WYOMING

Deluxe Sleeper – Stabled at Council Bluffs

The Wyoming was built in 1949 by American Car & Foundry as the 12-roomette, four-bedroom sleeper Western Lodge. It was rebuilt in 1965 into an 11-bedroom sleeper No. 1603, Sun Lake. In 1974 it was rebuilt into a four-bedroom deluxe sleeper and renamed Wyoming.

Wyoming became a territory in 1867, the year Union Pacific crews wintered in Cheyenne. Some of the most difficult challenges to UP’s engineering corps came in Wyoming after leaving the very level Platte River Valley in Nebraska. When building the transcontinental railroad, Union Pacific surveyors struggled against the Cheyenne and, in some cases, lost. General Dodge named sidings after slain surveyors Percy Brown (Percy) and Lothrop Hills (Hillsdale). Railroad workers also battled the elements in the Red Desert in central Wyoming. Here they had problems finding water and, when they did, even the mules would not drink it. Until sufficient wells could be drilled, water had to be hauled to the many tanks necessary for steam locomotive operation.

Breaching the Continental Divide between Cheyenne and Laramie, Wyo., came about by accident. General Dodge, after visiting some survey crews, was returning to camp when his party became aware of some Cheyenne following them.

During the chase that followed, Dodge found the line he needed over Sherman Summit, the highest point on any mainline railroad in the United States.

Today, most of Wyoming’s major communities are located along Union Pacific tracks.