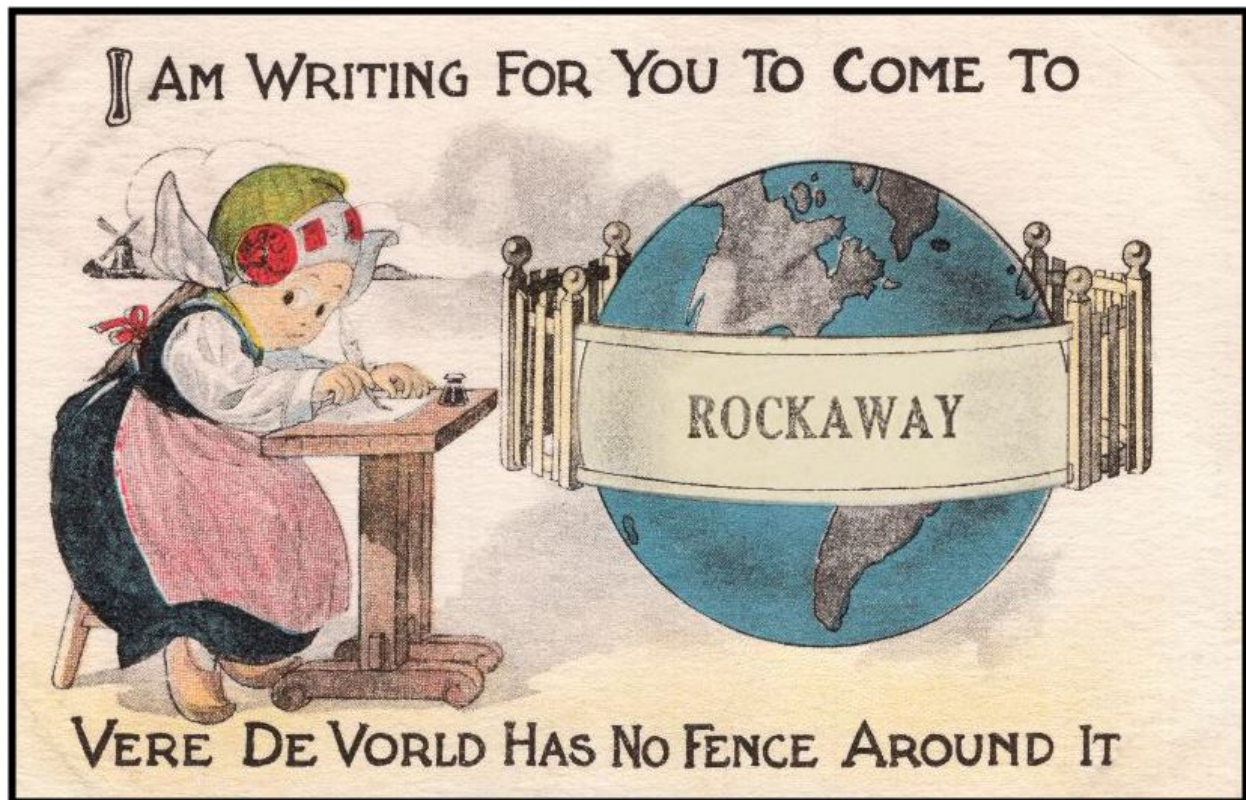




# WEBFOOTER EXTRA

January 2020

## *Tillamook County Resort Towns Rockaway Beach by Steve King*



From the Steve King Collection with corrections by Tracy Brown.

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# *Tillamook County Resort Towns*

## *Rockaway Beach - Seven Miles of Sandy Shoreline*

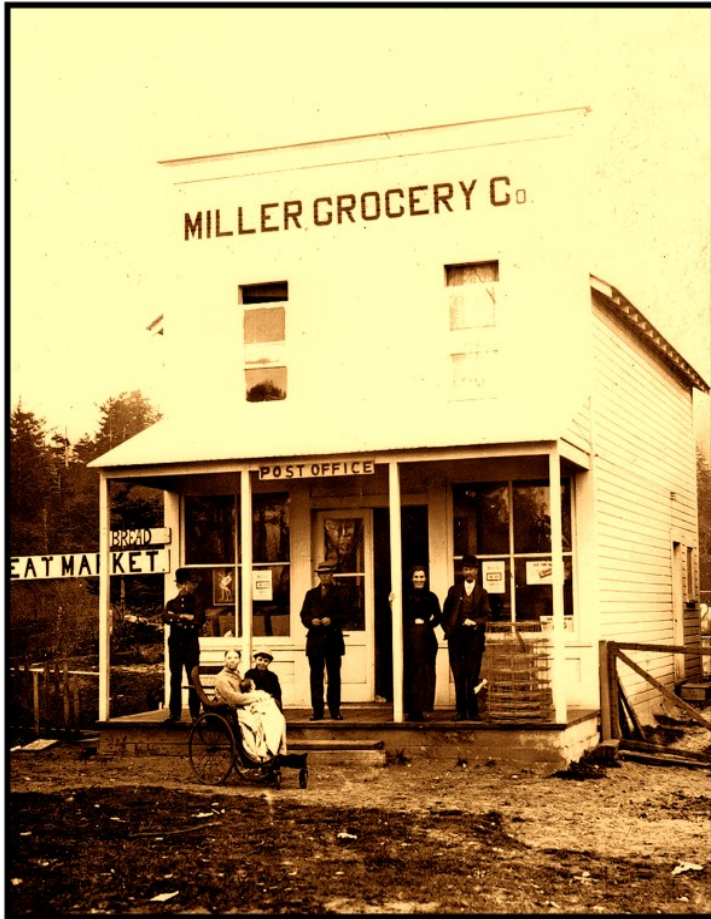
### *by Steve King*



The beginnings of Rockaway in 1910 as shown on a real photo postcard postmarked 1912. The white building on the right is the Miller Grocery and first Post Office. The building on the far right is the Miller residence. Larry Maddux Collection.

Rockaway Beach, Oregon, known as Rockaway up to 1987, is the largest of five distinct communities that had post offices on the seven miles of sandy beach between Tillamook and Nehalem bays in northern Tillamook County. The Rockaway Beach post office still operates, but the other four were shuttered by the 1970s. Rockaway Beach post office serves the population between Garibaldi and Wheeler post offices. There is no city delivery; patrons have to visit the post office to get their mail.

The City of Rockaway Beach had 1,312 permanent inhabitants according to the 2010 census. In good weather the population swells with tourists and non-residents that have second or vacation homes along the beach. More than half of the residences are part-time homes. Several homesteads were established along this section of coast. The community of Rockaway had its beginning in 1909 when the Rockaway Beach Company acquired a homestead. They surveyed the land and offered lots for sale.



Miller Grocery, built by Frank & Ida Miller, was the site of the first Rockaway Post Office when it opened in 1911. In 1913, the building was sold to Jasmann & Schloth. The building was destroyed by fire in 1934. Photo courtesy of Don Best.

Frank Miller was the resident agent for the company. The town was named after the Rockaway Beach on New York's Long Island. As far as bragging rights, Oregon's Rockaway Beach has a beach a mile longer than the one in New York. Frank and Ida Miller and their young son Dayle were the first residents of Rockaway, arriving in 1910 at Garibaldi on the vessel *Sue H Elmore*. They took up residence four miles north in the old homestead house and brought their goods in with team and wagon via the beach. The Pacific Railway and Navigation Company (PRN) was constructing a rail line from the Willamette Valley to Tillamook at the

time, and in anticipation the Millers built a new house and store. Railroad operations from Tillamook to Mohler were begun on July 4, 1910. Then the Millers were able to bring in building supplies on a flatcar.

Rockaway's first post office opened May 24, 1911 after Frank P. Miller was appointed postmaster on May 22. The post office was in the Miller Grocery building. The original petition for the post office recommended that the office be named Rockaway Beach, but the Post Office Department allowed only Rockaway. This was largely for brevity, not because there would be confusion with Rockaway Beach, New York. There was a Rockaway post office operating in New Jersey at the time.

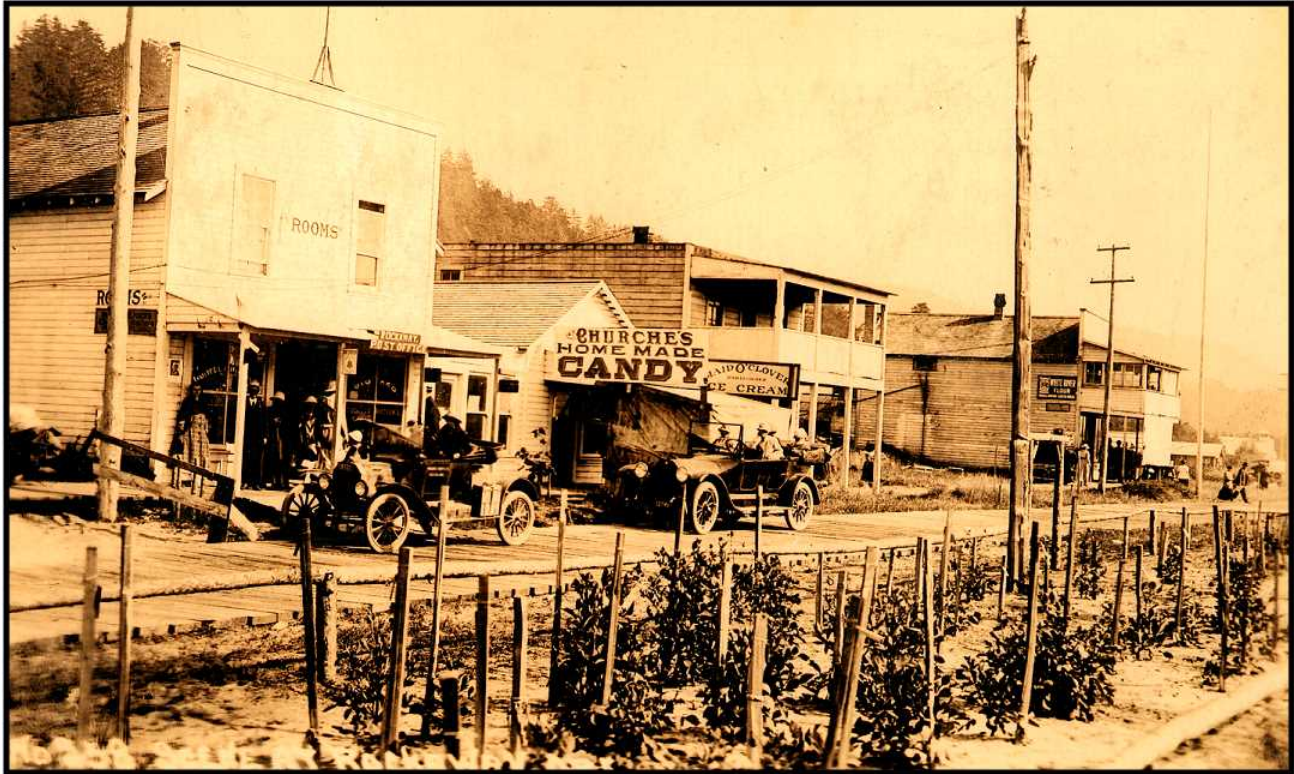
In 1912, Rockaway had many summer visitors. The PRN railroad inaugurated service from Hillsboro to Tillamook on October 9, 1911. A round-trip ticket cost \$3.50, nearly a day's wages for the working class. One could get from Portland to Rockaway (Garibaldi) Beach in a partial day's travel. Previously it would take days of travel, either by sea or overland over rough wagon roads. Rockaway underwent rapid development. It became a premier destination spot for an ocean beach experience.



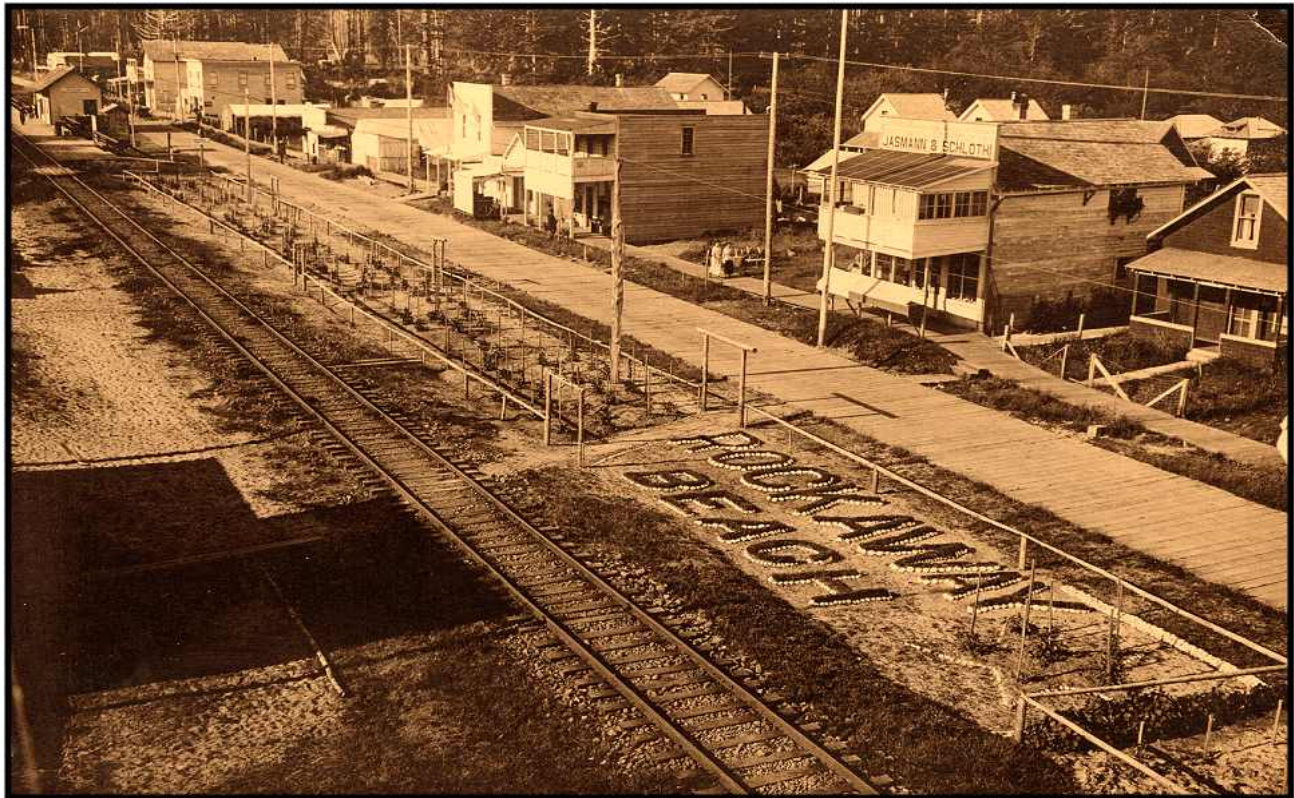
This photo shows city fathers with the accumulation of mail for Rockaway in the winter of 1911, when the mail was delayed for 40 days. Mrs. Ida Miller wrote on the back of the photograph that the mail was “brought by stage, horseback and foot by way of Grand Ronde.” Courtesy of Don Best.



In 1912, the Millers sold the Miller Grocery building to Jack and Nan Jasmann and Al Schloth, who operated a store and Wells Fargo office. Photo courtesy of Mark Moore.



The Millers built a new store (left) identical to their first, located 150 feet north of their original site. The post office opened in this new building May 21, 1913. Courtesy of Don Best.



Birdseye view of Rockaway's main street, showing the depot, railroad tracks and the plank road that became U.S. Hwy. 101. The plank road was completed in 1914. Author's collection.



Scene taken from the train while stopped in front of the Rockaway post office. The brass band gathered on the plank road to greet visitors, circa 1917. Courtesy of Joe Macdonald.

Mrs. Ida M. Miller was appointed Rockaway postmaster, replacing her husband on October 26, 1914. Mrs. Miller, later Mrs. Ida M. Clayton (name changed January 13, 1925) continued as postmaster for 20 years, until replaced by Mrs. Blanche A. Wood on September 5, 1934.

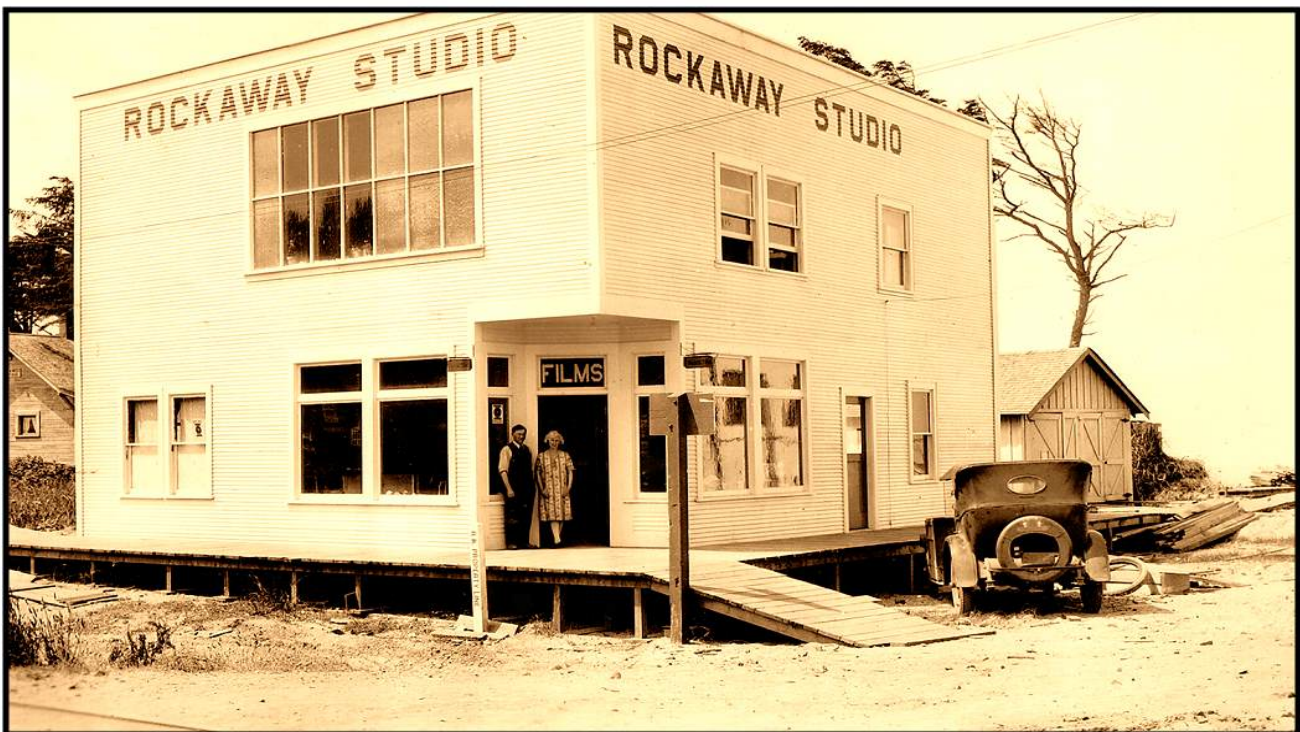
The Rockaway post office was advanced to Presidential grade, likely 3rd class, effective January 20, 1922, and Mrs. Miller was given a Presidential appointment with a salary of \$1,000 per annum. Prior to 1922 the office was 4th class, and the postmaster salary equaled the proceeds of the office.

On August 31, 1934 Rockaway experienced a devastating fire. Nearly a city block involving about eight concerns was razed, including the original Miller Grocery building. Following the fire a brick building was erected that housed Frank Miller Jr.'s IGA grocery store. The second Miller building that housed the Rockaway post office for over 20 years still stands, and is now occupied by Troxel's Gem and Jewelry store.

Effective November 14, 1934 the Rockaway post office moved 200 feet west, across the street and railroad tracks, to the Rockaway Studio building (101 Building), owned by Ed and Blanche Wood.



The Rockaway Studio was built next to the Natatorium.



The Rockaway Studio was operated by Ed and Blanche Wood, standing in the doorway. When the Post Office moved to this building, the entrance was through the side door by the car. Photo courtesy of the Tillamook County Pioneer Museum.

Ed Wood produced a number of real photo post card images of Tillamook County, now sought by collectors. Blanche Wood was appointed Acting Postmaster on September 5, 1934 and as Postmaster on July 18, 1935. On July 1, 1934 the office was demoted from 3rd Class to 4th Class.

There was a change in postmaster on April 14, 1938, when Blanche Wood was replaced by Mrs. Nona Fulton. Mrs. Fulton was Acting Postmaster until May 24, 1939, when she was appointed Postmaster, a position she held for the next 33 years. Her name was changed by marriage on June 8, 1961, when she became Mrs. Nona Fulton Taylor. The Studio building still stands at 101 S. Miller St. and contains several businesses.

In 1950, the post office moved one block north, back across the street and tracks to the new Kremers Building. The building was built in 1949, replacing a building that had been destroyed by fire in 1947. The building now houses The Little Crow and Schwietert's Cones and Candy businesses. Mrs. Fulton served 21 years of her 33-year career at this location. About 1971 the post office moved to a fifth location, in a concrete block building in the first block of Nehalem Ave. Mrs. Florence E. Hines was appointed postmaster on May 15, 1971. The building is gone now, replaced by a vacant lot.

In 1981, the post office moved into a remodeled automotive service center at 115 N. 3rd Ave., and this has been the location of the Rockaway post office ever since. It is already the longest tenure at one site of any of Rockaway's six post office locations. Seven postmasters have been in charge in this location, compared to only six during the first 70 years of the office. The current postmaster is Kathleen J. Todd, appointed December 1, 2012.

One important change has occurred. In 1911 the residents were denied the use of the name "Rockaway Beach" for their post office. On August 1, 1995 their wish was granted, and the name of the office officially changed from Rockaway to Rockaway Beach.

This article was adapted from an article written by Steve King for the Winter 2017-2018 issue of *The Oregon Country*, which is published four times a year by the Pacific Northwest Postal History Society.

The author wishes to thank the following Webfooters who loaned photos used in this article: Joe Macdonald, Larry Maddux and Mark Moore. Thanks also to Don Best of Best Impressions Image Company in Rockaway Beach. Don's family was the second to arrive at Rockaway, in 1911; he is the resident historian of Rockaway. Thanks also to the Tillamook County Pioneer Museum.



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