



# Street Stories

## Shook Street

GPS: [49.1549562-122.2385](https://www.google.com/maps/place/49.1549562,-122.2385)



*Frank Shook reigned as BC's Berry King from his Hatzic Island fruit farm in Mission's early years.*

*Mission Community Archives 0313-PR021-015*

On February 16, 1922, the local paper ran an article that proclaimed “[Frank] Shook of Hatzic Island is known as the ‘Berry King of BC’” and “the story of his rise is as wonderful and fascinating as any romance of the west ever penned.”

Franklin Marlon Shook was born in Ontario in 1864 and came west with the CPR in the 1880s. With the railway completed, he became the first CPR agent in Mission. In 1887, he married Mary Scorey, with whom he had four children.

After many years of work, Shook purchased 46 hectares on Hatzic Island. Living in a barn on the island, he managed to clear his land while having to walk 10 kilometers to and from work each day. At first he tried raising cattle, but that fell through. Then he started growing berries.

Within a matter of years, Shook was able to quit his railway job and become a prosperous berry farmer. Yet Shook had trouble finding enough people to pick the berries. As a solution, he began bringing in women and girls from across Canada, then England, to pick in his fields. He eventually hired as many as 200 girls each summer, building a big bunkhouse and cafeteria for the annual flood of pickers.

It wasn't all work, though. The girls en-

joyed swimming in and boating on the lake, taking walks and watching films in cinema set up on the island itself. The girls also enjoyed their food. Shook once said, “You take 200 healthy girls, practically living out of doors and working in the open...and believe me they make food disappear.”

The yearly flood of young girls into Mission attracted the local young men who, parking their buggies and cars up and down the roads, could be found hanging about the fields. It seems that many of the girls would go back to those vehicles with the young men. Frustrated at losing so many pickers to romance, Shook was said to have taken to patrolling Hatzic Lake in a rowboat, armed with a rock salt-charged shotgun.

Still, Shook's farm was a stunning success. At one point, his output of berries was far greater than that of any individual operator in Canada. Frank Shook died in 1942.

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 Shook, please call us at 604-820-2621.

*David Buss*

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