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## Western Union

**Postal Telegraph Company** Formed in 1881 to compete with Western Union, the Postal Telegraph Company capitalized on the email technology of its day. Telegrams were sent to destination offices, and then mailed to private and business recipients. Going "postal" was routine business for this telegraph company. Using local mail delivery still made it possible to transfer messages much faster than long distance mail. The concept was an immediate success, and Postal went international in 1886.



*CD 133 Star*

Lines were built through Josephine County around 1886 - 1887. It was a smaller company that found a niche in the market. Its niche was taking care of the little guy. For example, Western Union might be the only telegraph line providing service to your area. If you lived in Merlin or Grants Pass you could get telegraph service (somehow you would be notified if you had a telegraph line). If you lived in the country, forget it.

The Postal Telegraph Company was set up to utilize both the telegraph and the post office. A telegraph might be sent from Iowa to Merlin, Oregon. At this point the telegraph would be mailed from Merlin to the family in Hugo. So now, all the little folks in the country could now get telegraphs, or send telegraphs by using the mail system. There were postal telegraph offices clear up to Prospect, Oregon. They covered a wide market. Later on Western Union also started providing this service.

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## Postal Telegraph Company Lines Built In Josephine County: 1886 - 1887

The Postal Telegraph Company operated the line until they had six-pin cross arms. The neat thing about the postal line was in the middle of WWII they merged with Western Union and the lines were left. They discontinued using them and the lines were left in place and they disintegrated into the ground.

The Postal Telegraph Company went bankrupt at the end of World War II. While lines were salvaged in some parts of the country, significant stretches were simply left to the elements. When Howard Banks started collecting in the late 1960's, one of the main sources of insulators was the abandoned Postal line through Southern Oregon. Poles were still standing, some places adorned with CD 208 California's.

**Sexton Mt. CD 145** This CD 145 beehive was found by Howard Banks and his dad when they were digging around the base of a postal telegraph pole on Mt. Sexton. They were taking turns digging. He would dig and find something and Howard would dig and find something. He would pull up an insulator and then Howard would pull out an insulator.

The California Company was only in business from 1912 to 1916. Finding insulators from this company meant a lot of the upgrades for that time period.



*CD 145 Hemingray*

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## More Information

The original insulators on the Postal Telegraph Company system were CD 133 Brookfields. This telegraph system was expanded to six lines before it was abandoned to the elements in the middle 1940's. Most of the insulators found in the mountains are from the abandoned Postal Telegraph Company system.

A wide variety of insulators were being used on the system when it was abandoned. Included were the following insulators: CD 145 California, CD 208 California, CD 210 California, CD 154 Maydwell, CD 154 Whitall Tatum, CD 153 48-40's (Gayner), and others.

The Postal Telegraph Company had upgraded its lines in the 1930s, not long before it was abandoned.

**Insulator Brochure Series** This brochure is number two of several in the "insulator" series numbered 1 through 11. Most importantly, the insulator series is all about Josephine County, Oregon, insulators. The series will be continued with adventures in the field.

1. Insulators of Josephine County
2. Crown Jewels Of The Wire
3. Anatomy Of An Insulator
4. Insulator CD Numbers
5. Collins Line
6. Oregon & California Railroad
7. **Postal Telegraph Company**
8. AT&T Long Distance Telephone Lines
9. Local Phone Service Lines
10. Power Lines
11. First Insulators of Hugo Neighborhood

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## Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society's Mission

This information brochure is one of a series of documents published by the Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society (*Hugo Neighborhood*). It is designed to be shared with neighbors for the purpose of helping protect our rural quality of life by promoting an informed citizenry in decision-making. The *Hugo Neighborhood* is an informal nonprofit charitable and educational organization with a land use and history mission promoting the social welfare of its neighbors.

### Land Use & History

The *Hugo Neighborhood's* land use mission is to promote Oregon Statewide Goal 1 — Citizen Involvement, and by preserving, protecting, and enhancing the livability and economic viability of its farms, forests, and rural neighbors. It will act, as requested, as a technical resource assisting neighbors to represent themselves.

Its history mission is to collect, preserve, interpret, and research its local history and to encourage public interest in the history of the Hugo area.

Membership dues are \$10.00 annually and due in January. They are used for paper, ink, envelopes, publications, and mailings. Make checks to the *Hugo Neighborhood* and send them to our Treasurer.

*Hugo Neighborhood*

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Postal Telegraph  
Company



Brochure 7 in Insulator Series



*Howard Banks & Norbert Tieman Near  
Postal Telegraph Pole At Sexton Mountain*

March 19, 2006

by

**Hugo Neighborhood Association &  
Historical Society**

&

**Crown Jewels Of The Wire**