



Street Stories

Fripp Terrace

GPS: [49.1575502,-22.2495684](https://www.google.com/maps?q=49.1575502,-22.2495684)

Someone once claimed that Thomas Fripp painted so realistically that one of his wintery landscapes, when hung in the living room, cost the owner an extra ton of coal a year in heating expenses. Fripp was described by a friend as “a little gnome of a man... [who] must have been muscled by steel wires for he was indefatigable.” His colleagues described him as “the most outstanding watercolor artist in Western Canada.”

Thomas Fripp was born in London, England on March 23, 1864, the son of George Arthur Fripp – an artist whom Queen Victoria commissioned



Gertrude and Thomas [between 1925 and 1931], were also active in the community during their residence. When Hatzic Hall was built and the Women's Institute was formed, Gertrude became secretary-treasurer. Tom assisted with the organization of local concerts in which he often participated. Pioneer Richard Drake recalled in 1958: “His [Tom] recitations of poems from the two ‘Alice’ books were quite notable too, such as the Walrus, and the Carpenters and the Jabberwock. The latter was done with such dramatic gestures, facial contortions, and voice changes that it quite frightened some of the small fry.” (Fraser Valley Record Centennial Series, 1958

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to paint the scenery of Balmoral Castle. As a boy, Thomas travelled and studied in Italy and France before returning to England in 1887. In England, he received artistic training at St. John's Wood and the Royal Academy Art School.

In 1893, Thomas and his brother Charles, who was also an artist, immigrated to Hatzic where they established a farm. In 1897, Thomas married Gertrude Murill and had three children. They lived in a cottage built for them on Henry Street to which Thomas added rooms, including a studio. Following a farming accident, however, Fripp returned to his first love: landscape painting.

Though B.C. had no art market in those rugged early days, it certainly had many landscapes. Fripp's favorites were the view of Hatzic Lake from Neilson Park and the head of Stave Lake.

Spending his summers exploring, sketching, and painting, and his winters fine-tuning his art, Fripp produced hundreds of superb landscapes. He was also a talented photographer and our archives hold many of his beautiful photos of early Mission and its people.

Gaining a name in art circles, he established and served as president of the B.C. Society of Fine Arts. He was also a favorite artist of B.C.'s Lieutenant Governor Frank Ross, who bought many of Fripp's paintings. Some of them were hung in Government House in Victoria.

Having raised their family, Thomas and Gertrude moved to Vancouver in 1923 where, in 1931, Fripp passed away. He remains important enough today to have his own entry in the Canadian Encyclopedia.

Street Stories is provided by the Mission Community Archives, which is operated by the Mission Historical Society.

by David Buss and Val Billesberger

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