

The production of automobiles was curtailed during the war, with steel being needed desperately for the war effort, and hence the McCarthy boats could be of more service carrying bulk cargoes of iron ore and grain, which were useful for war production. Our records show that both the INGALLS and the McCARTHY were taken over by the U.S. War Shipping Administration in 1942, and that it originally was planned that both would be taken to salt water. Eventually, however, the authorities decided that the sisterships would be more useful to the cause running in the lake bulk trades. Accordingly, during 1942, the McCarthy ships were re-converted for the bulk trades, their elevators removed and their bulkheads between the cargo compartments resealed.

Meanwhile, the McCarthy interests were fighting a restriction on their Interstate Commerce Commission certificate that forbade them to operate as a common (rather than a captive) carrier. McCarthy won legal proceedings to this end and, in 1946, now licensed to carry autos for any shipper, Automotive Trades fitted the INGALLS and the McCARTHY (returned to the auto trade after the war) with watertight sideports designed to allow the direct loading of autos on the lower decks of the steamers. As well, their elevators, removed back when the U.S. entered the war, were put back in the steamers. It was at this time that the INGALLS and the McCARTHY were fitted with platform-type 'tween decks, for additional auto stowage, and it was onto the 'tween deck that each ship's sideports gave access.

The Automotive Trades Steamship Company and its parent, the T. J. McCarthy Steamship Company, were merged in 1947, and T. J. McCARTHY and GEORGE H. INGALLS thereafter operated under the ownership of the McCarthy firm. This state of affairs was to last for the duration of their operating careers.

McCarthy's main competition in the shipment of autos by water, the Nicholson Transit Company, had begun to expand its auto carriers' capacity. Many of its steamers had elevators to assist in the carriage of cars, but the CANOPUS, CHARLES DONNELLY and MATAAFA were fitted with additional superstructure above their spar decks for extra auto space.

McCarthy followed suit in 1949-1950, equipping T. J. McCARTHY and GEORGE H. INGALLS with what became known as "flight decks" because of their similarity to the upper decks used for the landing and takeoff of airplanes on naval aircraft carriers. A deck was built up over the hatch coamings and covers on the spar deck, and another deck was built above it, almost on the same level as the bridge deck (texas roof) and the boat deck aft, supported by posts and a steel webwork on each side. Ramps were built so that the autos could be driven from deck to deck, and these ramps also led down to the decks in the holds. Each ship could now carry some 500 automobiles on each trip.

By this time, the INGALLS and the McCARTHY, together with McCarthy's similarly rebuilt GEORGE W. MEAD, (a) FRANCIS L. ROBBINS (28), were painted up in the very distinctive fleet colours that made the McCarthy steamers unmistakable, no matter where they ventured. Their hulls were a shamrock green, while not only were their forecastles white, but the white was extended downward so that there was a broad white band all around the hull, from the stem all the way around the fantail. The lower hull's boot-topping was bright orange. The cabins were white, and the tall, black stacks still carried the broad red band and the white-and-green 'Mc' insignia as before. The sides of the flight deck and the supporting webwork were all white.

At about this same time, the McCARTHY, INGALLS and MEAD all were given catwalks around their upper pilothouses, as were most lake steamers which had "turret-style" cabins. This not only greatly improved their appearance, but made things much more comfortable for the crew. The pilothouse windows could more easily be washed, and the windows could be left open in bad weather for greater protection from the elements being provided by the steel bulwark around the catwalk and by a canvas weathercloth which could be hoisted above