

## FORSTER, Julian C. (1860 – 1934)

**J**ulian Forster was the senior partner in the architectural firm of Forster & Clark which designed many types of buildings in the Owen Sound area during their partnership from 1902-1915. The firm contributed substantially to the architecture of many of the cities, towns and villages of Huron, Bruce and Grey Counties such as Wiarton, Hanover, Shelburne, Dundalk, Meaford, Chesley, Wingham and Markdale.

Forster was born in 1860 in Hamilton, Ontario the son of Mr. and Mrs. W.C. Forster. His architectural career flourished when he worked in the Owen Sound area between 1885 and 1915. In 1915 he returned to Hamilton and took up a position with the F.F. Dalley Company as superintendent of buildings. His duties took him to many cities in the United States and Canada. Mr. Forster served on the Town Council of Owen Sound for one year.

Initially Forster practiced architecture on his own. Some of his earliest design work is for all the buildings of the Great Northwestern Exhibition grounds, Owen sound (1886). Later in 1889 he designed the West Ward School, Beech Street, Owen Sound which is a rectangular brick structure with a hipped roof. It used stone for the base, string course linking all the round arched windows on the ground floor and window lintels above. It is his use of a wide three-bay entrance tower that gives the building its presence, with its tri-partite arcade and large entry arch. His Presbyterian Church of Christ Disciples, Owen Sound (1889) is a small stone gothic church with a central transverse bay giving it a domestic look reminiscent of the typical Ontario farmhouse.

Designs for the General and Marine Hospital in Owen Sound built in 1892-93 were based on the shingle style so popular in the United States, with

its enlarged dormers and central gable broken forward to give it an enhanced roof-line. The additions of 1909 are more Edwardian with its large verandas, gables and bracketed pylons breaking the facade.

In partnership with Clark he designed the Roman Catholic Church at Cape Croker, Ontario in 1905. It is a small gothic church of brick with stone trim. The entrance is in a large bell-tower on the main facade which dominates the building and has an unusual large pointed window at the top, crowned by an octagonal spire with 4 pinnacles at its base. The firm's designs for the King's Royal Hotel, Balmy Beach (near Owen Sound) which opened in July 1902 (demolished 1916) are more flamboyant with an asymmetrical composition dominated by a large tower. It is executed in shingles with striking round-arched arcades enclosing the verandas.

Forster and Clark's classical design for the Young Men's Christian Association building, Scrope at Division streets, Owen Sound (1905) is more restrained, with its windows linked vertically by recessed arches and entrance-way embellished by extending the segmental arch outward to form a porch. At the Sydenham Club on First Avenue West, Owen sound (1911), which later became the Canadian Legion Hall, they used plain-faced blocks to create a lively design with stepped gables and raked roof-line to achieve an interesting effect. Their design for the Carnegie Library, First Avenue West, Owen Sound, (1912-14) is a well composed classical building with pilasters vertically connecting all three levels of the facade and a heavy cornice linking it horizontally. The entrance bay is accentuated as it is brought forward from the main facade and door surrounded by a stone temple.