

least 20 boats, beginning with DIME, a wooden steamer run by a Canadian Soo hotel operator.

In 1901, the International Transit Company Ltd. was formed with the purchase of ALGOMA (C.111803), a 104-foot, 157-ton, side-loading steamer, the first to carry automobiles between the two Soos. Built in 1901 by Polson Iron Works, Toronto, ALGOMA ran the ferry service until 1926, after which she became a Canadian federal buoy and lighthouse tender on the St. Lawrence River. Her name was changed to (b) VERCHERES in 1928 (she was the second tender of this name), and she was broken up in 1967.

International Transit (which would operate the ferry route until its end in 1962) replaced ALGOMA with the purpose-built diesel ferry AGOMING (C.150338) which was built at Collingwood (Hull 77) in 1926 and put into service that summer. The 1927 Dominion List showed her as 89.1 x 34.0 x 8.4, 199 Gross and 122 Net, although she later would be shown as 89.2 x 34.1 x 8.5, 155 Gross and 92 Net. Strangely, the 1927 list actually showed her owner as the St. Mary's River Construction Co. Ltd., although subsequent issues did show International Transit as the owner.

AGOMING was a double-ender, with the entire main deck open to autos. A passenger cabin was located on an overhead deck which was supported by steel sides. The squarish pilothouse was located on a third deck, to which passengers always were admitted despite the fact that their presence could hamper the captain's visibility. Engine exhaust was vented via pipes running up the sides of the upper decks. AGOMING remained virtually unchanged for her entire career, apart from the fact that her upper decks were raised substantially in 1954 to provide more overhead clearance for the trucks that then were being carried in ever-increasing numbers.

AGOMING was to run right through to the close of the Soo ferry service, but in latter years she usually operated only during periods of peak auto traffic. She never was considered for the proposed Wolfe Island service, but instead was sold to private owners who cut her down to a barge. She can still be found at Thunder Bay, Ontario, owned by Thunder Bay Marine Services Ltd.

The AGOMING was able to handle the service alone for 21 years, but in the post-World War Two era, traffic expanded beyond her capabilities. Accordingly, International Transit ordered another ferry from Collingwood Shipyards. Very similar to AGOMING in design (although built with higher deck clearance), she was of all-welded steel construction and was 114 feet in overall length. Her registered dimensions were 103.0 x 34.0 x 8.2, 189 Gross Tons and 129 Net. She could carry 19 automobiles and 450 passengers.

The new ferry was named for a man who identified himself and his newspaper, "The Sault Star", with every major step in the development of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. James Watson Curran, of Irish descent, came to the Soo area in 1901 and bought "The Sault Weekly Star", which then had a circulation of less than 2,000. In 1906, Mr. Curran set about interesting others in building the Soo-Sudbury Highway. During World War One, he watched the "Star's" circulation grow to 5,000 after it had become a daily paper in 1912. James Curran scorned the use of a typewriter; instead he wrote copy with pen, sometimes quite legibly and at other times it was the despair of the editors and typesetters. He was a historian of some recognition, and the author of two books, "Wolves Don't Bite" and "Here Is Vineland". James Curran died in February of 1953.

Skip Gillham, in his book The Ships of Collingwood, stated: "Although she had a later hull number (143), the construction of the JAMES W. CURRAN actually commenced ahead of some of the previously assigned hulls. Work began on March 10, 1947, and she was launched June 14, 1947, prior to Hull 137, IMPERIAL COLLINGWOOD."

JAMES W. CURRAN was side-launched into No. 2 drydock of Collingwood Shipyards Ltd. Promptly at noon on Saturday, June 14, 1947, to the accompaniment