

Footprints Through the Sands of Time

The Golden Arches at Copalis Crossing

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At one time, Copalis Crossing was a much-needed stopover for weary motorists on their long and slow excursion to the beach. Traveling between the Crossing and Pacific Beach on a single lane of Ocean Beach Road with turnouts every quarter mile was especially tedious.

In 1922, two large wooden arches were built welcoming tourists to explore the beaches at Copalis, Pacific Beach, and Moclips. Anna Kay was on the committee that oversaw the construction, and Mr. Harris was one of the builders. These structures measured 24' high by 44' wide. They were located at the conjunction of today's Copalis Beach and Ocean Beach Roads. There was a park on the right just past the Copalis Beach entry. This arch was parallel to the Northern Pacific Railway tracks and each leg included a door where boarding passengers could wait inside during inclement weather.

Elaborate artwork adorned the Copalis arch showing a razor clam, a crab, and a woman on the beach. It also proclaimed, "No finer beach on the Pacific Coast" and promoted good hunting, fishing, bathing, campgrounds, hotel, merchants, and a 15-mile beach speedway. The ads and artwork on the Copalis span changed over the years. Although less detailed, the "Welcome to Pacific and Moclips Beaches" arch embraced artwork at the top of each pillar. As visitors left the beach heading east, the message read, "Thank you, goodbye, come again."

When the era of logging trucks got underway and with the establishment of the Navy Base at Pacific Beach during WWII, these two magnificent arches became hazards with large vehicles unable to pass under without causing damage. There was also a need to widen both roads. Sadly, in 1945 both welcoming arches were torn down and are now only seen in photographs.

(four photos ahead)



Karl Teppner posing in front of both arches, July 13, 1935



Copalis Beach arch adjacent to the Northern Pacific Railroad Depot tracks



Pacific and Moclips Beaches arch as visitors drove west



Message to visitors on the Pacific and Moclips Beaches arch as they headed home