



# WEBFOOTER EXTRA

February 2020

## Tillamook County Resort Towns

*Lake Lytle -- Twixt Lake and Ocean*

*by Steve King*



Postcard view of the depot at Lake Lytle circa 1913 from the Larry Maddux Collection.

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## *Lake Lytle -- Twixt Lake and Ocean*

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Close-up view of the Pacific Railway & Navigation Company depot and Post Office at Lake Lytle, circa 1913. Photo courtesy of the Tillamook County Pioneer Museum.

Lake Lytle is among the five post offices that were established on Garibaldi Beach (now known as Rockaway Beach). The beach stretches seven miles from Tillamook Bay to Nehalem Bay, and also included the post offices at Twin Rocks, Bar View, Manhattan Beach and Rockaway Beach. With the building of the railroad it became a premier destination for vacationers from Portland and the Willamette Valley. Today the area has many permanent as well as second homes. Lake Lytle is located between Rockaway Beach to the south and Manhattan Beach to the north. The original development was centered around 9th Avenue.

The Lake Lytle townsite was developed from portions of several original homesteads by Elmer Lytle and several partners. A town plat was filed in 1909. A 60-foot wide right-of-way was deeded to the Pacific Railway & Navigation Co. (PR&N).

Elmer and Charles Lytle began construction of the PR&N railroad in 1906 in Hillsboro, the eastern terminus, and in Tillamook, the western terminus. The first through train went from Hillsboro to Tillamook on October 9, 1911. With the completion of the railroad, Garibaldi Beach experienced a wave of migration that resulted in the development of many new communities along the rail line.

To accommodate the surge of visitors expected at Lake Lytle, a small flag-stop depot was erected. The Lake Lytle post office opened in the depot on August 9, 1913 with Clarence A. Austin serving as postmaster.

A large hotel, four stories high with 43 rooms, eight baths and a beautiful dining room was completed in 1912. It was called the Outlook Inn.



✠ ——— ✠ **OUTLOOK INN** ✠ ——— ✠

LAKE LYTLE BEACH, OREGON  
(P. O. ROCKAWAY, OREGON)

OPEN ALL THE YEAR

✠ ——— ✠

**W**e've got a chair we'd  
like to spare,  
**A** room, a welcome and  
good fare.  
**W**e only wait to know  
the date,  
**T**hat we may meet you at  
the gate.

✠ ——— ✠

Advertising card for the Outlook Inn circa 1913. Photo courtesy of Joe Macdonald.





Postcard showing Elmer & Lizzie Lytle's home across from the depot.

In 1914 Elmer Lytle became the sole owner of the townsite by buying out the other interests. He commissioned an agent to sell the remaining lots. It was expected the community would grow quickly and be a destination for beach vacations. But development beyond the railroad stop and the hotel never occurred.

Aside from the rail stop, there was no good way to get to Lake Lytle. There was no Highway 101, not even street access from Rockaway. Visitors by rail either stopped at Manhattan Beach to the north, or passed through Lake Lytle to get to Rockaway (one mile), Twin Rocks (two and a half miles), or Bar View (four miles). With few visitors, the Outlook Inn soon fell on hard times. Reflecting the lack of customers, the Lake Lytle post office was closed after only nine months of operation, on May 15, 1914.

Elmer Lytle sold his railroad to the Southern Pacific in 1915. He then disposed of his interest in the Lake Lytle development in 1916. But he liked Lake Lytle. Elmer and his wife Lizzie had a home across from the depot, and Elmer lived there until he died May 3, 1941 at age 80.

In 1921 George and Helen Watt purchased the hotel, remodeled it and renamed it the Lake Lytle Hotel.



Postcard view of the Lake Lytle Hotel, circa 1921.

An undated message on the back of the real photo post card above provides a glimpse into one guest's exciting stay at the hotel:

Friend Edna: ... I notice the ocean here is just as close to the shore as elsewhere. It is very peaceful and quiet here so much that it makes me weary just to endure it. I have met several Portlanders that I know.

Yours truly, C.A.B.

In 1935 George and Helen Watts sold the hotel. During World War II the hotel accommodated military personnel doing coastal guard duty. The hotel was later razed.

The Lake Lytle townsite was annexed into the city of Rockaway Beach in the 1970s. Now the ridge between the railroad tracks and ocean is fully developed with houses, mostly vacation homes, and a motel. Highway 101 passes through it, and it is hard to discern Lake Lytle as a distinct community.

No genuine postmarks are known to exist from the nine months the Lake Lytle post office operated. But fakes do exist, so be very wary in purchasing a Lake Lytle cancel. Some postal historians question whether the Lake Lytle post office was ever open.





Postcard view of the Lake Lytle Hotel from the south, circa 1923.

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 and Larry Maddux. Thanks also to the Tillamook County Pioneer Museum.

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P. O. ROCKAWAY, OREGON.

Advertisement for the Lake Lytle Hotel circa 1928. Photo courtesy of Joe Macdonald.





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