

Early Vancouver

Volume Five

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Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected During 1936-1945.

Supplemental to volumes one, two, three and four collected in 1931, 1932 and 1934.

About the 2011 Edition

The 2011 edition is a transcription of the original work collected and published by Major Matthews. Handwritten marginalia and corrections Matthews made to his text over the years have been incorporated and some typographical errors have been corrected, but no other editorial work has been undertaken. The edition and its online presentation was produced by the City of Vancouver Archives to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the City's founding. The project was made possible by funding from the Vancouver Historical Society.

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MEMO OF CONVERSATION WITH MISS ELSA WIEGAND, 3836 WEST 23RD AVENUE, DAUGHTER OF CHARLES WIEGAND, WELL-KNOWN PIONEER OF VANCOUVER, WHO VERY KINDLY CALLED AT THE CITY ARCHIVES THIS MORNING, 28 JUNE 1946.

The celebration of the sixtieth anniversary of the incorporation of Vancouver is on everyone's mind, and we are compiling a roll of all those who have lived, and are still living, sixty years or more on Burrard Inlet.

CHARLES WIEGAND. ALEXANDER STREET.

Miss Wiegand: "Father came to Burrard Inlet on December 5th 1885. He had travelled all around the world before finally settling here. He was apprenticed to a sailing ship, but he liked the beauty of the scenery here and decided to stop. At first he lived in a little bit of a place, a sort of shack or cottage on the shore between old Granville Townsite at Carrall Street, and the Hastings Sawmill, and he has told me that when the tide came in—that is, at extremely high tide—it flooded the floor." (See photograph C.V. N. Wat. 25, P. Wat. 43.) "He was single at the time, and is now eighty-eight, and wonderfully well and hearty, and still a first class rifle shot at game; he even, during the recent war, belonged to the Pacific Coast Rangers on Gambier Island, where we have six hundred acres."

PRINCESS STREET METHODIST CHURCH.

"Father and Mother's marriage at the Princess Street Methodist Church was the first in that church. Before that he used to attend St. James' Church. After Father married, he went to live on Keefer Street, not very far up, about two blocks from Westminster Avenue, and there I was born. We lived there until I was three years old, and then we moved to Twelfth Avenue and Ontario, the corner of Twelfth and Ontario, and there my brother, who is dead—he died without children—was born. Then, when I was about twelve years old, we moved to the 1300 block on Pender Street West, and our home was right down on the shore; we kept a row boat at the bottom of the garden, and used to row over to the fishermen living on Deadman's Island, and get fish and take them to feed the seals in the seal pond in Stanley Park."

CHARLES WIEGAND, FURNITURE. FRANK W. HART, PIONEER, 1885.

"It was in this manner that Father started in the furniture business. Mr. Frank W. Hart, whom you know, his widow is living in Vancouver, was in the furniture business here before 'The Fire'; he had a small joinery or furniture factory and Father worked for him, and at the time of 'The Fire,' Father was instrumental in saving his business papers, or something like that. Father tried to save his own father's picture; he had it under his arm; but the fire raced along so quickly he had to let it go; he dropped it. Later, Father managed Mr. Sehl's furniture business in Vancouver, and then he worked for a little while for a Mr. Heck" (sic), "I think that was his name, and later he bought out that business and had his store on Cordova Street. Ultimately, Father was quite a leading furniture dealer in Vancouver."

GAMBIER ISLAND.

"Father retired in or about 1906, and became interested in his summer home on Gambier Island. We had been up and down for some time before he took it over as his country home. We continued to live in Vancouver at our new home we purchased after we left Pender Street. We went to Gambier Island during the summer. Father developed the place, made an artificial lake, erected an attractive rustic dwelling; there was no cattle or stock, but we had birds such as pheasants. It is quite a remote place, but the scenery is unsurpassed; there is a glorious view of Mount Garibaldi. It was never given a name; I suppose we should have. Then in the winter we returned to our home in the thirteen hundred block, Burnaby Street."

As told to me, 28 June 1946.

J.S. Matthews.