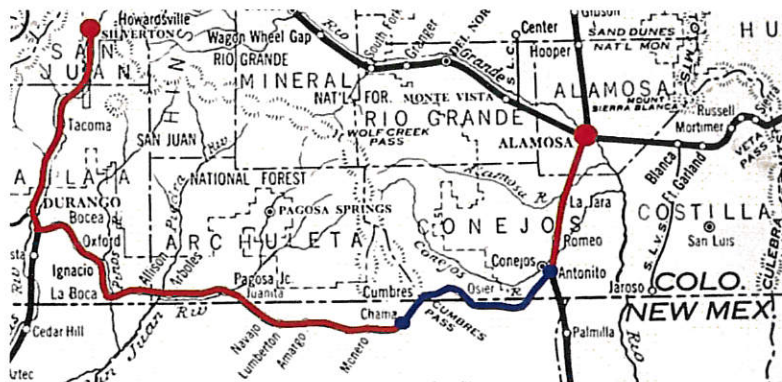


# A Philatelic Trip on the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad

In 1880 the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad began laying narrow gauge (3' rail to rail) track for the San Juan Extension (red and blue line) in south central Colorado to travel through the mountains from Alamosa, CO to the mining areas near Silverton, CO.

Once the mining and other commercial operations played out, the line was officially abandoned in 1969. In 1970 the states of New Mexico and Colorado came together to purchase a scenic section from Chama, NM to Antonito, CO and operate it as a tourist line (blue line).



The Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad is America's longest and highest narrow-gauge railroad. From Chama, NM to Antonito, CO the line stretches 64 miles and reaches an elevation of 10,015 feet. The narrow rails zigzag back and forth between the two states eleven times while traversing some of the most beautiful scenery in northern New Mexico and southern Colorado.

This exhibit uses philatelic and ephemeral items to take a trip on this famed railroad. The categories on this journey are:

1. **The Line: The Denver and Rio Grande Railroad**
2. **Mail on the Line: The Alamosa and Durango Railway Post Office (RPO)**
3. **Traveling the Line: All Post Offices and a Point of Interest along the Route**
4. **Celebrating the Line: Event Covers**
5. **Celebrating the Line: 1994 USA Steam Locomotives Booklet First Day of Issue**
6. **Celebrating the Line: 2004 Grenada Cumbres & Toltec Steam Bicentenary Issue**



**ROUND-TRIP  
EXCURSION TICKET**

**CUMBRES & TOLTEC  
SCENIC RAILROAD**

P.O. Box 789, Chama, New Mexico 87520

Regular train round-trip excursions consist of a one-way, six and one-half hour trainride, and a one-way, one and one-half hour busride. Special service which may be added on short notice to accommodate heavy traffic loads may deviate from this program.

Date SUNDAY SEP 24 1978

CAR: U SEAT: 29

DEPARTS: ☐ Antonito ☒ 8:00 A.M.  
☒ Chama ☐ 10:00 A.M.  
☐ Cumbres ☐ 11:00 A.M.  
☐ 12:01 P.M.

☒ Bus ☐ Train

No 030403 -78

1978 Cumbres & Toltec round trip passenger ticket



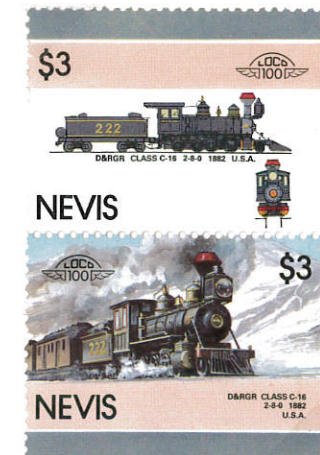
# The Line: Denver and Rio Grande Railroad



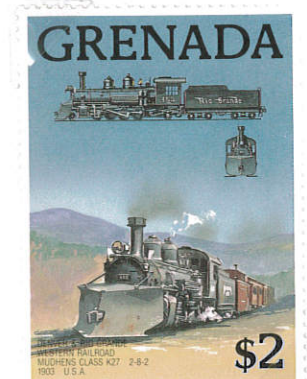
The Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad would not exist if it was not originally constructed by the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad in 1880-1881 as part of their San Juan Extension.



1920 Denver and Rio Grande Railroad stock certificate for 10 shares of common stock. Vignette shows their line in the Royal Gorge, CO. 1920 English two shillings and sixpence orange embossed revenue stamp at right.



1986 Nevis \$3 Loco 100 Issue showing Denver & Rio Grande narrow gauge Class C-16, 2-8-0 engine. Locomotive #222 (shown) was built in 1882 and was in service soon after the construction of the San Juan Extension.



1989 Grenada \$2 Locomotive Issue showing Denver & Rio Grande narrow gauge Class K-27, 2-8-2 engine. Locomotive #455 (shown) was built in 1903, The Cumbres & Toltec currently operates this same type of engine, the #463



# The Line: Denver and Rio Grande Railroad



Denver and Rio Grande Railroad corner card on 1968 airmail letter to from Chama, NM to Holland. Chama four bar cancels 20c 1967 Prominent Americans Issue.



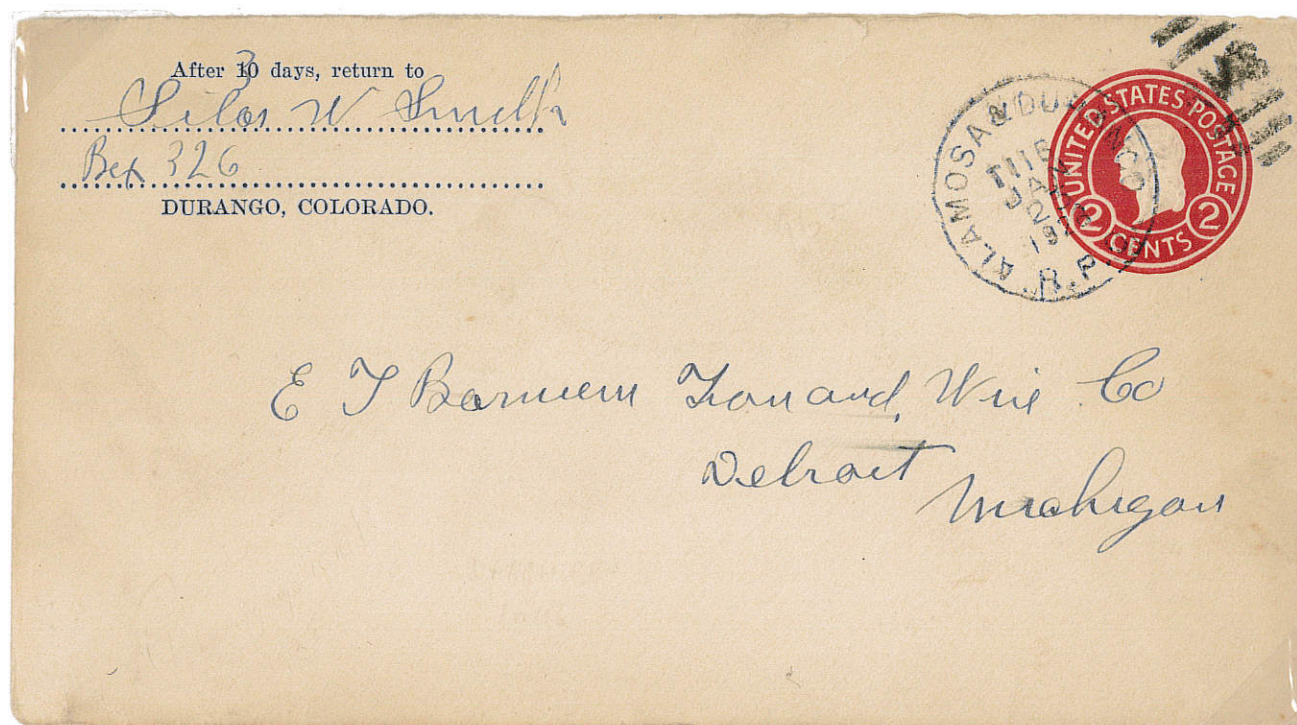
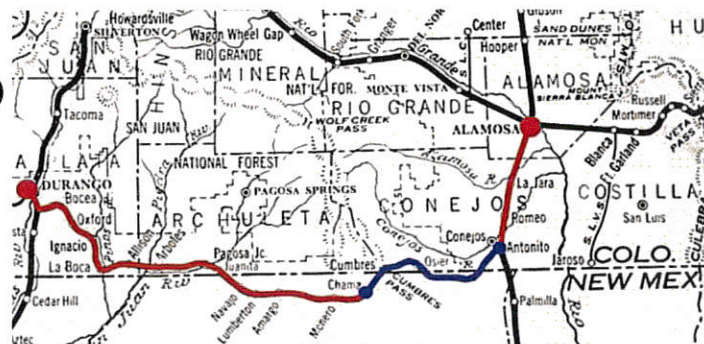
Vintage photograph from the last days of commercial operation of the line.



# Mail on the Line: Alamosa & Durango RPO



In 1909 the Alamosa & Durango Railway Post Office (RPO) was established (red and blue line) and service discontinued in 1951. Mail carried on this line traveled the present day Cumbres & Toltec (blue line).

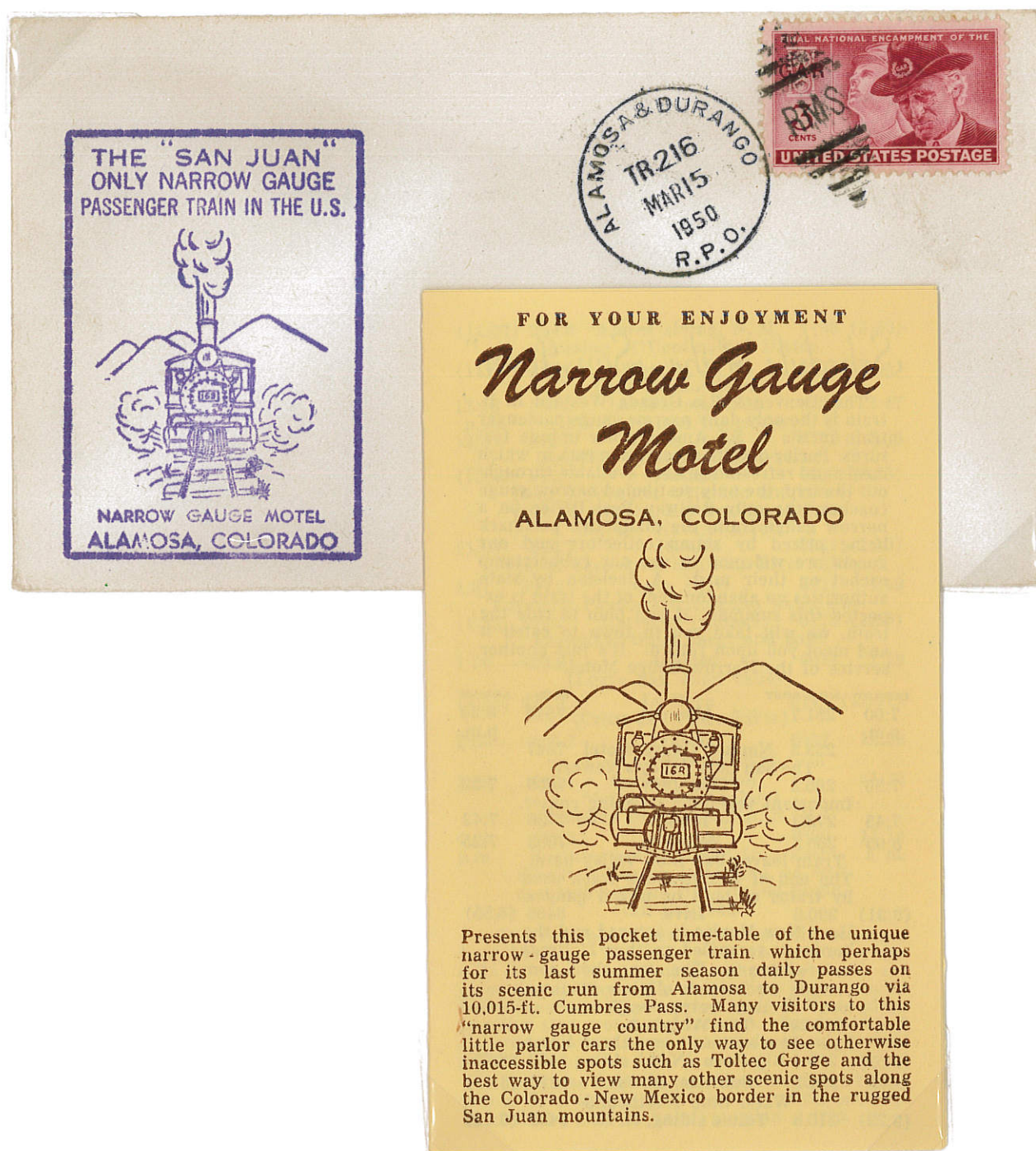


1928 Alamosa & Durango train 116 duplex cancels 2c 1915 issue stamped envelope.



1947 Alamosa to Durango passenger ticket.





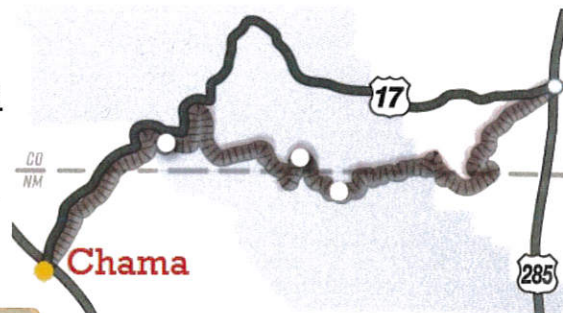
1950 Alamosa & Durango train 216 duplex cancels 3c 1949 G.A.R. Issue. Commemorative cachet and pocket San Juan extension time table by the Narrow Gauge Motel in Alamosa, CO.



## Traveling the Line: Chama, NM



Chama, NM is the western start of the Cumbres & Toltec. Post office opened in 1880 with construction of the railroad and continues today. East and west bound trains start on opposite ends of the line, stopping at a midpoint for lunch. Our journey starts on the Chama eastbound train.



1907 postcard showing a snow covered Denver & Río Grande train at the station at Chama. Reverse shows Chama duplex canceling 1903 1c Regular Issue.



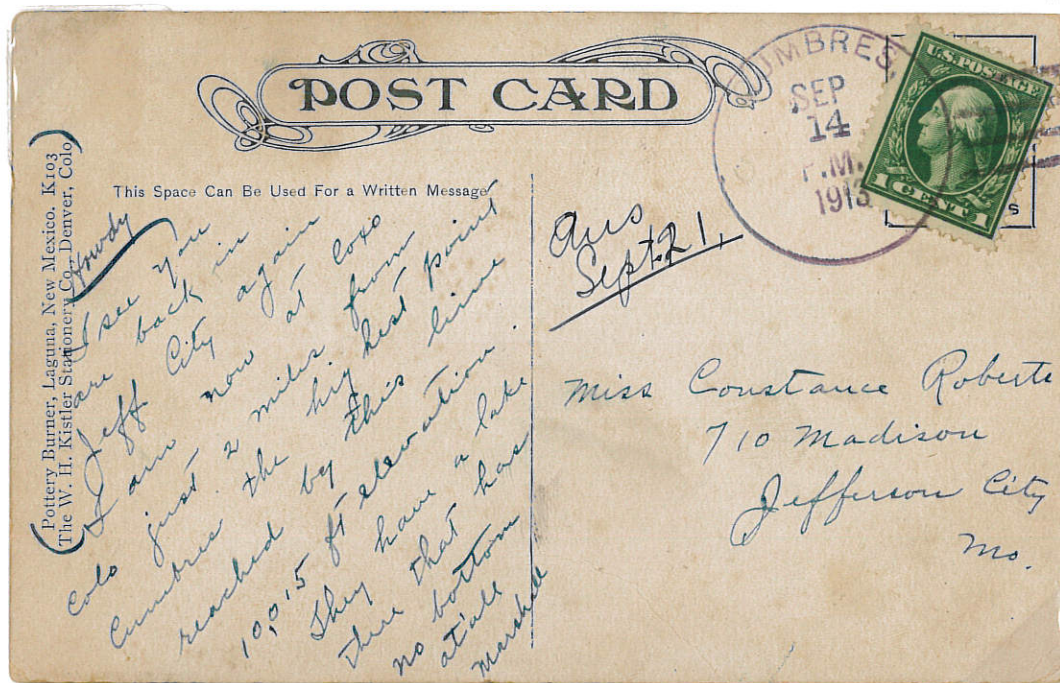
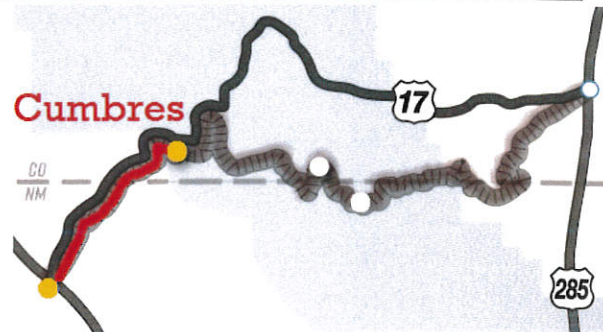
Postcard showing train at Windy Point near Chama. Reverse shows Chama duplex canceling 1903 2c Regular Issue.



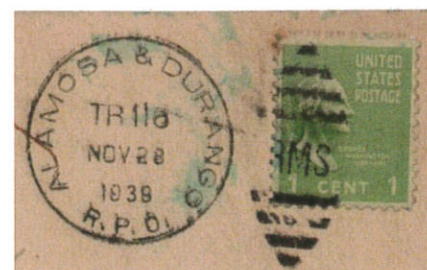
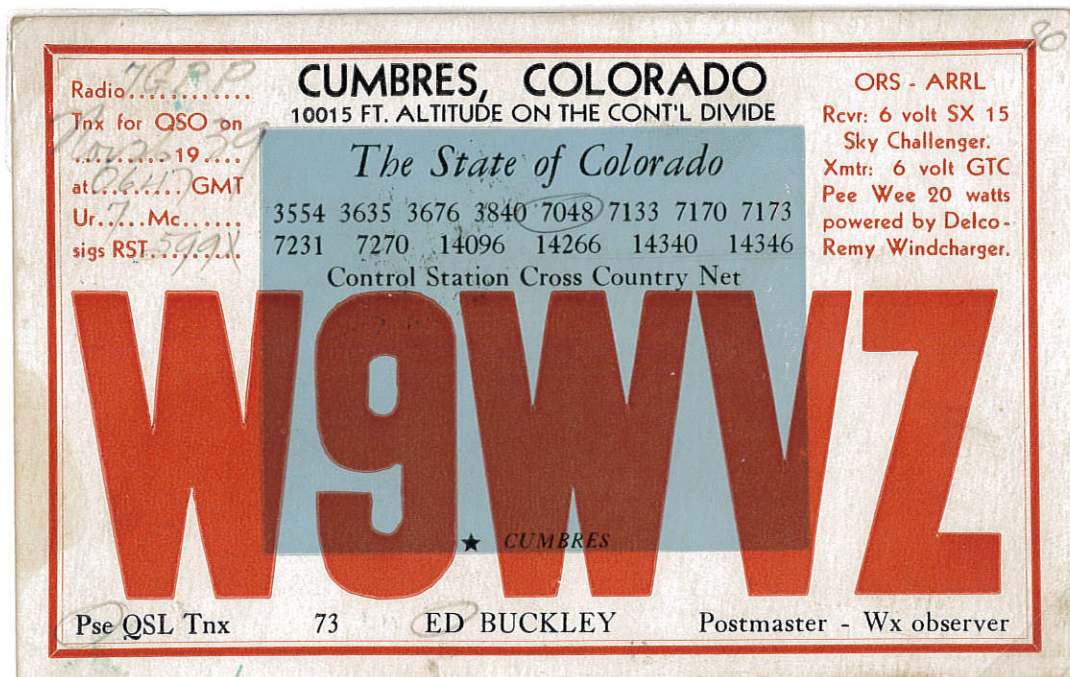
# Traveling the Line: Cumbres, CO



Traveling 14 miles and climbing 2,152 feet is the namesake Cumbres, CO at the highest point on the line at 10,015 feet. The Cumbres post office opened in 1889 and closed in 1937.



1913 postcard mailed from Cumbres, CO. Purple four bar cancels 2c 1912 Regular Issue. Written by a passenger on the train, notes that "I am now at Coxo" a railway siding near Cumbres.



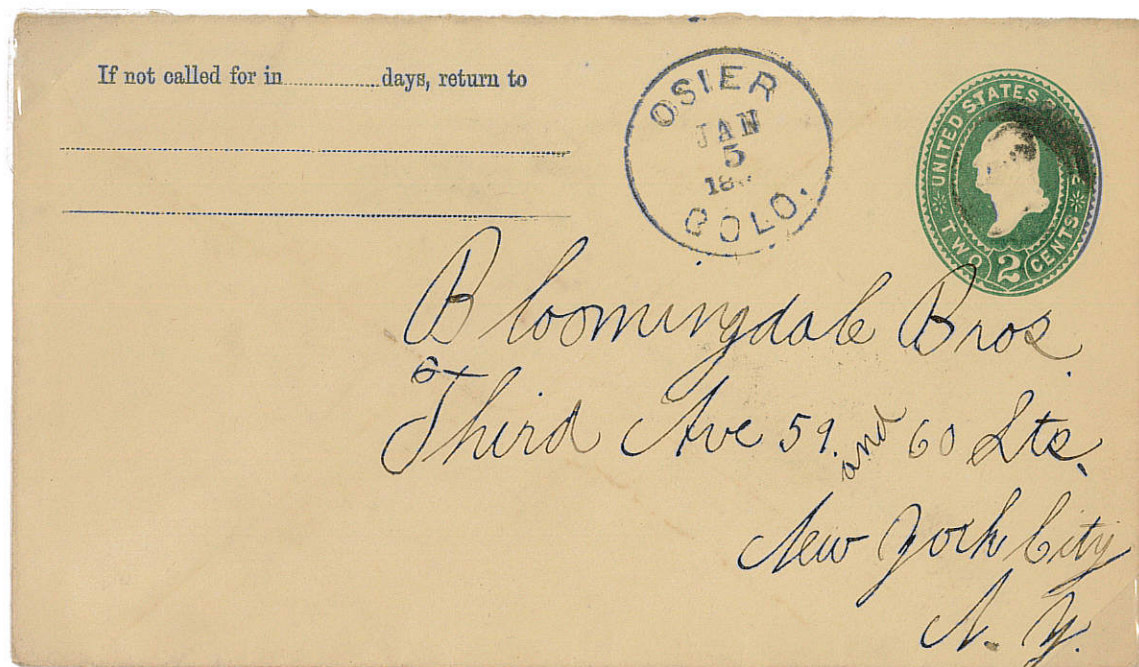
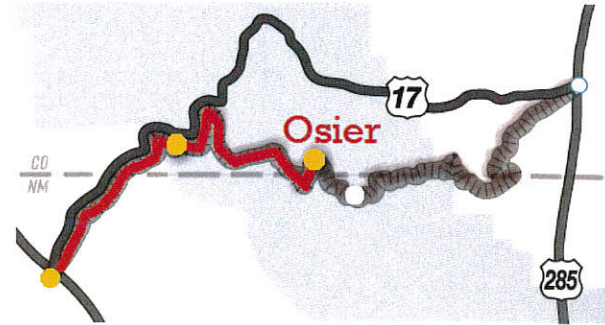
1939 ham radio card sent by the former Cumbres postmaster. While the post office was closed at this sending, reverse shows it was carried by the Alamosa & Durango RPO.



## Traveling the Line: Osier, CO



Another 12 miles takes us to the midway point of the trip at Osier, CO. Passengers stop for lunch and either return to Chama on westbound train or continue on to the eastern end at Antonito, CO. Osier Post office opened in 1882 and closed in 1928.



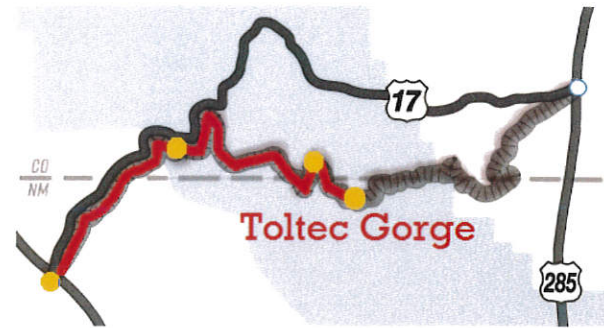
1894 Osier circular date stamp on 2c stamped envelope, cork killer. ex-Newburn



## Traveling the Line: Toltec Gorge, NM



Continuing just 3 miles east comes one of the most scenic sections of the trip, including the Toltec Gorge. Along with Cumbres, this iconic formation gives the second half of the route's name.



1906 postcard showing Toltec Gorge. Note tiny puff of smoke from the train at upper right.



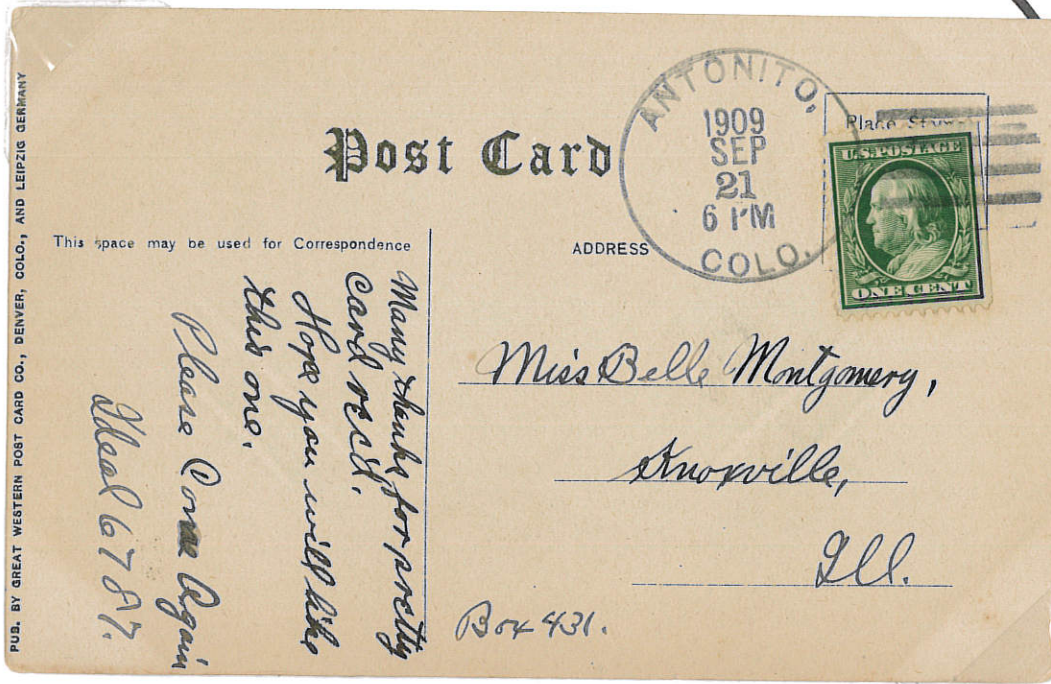
Souvenir patch showing Toltec Gorge and reads "THE TOLTEC GORGE ROUTE."



# Traveling the Line: Antonito, CO



The final stretch of 35 miles is the eastern end of the line at Antonito, CO. Passengers traveling the full 64 miles are then bused back to their vehicles in Chama. The Antonito post office opened in 1881 and continues to operate to this day.



1909 Antonito four bar cancels and ties 1908 Regular Issue.

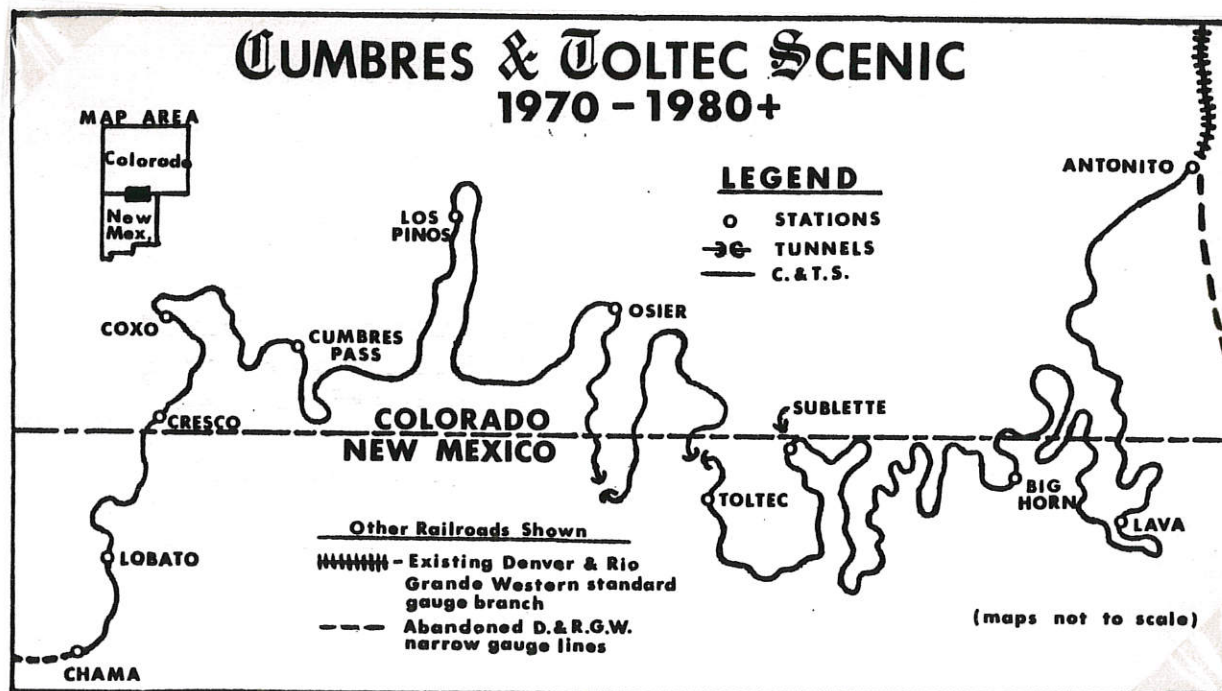


1974 postcard shows a train crossing Lobato Trestle near Chama. Revers shows Antonito machine cancel tying 10c 1973 Jefferson Memorial Issue





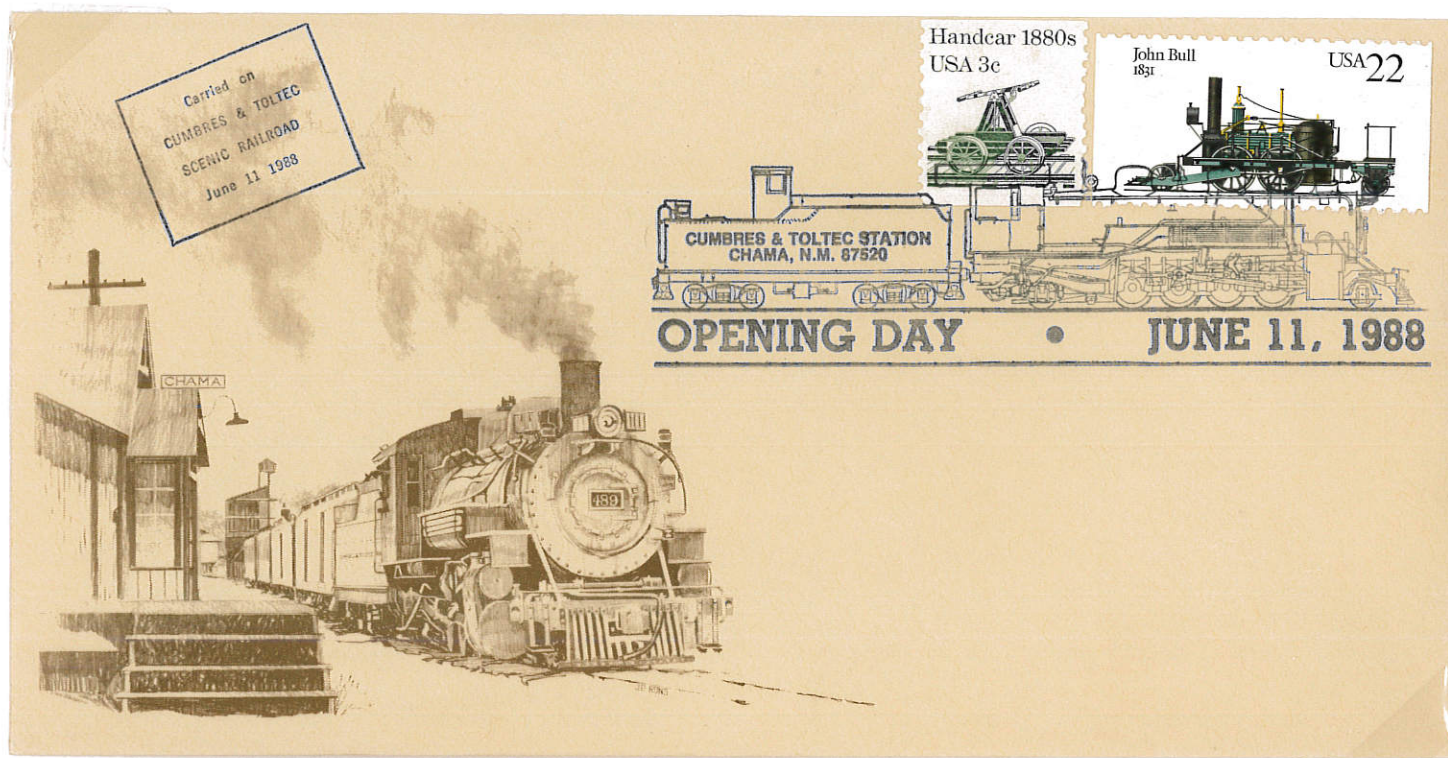
1980 Chama, NM circular date stamp on Ferro-Phile cachet marking the first decade of the Cumbres and Toltec (1970-1980).



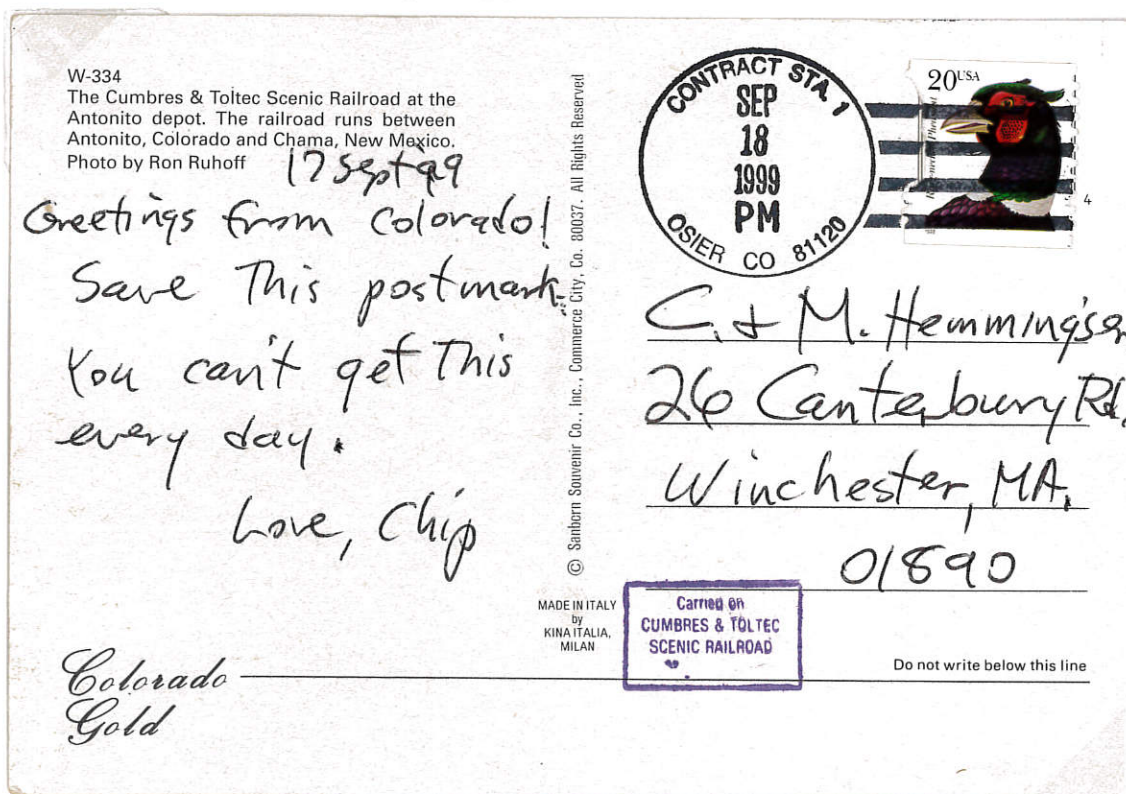
Commemorative map issued with cover.



# Celebrating the Line: Event Covers



1988 Chama, NM Opening Day Cumbres & Toltec Station pictorial cancel ties 3c 1983 Transportation Issue and 22c 1987 Locomotives Issue. "Carried on CUMBRES & TOLTEC SCENIC RAILROAD" private auxiliary marking at upper left.

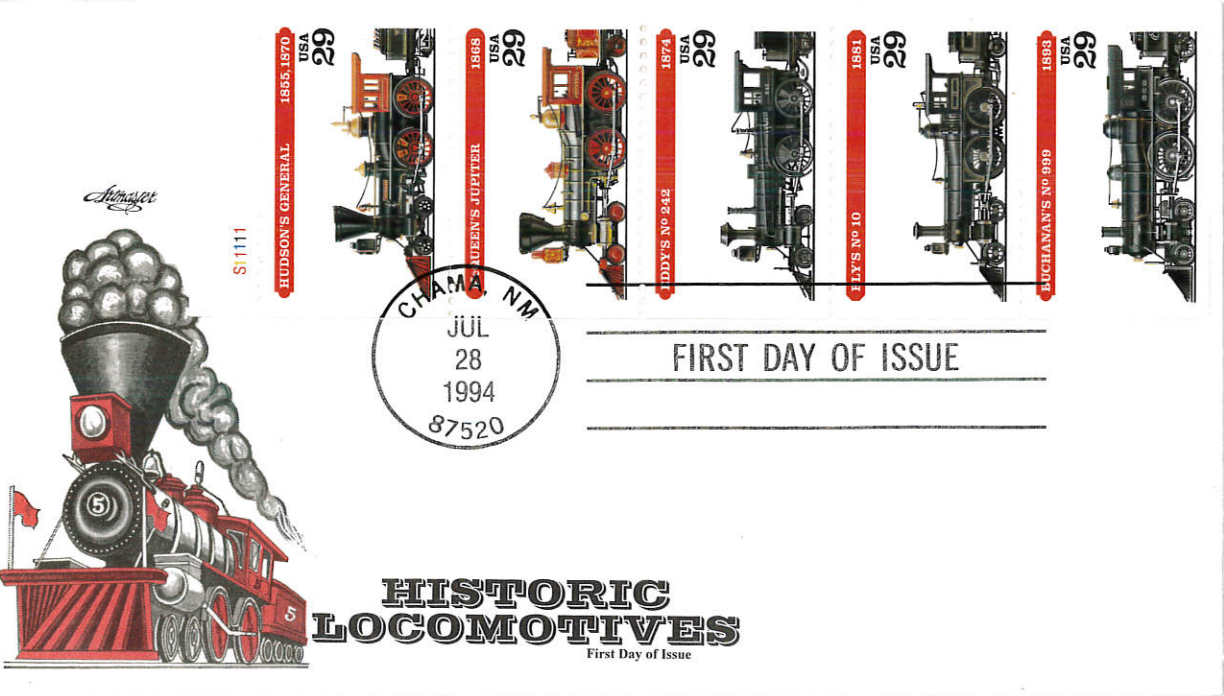


1999 Osier, CO Contract Station 1 four bar cancels 20c 1998 Flora and Fauna Issue. Small purple Cumbres & Toltec private auxiliary marking at bottom. This contract station under Antonito, CO zip code allowed passengers to send mail at their midway lunch stop.





In 1994, the US Postal Service chose the Cumbres & Toltec depot in Chama, NM for the First Day of Issue ceremony for the 29c Steam Locomotives booklet.



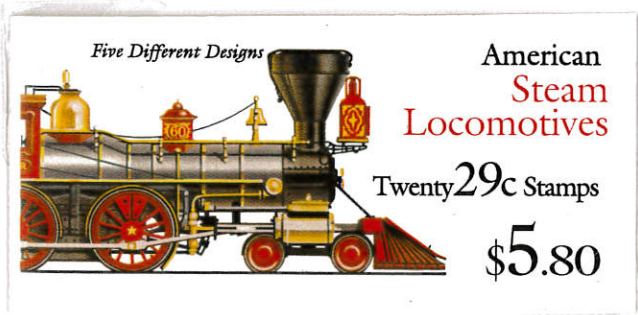
Entire booklet pane tied by First Day of Issue cancel with Chama 24mm circular date stamp, cachet by Artmaster.



First Day of Issue ceremony program showing Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad engines.

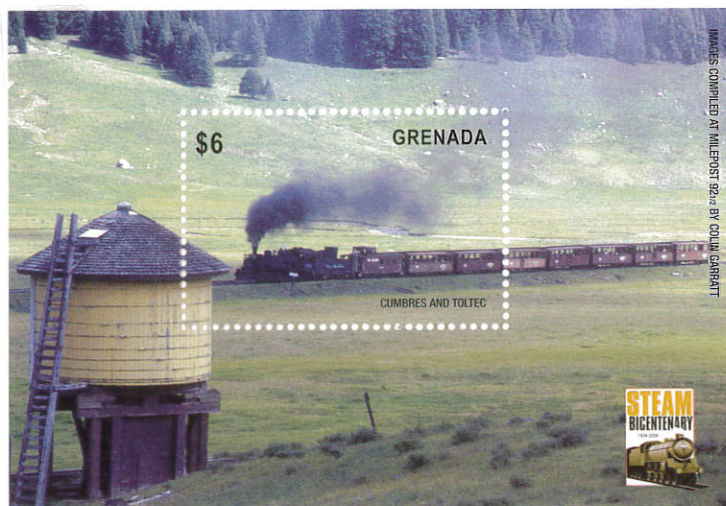


Ely's No. 10 Issue tied by First Day of Issue cancel with Chama 21mm circular date stamp, cachet by Artmaster.



Complete unexploded booklet of the issue.





2004 Grenada \$6 Cumbres & Toltec Steam Bicentenary Issue souvenir sheet. The only stamp issue to commemorate the line by name.

