

Vancouver Has A Charming Summer Cottage Colony At Her Door

“The Lure of the North Arm” by [T.E. Julian](#), *Opportunities* magazine, April 1911, pages 22–23.

Editor’s Note: During the early years of the 20th century, prominent families from New Westminster and Vancouver purchased land at Belcarra, Whiskey Cove and Coombe for their summer homes. Vancouver architect T.E. Julian acquired 50 acres at Coombe in 1908, and in 1909 built a cottage (still standing in 2009) on the rock bluff just south of the community wharf known as ‘Coombe Landing’ where the harbour ferry stopped.

For situation Vancouver is unique among cities. As a commercial center it has every facility of shipping by water or rail, and that, too, without any special engineering difficulties as a watering place and summer resort for bathing and boating it has but few rivals, and for mountain scenery and ease of access thereto it is hard to find its equal. To the resident citizen however the land-locked inlets extending from ten to one hundred miles between the mountains, their little bays and projecting points, their facilities for boating, and the many scenic spots for summer homes are probably the most attractive and enjoyable.



T.E. Julian

(CVA VLP9 1560)

The harbour is one of these bodies of water. The main branch thereof, about twelve miles long, commerce claims as her own, and is welcome thereto. A narrow branch, however, known as the North Arm and extending about fourteen miles almost due north, and an extension of about three miles long, known as Bedwell Bay, are ideal for recreation. Together they afford a shoreline of about thirty miles, along which during the last few years, numerous cottages have been built, and wharves or floats placed as landings for the many craft which, in the summer ply the quiet waters of the North Arm (Indian Arm) and Bedwell Bay.

The names given to these places, such as Belcarra, “the place of sunshine,” Coombe, “a sheltered hollow”, Cozy Cove, and Woodlands, are simple and descriptive. Others, such as the Wigwam and Meslillooet, show a desire to link the past and present — the savage and the civilized. Whatever the name, however, each place has something so specially and peculiarly insinuating and attractive as to induce the summer dwellers in each locality to believe that they have the beauty spot of the whole inlet. The following will illustrate this: Mr. A. Says: “Boys, your places aren’t in it. Mr. B. was at my place on Sunday, and when he had got seated and had seen the glorious views from my verandah, he could not contain himself, but said “Why, Mr. A., I thought that we had the finest place on the Arm. But you have us beaten.” This the “boys” repeated to Mr. B. And the latter says: “The old sinner told you that, did he? Why sirs, I couldn’t say it. I would not change our place for ten of his.”

“Quite so!” replied a little lady who lives on a rock whence a view can be had all down the Inlet, and on a clear night all the way up to the polar star. “We know we have the most beautiful place, but we do not brag. We let it go at that.”

The truth is that every bit of water, crag and peak has a beauty of its own. Summer resorts are mostly places not showing off peacock colors and surface politeness. The forests, mountains and fjords of B.C. Put these out of court and call for manliness of a different order. The campers of the North Arm instinctively adapt themselves to the

scenery and become strong, natural healthy and unaffected. Rushing for rents, cascades and waterfalls, precipices, ravines, and mountains, are all there and nature's wild creatures. They make a strong appeal of course, but do not constitute the whole appeal to those we know and feel environment.



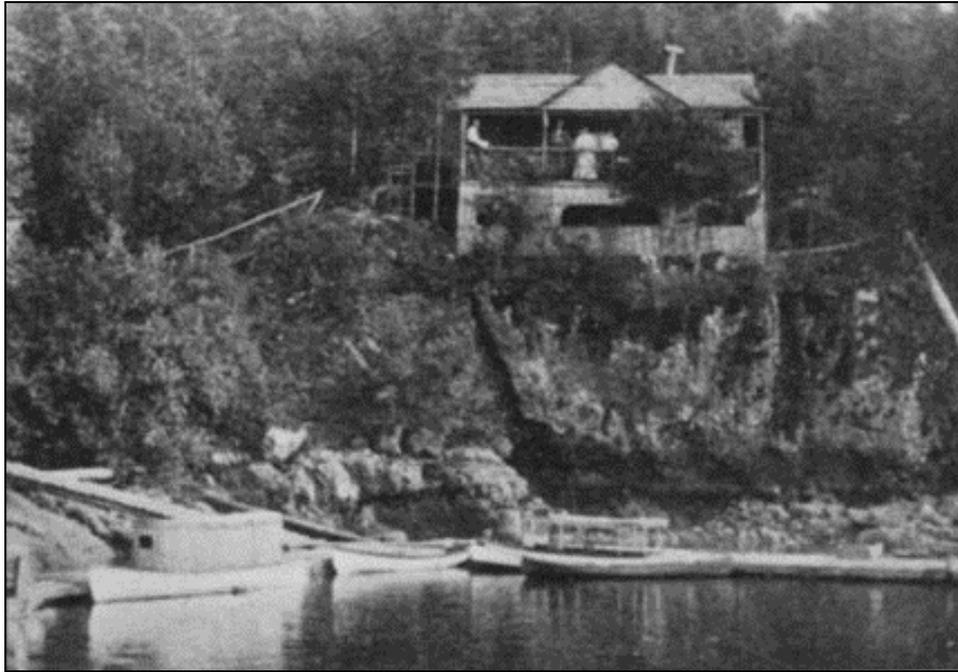
A North Arm Bungalow — Belcarra

Indefinable spirits, all pervading molding everything with simplicity and strength, seem to take possession of the soul and build likenesses therein of themselves. The great snake which the Indians say lives of the peaks along the Meslillooet River (Indian River) no more and devours every Indian who wanders off through the mountains, than the air and the freedom of the sea and heights hold a healthy fascination for every cottager and every visitor.

This influence acts upon the home. The places suitable for cottages are scattered. In hardly any case can two be placed together or be alike. The shore is never level; it is sometimes vertical, and always steep. The preliminary work of placing a landing or float for the craft, the steps up, the terraces, the winding walk, and the toil to get the site ship-shape, call for picturesque skill and loving labour. This work often costs as much and sometimes more than the cottage itself. Yet the feeling that one is living in a location like that of a Swiss mountaineer, or a mountain goat, is in itself worth while, and nobody chooses a pancake site. The infinite variety which the irregularity compels is one of the chief charms of the Inlet, and doubtless the cause of each cottager being sure that his site is the choicest of them all.

As to the cottages themselves, they should conform to the surroundings; they should be simple and rugged, yet comfortable. At present they mostly consist of a good kitchen, a few small, plain bedrooms, a roomy day room, and a large verandah. Many of them have big open fireplaces built of rubble masonry or cobble concrete. Finicky detail is out of place, and is never thought of, but a sense of the beautiful pervades the mind and compels one to so place the doors and windows that every opening shall frame a living picture of Nature's own design and painting. A friend once having a special opportunity in one of his views, failed to make the most of it in this way, and ever since then, morning, noon and night, somebody reminds him of it; and the sea and mountains, clouds and sky, cry Amen.

The sixty or seventy cottages already built vary considerably in size, and in price range from four hundred dollars to about fifteen hundred each. Most of them are fitted only for the summer. But a few are well adapted for use all the year around. A few of the sites have a little land suitable for cultivation. In most cases, however, the location is too rugged, and the formality of lawn and garden would detract from its enjoyment. The end sought and the end gained is recreation by a healthy relaxation in touch with nature. The apparent inaccessibility of many of the sites adds to the delightful feeling of being out with Mother Nature, "far from the maddening crowd" and "the haunts of men." The pleasures for the active bodied are those of bathing, rowing, sailing, and motor boating.



Julian's Summer Bungalow — Coombe in Belcarra

For those who have no cottages, the Wigwam at the head of the Arm near the mouth of the Meslillooet River (Indian River), affords most enjoyable hostelry at which to spend a day or a week or a month.

The sites available and suitable for hotels are not many, and for picnickers there are not many places spacious enough for spreading out the table cloths. The best is the much belabored Isolation Hospital site at the entrance of the Arm. If the City Council be wise it will give up the hospital notion, build a fitting wharf, open out a few trails, and make this place a "picnicker's paradise", and "children's delight."

As the city grows and wealth increases, cottages will multiply and built of rubble masonry or cobble concrete as well as wood, they will harmonize completely with the surroundings, and become as it were, a natural outgrowth of the rugged shores of the North Arm. And the Inlet will gradually but surely come into its destiny — a summer city of simple pleasures and fostering influences for people of strength and patriotism.

Most of the owners of cottages have either a canoe or motorboat, and spend many a happy hour in going to and fro. In addition, all through the summer there is a double steamer service, arriving in the city in time for business every morning and leaving from half-past five to six o'clock every evening. So it is that every summer day crowds of

people with the freshness of the wind and sunshine in their eyes journey between the big city of Vancouver and the untrammled wildness of the North Arm, stimulated and helped by each in its way to play their parts in life.



Julian & Family — Cottage Veranda at Coombe in Belcarra



City of Vancouver Archives (CVA VLP-9A).

**Association of Canadian Clubs — Belcarra — August 6th, 1914.
(T.E. Julian — far left, F.C. Wade — center)**



(CVA 1376-512)

Thomas Ennor Julian

Thomas Ennor Julian (1843 – 1921)

Born in Wales, Thomas Ennor Julian had been based in the late 1880s in Calgary, where he advertised himself as an “architect and civil, sanitary and mining engineer.” During his time in Calgary he was responsible for at least one Italianate commercial project, a two-storey brick store on Stephen Avenue, demolished about 1929. Julian first came to British Columbia by February 1889 and “got his shingle hung out in Vancouver as an architect and surveyor.” He worked as a moderately successful architect based in New Westminster and Vancouver, and was briefly in partnership with George W. Grant, 1893-94. Julian was active in New Westminster for a number of years, and was especially busy immediately after the 1898 fire, undertaking a two-storey brick block for *Kwong On Wo & Co.* on Front Street; a station and a freight shed on Columbia Street for the *B.C. Electric Railway*; residences on Camarvon Street for Dr. Drew and B.W. Shiles; a house on Agnes Street for Dr. Boggs; the St. Patrick’s and Young Mens’ Institute Hall; an addition to the Electric Light Powerhouse, Tenth Street; and the Queen’s Avenue Methodist Church, all designed and built 1898-99 and all now demolished. In Vancouver, Julian worked mostly on the design of houses, small apartment buildings, and businesses, including the extant *Wing Sang Building* on Pender Street, 1901. Julian is best known, though, for his design of downtown Vancouver’s monumental *Holy Rosary Cathedral*, 1899-1900, a beautifully decorated, Gothic Revival building with sumptuous materials, gilding and stained glass. Julian died in Vancouver on September 10th, 1921, survived by two sisters in Wales.

Source: “*Building The West – Early Architects of British Columbia*”, Compiled and Edited by Donald Luxton, Printed by Talon Books, April 2003, p.171.



City of Vancouver Archives (CVA LGN 679).

Holy Rosary Cathedral — circa 1901