

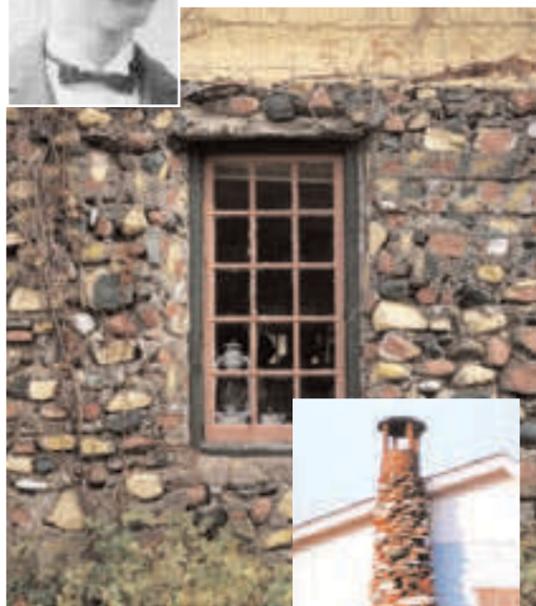
Charles Macdonald's Faerie Cottages at Huntington Point on the Bay of Fundy

“Their architecture might have seemed a troubled dream, or even a nightmare, to an aspiring member of the Royal College of Architects. They looked, indeed, like the sort of cottages in which Snow White and her seven dwarfs might have lived.”

— THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR, 1941

The “Blue Cottage” is one of five cottages built at Huntington Point by Charles Macdonald and Kentville Concrete Products. The Blue Cottage stands as a monument to the imagination and innovation of a talented Nova Scotian.

Charles Macdonald avidly promoted concrete as the best material for virtually any purpose, even using it to build his Centreville home and the statues adorning its lawn. Since 1912 Macdonald had run a successful concrete company, Kentville Concrete Products, but during the economic doldrums of the 1930s the construction industry collapsed. Contracts grew scarce. Charlie kept the men of Kentville Concrete employed by using money he had saved to keep them busy with a project at Huntington Point.



Inset: Charles William Macdonald, c. 1900

Above: Macdonald cottage wall and window

CHRIS REARDON PHOTO

Right: Beach stone chimney of Green Cottage



Charlie and his wife Mabel had camped at the Point every summer since 1919, attracted by the natural beauty of the place. Macdonald decided to build cottages at the isolated Point so that others could enjoy it as well. Between the years of 1934 and 1938, five cottages with a certain fantastical aesthetic were constructed by Kentville Concrete, under Charlie's direction. The cottages served as experiments in form with the material that so fascinated Charlie. The cottages are built almost entirely from reinforced concrete, like Charlie and Mabel's home in Centreville (now the Charles Macdonald Concrete House Museum). The structures solidly attest to Charlie's belief in the virtues of concrete as a building material.

Work on the cottages went ahead without blueprints, Charlie designing the cottages as they were poured. This creative process resulted in five buildings, each quite unique in style, all of which incorporated a concrete chimney, brightly painted beach stones, and lively chimney caps. Those that were topped with a painted model of a sailboat created the appearance of ships at sea as one came upon the Point.

Charlie refused many offers to buy the cottages, waiting until he had found buyers whom he trusted to care for them. In the meantime he rented them for a modest fee, usually twenty cents per night, advertising in local papers for people to get away from the stress of



Macdonald's oil painting of his own 'Point Cottage' before additions on the North.



Above: Blue Cottage under construction, 1936. The lower man is Charles Macdonald



South side of Spencer/Jefferson Cottage



Blue Cottage c. 1937



North side of Green Cottage, c. 1945



The Teapot Cottage, c. 1945

their busy lives by enjoying nature and a cosy cottage.

Today the Charles Macdonald House of Centreville Society is following Charlie's practice by making the Blue Cottage available for rental.

The five cottages built at Huntington Point were:

The Spencer/ Jefferson Cottage 1934

This was the first cottage of the cottages to be built, the Spencer family bought it from Charlie. Raymond and Clara Jefferson have lived there since 1970. Many renovations have been made to the cottage over the years, including the enlargement of the second storey and the addition of a wooden pitched roof to replace the original flat concrete roof.

The Teapot Cottage 1935

Although its unusual shape made it the most popular of the cottages, the Teapot Cottage is the only of the five to have been destroyed. It was demolished by its owners c. 1982. Only earlier photos of the dwelling remain.

The Green Cottage 1936

The Mansons, who had tented with the Macdonalds since the 1920s, bought this cottage from Charlie. The family still owns the cottage today. The Green Cottage had the steepest roof of the five cottages, as well as a balcony, but the roof has since been re-done and the balcony closed.

The Blue Cottage 1937

The Blue Cottage served as a youth hostel at first, renting for twenty cents per night. Harold Whitman took possession of the cottage in 1953 and remained the owner until the early 1990s. The Fullers then owned it briefly, before the Charles Macdonald House of Centreville Society bought it in 1996. It is now a Provincially Registered Heritage Property, along with the Charles Macdonald Concrete House in Centreville.

The Macdonald Cottage 1938

With an L-shape and distinctly English style, the Macdonald Cottage was the last to be built and the one kept by Charles and Mabel for themselves. It is regarded as the most sophisticated work of the five and has remained in the Macdonald family.



Notice in the Kentville Advertiser, July 1941

Research and text: Robin Bates 2002