



The Badges of Grant R. Wilson

Chief of Police - NYO&W Railway

By Chip Greiner

I was very fortunate about thirty years ago to locate and trade for the first Chief of Police badge that belonged to Chief Grant R. Wilson of the New York, Ontario & Western Railway Company. It was a beautiful gold eagle top badge with an early New York State coat of arms seal. It wasn't until about seven years ago that I was able to purchase a group of artifacts from Grant Wilson that had belonged to a long time NYO&W collector and KL&L member. I received these through the kindness of the collector's widow, along with some other items.

Among the items were Chief Wilson's first Patrolman's badge #1, a matching Chief's hat badge, collar eagle and marked "come along" chain twister handcuff. Also in the group were three old railroad passes that belonged to Chief Wilson, and his membership card for the New York Terminal Railroad Police Association.

The photo of Chief Wilson at right shows that he had only one arm, losing the other arm in a railroad accident while coupling cars when he first hired out as a brakeman in 1884. He was then hired by the O&W as a Patrolman for the Middletown, NY yards and was shot and wounded several times by thugs while working the yards. Wilson was appointed Chief of Police for the O&W in 1892. He retired on pension on December 2, 1929 after 45 years of railroad service and died on July 25, 1938 at the age of 72.



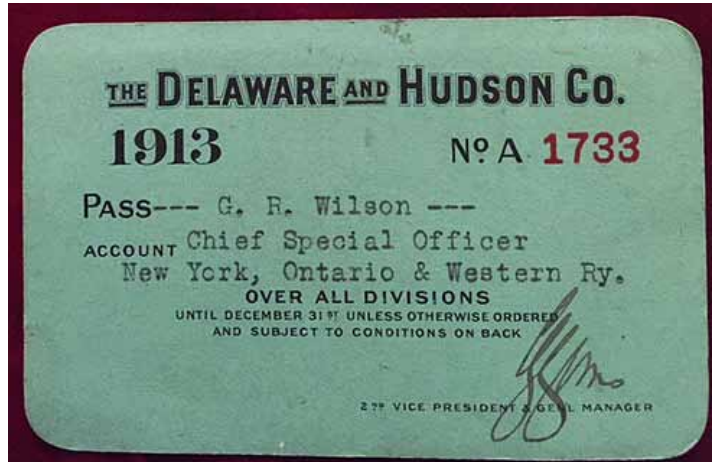
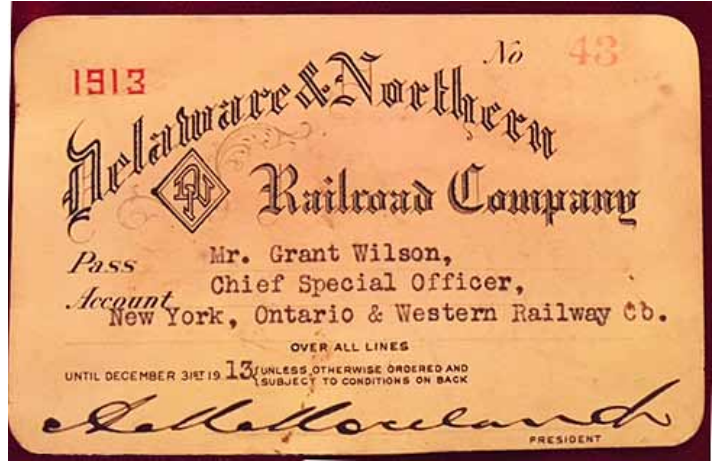
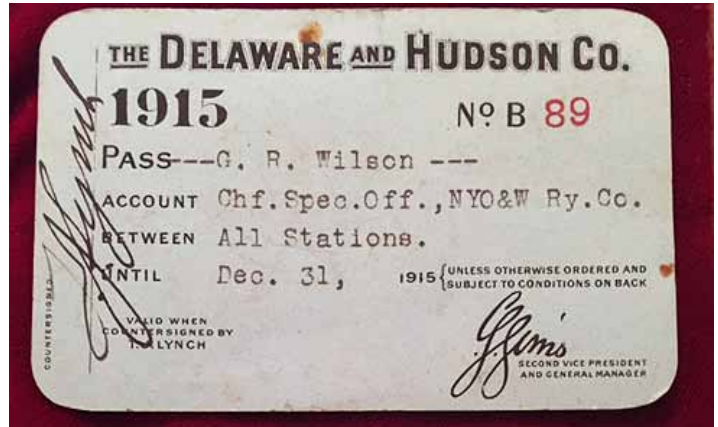
NYO&W Railway Chief of Police Grant R. Wilson, in an undated photo. He had lost his left arm in a coupling accident as a brakeman, prior to entering police service.



Patrolman's badge issued to New York, Ontario & Western Railway Chief of Police Grant R. Wilson, when he first entered service for the railroad at the Middletown Yard.



Grant Wilson's membership card in the New York Terminal Railway Police Association, a professional organization of railroad police department heads in the New York area.



A small collection of annual passes issued to Grant Wilson by the Delaware & Hudson Company in 1913 & 1915, and by Catskill shortline Delaware & Northern Railroad in 1913.



A closer view of the small "O&W" logo marking on the end of Chief Grant Wilson's chain twister handcuffs.

The gold eagle top Chief of Police badge issued to Grant R. Wilson by the New York, Ontario & Western Railway, when he was promoted to the position from patrolman in 1892.



Grant Wilson's "come along" chain twister handcuffs, marked for the New York, Ontario & Western Railway

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New York, Ontario & Western Railway Chief of Police Grant Wilson's badge, "Chief" hat badge, and uniform collar eagle are reunited in the collection of Chip Greiner (below). Chief Wilson retired in 1929 and died in 1938, but the railroad that he worked for didn't outlast him for too many more years. By the time the 1948 public timetable at lower right was issued, service was dwindling and abandonment came in 1957. In addition to badges, timetables and other artifacts, another survivor of the NYO&W is NW-2 diesel locomotive No.116, sold to the New York Central and later used on the Delaware Otsego's lines (including former O&W trackage in Utica and Norwich), seen at right in its new home on the Delaware & Ulster RR at Arkville, NY. Timetable and photo from the collection of Dave Hamilton.

