

## 1925 – 1940 National Park Vehicle Entry Passes

Vehicle entry into our National Parks began in the early 1900's after construction of dirt paths and gravel roadways were introduced into Banff National Park during the 1920's. Previously, only railway access to Banff and Jasper allowed visitors to depart the train, and visit via horseback or "Tally Ho" wagon from the train station.

A "new" metal Buffalo style vehicle pass was introduced in 1925, and used as a roadway National Park pass in the mountain Parks until 1940. These annual passes originally cost \$1 and later \$2, and were intended to be mounted to the front bumper or radiator shell of the vehicle, so the gate attendant could see them on vehicle entry to the Park. The first metal used was a copper "walking" buffalo with "CANADIAN NATIONAL PARKS" on the base and no date on it. Each year after the metal used was alternated between aluminum, brass and copper (A,B,C). Six mounting screw holes were drilled in the original plates, until 1930 when the holes drilled was reduced to four. The first three years (1925,'26, &'27) did not have a date on them, but were made of copper, aluminum, and brass to distinguish each year.

1928 & 1929 (copper & aluminum), only had .8 and .9 dates to distinguish them, and the name was changed to "CANADA'S NATIONAL PARKS". 1930 and 1931 (brass & copper) used .30 and .31 to date each.

Beginning in 1932, a more detailed "standing" buffalo was crafted, with the full date.

In 1939 & 1940, mounting holes were removed, and a base plate with a slotted mounting bar opening were added. The use of metal for entry passes was discontinued during the second world war to help assist the war effort. Paper receipts were then used, until window stickers, - - first buffalo, then elk, and eventually a stylized beaver were used into the 1990's.

In 1938, 1939 (aluminum) & 1940 (copper), circular metal passes were also produced for use in the prairie National Parks. They had a single mounting hole base, and the date in the beaver lodge the beaver sat on. Again the use of metal was discontinued for the second world war. 1942 saw a paper bison sticker replica produced for a few years. During the 1930's Saskatchewan Natural Resources produced an aluminum beaver, "SNR Parks" for use in that province at that time.

Other provinces and local communities, used a moose, elk, or fish (Waterton) metal format promoted by local Chamber of Commerce groups. Many "commemorative plate reproductions" have been produced since the National Parks centennial in 1985. BNP did one of the first, then Elk Island for 1906, and Jasper for 1907 (100 year Park commemorations). The Jasper museum also produced replica's in a metal alloy format, for use as a fund raising effort in the early 2000's.

The metal plates were stamped in three different locations, Winnipeg, Ottawa, and Vancouver where various contracts were let to produce them. Some have the maker's location stamped on the back. Counterfeit copies were common, and many have had the date's altered in an effort to avoid paying the next year fees when entering the Park. Examples of all of the original metal passes are considered rare to extremely rare, and of significant value!

**Editor's notation:** One of author Rod Wallace's pastimes is collecting 'Historical National Park Passes'. Rod retired after spending a lifetime career with National Parks Canada.

An original  
1925 Parks Pass

