

PIERSON MEMORIAL HOUSE

Kitami City, Hokkaido, Japan



Long, long ago,

Charmed by a view of the setting sun,

A couple from a distant land

Made this place their home.



Missionaries George and Ida Pierson and Kitami

On a crest surmounted with ancient oaks and towering elms they stood amid the delicate fragrance of bellflowers as the setting sun tinted the peaceful sky over Notsukeushi.

The impressively tall missionary, already more than fifty years of age, and his wife had been strolling along this ridge, considering whether to establish their mission headquarters in Engaru or in Notsukeushi (now Kitami). Looking up, they saw the giant burning disc of the sun slowly declining towards the mountains to the west. Charmed by the beauty of the scene, their uncertainties were resolved and they decided there and then to come and live at this place.

In early autumn, a house in the Swiss chalet style favoured by Mrs Pierson was completed on this spot, reminiscent of the natural beauty of their hometown Elizabeth, New Jersey.

To the local people, this western-style building was very unusual and it received a constant stream of visitors, drawn by their admiration for the character and dedication of the two missionaries.

George Pierson first arrived in Japan in 1888 and subsequently spent forty years here, thirty-four of them in Hokkaido. He, later with his wife, followed their calling to Otaru, then Sapporo, Asahikawa and Kitami. From the south to the north, from

cities to rural areas, they kept the light of their dream alive, fortified by their pioneering spirit of courage and endurance.

In Otaru and in Sapporo they contributed to the first education for women in Hokkaido and taught at Sapporo Agricultural College. In Asahikawa they dedicated themselves to mission work among soldiers, prisoners and Ainu, campaigned to end prostitution and promoted the development of schools.

In Kitami they published annotated translations of the Old and New Testaments, worked to prevent the establishment of places of prostitution and transformed the lives of many women and children.

They called this spot Mikashiwa no Mori (Three Oaks), developing a deep affection for it and for this town. From here they could see the Hokkosha (Christian pioneer) settlement in the distance and the lights of the town close at hand. This place became a house of prayer for Hokkosha pioneers and other citizens, a house of God where the words of the Bible were explained. In the spring of 1928, the Piersons bid a tearful farewell to Mikashiwa no Mori, which had been their home for fourteen years, and set out down poplar-lined Pierson Avenue on their way back to the United States.

Main Items Displayed

First Floor Display Room - Memories of George and Ida Pierson

Items formerly belonging to the Piersons:

Bell, organ, desk, lamp, chalice

Photographs, letters, pamphlets, other writings

Mr and Mrs Pierson, Rural Missionaries (in Japanese)

Works of George & Ida Pierson:

The Year 1908 in Hokkaido	1908
'DAN=DAN' ? How to Present Christ to Unbelievers	1909
Through Kitami in June	1910
Annotated Complete Old Testament	1916
Annotated Complete New Testament	1916
Annotated Complete Bible	1916
Let Us Go Into the Next Towns in Japan	1934
Forty Happy Years in Japan	1936
The Cross of Christ	1937
Ask and It Shall Be Given You	1937
The Call of Rural Japan	?
Writings in Japanese by George & Ida Pierson	

Translations into Japanese:

Forty Happy Years in Japan	1985
Through Kitami in June	2002
The Year 1908 in Hokkaido	2009



Second Floor Display Room

Items related to Elizabeth,
New Jersey - Sister City to Kitami

In June 1969, Kitami signed a sister city agreement with Elizabeth, New Jersey, U.S.A., the birthplace of George Pierson.

Kitami and Elizabeth have maintained their international friendship since then.



WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH Elizabeth New Jersey

Sister city agreement, city guides, city maps, city planning reports, annual education reports, publicity pamphlets, photographic collections, other.

Lives of George & Ida Pierson

- 1861 George Pierson born 14 January in Elizabeth, New Jersey, U.S.A., at the time of the outbreak of the Civil War.
- 1862 Ida Goepp born in Easton, Pennsylvania. Her father a lawyer.
- 1882 G. Pierson graduated from the University of New Jersey (now Princeton University).
- 1885 G. Pierson entered Princeton Theological College. Graduated. Evangelical work in Cumberland, Pennsylvania, summer 1887.
- 1888 G. Pierson became a minister on 16 April. Ordained on 21 June at Westminster Presbyterian Church, Elizabeth, his home church, and simultaneously appointed a missionary to Japan. Set sail from America for Japan on 21 August.
- 1888-90 G. Pierson learned Japanese while teaching at Meiji Gakuin High School in Shiba, Tokyo.
- 1890 Ida Goepp first came to Japan, as a missionary teacher.
- 1890-92 G. Pierson engaged in mission work in Tokyo and Chiba while teaching at Chiba Prefectural High School. Spent time in Morioka, Iwate Prefecture doing mission work.
- 1894-95 G. Pierson moved to Otaru. He married Ida Goepp in Tokyo on 12 June, 1895. After a furlough break in the United States, they returned to Hokkaido.
- 1897-1900 Moved to Sapporo. Taught at Hokusei Girls' School (now Hokusei Gakuen) and at Sapporo Agricultural College (now Hokkaido University).
- 1901 Moved to Asahikawa. Joined Japanese minister Sakamoto Naohiro in campaigning against prostitution. Engaged in mission work in Tokachi Prison. Extended the scope of their mission activity to include the Tokachi, Kushiro, Kitami, Engaru, Nayoro and Teshio regions.
- 1914 After taking a one-year furlough break in the United States, moved to Notsukeushi (Kitami) in late spring.
- 1914-28 Lived in Notsukeushi (Kitami) for fourteen years. Engaged in mission work in eastern and northern Hokkaido.
- 1928 Left Kitami in May. Officially retired from mission work in August. Went to live in Philadelphia. Devoted themselves to writing, several works published.
- 1937 Mrs Ida Goepp Pierson died in Philadelphia at the age of 75.
- 1939 George Pierson died in Philadelphia on 31 July at the age of 78.

Pierson Memorial House

This house, built in 1914, was the home of Mr and Mrs Pierson for fourteen years. It was later altered, but in 1970 was restored by Kitami City to its original form. It was opened on 31 May 1971 as the Pierson Memorial House, and is governed by the Pierson Memorial House Ordinance of 1 October 1971. Since then it has functioned as a memorial house and museum, under the control of the Kitami Board of Education.

(この英訳文章は北海学園北海道大学教授、Graham W. Herd氏によるものです)



Pierson Memorial House

- Open : Six Days a Week
 Tuesday - Sunday
 Monday when a National Holiday
- Opening Hours: 9.30 a.m. - 4.30 p.m.
- Closed : Monday
 Tuesday following a National Holiday
 Holiday Closure:
 New Year
 30 December - 6 January
- Admission : Free
- Access : From JR Kitami Station and Kitami Bus Terminal
 15 Minutes Walk; 5 Minutes by Taxi

Managed and Staffed by Members of the NPO Pierson Society on behalf of Kitami City.

PHONE..FAX (0157) 31-1215
[\[homepage\]](http://www.npo-pierson.org/)
<http://www.npo-pierson.org/>

missionary Dr. Pierson's hometown



City Hall

Elizabeth New Jersey

