

The History of the Gateway to the Road of Remembrance

Flanking Arapahoe Road on the west side of the intersection with US 287 in the east county are two stone pillars that for decades were mostly buried in shrubbery along the roadside. Many of us noticed them, but gave the little thought.

The two pillars are a monument built by the Boulder Lions Club in 1928, dedicated to the 1000 men and women from the County that served in WWI. But the pillars were also intended to become a gateway for a “Road of Remembrance” lined with trees, parks and lakes connecting the city of Boulder to a newly constructed stretch of the highway connecting Lafayette to Longmont. As one Boulder supporter described the project:

The psychology back of the plan is that the casual motorist traveling the main highway will be instinctively attracted by the beautiful entrance to the road and that large numbers who would otherwise miss Boulder will turn their machine into the improved highway and follow it to the city.

That stretch of new East County highway, inaccurately promoted as part of the transcontinental Lincoln Highway, was itself a battleground throughout the 1920s between competing local interests seeking to garner a share of the burgeoning automotive tourism market headed for Colorado’s mountains. And Boulder’s effort to siphon off northbound tourist traffic headed for Longmont from the new highway developed into a series of fascinating – often hilarious – skirmishes between the Boulder County neighbors.

But the Gateway became a major civic project for Boulder boosters and businessmen. Money was raised through the Boulder Lion’s Club, and two stone pillars were erected out on the empty Colorado prairie. The dedication of the pillars in 1928 drew more than 1,000 people, with state and national luminaries lining up to speak.

After the Gateway was completed, the remainder of the Road of Remembrance was abandoned. Yet for a quarter century, the pillars continued to symbolize the main route between Denver and Boulder.



With the opening of the Boulder-Denver Turnpike in 1952, however, the intersection became primarily a local thoroughfare. Congestion from the increasing East County population soon began to

strain the roadways, and the Gateway became a nuisance. In 1983, the Colorado Department of Highways decided to widen the intersection to improve traffic flow. The road was reconfigured and widened the park was paved over, and the north pillar was moved 40' north to make way for additional traffic lanes. In the process, the north pillar was destroyed, but later rebuilt on the north side of the right of way.

From 1983 until 2021, the pillars simply sat nestled among the brush and road signs alongside Arapahoe Road, unmarked and inaccessible to foot traffic. As best anyone can determine, zero maintenance has been done for the last 38 years. Indeed, the Monument essentially became an “orphan,” nominally on the CDOT right of way, but ignored by the State, County, and adjacent municipalities.

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