



Street Stories

Catchpole Avenue

GPS: [49.14612,-122.271978](#)



While visiting his parents at their Hatzic homestead in 1930, Basil captured an image of them in the living room of their home and in 1948 made the above etching of it. The original print along with some other family records were donated to the Mission District Historical by Basil in 1982 when he returned for visit. At this time, the old family home which was constructed in 1907 was still standing.

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Our story begins in London, England in 1907, where a successful tobacconist became so excited by the prospect of immigration to the New World that he sold his three shops, packed up his wife and four young sons, and headed west.

The man's name was Arthur Catchpole, and where he finally settled was Hatzic, on a seven-hectare fruit farm which was adjacent to the OMI lands. The family built a house and carried on producing small berries and fruit. He took an active interest in the community, and at one point served as the municipal clerk for the District of Mission.

The most remarkable of the four Catchpole boys was Basil (1896-1984) who, between 1912 and 1914, used to cycle into Mission and work at the old Bank of Commerce building, which now houses the Mission Museum. In the First World War he was decorated for his air force service by the Canadian, British, and French governments. He then went on to become an artist and writer.

Arthur and his wife did not stay in Hatzic very long. In 1936, following an ice storm that damaged many of their fruit trees, they moved to Niagara, where they are buried.

Meanwhile, Basil had settled in England.

In 1966 while on holiday in England, a Mission resident named C.A. Finch was amazed to meet a man who had lived in Hatzic at the turn of the century. It was Basil. The two did not meet again until 1981.

According to Finch, Basil, by now a robust 85, was still living in England "surrounded by decades of art and history. His curiosity about Hatzic and Mission knew no bounds."

In May 1982, the annual reunion of Canadian and American First World War flyers brought Basil to Hatzic – his first time back in 52 years. There he visited the old farm site, some of which, to his delight, had not yet been developed. He also managed to meet some of the old-timers he had known in his youth. Two years later, in 1984, he passed away.

"Thank you, Basil Catchpole," wrote C.A. Finch in the local paper upon the pioneer's death, "for being part of Hatzic's heritage and an unforgettable part of our family's life."

Street Stories is provided by the Mission Community Archives, which is operated by the Mission Historical Society. If you have any questions or further information on the Catchpole family, please call us at 604-820-2621.

By David Buss; edited with additions by Val Billesberger