



WEBFOOTER EXTRA

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BAYOCEAN - PLAYGROUND OF THE WEST



WEBFOOTERS POST CARD CLUB

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REMEMBERING BAYOCEAN

PLAYGROUND OF THE WEST

Dave Elston Collection



The docks at Bayocean where crowds arrived on yachts that sailed down the Columbia from Portland.

Bayocean was to become the Atlantic City of the West in the dreams of the town's founder and first promoter, T.B. Potter in 1906. Bad health forced Potter, a real estate promoter from California, to leave Oregon before the town officially opened and the task of promoting and building the Resort Community was passed on to Potter's son, Thomas Irving Potter. The first lot was sold in 1907 to Francis Mitchell, a 37-year old druggist who opened a grocery store. By 1914, 600 lots had been sold to house 2,000 inhabitants.



This photo from about 1909 shows the Potter family (left to right): Thomas Irving Potter, Thomas Benton Potter and his wife Mary with granddaughter Helen Elizabeth Potter. (Photo courtesy of Sarah Kern Potter and Robert Kern Potter, Jr.)

There were three hotels and boarding houses, a school, a general store, a bakery and several other businesses. The Amusements consisted of a trap shoot range, a bowling alley and tennis courts. Bayocean had a cannery, a tin shop, machine shop and a Texaco gas station. The Town had a sophisticated water system, a telephone system and a power plant with a diesel engine that provided electricity. A grand opening for the beach resort was held on June 20, 1912 complete with a parade and marching band.

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The Mitchell Building housed Mitchell's Grocery Store and the post office, which was established on February 4, 1909. The upper floor housed the Bayocean Inn.



Another view of Mitchell's Grocery Store. The building on the right was the Bay Hotel.



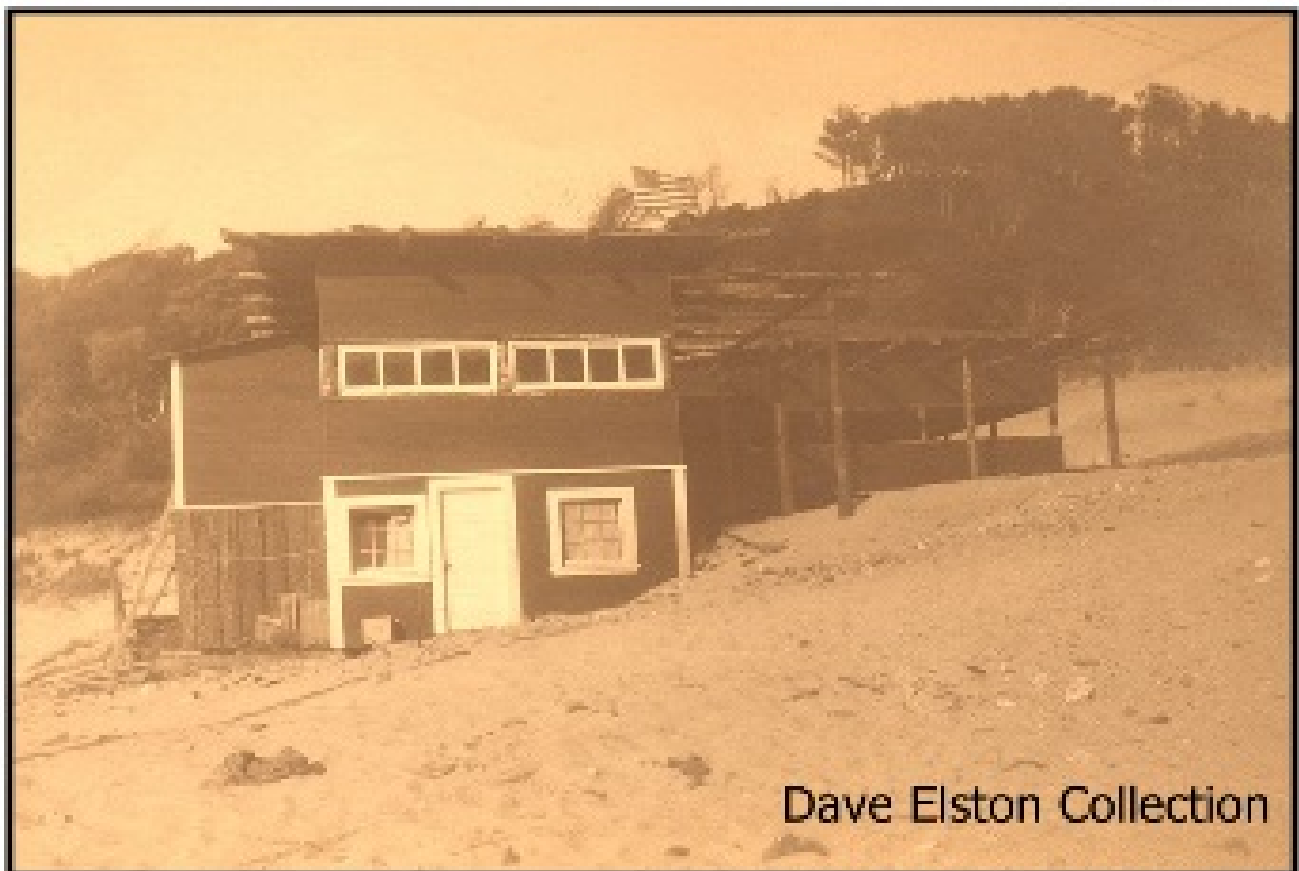
On weekends, the narrow guage railroad carried in hundreds of “potential buyers or investors” who were basically just there for a fun time. This view from July 4, 1910 shows the many passengers that arrived on Potter’s train.



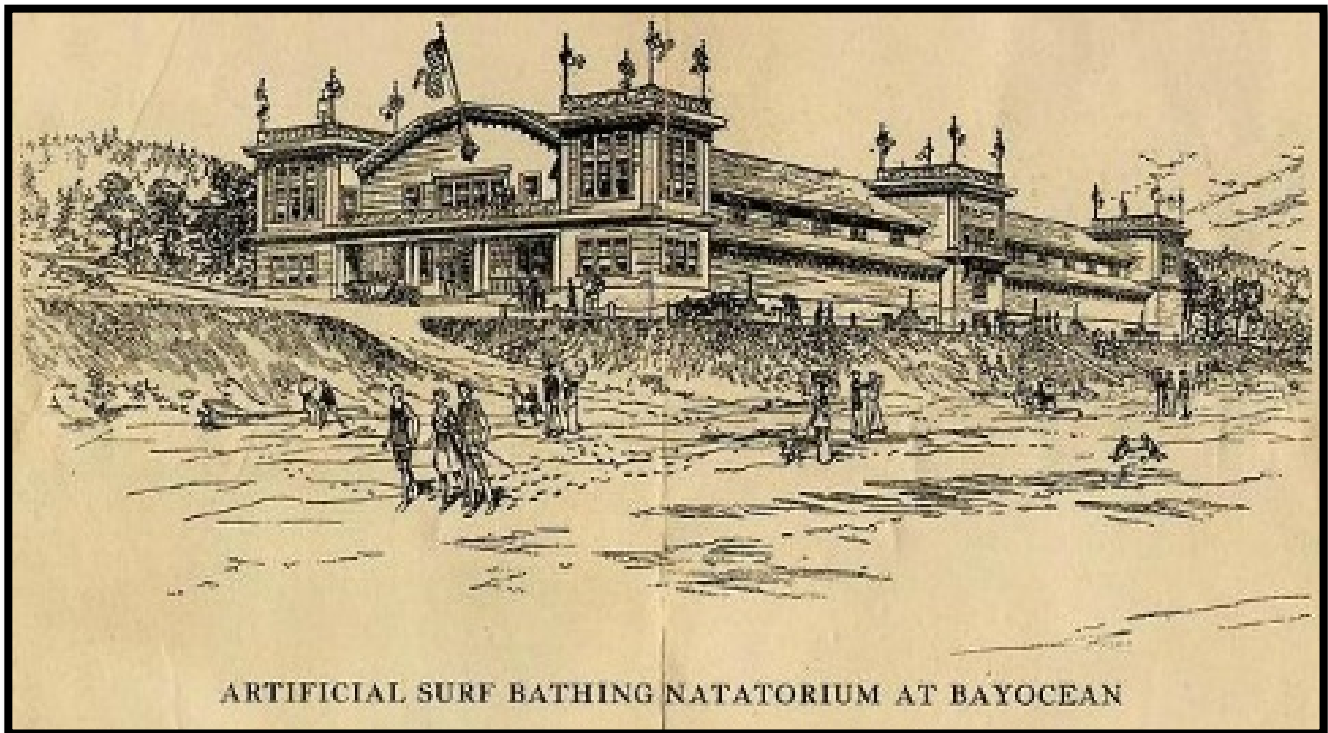
The Natatorium on the left was popular in the daytime and the rustic Dance Pavilion on the right was popular on Wednesday and Saturday nights when the Hotel Orchestra provided the music.



Dancing Pavilion at Bayocean.



Another view of the Dancing Pavilion as seen from the Natatorium.

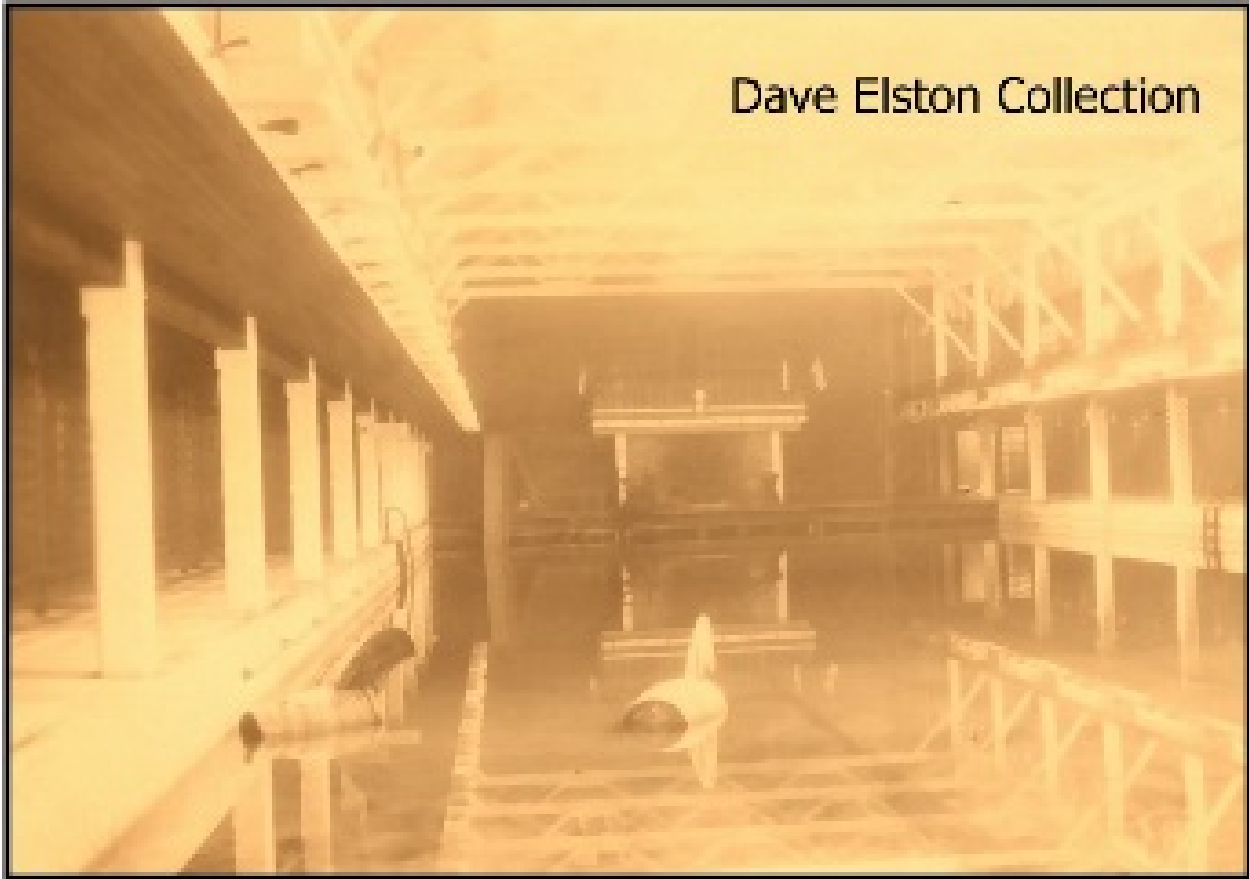


Artwork from a brochure showing the Natatorium at Bayocean. Photo courtesy of Dave Elston.



Interior view of the Natatorium at Bayocean which also housed a 1000 seat movie theater. The 50 by 160 foot pool, which varied from one foot to 11 and 1/2 feet in depth, was heated and it was known for its wave machine. The building housed dressing rooms, tub and shower baths, boilers, pumping and heating machinery, a laundry and an electric light plant.

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Interior of the Natatorium showing a mini submarine.

By the time the road from Tillamook opened in 1928, erosion had begun to take a toll as several buildings washed into the sea, and the Dance Hall had burned down. The town had about 50 year-round residents, but in the summer, the crowds would swell to several thousand inhabitants.

By 1932, the ocean had taken a toll on the Natatorium. It was no longer safe to swim there. As the ocean washed away the sand and under footings, the walls of the Natatorium began to sag and the roof collapsed in 1936. It had totally disappeared by 1939. The Post Office closed on March 31, 1953 as most of the resort town's residents had moved away. Mr. Mitchell was the last resident to leave. By 1954, the spit washed out, making Bayocean an island. It became known as *the town that fell into the sea*.

Over the next few years, the town was closed and the remaining buildings were burned down, removed or torn down. The last house fell into the ocean in 1960. Several of the original buildings from Bayocean were moved to Cape Meares, including the school house, which is now a Community Center. Unfortunately, very little else of Bayocean survives today, just a few pieces of concrete here and there, and a few fading memories.