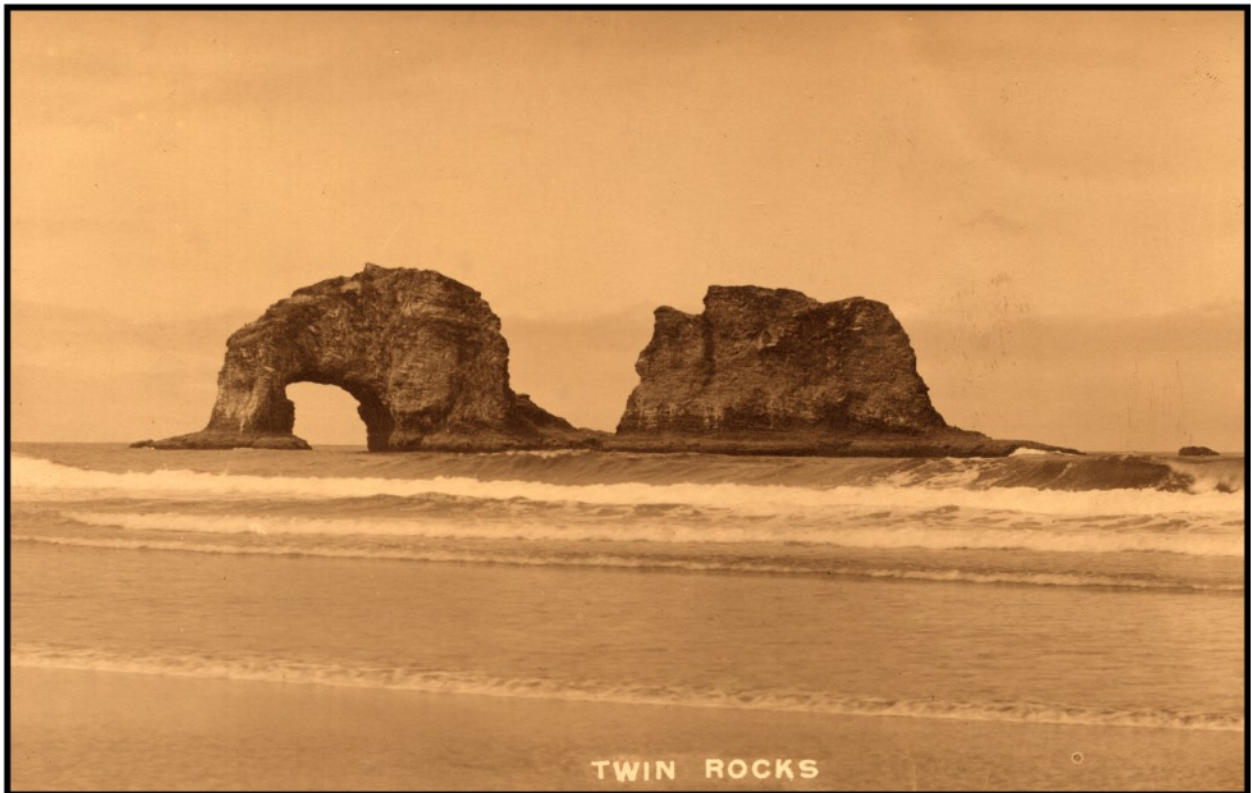




WEBFOOTER EXTRA

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Tillamook County Resort Towns Twin Rocks, Oregon



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Tillamook County Resort Towns – Twin Rocks – Ocean Playground by Steve King

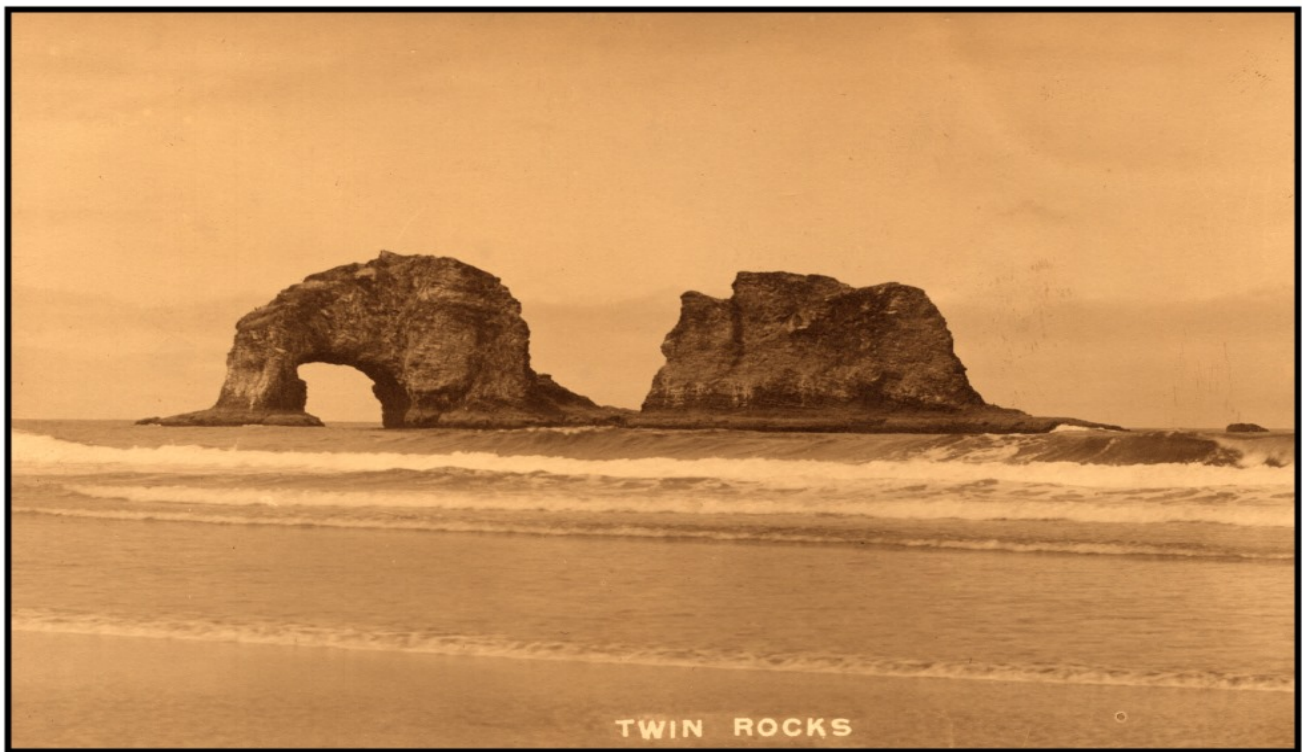


Twin Rocks' first post office and grocery circa 1916. In the photo are Edith Hart, her son Edward Hart and the good dog Royal. The plank road in front of the store was completed in 1915 and it went from Bar View to Lake Lytle. Photo courtesy Don Best.

Introduction

This is the story of Edith L. Hart, an early arrival to north Tillamook County, and her involvement with the establishment of the Twin Rocks post office in her growing community near the mouth of Tillamook Bay. Her support for the post office lasted for the entire 40 years the post office existed.

Interest in Edith Hart and the Twin Rocks post office was sparked by a small packet of covers with letters included. They were written in the summer of 1924 by Edith to her son, Edward L. Hart. He was at the Citizens' Military Training Camp at Camp Lewis, Washington. The letters were posted at the Twin Rocks post office. Two received a postmark from the Portland & Tillamook Railway Post Office (R.P.O.).



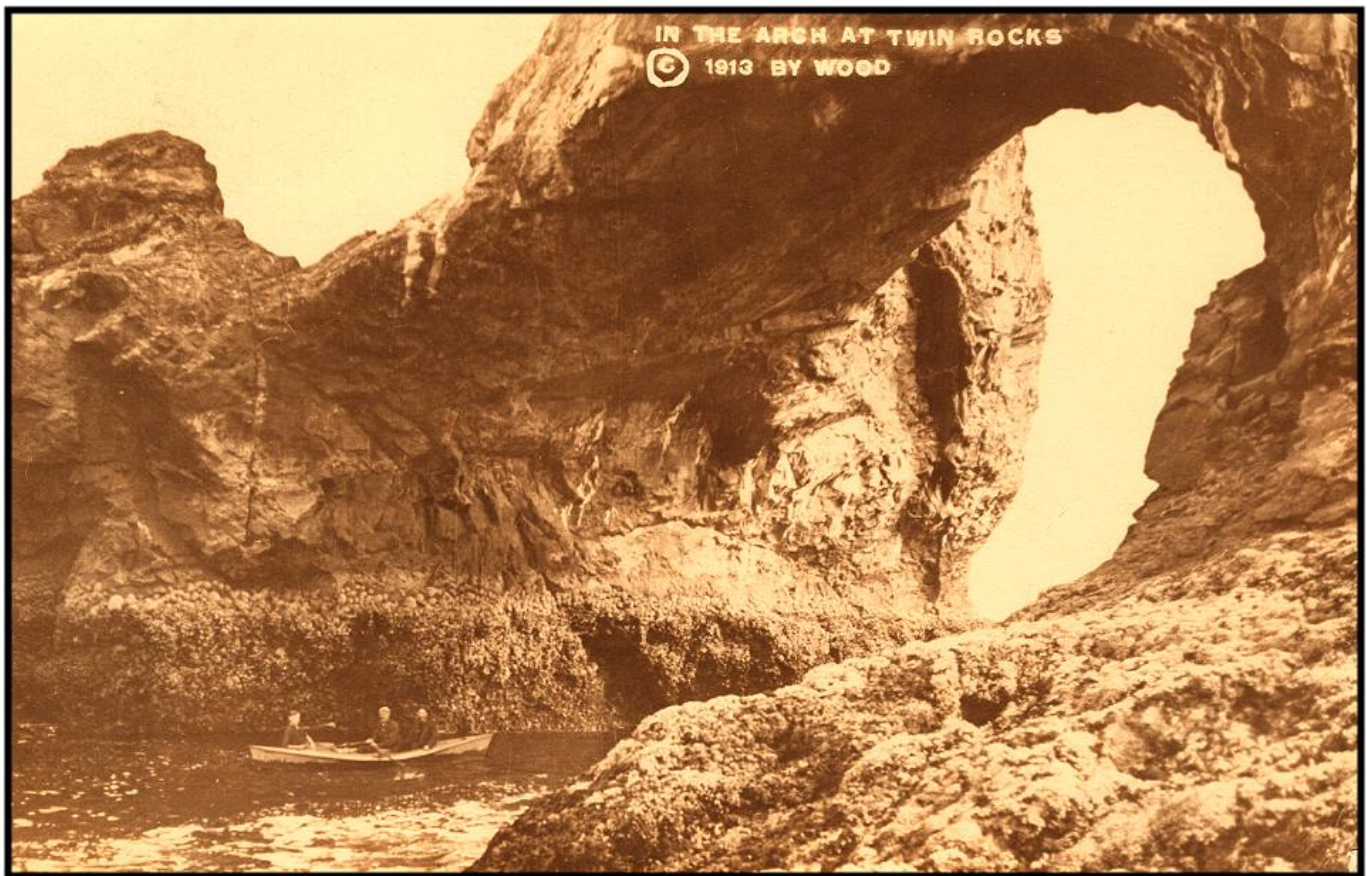
A real photo postcard showing the twin rocks that defined the community. This is the view from the Hart family home, Rock View Villa. The card was postmarked at Twin Rocks on Aug. 6, 1915. Postcard published by H.R. Gregg.

The Hart Family

Edith Louise (Valentine) Hart was born in St. Paul, Minnesota on April 26, 1874. She married Edward Loper Hart, Sr., of Guilford, Connecticut. A daughter was born, but she died at age three. In 1902, they left Minnesota and came to Seattle, but they soon moved to Seaview, Washington and then to Cannon Beach, Oregon. In 1905, a son was born in Portland, named Edward L. Hart, Jr. They had no more children, but a niece was raised as their own daughter and little Edward's sister.

In the spring of 1912 the family moved to Garibaldi Beach, a seven-mile stretch of ocean shore between Tillamook Bay to the south and Nehalem Bay to the north. Much of the area had been platted by developers for home sites in the very early 1900s, but at this time access was difficult. When the Pacific Railroad & Navigation Co. (P.R.&N.) railroad was completed in late 1911, a wave of migration and the development of Garibaldi Beach began.

The railroad was envisioned by Elmer and Charles Lytle. Construction began in 1906 in Hillsboro, the eastern terminus, and Tillamook, the western terminus. The first through train from Hillsboro to Tillamook ran on October 9, 1911. However, the route from Tillamook to Mohler was opened and ran its first train on July 4, 1910. The railroad was sold to Southern Pacific on July 1, 1915.



Taking a boat ride through the Arch at Twin Rocks in 1913.

Garibaldi Beach, now known as Rockaway Beach, quickly developed into several distinct communities, all of which established post offices. By my count, ten post offices opened along the Tillamook County portion of the P.R.&N. railroad soon after its completion, five of them along Garibaldi Beach.

The Hart family spent the early days of their arrival at Garibaldi Beach living in a tent. When Edward Sr. became ill, he went to Portland, from where he never returned and later died. In the meantime Mrs. Hart continued on with their plan of a cottage-rental business in Twin Rocks, with a store and a post office. The Hart home was built with rooms to let upstairs, and small cabins termed "bungalettes" in the back. The house was the first built on the low-elevation "ridge" between the ocean and inland. The namesake of the community, the twin sea stacks, was in clear view of the house, so they named it Rock View Villa.

The twin rocks are two 100-foot sea stacks just off shore. Many postcards showing the twin rocks were published. They are among the most common subjects for postcards made of the Oregon Coast. With the opening of the area by railroad, visitors from Portland and the upper Willamette Valley flocked to the beach.



Aerial view of the Twin Rocks community in the early 1920s as seen on a real photo postcard published by Woods. The building in the upper center was the second location of the Twin Rocks Post Office. Note the completed county road.

Twin Rocks Post Office

The Twin Rocks community remained unincorporated until the northern portion was annexed by the city of Rockaway (now Rockaway Beach) in 1981. The southern portion remains unincorporated.

The Twin Rocks post office opened as a fourth-class summer post office on June 13, 1914, closing after the visitor season ended on September 10, 1914. It operated from May 10 to September 25 in 1915. It reopened June 28, 1916 and apparently became a year-round office at that time.

A petition to establish the post office was circulated by Edith Hart in 1912 or 1913. Petition signers included the Watts and Dental families, Horace Sappington, son Ed and perhaps others. The first post office was located in the recently built Twin Rocks Grocery, one of the first five to open on Garibaldi Beach. The Twin Rocks Grocery and Post Office was located at three different sites, all within a quarter mile of each other, centered around the intersection of Minnehaha Street and what is now U.S. Highway 101.

William E. Dunsmoor was appointed postmaster of Twin Rocks effective June 11, 1914. Three months later, on October 12, 1914, Walter W. Bollen replaced Dunsmoor. Perhaps the October appointment of Bollen suggests an intent to keep the post office open through the winter when community residents likely had to go to Rockaway or Garibaldi for their mail.

The first Twin Rocks Grocery, with the post office, was located along the railroad just north of Minnehaha Street, next to Lake Marie. When the county road was built, the grocery store and post office was moved 700 feet south to the northeast corner of Hollyhock Street and the county road, effective February 21, 1917.

The second Twin Rocks Grocery and Post Office was located at the northeast corner of Hollyhock Street and the county road. Nellie Tomsett was postmaster at the second location and her term lasted over ten years.

The Twin Rocks Grocery and Post Office was moved a third time in 1927 and this would be its last location. It is unknown why the store and post office was moved a few more yards to the south, to Marigold Street and the county road. Mrs. Myrtle Ryan became the postmaster at the new location. Three more followed, with Mrs. Madeline T. Prigge who was appointed on Jan. 15, 1953. The Twin Rocks Post Office closed March 15, 1954.



Real photo postcard view of the third location of the Twin Rocks Grocery and Post Office circa 1928. Postcard published by Wesley Andrews.

During the Eisenhower administration, many small, rural post offices were closed. Along the route of the railroad in Tillamook County, five post offices were closed in 1954. Three had closed earlier. This only left two post offices operating north of Garibaldi, at Rockaway and Wheeler.

When the Twin Rocks Post Office was slated for closure, Edith Hart objected strongly, but couldn't stop the office from being discontinued. It was in operation for 40 years. In place of the post office, a Rural Station of Rockaway was established, so for the patrons little changed for the next five and a half years until the Rural Station was closed on October 31, 1959. After that all mail for Twin Rocks was handled by the Rockaway Post Office. Mail for the community is now picked up and delivered by a contract mail carrier. The final Twin Rocks grocery and post office building was razed. Bus barns for the Neah-Kah-Nie school district now occupy the site.

Edith Hart remained active in Garibaldi Beach social activities until her death at the age of 91 on April 9, 1966. Edward Hart worked as a merchant seaman for eight winters before World War II and four years during the war. When he returned from service he worked as a cheesemaker at the Tillamook Cheese Factory. Edward never married and he died at the age of 92 on October 19, 1997.



Real photo postcard view of the Twin Rocks Auto Camp on Ocean Lake circa 1928.



This article was adapted from an article written by Steve King for the Fall 2015 issue of *The Oregon Country*, which is published four times a year by the Pacific Northwest Postal History Society.