

Philatelic Railroad Ephemera

By Stan Cronwall

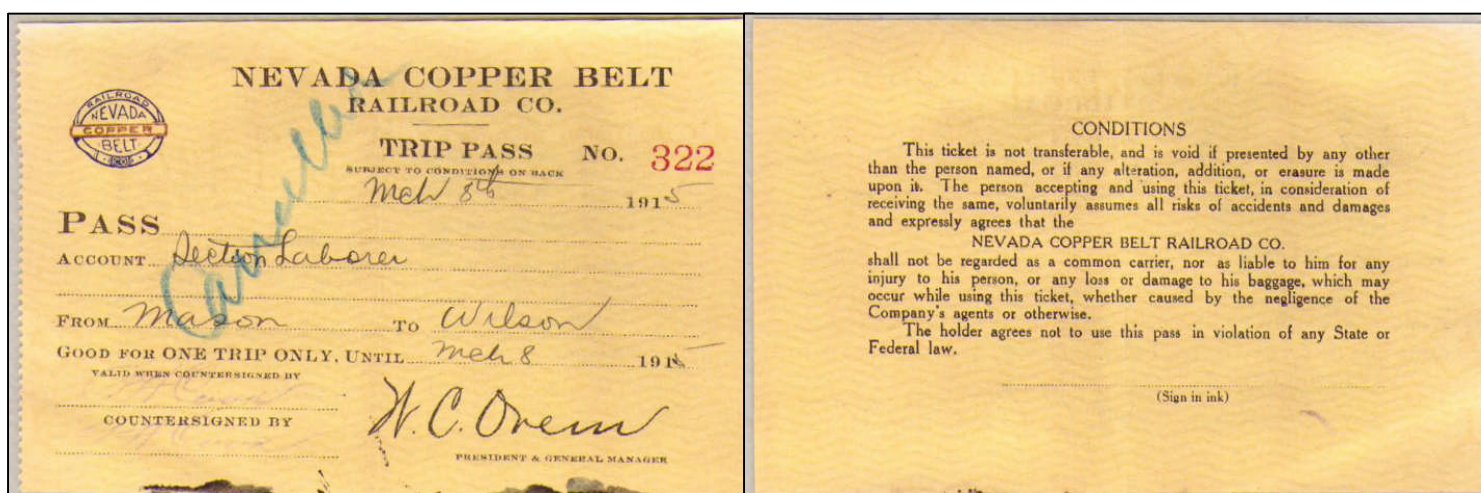
The title of this piece maybe misleading. In all honesty, I don't know what the title means. It ain't an RPO, HPO, or something postal carried on a ship/boat/ferry. If it sucked you into reading this far, mission accomplished.

But, I did buy it at the recent SACAPEX Show from one of our NSSS dealer members, Mark Baker from Pollack Pines, CA.

Mark has a bit of everything – covers, postcards, and lots of ephemera from stocks and bonds, to ticket stubs, to almost anything paper.

The Nevada Copper Belt Railroad was a 12 mile long standard gauge line operating from Wabuska to Ludwig in the shape of a large letter “J”.

The NCB Trip Pass shown below was issued for a railroad employee, a Section Laborer, to be used on March 8, 1915 for passage between Mason and Wilson:



The railroad's purpose was built to provide transportation for Bluestone (copper sulfate) which was in demand for amalgamating the silver ores from the Comstock in the Washoe Process. Construction was started September 8, 1909 but not completed until early 1912.

The first shipment from Ludwig was not copper ore, but gypsum (hydrous calcium sulphate) being shipped to Reno in late October. This mineral was a good source of revenue in the early days of the road.

However the Bluestone mines output was the principal source of traffic. The fortunes of the new railroad were tied to copper prices and production.

March 24, 1947 was the NCB last day of operation.

The last local vestige of the NCB remains in service today as part of the Nevada State Railroad Museum in Carson City which operates the steam train. The caboose has been painted back to its NCB red livery .

After years of service on the V & T RR (painted V & T yellow) and then being on display in Carson in front of what is now the State Museum on Carson Street, the veteran car was brought back to operating condition in the Museum Restoration Shop, and has seating for rail fans.

Learn more about the NCB RR in Volume 1 of David F. Myrick's "Railroads of Nevada and Eastern California" pages 214-229.

Stan Cronwall's collecting interests include Germany: Third Reich 1933-45 and the areas it occupied (stamps covers & cards). He also collects U.S. World War II Patriotic Covers and Cards; Civil War Patriotic Covers (both U.S. and CSA); U.S. Naval Covers; DDR stamps; and, Post WW II Soviet Zone Hitler Head Obliteration stamps, covers & cards.