COLUMBIA RIVER

Crew Sleeper – Stabled at Council Bluffs

The *Columbia River* was built in 1949 by American Car & Foundry as the *Western Wonderland*, a 12-roomette (single), four-bedroom sleeper. It was converted to an 11-bedroom car, the No. 1611 *Sun Slope*, in 1965. The car resembles traditional passenger sleeping cars because upper berths still remain in some rooms. In 1989, it was named the *Columbia River*.

Winding through Washington and Oregon, the Columbia River received its name when Captain Robert Gray, aboard the American vessel Columbia Rediviva, anchored 10 miles from its mouth. On May 19, 1792, Gray gave his ship’s name to the river that became a major source of commerce and trade.

By 1860, the Oregon Steam Navigation Company, a predecessor of Union Pacific, began steamboat operations on the river. Later, a railroad was built to bypass rapids in portions of the river. Up the Columbia River and down the Pacific coast, the Oregon-Washington Railroad and Navigation Company, another UP predecessor, operated steamboats such as the *Columbia* and the *T. J. Potter*. The *Columbia* was the first vessel fitted with Thomas Edison’s new electric lighting system powered by a portable generator. This generator is now at the Smithsonian.

Traveling by rail through the Columbia River Gorge is one of the most beautiful vistas on the Union Pacific system.