

Three Railroads

2532 Miles Of Gorgeous Scenery

Five Vista Domes

*The Most Talked  
About Train In  
America...*

# Silver Thread to The West

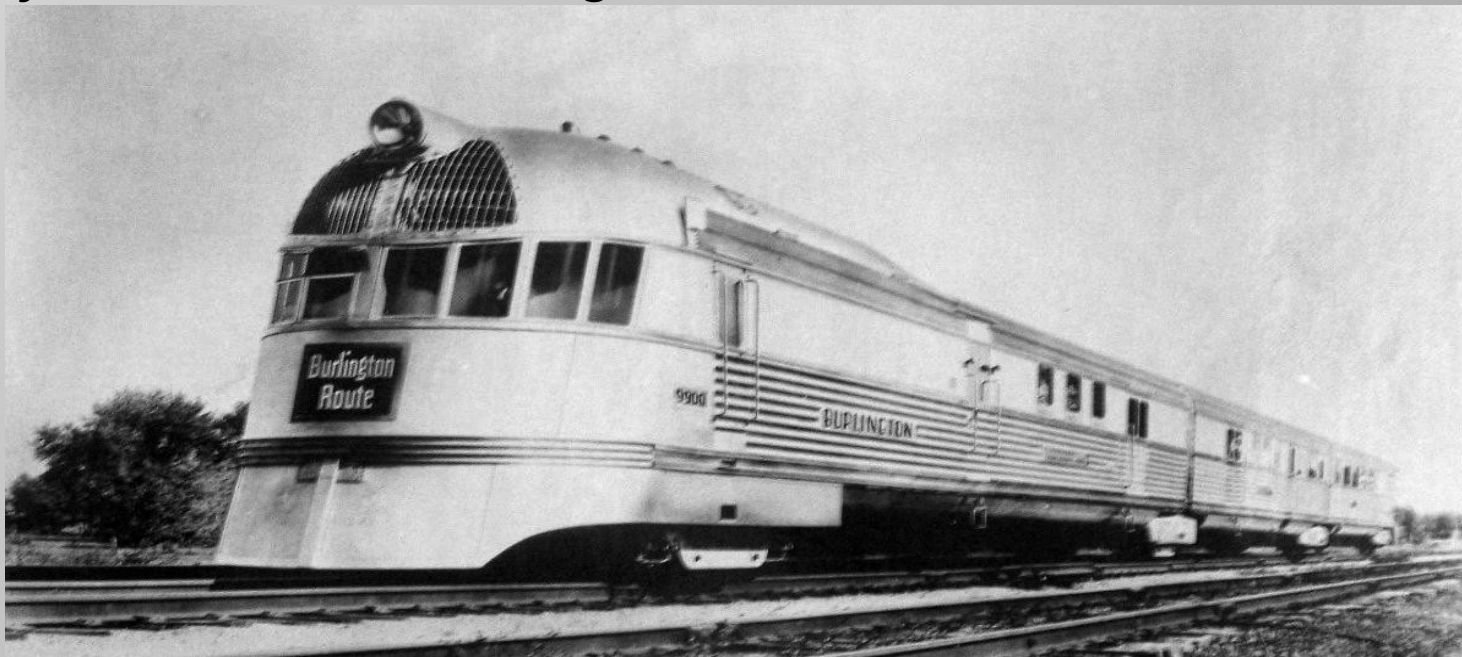
The History of the California Zephyr

March 20, 1949 - March 20, 1970



# Beginnings

- 1934 Pioneer Zephyr
- Streamlined
- Ralph Budd (CBQ) meets Edward Budd (Budd Corp.)
- Stainless steel and shotwelding
- Wildly successful = willing to take risks



# Beginnings

- Exposition Flyer – 1939
- First through car train for CB&Q/DRGW/WP
- “Scheduling for Scenery”
- Dotsero Cutoff / Moffat Tunnel
- Traded time & distance for scenic beauty



**CZ Fun Fact #1**

# Beginnings

- 1940 Joint Meeting
- 1943 Informal Discussions
- Post-war RR's Awash With \$
- October 1945 Joint Contract
- First orders to Budd 1945
- Revisions in 1946 & 1947
- First deliveries 1948

# Beginnings

- 1944 Cyrus Osborn's (General manager of EMD) grand idea
- 1944 trip Glenwood Canyon
- The Dome Car is born by rebuilding a standard Budd chair car (originally Silvery Alchemy)





# CZ Fun Fact #2

# Dividing the Cost And Profits

- Costs were divided by percentage of CZ route mileage (the Exposition Flyer route)
  - CB&Q = 41%
  - DRGW = 22%
  - WP = 37%
- Profits were divided by percentage of short line route (the Overland Route), which cost WP 10% compared to CB&Q and DRGW share

# Dividing the Cost And Profits

- CB&Q owned 27 cars
- DRGW owned 15 cars
- WP owned 24 cars
- PRR leased 1 car

# Planning

- Menus
- Timing
  - Governed by need to have the train in the Rockies and Feather River Canyon during daylight
  - Layover time for through car was a casualty
- Staffing

# The Zephyrettes



# CZ Fun Fact #3

# The Zephyrettes



# Planning

- Advance publicity
  - Blitz of newspaper and magazine ads touting the Vista Dome and the CZ
  - Demonstration runs by all three railroads March 8-19, 1949
  - Christening in San Francisco March 19 by Eleanor Parker and Goodwin Knight





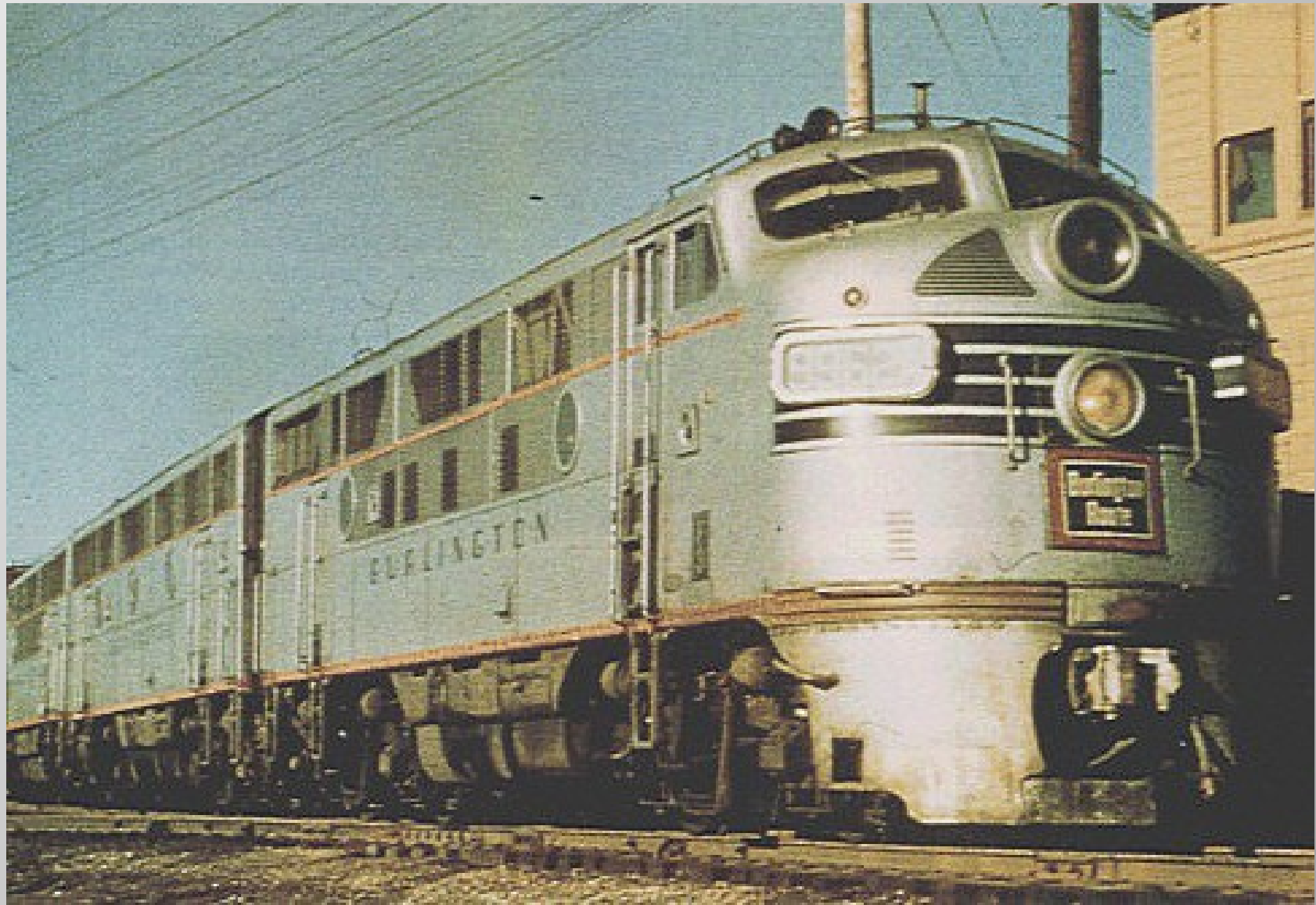
CZ Fun Fact #4

# Style and Design

- Overall planning was chaired by CB&Q
- Focus on the tourist, not the business traveler
- Radio, wire-recorded music, and PA throughout
- Carpet, soundproofing, foam rubber cushions, venetian blinds, draftless AC, soft water for washing throughout the train
- Each car had its own color scheme
- Dome cars had special murals
- Unique china, linen, and silverware

# Motive Power

- CB&Q
  - EMD F-3 ABA with 56:21 gearing, double headlight
  - E-5, E-7, E-8
- DRGW
  - ALCO PA1 & PB1 ABA
  - F-3 ABBA 56:21 gearing, dual headlights
- WP
  - EMD F-3 ABB 57:20 gearing, dual headlights
  - FP-7 ABA and ABB





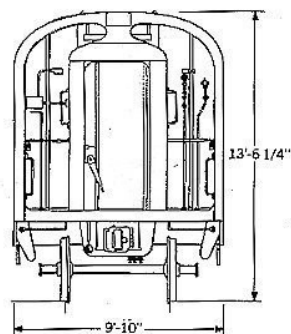
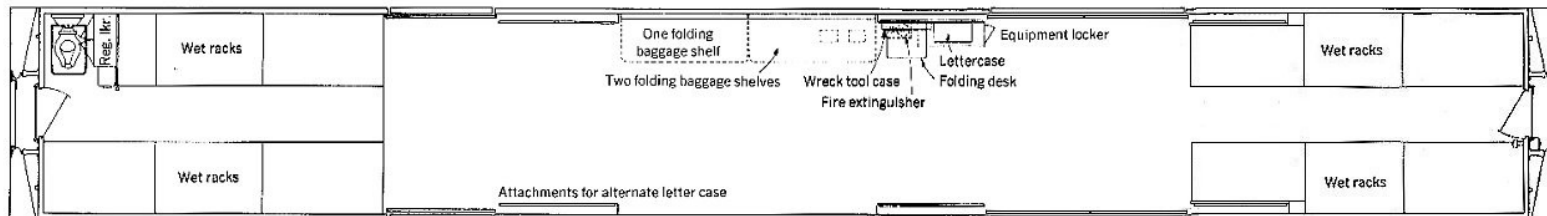


CZ Fun Fact #5

# The Original Consist

- Baggage car (1)
- Vista-Dome Coaches (3)
- Vista-Dome buffet-lounge-dormatory (1)
- 10 roomette/6 double bedroom Sleepers (2)
- Diner (1)
- 16 section Sleeper (1) - later dropped
- 10 roomette/6 double bedroom Sleeper (1)  
through car NYC- PRR – also dropped
- Vista-Dome lounge observation (1)

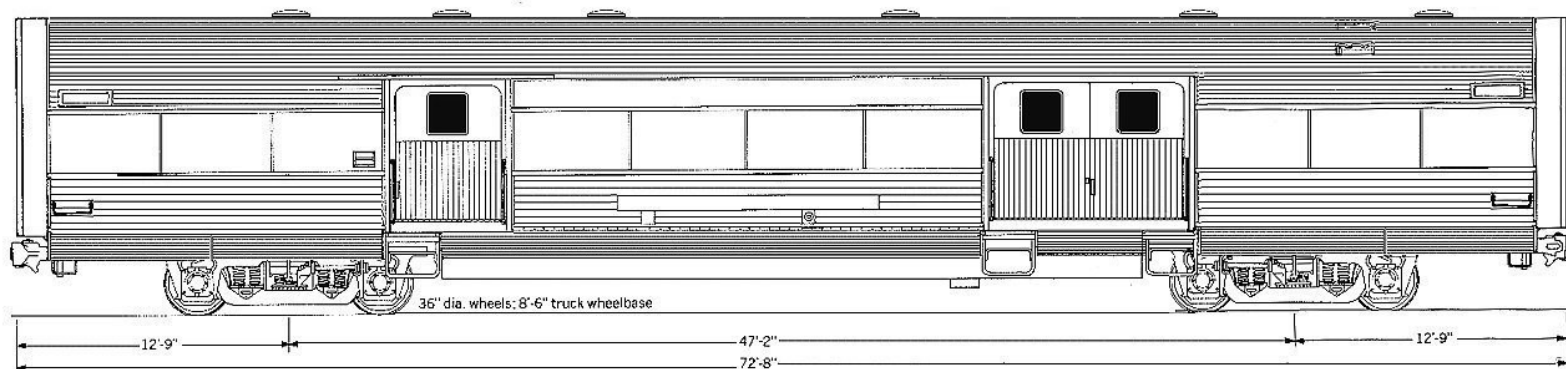


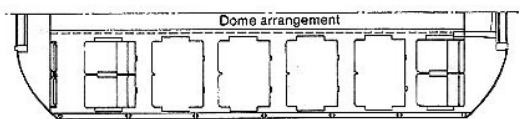
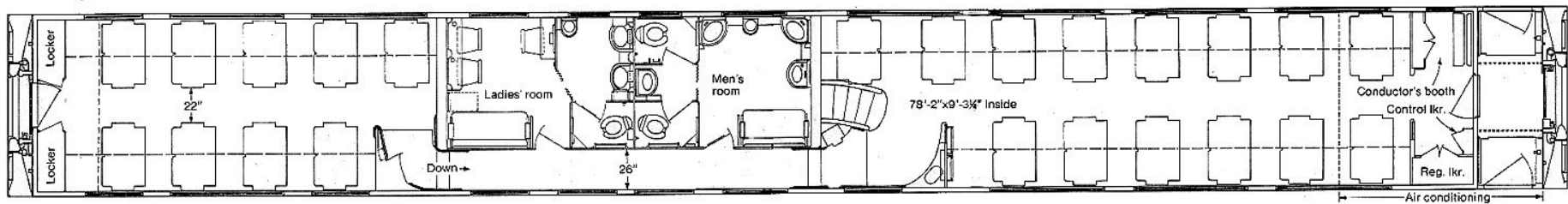


# California Zephyr

## Baggage Car

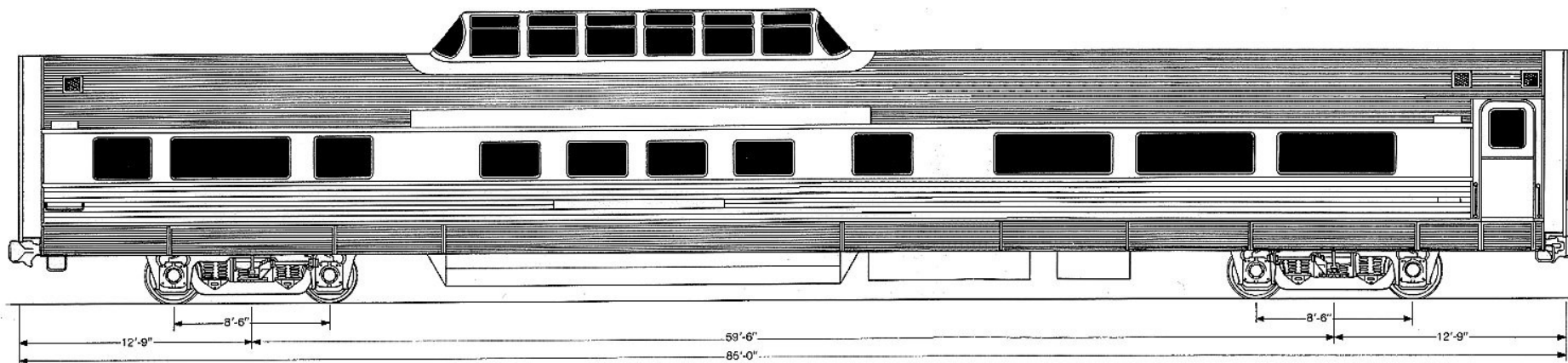
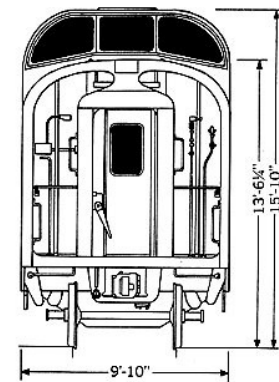
Plans not to scale





# California Zephyr Dome Chair Coach

Plans not to scale

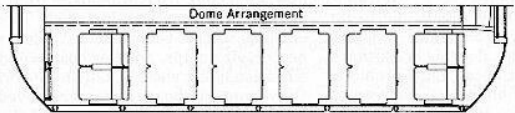
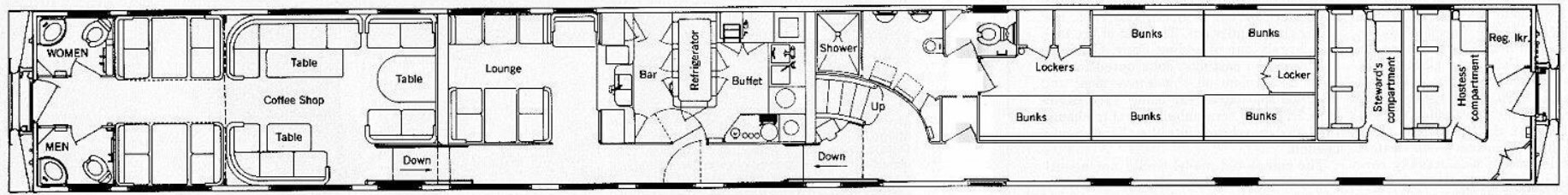


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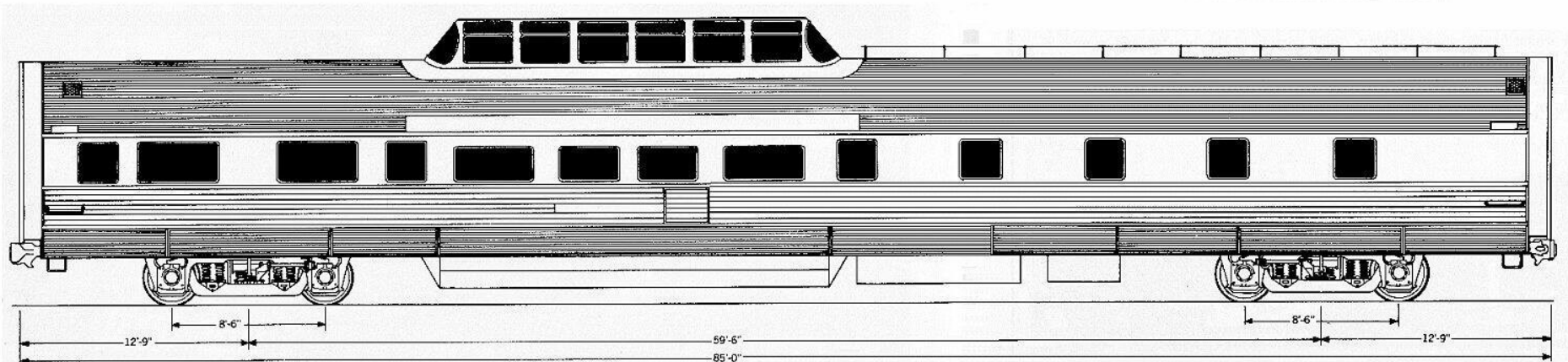
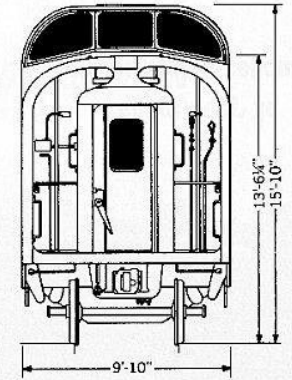


CZ Fun Fact #6



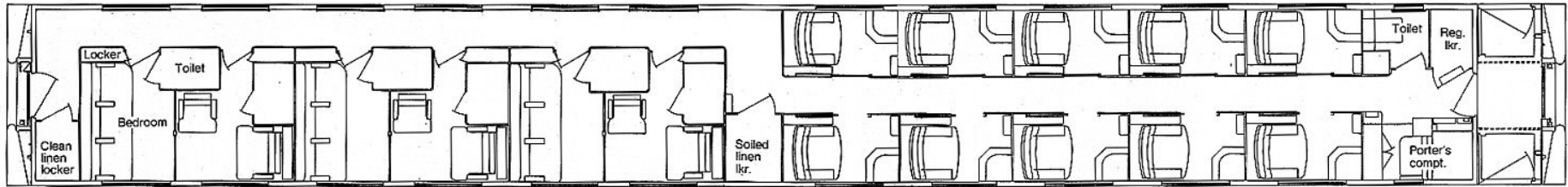
# *California Zephyr Dome-Dormitory-Bufferet Lounge*

Plans not to scale



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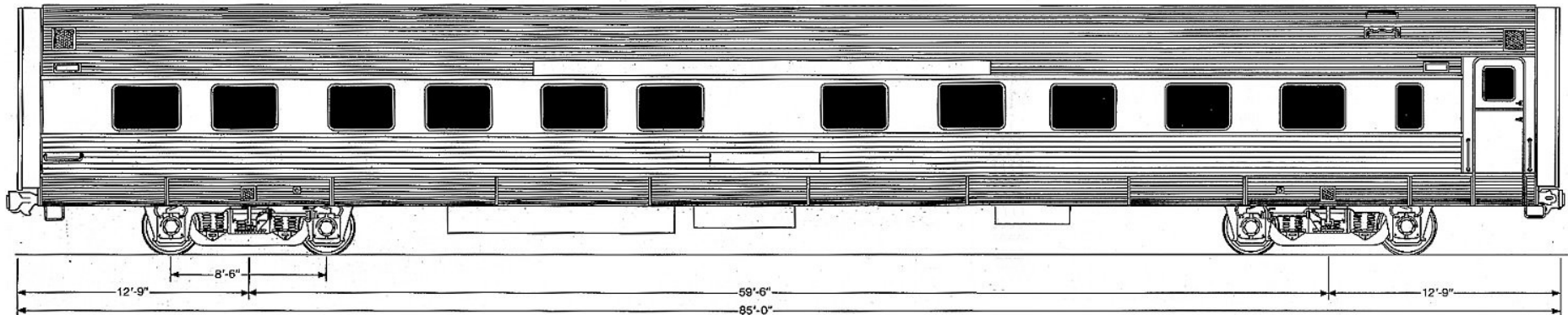
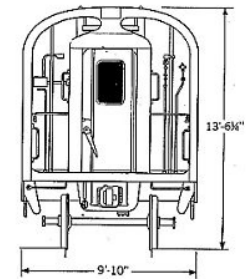




# *California Zephyr*

## *10-Roomette / 6-Double Bedroom Sleeper*

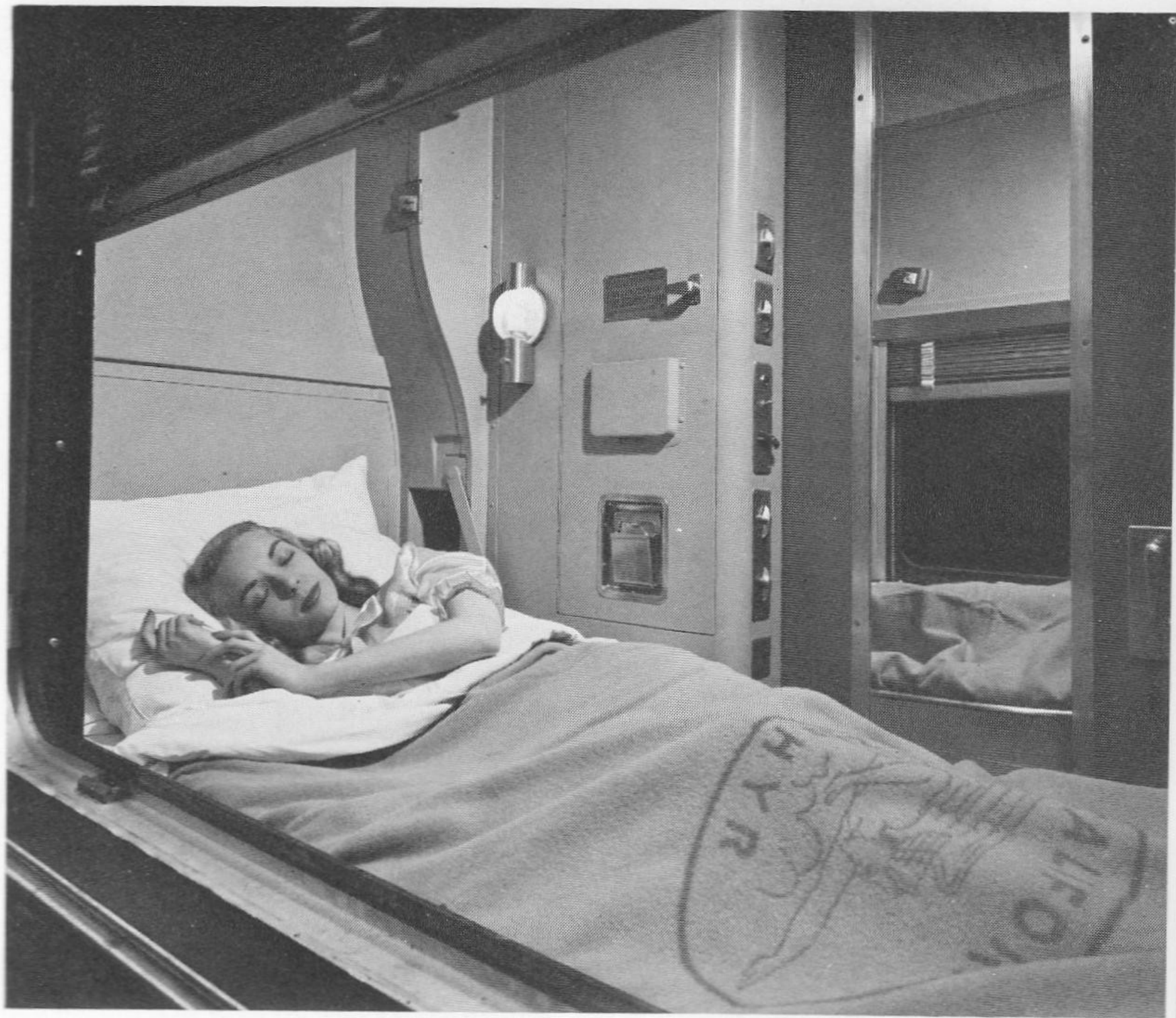
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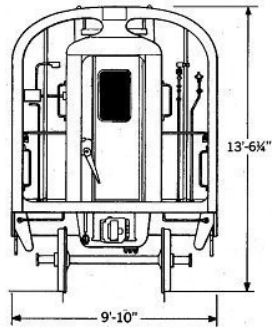
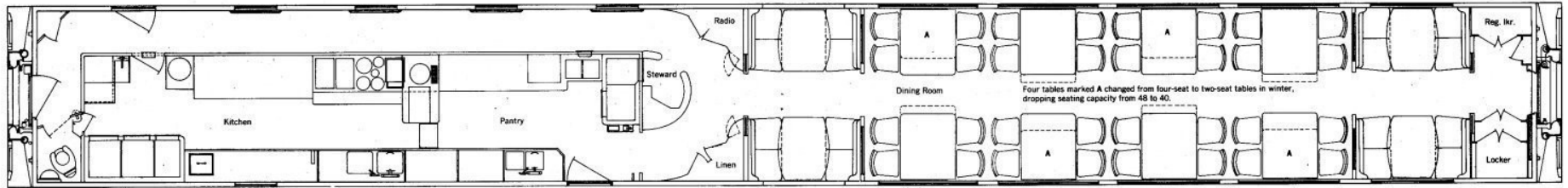


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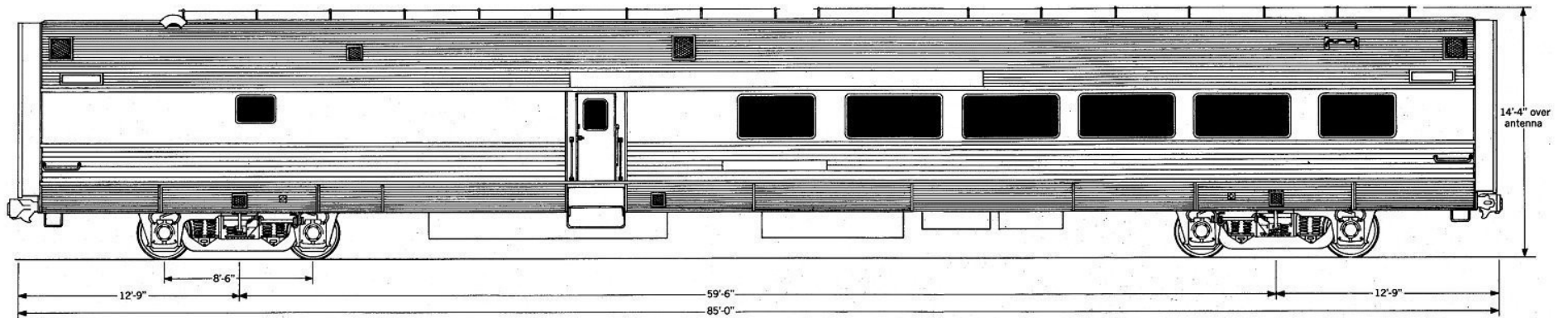




# *California Zephyr*

## *48 Seat Diner*

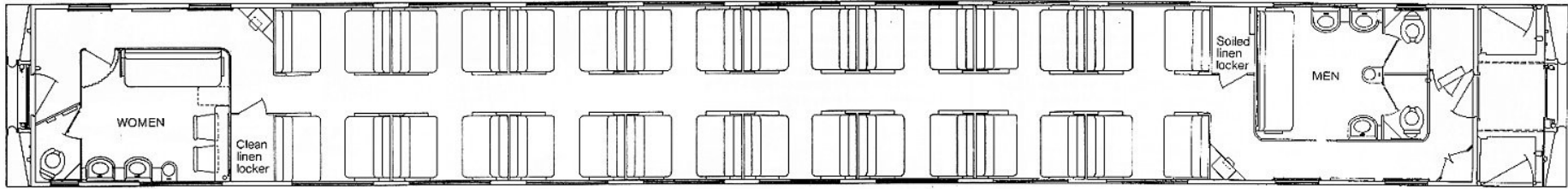
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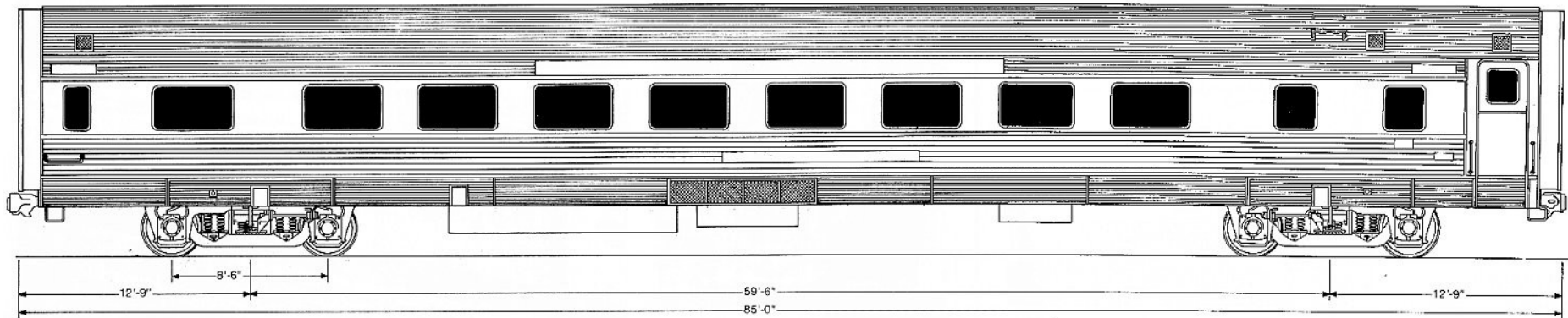
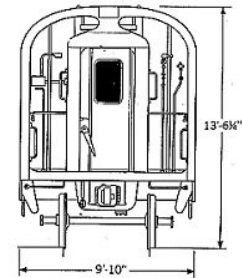




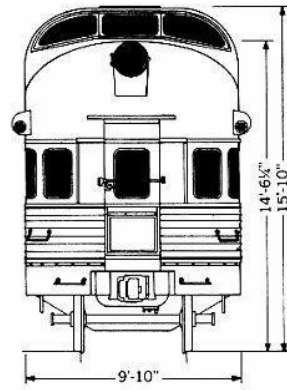
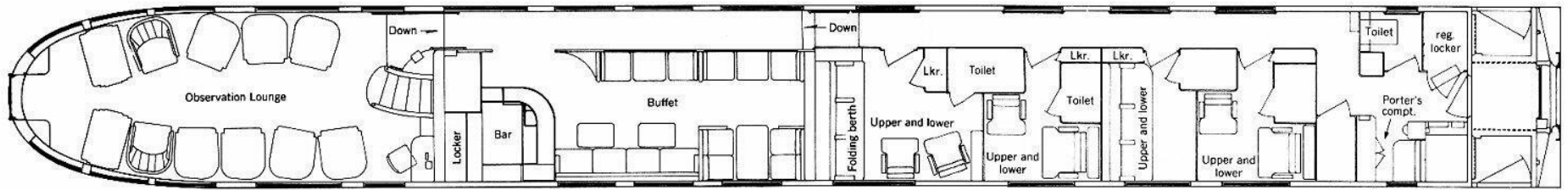
# *California Zephyr*

## *16-Section Sleeper*

Plans not to scale

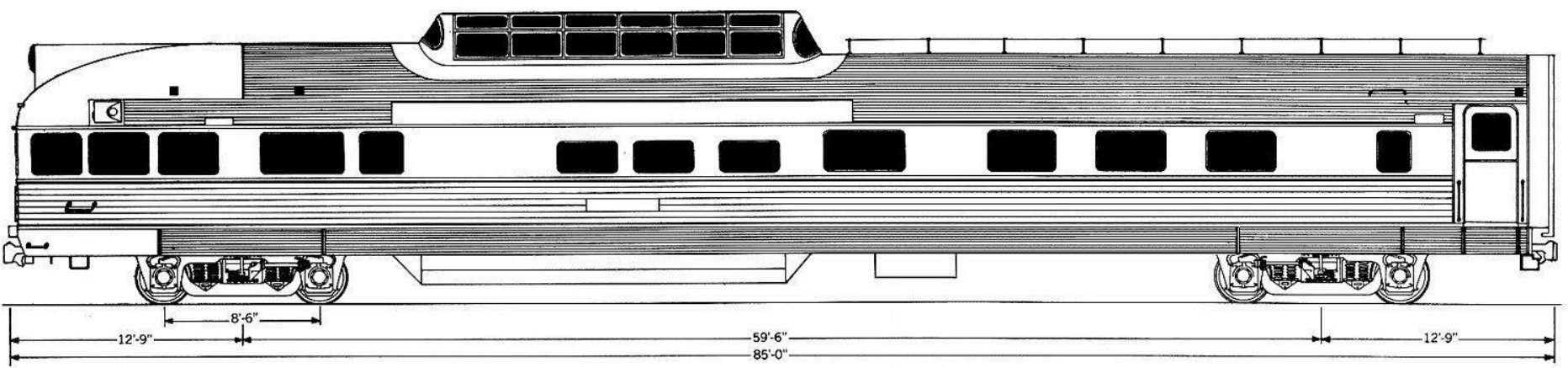
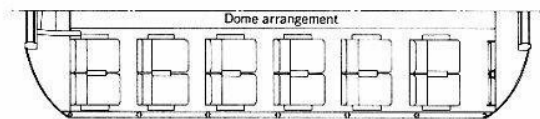
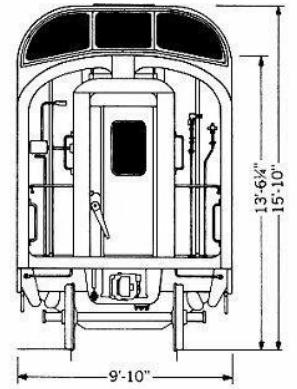






# California Zephyr Dome-Observation

Plans not to scale



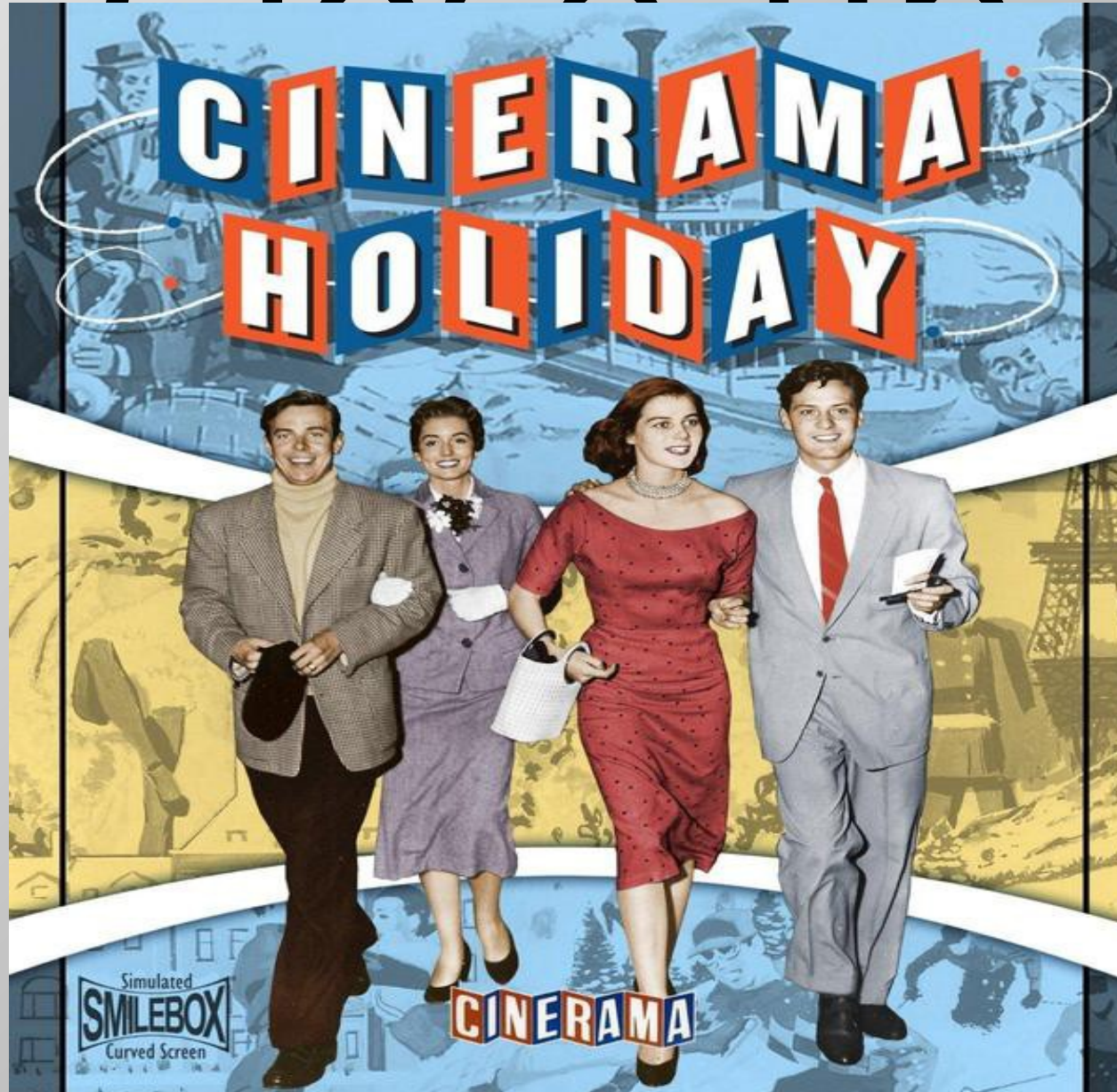
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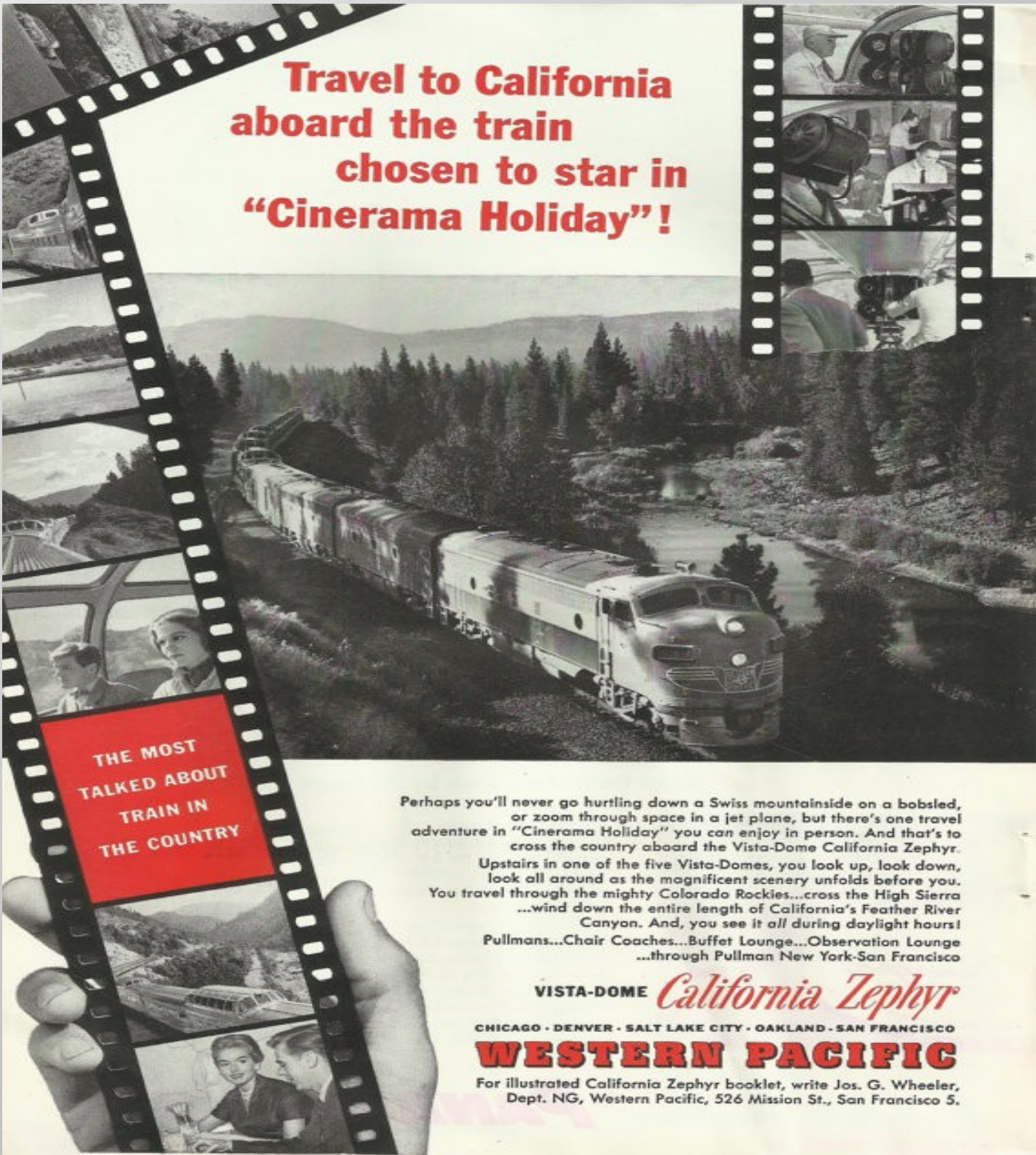






# Ready For Its Close-up





**Travel to California  
aboard the train  
chosen to star in  
"Cinerama Holiday"!**

**THE MOST  
TALKED ABOUT  
TRAIN IN  
THE COUNTRY**

Perhaps you'll never go hurtling down a Swiss mountainside on a bobsled, or zoom through space in a jet plane, but there's one travel adventure in "Cinerama Holiday" you can enjoy in person. And that's to cross the country aboard the Vista-Dome California Zephyr.

Upstairs in one of the five Vista-Domes, you look up, look down, look all around as the magnificent scenery unfolds before you. You travel through the mighty Colorado Rockies...cross the High Sierra ...wind down the entire length of California's Feather River Canyon. And, you see it all during daylight hours! Pullmans...Chair Coaches...Buffet Lounge...Observation Lounge ...through Pullman New York-San Francisco

**VISTA-DOME** *California Zephyr*

CHICAGO · DENVER · SALT LAKE CITY · OAKLAND · SAN FRANCISCO

**WESTERN PACIFIC**

For illustrated California Zephyr booklet, write Jos. G. Wheeler, Dept. NG, Western Pacific, 526 Mission St., San Francisco 5.

# CZ Fun Fact #7

# The 1957 “New Look”

- Bolder colors replaced the original muted color scheme for each car
- 16 section cars withdrawn (eventually rebuilt as 48 seat chair cars, used in high season)
- Observation car got new paintings
- Dome-Buffer-Dorm cars had new kitchen facilities for light meals, and a whole new decoration theme: The Cable Car Room

# Before And After - The Dome Buffet Lounge



# Slow Demise

- October 1957, through car to NYC dropped
- The rigid consist was broken in the mid-60's
  - Sleepers and domes were removed or added based on seasons
  - Sabotaged the audio to the rear of the added cars that were not original CZ
- By 1965, profit had turned to loss
- WP was the first to talk about discontinuing
- CB&Q remained deeply committed



# Slow Demise

- Competition from passenger jets
- Competition from auto travel
- Loss of many other name trains
- Labor costs – 16% of the airline's, 42% of CZ's
  - Chicago to SF crew cost \$391 for airline
  - Chicago to SF crew cost \$2,288 for CBQ/DRGW/WP

# Slow Demise

- Aging demographic – half of CZ's passengers were over 55
- Only 1 in 5 tickets were bought through travel agents
- Ironically, 95% of passengers surveyed in 1965 were positive about their trips on the CZ
- 42% said the CZ was better than most trains
- 31% said the CZ was the BEST train, period



## TRAVEL BARGAIN OF THE YEAR

...aboard America's  
most talked-about train!

Round trip Chicago-San Francisco

<p>COACH</p> <p>only <b>\$88<sup>45</sup></b></p> <p><small>(plus reserved seat charge)</small></p>	<p>FIRST CLASS</p> <p>only <b>\$112<sup>30</sup></b></p> <p><small>(plus Pullman charges)</small></p>
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20-day limit. Available through May 15, 1968

Even lower than some Family Plan fares!

More Vista-Domes—on the only train designed  
and scheduled for daylight sightseeing.

Spectacular front-row viewing of the breathtaking  
Colorado Rockies and High Sierra

Delicious food, cooked to your order, in the  
beautiful dining car. Moderately priced.

Appetizing snacks and beverages in the unique  
Cable Car Room Lounge Car.

Vista-Dome coaches  
with comfortable reclining seats.

Private Pullman rooms with wide, full-length  
beds. Luxurious Observation Lounge Car.

The Vista-Dome

## CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR

Chicago • Denver • Salt Lake City  
Oakland • San Francisco

See your Ticket or Travel Agent or write  
Burlington Railroad, Room 420, 500 Fifth Ave.  
New York, New York 10036. Phone: PE 6-5815

Burlington • Rio Grande • Western Pacific

## The California Zephyr still runs.



## So you won't overlook America's beauty.

From the luxurious California Zephyr you  
see America's most magnificent scenery close-  
up. The Mississippi, the Colorado Rockies,  
Feather River Canyon.

Enjoy America's most magnificent ride  
while you can. Daily, between Chicago and  
San Francisco.

# Slow Demise

- In 1966, 1968, and 1969 WP petitioned the I.C.C. to discontinue service
- In 1969, DRGW petitioned as well
- February 13, 1970, I.C.C. granted WP's petition to discontinue, and allowed DRGW to cut service to once weekly.
- Service ended March 20, 1970, exactly 21 years to the day of the first run.

# The End of the CZ

- In the end, the public's tastes changed
- Speed was valued above all else for travel, for vacation as well as business
- Larger jets and extension of jets to regional routes made air travel both cheaper and more widespread.

CZ Not-So-Fun Fact #8

Daddy, what's a train? Is it  
something I can ride?  
Does it carry lots of grown-up  
folks and little kids inside?  
Is it bigger than our house? Well  
how can I explain  
When my little boy asks me  
'Daddy, what's a train?'

Utah Phillips, American labor organizer, activist, singer, poet, storyteller (1935-2008)





CALIFORNIA  
SANTA FE

Foggy



# California Zephyr Presentation

- Created by Mark Williams for various NMRA regional and national conventions 2015, 2016, 2018, 2019
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