

Although we are nostalgic about these steamers, some trips were not smooth sailing or without incident. At times the waters would be rough and the large steamer might rock and roll. Numerous collisions occurred mostly due to the fog. On October 10, 1914 the *Belfast*, heading for Bangor, collided with the Camden-built *Alma A.E. Holmes* off Graves Light. On Oct. 31, 1916 the steamer *Camden* ran into a fishing boat, *Arthur James*, which sank and one life was lost, but Capt. Brown was found not to be at fault. The winter of 1917 was extremely cold and the Penobscot Bay became frozen over to Islesboro and beyond. Eight vessels from the Eastern Steamship Co., were unable to get out of Camden Harbor, which was an unusual sight.

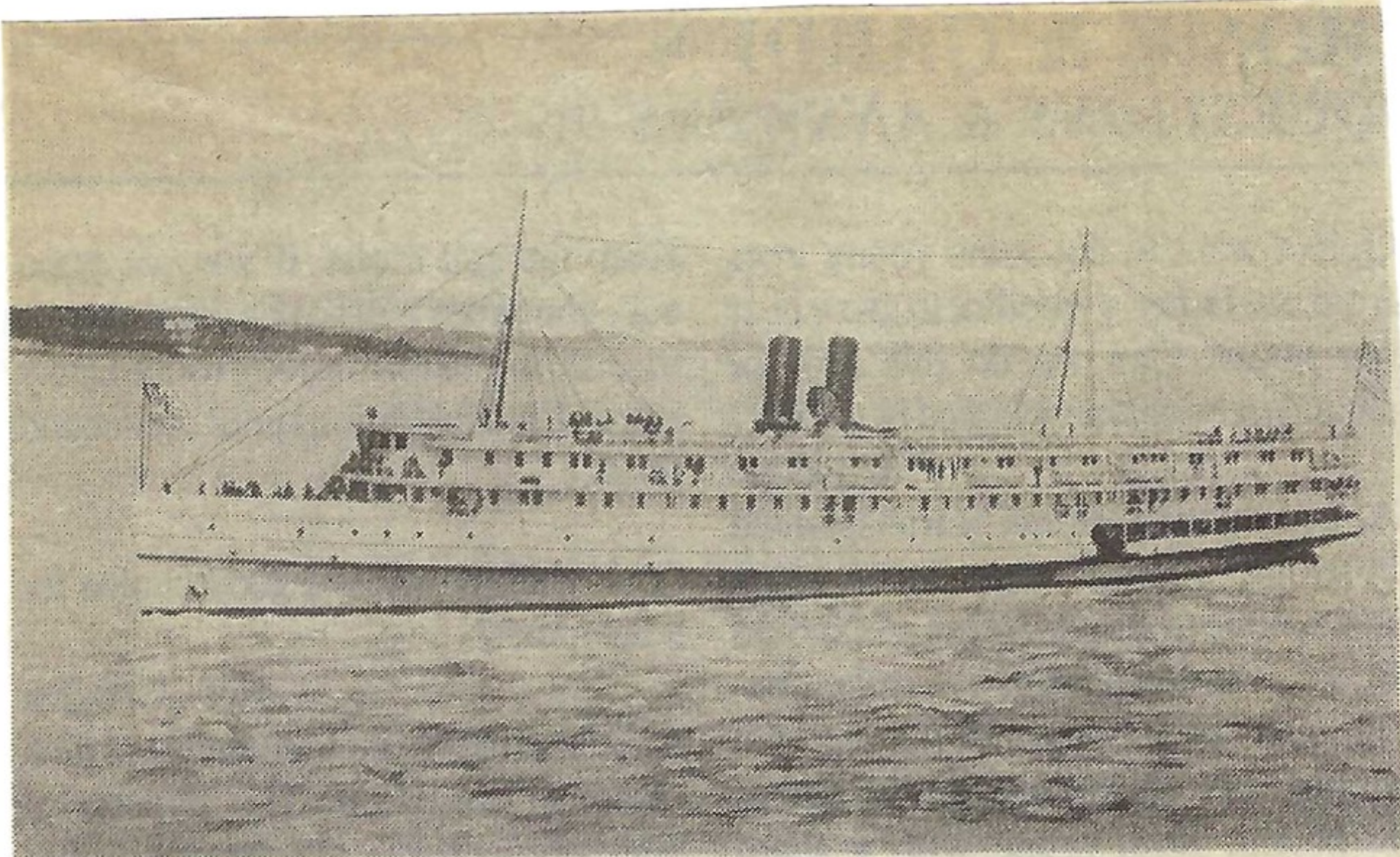
The following year *Camden* and *Belfast* changed from the Boston-Bangor run and served the Boston-New York trip. At that time the *City of Rockland* and the *City of Bangor* replaced them temporarily.

The Steamship Wharf in Camden was totally destroyed by fire on Aug. 1, 1924 but was rebuilt the following fall and winter, and was completed in 1925.

In 1927 the *Camden* ran on a rock at the entrance to Camden Harbor. The *Belfast* was quarantined in Boston the next year due to an outbreak of smallpox among the crew. All crew members and 100 passengers were vaccinated and the vessel fumigated before it could resume service. In August of that year, the steamer rescued a Camden man who had jumped overboard just outside Camden Harbor. The *Camden*, on Sept. 2nd, saved two men who were clinging to a capsized boat near Salem, Mass.

Eventually, in 1933, the steamer *Camden* was outfitted with a sonar-type device to notify the captain and crew of objects not visible in the fog. It was a siren located on the roof of the pilot house, with two electric ears detecting echoes from anything in its path.

All good things must come to an end and so it was with the "Boston Boats." Trucking and automobiles were gaining popularity and the Depression was having an impact on business. Captain Alfred E. Rawley, master of the *Belfast* for 22 years, left Camden for the final



Steamer *Camden* of the Eastern Steamship Lines.

trip on Dec. 27, 1935. The Colonial Lines purchased the *Camden*, renaming it *Comet* and the *Belfast*, giving it a new name of *Arrow*. They became Sound Steamers until World War II, when they were called into the service of their country as troop transports operating out of Honolulu. When the war was over they were laid up for a while there and the *Comet (Camden)* was sold to the Asia Development Corporation for Chinese service. Renamed *Ya Sung*, it was reported captured by the Chinese communists and used for scrap.

The *Arrow (Belfast)* wrecked while being towed in 1945, grounding off Oak Park, Washington. She was buried in the mud. Her masts were salvaged and her whistle came back to Belfast to a sardine cannery and was still sounding off in 1968.

The Eastern Steamship Wharf in Camden was purchased by local businessmen. It was sold in 1941 to the Camden Shipbuilding and Marine Railways Co., and used as a mold loft during World War II. After the war, the Camden Cabin Company owned it. In 1951 the Helioffs purchased the wharf and converted it to a lobster holding and packing plant. Three years later (from the stress and strain) the center section collapsed and 18,000 pounds of lobsters went back to the natural habitat. Eventually the piling began to give way. It was decided that the "flotsam and jetsam" was a menace to navigation. At a special town meeting on May 11, 1959, the townspeople voted to burn it. During the next three days as

much lumber as was salvageable was removed. On May 15, Mr. Andrew Sides, a former vice-president of the Eastern Steamship Lines, had the honor of lighting oil-soaked ropes. It burned for three days, hating to "give up the ghost." Pilings still standing had to be removed ... along with many fond memories.