

# Footprints Through the Sands of Time

## The Quinault and Pacific Beach Hotel

Byline: Kelly Calhoun, Executive Director/Curator of Museum of the North Beach

Built by the Pacific Beach Company in 1906, the Quinault Hotel stood on the bluff with an unsurpassed view of the Pacific Ocean. At this time, there were no hotels in this area of North Beach. Most likely, it was built to fill the void when the first Moclips Beach Hotel burned to the ground a year earlier in November of 1905.

In 1911, Moclips businessman and active promoter, Carl A. Cooper and Mr. N.B. Husby, purchased the hotel and property. Cooper became the manager of the hotel and changed the name to the Pacific Beach Hotel.

At approximately 6:30 AM on the morning of Saturday, October 3, 1914, fire broke out from a wood stove in the dining room located on the second floor destroying the hotel and most of its contents. The fire burned for some time before the Japanese cook and a kitchen boy in the kitchen suddenly found the room in flames. The cook immediately sounded the alarm.

There were a few guests staying in the hotel overnight including the hotel's owner, Carl Cooper. The other occupants were a second kitchen boy, Kathleen Russell (a teacher at the Pacific Beach School), and Mr. and Mrs. Sterling from Walla Walla.

Overcome by smoke, Mrs. Sterling fainted in the hallway of the second floor and was carried down the stairs by Mr. Cooper. Mr. Sterling had left the building shortly before to mail a letter at the Northern Pacific Railway Depot when he saw the flames. With only a bucket brigade, fighting the fire was futile. The hotel was doomed from the start. All personal items were lost in the fire including the Sterling's two steamer trunks, \$200 in gold, and some bank drafts.

With the help of Pacific Beach residents and employees of the Northern Pacific Railway, their salvage efforts saved a few items from the first floor. These items included the piano, safe, cash register, the Victrola, and dining room tables. Although the attached garage also burned, Mr. Cooper's auto was saved. The billiard room and its entire contents were completely destroyed.

A month later, on November 3, 1914, Kathleen Russell sued Carl Cooper over the loss of her personal property. The case was heard at the courthouse in Montesano on January 28, 1915. Testimony hinged on her claim that she had recently changed her relationship with the hotel from an ordinary boarder to that of a transient guest. After first arriving at the hotel, she had an agreement as a boarder to pay \$22.50 per month. She later discovered that also meant eating some meals in the kitchen, which she refused to do. Other conditions in the agreement did not give her the same privileges as hotel guests. She later signed another agreement making her a regular guest until she could find another place to live. Everything she owned was lost in the fire.

The hotel was valued at \$7,000 with insurance coverage of \$3,500. An additional \$4,500 insurance covered the contents. Cooper used the insurance money to rebuild the hotel into a more modern facility with 50 guest rooms. The new Pacific Beach Hotel opened for business in June 1915. Twenty-five cabins, each with baths, were added by the 1930 tourist season.



The Quinault Hotel at Pacific Beach; circa 1908