Street bakery, becoming foreman.

On 31st January 1878, a son to George Sargent and Charlotte Foster, Henry Hartley Foster, later known as Foster Henry Hartley Sargent, was born at Woolloomooloo.

Charlotte was born on 28th May 1856 in Sydney, the seventh child of English parents, Thomas Foster, coachman, and his wife Sarah, nee Thornber. After schooling she successfully managed a confectionery shop.

George and Charlotte were married on 5th September 1883 at St. Peter’s Anglican Church.

They ran a bakery at Glebe before a win in George Adam’s Tattersall’s sweep enabled them to buy a small shop in Surrey-street, Darlinghurst, about 1889. They baked 700 loaves daily, but, when George became ill next year, were forced to sell. Six months later they opened a confectionery shop in Oxford-street, Paddington, and began making small meat-pies which, selling for a penny, were an immediate success. Charlotte became known as the ‘Princess’ and George, sporting a handlebar moustache, as the ‘Colonel’.

The Sargent’s shop moved to 11 Hunter Street in 1895 where business continued to boom.**2**

In Jul 1896 Mr. Sargent was continuing to have improvements made at “The Rest,” Beecroft, the latest being the making of a large dam at the rear of the premises.**3**

In July 1897, the Redfern Bicycle Club conducted a road race from North Sydney to Beecroft, a distance of 15 miles. The prizes were: An open order for £10, presented by Mr. G. Sargent, of Beecroft; a £4 open order presented by the residents of Beecroft, £2 provided by the club, and £2 for the rider doing the fastest time.**4**

In May 1899 there was advertised ‘To Let, for a term, a real nice furnished home, “Waratah,” Beecroft, 3 bedrooms, dining and sitting room, kitchen, bathroom, etc. To a careful tenant very mod. Rent. Sargent, Beecroft or Sargent, Corso, Manly.

In July it was reported that Mr. Melbourne Green, an old “Beecrofter” came back to live in Beecroft for a month or six weeks and was living in Mr. George Sargent’s house. In early August it was reported that Mr. George Sargent had left his house furnished and had gone to reside at Manly for twelve months.**5**

About 1900 they sold out to W. E. Dance and travelled overseas. That year, their son, Hartley, who had also learned the trade, brought a bakery at Manly, and in 1901 opened two bakeries in Pitt Street and refreshment rooms in George Street.

When his parents tried to restart their business, they were sued by W. E. Dance. Regaining their right to trade in the city, they joined Hartley in partnership.**6**

In July 1901, Mr. Melbourne Green, accountant in the Water and Sewerage Board who left Beecroft about two years before had again residing in Mr. Sargent's house in Copeland-street, Beecroft.**7**

In July 1902 Mrs. Charlotte Sargent, wife of George Sargent, of Beecroft, was about to build several new villa residences. In June 1903 eight lots of the Cranbrook Estate were put up for auction but only two were sold, Mr. Sargent being the purchaser in each instance.**8**

In June 1903, at the invitation of Mr. and Mrs. George Sargent, a number of friends assembled at “Uralla,” Beecroft, on the 30th [May] and spent a very enjoyable evening. Dancing commenced about 8 o’clock; and was continued with zest until close upon midnight, to excellent music provided by De Groen’s band (piano, violin and cornet). An excellent supper was provided. Mrs. Sargent, sen., wore a handsome and becoming costume of black velvet, and Mrs. H. Sargent a pretty gown of blue satin and black velvet. Local guests included Mrs. Barnby, Mrs. Lee, Mrs. Skellett, Mrs. Forsyth, Mrs. Meadmore & Miss Chorley.**9**

In late 1903 Mr. George Sargent, encouraging the young, offered a medal for the best writer at the Beecroft public school for the year.**10**

In April 1904 Messrs. Sargent entertained all the young ladies employed in their various tea rooms at a plain and fancy-dress ball. About 300 young ladies employed by the firm were present, besides a number of guests. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. On Easter Monday Mrs. Sargent gave a picnic at her private residence, “Uralla,” Beecroft, to the younger girls in the firm's employ, and they spent a most enjoyable time.**11**

In December 1904, at Beecroft Public School, Mr. G. Sargent provided a gold medal as a Prize for writing, which this year had been won by G. Bray.

The gold medal presented by Mr. Sargent was in the form of a Maltese cross, and was inscribed on the one side with the winner's monogram, 'G.B.'

Mr. Sargent's also provided a silver medal for writing, which was won by Grace Smith.**12**

In January 1905 Mr. Sargent's cottage, “Waratah,” Copeland-road, was available for rent of 20s a week. The cottage included a large dining-room, 4 bedrooms, kitchen, etc., situated on 1-acre of land, with garden and orchard. That year, at the Beecroft Public School, Mr. G. Sargent’s gold medal for writing was won by Clarice McKay.**13**

In 1906 a private company, Sargent’s Ltd., was formed and when, in February 1909, it was registered as a public company the three (George, Charlotte & Hartley) were general managers and George and Hartley directors. George later became chairman. He was an astute buyer, and Charlotte, in charge of the female staff, gave meticulous attention to detail.**14**

In late 1906 Mr. George Sargent, of Beecroft, purchased the mansion and grounds of Mr. Hardie (of Hardie and Gorman), of Castle Hill, known as “Craig Gowan,” and would be going there to live. The price paid, it is understood, was £18,000.

CRAIG GOWAN at CASTLE-HILL was advertised as ‘A good residential property, 45 acres of rich land (Torrens Title) in grass and cultivation paddocks, and 12 acres orchard. Commodious House, with garden, extensive views, wide verandahs, hall, drawing and dining rooms, and six bedrooms, etc., etc., detached stable. (600ft altitude.) For auction sale, Wednesday, 17th October 1906.

[Some years later, in 1936, this former Sargent residence, “Craig Gowan,” Castle Hill, was occupied by Mr. Richard Glinn Vallack, who took ill while sitting at dinner, and subsequently died.]**15**

The Hornsby Council Ratepayers List for Beecroft, 1907, included:

Sargent, George, Malton road, Beecroft, 2a 0r 39p

Sargent, Charlotte, Copeland road, Beecroft, occupier Mrs. C. G. Lindsay, 2a 0r 25p

Sargent, George, Caterer, Copeland road, Beecroft, occupier H. J. Shand, 2a 0r 29p

Sargent, George, Caterer, Copeland road, Beecroft, occupier R. F. Searle, 1a 0r 16p

Sargent, George, Caterer, Copeland road, Beecroft, occupier H. Husband, 1a 0r 17p

Sargent, George, Caterer, Copeland road, Beecroft, occupier E. S. Rofe [?], 2a 0r 38p

Sargent, George, Caterer, Copeland road, Beecroft, 1a 2r 2p

In May 1907 it was reported that Mr. R. P. Searl, of Searl and Son, was about to take up his residence in Beecroft, in one of Sargent's cottages.**16**

In 1907, at Beecroft Public School, Mr. G. Sargent's gold medal for general proficiency was won by Isa Bonsall. In 1908 a medal donated by Mr. G. Sargent was awarded to J. Purnell as dux of the school.**17**

By February 1909 Mr. Sargent was the patron of the Castle Hill Agricultural and Horticultural Association. In December, at Beecroft Public School, Mr. G. Sargent’s gold medal was awarded to R. S. Forsyth.**18**

In April 1910, Mr. R. T. B. Andrews, of Hornsby, took up residence at “Uralla,” Copeland-road, Beecroft. In August five brick villas were being erected in Copeland-road, Beecroft, to the order of Mr. Sargent. Messrs. Nixon and Son were the architects, and Mr. Brown[e] the contractor. By December the five cottages being erected for Mr. Sargent were now nearly completed. That month, Mrs. Sargent’s medal (dux of school) was won by Helen Bonsall.**19**

In April 1911 The new cottages recently completed for Mr. Sargent in Copeland road had been taken by the following families: Mr. and Mrs. Rae, late of Epping; Mr. and Mrs. Christopher Little, of Strathfield; Mr. and Mrs. Morton, of Petersham; Mr. and Mrs. Macindoe, of Petersham; Mr. and Mrs. Green, of Wagga Wagga.**20**

In September 1913, Mr. G. Sargent was selling, by public auction, household furniture and effects, the contents of a Five-Room Furnished Cottage, lately occupied by the Chauffeur, and known as “La Lotta,” Castle Hill Road, Castle Hill, and opposite “Garthowen.”**21**

On 30th January 1915 there was an auction of Mr. George Sargent’s nine villas, comprising:

Lots 1, 2, and 3. - "AMBY," "WYC0LLAR," and "RESTDOWN," built of brick, each having tile roof, verandah, hall, 6 rooms, kitchen, laundry, bathroom, etc. Two let at £66 per annum each. Land to each, about 56 x 397.

(4) - "ELIM," Brick, slate roof, verandah, hall, 8 rooms, kitchen, bathroom, etc.; garage, stables, man's room. Land 93ft x 590ft. Vacant.

(5) . - "HARBLEDOWN," similar to Lot 1, W.B. Garage additional. Land 89 x 439. Let at £72 p.a.

(6). - "URALLA," Brick, tile roof, 3 verandahs, hall, 9 rooms, kitchen, bathroom, etc. Land 89 x 439. Let at £80 per annum.

(7) - "COORANGA," Brick, tile roof, 2 verandahs, 6 rooms, bathroom, kitchen, etc. Land 80 x 580. Let at £60 per annum.

(8). - "ROSEVILLE," Brick, tile roof, 3 verandahs, 7 rooms, kitchen, bathroom, etc. Land about 80 x 577. Let at £66 per annum.

(9). - “WARATAH," W.B. Bungalow, iron roof, three verandahs, hall, 7 rooms, kitchen, bathroom, and offices. Land 165 x 567. Act at £52 per annum.

TORRENS TITLE

Plans from HARDIE AND GORMAN PROPRIETETARY, LTD.,

AUCTIONEERS, 133 PITT-STREET.

T. STOBO, Local Agent, Beecroft.**22**

In September 1915 Mr. F. H. Sargent, managing director [or general manager] of Sargent’s Ltd., son of George & Charlotte Sargent, having recently joined the Australian Expeditionary Forces, was leaving for ‘the front’. A banquet at the Sydney Town Hall was arranged. The following year he was captured by the Germans and remained a prisoner for the duration of the war.

The Sargents were generous supporters of charity. They raised over £4000 for the war effort when their son Hartley was taken prisoner while serving with the 54th Battalion. Charlotte organised functions for soldiers’ wives, widows and children, and assisted returned soldiers.**23**

In November 1917 it was announced that Mr. George Sargent, had been for some time in ill-health, and was confined to his home at Beecroft.

On 13th August 1921 he died at his residence, "Hartley Hope," Vaucluse-road, Rose Bay, aged 64 years. The cause of death was cerebral haemorrhage.

One of the founders of the well-known firm of caterers, Sargent’s Ltd., the firm had, at the time of his death, established 46 branches of the business in Sydney and Melbourne.

Although the late Mr. Sargent was a director of the firm, general management for some time past had been in the hands of his son, Foster Henry Hartley Sargent, who had spent his life in the business, becoming general manager and chairman of directors of the firm after his return from the war in early 1919.

Mr. Sargent had the complete confidence and affection of his employees, some of whom had been in his service for many years, and he was a generous supporter of charitable movements.

George Sargent left a widow and one son.

The funeral left the deceased's late residence for the Waverley Cemetery. The long cortege, on arrival at the cemetery gates, passed through a double line of several hundred of the employees of Sargents, Limited.

The chief mourners were: - Messrs. F.H. Sargent (son), Frank and Ivor Sargent (grandsons), H. Sargent (brother), H. I. Sargent (nephew), S. Furness (brother-in-law), F. and H. Furness (nephews), J. Howard, H. Warton, C. Gledhill (nephews), W. Savage (brother-in-law).

Probate was granted of the will of the late Mr. George Sargent, of Vaucluse, company director, leaving an estate of the net value of £21,214, of which £10,555 represented realty. The testator appointed his wife, Charlotte Sargent, sole executrix, and devised and bequeathed to her the whole of his estate for her absolute use and benefit.**24**

In October 1921 Charlotte Sargent, widow of George Sargent, of Rose Bay, company director, sued John Chapman to recover possession of a property called "Grandview," at Castle Hill. The parties agreed to dispense with a jury, and to have a verdict entered, for the plaintiff, on condition that execution should not issue pending the determination of a motion for injunction now before the Equity Court.**25**

On 15th May 1924, Charlotte Sargent, widow of George Sargent, and the one of the founders of Sargent’s, Ltd., caterers and restaurant keepers, died at her residence, "'Hartley Hope," Vaucluse-road, Rose Bay.

She was regarded as one of the best-known businesswomen of Sydney.

She was widely known throughout the Hills district, having resided at Castle Hill for a number of years, where she was very popular.

She appointed her son, Foster Hartley Sargent and her grandson, Frank Sargent, executors and trustees of her estate, and among bequests were shares to the value of £500 and certain property in Copeland-street, Beecroft, to her adopted daughter, Dorothy May Roffie; shares to the value of £100 to her chauffeur Harold Charles Worth; and £200 to Mrs. Isabella Warton, of Liverpool-street, Darlinghurst.

Mrs. Sargent left the residue of her estate, in equal shares, to her son, Foster Hartley Sargent, and her five grandchildren.

Her estate was sworn for probate at £38,669.**26**

**Bibliography**

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25 Sydney Morning Herald, Sat 22 Oct 1921

26 The Daily Telegraph, Fri 16 May 1924; Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 17 May 1924; The Sun, Wed 25 Jun 1924

**NOTE**: Additional information contained within Beecroft Cheltenham History Group website and book ‘Beecroft and Cheltenham, the Shaping of a Sydney Community to 1914’.