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# Nevada County Narrow Gauge

*Gerald M. Best*

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**Nevada County Narrow Gauge** Gerald M. Best

Heimburger House announces another new book offering, the Nevada County Narrow Gauge by Gerald M. Best, a 214-page hardbound history of this well-known narrow gauge line in California.

With 284 photographs, maps, diagrams and rosters, Nevada County Narrow Gauge recounts the story of this short line railroad that served California's northern mines, mostly quartz gold mines. The line opened for business on May 24, 1876 when the first regular train ran between the two end points.

High trestles, tunnels, steep grades and sharp curves, picturesque stations and yards are what this shortline was all about. The railroad ran between Colfax, through Grass Valley and up to Nevada City, California, north and east of Sacramento.

The railroad, besides carrying large quantities of lumber, farm produce and feeds, Bartlett pears and peaches, grapes, walnuts, apples and citrus fruits, carried gold shipments for the San Francisco Mint—and never was this part of the business marred by a holdup or even an attempted one, though the total amount of gold shipped was $250 million.

With the war in Europe, and permits to mine gold cancelled, the NCNG became more valuable as scrap. The gross revenue for 1941 was down $50,000 in two years to $118,000, and a Federal order to shut the mines in October of 1942 was the final blow. On July 10, 1942, the railroad ran its last revenue train. Some of the equipment went to the White Pass & Yukon, while some went to Hawaii for use by the U.S. Navy at Pearl Harbor.

The Nevada County Narrow Gauge was a pioneer, there being only four other common carrier railroads of 3-foot gauge completed in California before May of 1876. It had been built without subsidy and outlasted many of its contemporaries except the Carson & Colorado.

Over its 66-year life span, the rail line gave employment to hundreds of people, and made it possible for the mines to operate without interruption, and earning $7.2 million in revenues along the way. It's gone—but not forgotten! The book features a beautiful color painting of NCNG locomotive #5 on the dustjacket, painted by noted artist John Hugh Coker. The book was first printed many years ago.

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