

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received APR 8 1987

date entered MAY 18 1987

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Motor Vessel "Lotus"

and/or common N.A.

2. Location

street & number Fiddlehead Marina, B Dock not for publication

city, town Olympia vicinity of

state Washington code 053 county Thurston code 067

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	n/a	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Lt. Col. Curtiss Gruye, USAF (ret.)

street & number 8003 Veterans Dr. S.W.

city, town Tacoma vicinity of state Washington 98498

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. U.S. Coast Guard, Vessel Documentation

street & number Pier 36

city, town Seattle state Washington 98104

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Washington State Inventory  
title of Cultural Resources has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1987  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Washington State Dept. of Community Development, OAHP

city, town 111 W. 21st Ave., KL-11, Olympia state Washington 98504-5411

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## 7. Description

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<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

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### **Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The "Lotus" is a motor powered houseboat which combines the clean lines of a cruising yacht with the large and graceful superstructure of an inland water craft. Built in 1908-1909, the boat has remained in excellent condition after 78 years afloat. The boat displaces 116 tons gross and measures 93.2 feet long overall and 88.6 feet long at the water line, 18.3 feet wide, and draws six feet of water (1983 registered Coast Guard admeasurements). The main deck shelters the living and sleeping quarters while a top deck holds the wheelhouse and covered promenade.

The hull of the boat, patterned after the design of the Mosquito Fleet vessels of the era, is built of fir planks with double fir framing and an oak keel. Several strongbacks running lengthwise and transverse bulkheads give strength and rigidity to the hull and it is reinforced with diagonal steel strapping.

The main deck houses the living quarters. A Dutch door at starboard amidships opens to a mahogany lined vestibule which in turn leads to the main saloon. The saloon, which measures 14 by 17 feet, is luxuriously outfitted with stained fir panelling, a built-in side board with leaded glass, fireplace with tile surround, and built-in book shelves. A "secretary" style desk built of wood from the battleship "Oregon" has a drop leaf ornamented with a carving made from a plank of the steamer "Beaver." The ceiling of the saloon (with a height of eight feet) is framed by box beams. In the center of the overhead, a modified skylight extends outward, allowing light in through its patterned glass perimeter. The deck flooring is oak with parquetry of mahogany. Original brass light fixtures fashioned in the form of lotus flowers are still mounted to the bulkhead. The saloon is lighted by one-over-one double hung wood sash windows with oak frames.

A door through the forward bulkhead opens onto a passageway through the center of the vessel which leads to the master stateroom. On either side of the passageway are guest staterooms. To the starboard is a two bed stateroom with built-in hanging locker, vanity, and sink. A mirror image stateroom is forward of the first with an additional fold up bunk above the bed. Across the passageway are two two-bunk staterooms. Each holds a vanity and a Pullman style sink. Just forward is a bathroom with shower, sink, commode, and storage areas followed by a curving stairway and a linen locker.

The passageway terminates in the owner's stateroom (a room that covers the full width of the deck), furnished with two built-in vanities, hanging lockers, a window seat to starboard, and a dressing table to port. The original iron bed frames remain as does the intercom system. A bathroom with a claw-foot tub, commode, and sink adjoins the owner's stateroom. The owner's stateroom is lighted by double hung sash windows and two portholes looking forward.

The wheelhouse, above the owner's stateroom, is reached by a curving staircase. The wheelhouse served both as smoking room and pilot house. The room is finished with varnished fir walls, oak parquet floors, and drop-type windows with oak sashes. The wheelhouse features built-in cabinets for the storage of charts and flags.

Built against the aft bulkhead of the wheelhouse is a seat with two kapok stuffed cushions. An ornate back-to-back settee holds life jackets and forms the top of the main saloon skylight. A wood framed fresh water daytank is offset to starboard, adjacent to the engine exhaust stack. A metal screen topped by a waist high railing surrounds the

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perimeter of the upper deck. The roof which shelters the deck is supported by pipe stanchions. Above the roof are two signal masts, several stacks, and a ventilator.

A ladder aft leads down from the main deck to the after deck. An ice box and vegetable locker are to port and a furnace room is to starboard, the latter replacing what was once the crew's head. The furnace services a hot water radiator system throughout the vessel. A short ladder between the two leads inside to the galley and engine room. The galley has been modernized but not fundamentally altered. The pantry counter was extended to form an engine room that houses a 1951 180 h.p. Buda Diesel. (The original four cylinder 80 h.p. Globe gas engine was replaced in 1923 with a 125 h.p. Eastern Standard engine.)

There are two crew bunk rooms with vanities to port. The engine room is accessible through a doorway adjacent to the crew's quarters. Flotation tanks running along both sides of the "Lotus" below the floor level were filled with foam in 1977. An 1,800 gallon water tank is below decks. Below the foredeck in the bow there is a chain locker and storage area. The 2,400 gallon fuel tanks are located beneath the owner's stateroom.

Today, the "Lotus" is moored at Fiddlehead Marina in Olympia at the southern reaches of the Puget Sound, a historic port of call for the boat. The current owner has maintained the ship in nearly original condition. The original hull form, materials, construction, and equipment remain intact. Original blueprints remain on board the vessel. Some deteriorated planks have been replaced as necessary, a new engine has replaced the original, and the pantry has been modified.

Total number of contributing resources:     1 (boat)

noncontributing resources:     0

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

<b>Specific dates</b>	1908	<b>Builder/Architect</b>	Lee & Brinton, naval architects Joseph A. Sloane, builder
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### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Built in 1908–1909 for Seattle lawyer and entrepreneur Maurice McMicken, the M.V. "Lotus" is a significant example of motor boat design and construction from the early 20th century. When launched in May 1909, the boat was the largest cruising houseboat on the West Coast, measuring 93 feet in overall length with quarters for a party of 11 and a crew of four and enough fuel capacity to cruise for a range of 1,500 miles. Shortly after the launching, "Rudder" magazine characterized the "Lotus" as "the largest and by far the most commodious and best equipped power boat on the Pacific Coast." Today, the boat remains afloat and in nearly original condition. During the spring and summer months, it continues to cruise the waters of Puget Sound and the Inside Passage, retracing the frequent route of the original owner.

From the date of its launching, the "Lotus" has been described in boating journals and the local press as unique in size and unusually lavish in its appointments. Designed by naval architects Lee and Brinton and built by Seattle ship's carpenter Joseph A. Sloane, the "Lotus" combines a high and roomy superstructure--complete with all the features of a floating home--upon an elongated cruising hull of fir planks.

The boat has a fir frame reinforced with transverse bulkheads, strongbacks, and steel straps, and an oak keel and stem. The spacious interior of the house is finished with oak decks and includes an elegant Edwardian saloon with built-in fireplace, tile hearth, fir panelling, built-in cabinetry, box beam ceiling, parquet floor (with inlaid mahogany), double hung windows, and brass lighting fixtures designed in the shape of lotus flowers. The sleeping quarters on the main deck include four guest staterooms, equipped with built-in vanities and hanging lockers, and a master suite with built-in vanities, window seat and hanging lockers. The master stateroom bathroom and all the staterooms have hot and cold running water. The wheelhouse/smoking room on the upper deck is finished with the same fine materials and craftsmanship. Remarkably, the interior and exterior have survived nearly intact and in good condition.

Maurice McMicken: Maurice McMicken was born in Dodge County, Minnesota, in 1860. The son of General William McMicken, long-term surveyor general of the Washington Territory (1873–1886), the younger McMicken came to Olympia to join his father in 1874. In 1879, McMicken entered the University of California at Berkeley, graduated in 1881 and completed his education by reading for the law with a firm in Portland, Oregon. In 1881, McMicken moved to Seattle to clerk for the firm of Struve and Haines and to embark on what became a long and profitable career as an attorney. In the next several years, McMicken was made a partner in the firm. Through several name changes, McMicken's firm became one of the most prominent in the state. When he retired in 1930, the firm was known as McMicken, Ruppe, and Schweppe.

In addition to law, McMicken was involved in several ventures closely associated with the development of Seattle at the turn of the century. For example, McMicken was an incorporator of the First Avenue and Madison Street cable car companies and helped to build the

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Tumwater, WA (7.5)

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A 

1	0	5	0	7	3	4	0	5	2	1	0	4	4	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

D 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

E 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

F 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

G 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

H 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The Motor Vessel "Lotus" measures 93.2' overall x 18.3' and is at berth at Fiddlehead Marina, B dock, in the City of Olympia, Washington. (VBD format based on National Register Bulletin # 20, p.14.)

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state n/a code county code

state n/a code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lt. Col. Curtiss Gruye, owner Edited by L. Garfield Archaeology & Hist. Pres.

organization N.A. date January 1987

street & number 8003 Veterans Dr. S.W. telephone

city or town Tacoma state Washington 98498

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Jacob E. Johnson*

title State Historic Preservation Officer date March 31, 1987

### For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

*William B. Bushong* date 5/8/87  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

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North Seattle and South Seattle lines that extended the First Avenue street railway. From 1899 to 1909, McMicken was a major shareholder in the Post Intelligencer Company and he served as vice president of the First National Bank of Seattle. In addition, he was director of the H.F. Ostrander Corporation, president of the East Waterway Dock and Warehouse Company, and secretary of Yesler Estates, Inc.

McMicken's interests in Alaska included the Crackerjack gold mine at Hollis which he acquired in the 1920s. During his ownership of the mine, McMicken used the "Lotus" to transport himself, a mining engineer, and several miners to the site and the boat served as an offshore office for the enterprise.

McMicken was married to the former Alice Smith, with whom he had sons Hallidie, William, and Maurice, Jr. In 1923, after Alice had died, he married Laura Rumsey. McMicken was a member of the Rainier, University, Seattle Golf and County, Arctic, Seattle Yacht and Royal Victorian Yacht clubs.

McMicken's prominence in local affairs is indirectly revealed in the guest register of the "Lotus," which, together with the architect's blueprints, remains with the boat. Entries in the register include the names of Asahel Curtis, members of the pioneer Denny, Bremer, and Stimson families, and other distinguished Seattlites of the era.

Lee and Brinton: When McMicken commissioned the "Lotus," he wanted a vessel powerful enough to cruise the Inland Passage through British Columbia and southeast Alaska, and large enough to hold fuel and provisions for those long voyages. To realize his goal, McMicken engaged leading Seattle naval architects Lee and Brinton and ship's carpenter Joseph A. Sloane.

Harold Lee graduated from Yale, studied naval architecture at Cornell, and was employed as a draftsman at the Newport News Shipbuilding Company, the Crescent Shipyards in Elizabethport, New Jersey, and at the New York Shipbuilding Company of Camden, New Jersey. He came to Seattle in 1906 and the next year formed a partnership with Frederick Schermerhorn Brinton. Brinton was born in Philadelphia in 1871, studied engineering at the University of Pennsylvania, and was employed as a draftsman by the Crescent Yards in New Jersey until 1902 when he became an official with the Marine Construction and Dry Dock Company of Staten Island, New York. In 1907, Brinton came to Seattle where he joined forces with Lee. The next year, the young firm moved its operation to the Colman dock, becoming one of the first tenants at that address.

During their partnership in Seattle, the firm designed nearly all the ferries of the Puget Sound Navigation Company as well as wooden ships built during World War I by the Allen and Anderson Shipbuilding companies. Lee also designed the halibut schooner "Idaho," forerunner of U.S. Bureau of Fisheries' Bering Sea tender "Eider." In addition to the "Lotus," Lee also designed the power cruiser "Soya" for Seattle businessman Reginald Parsons, which won the first international power boat race in the region. In 1924, the firm established an office in San Francisco.

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Joseph A. Sloane was a successful ship's carpenter in the Puget Sound area in the early 20th century. When commissioned to build the "Lotus," his shipyard was located on the East Waterway at the foot of Hanford Street. By the World War I, Sloane had yards in Olympia and Anacortes. Among his notable achievements, Sloane launched the 539 ton "Washington" for the Washington Marine Company of Seattle in 1906. In 1920, the Sloane Shipyard in Olympia produced the 2,500 ton wooden motorships "Culburra," "Coolcha," "Challamba," and "Cethana" for the Australian government.

McMicken owned the "Lotus" until his death in 1940. During that time, he cruised the inland waters of Washington, British Columbia, and southeast Alaska, allowing his guests the opportunity to photograph, hunt, fish, and explore the wild territory. During World War II, rationing made fuel an impossible luxury and the vessel spent most of the war years dockside. In 1947, heirs of McMicken sold the vessel to Allan and Arlie Ostling. In 1951, the boat was purchased by Josephine and Howard Hayes, who moored her at the old Latona Mill site on Lake Union in Seattle and moved aboard as full time residents, raising their children on the boat.

In 1961, the Hayes family sold the boat to its present owner, Colonel Curtiss Gruye, an Air Force officer stationed in the area. The Gruyes used the "Lotus" as a floating "bed and breakfast" during the 1962 World's Fair in Seattle. Gruye kept the boat continually occupied with tenants. In 1977, Gruye sold the boat to maritime writer and historian Gordon Newell of Olympia. Newell moved the boat to its present location at Fiddlehead Marina. Then, in September 1981, Gruye repurchased the vessel and undertook extensive repair and rehabilitation work in an effort to restore the boat to its original condition. In 1982, major hullwork was completed and an engine and generator were installed, restoring her unusual galley and engine room to full operation. Today, the "Lotus" is once again fully capable of cruising and is a familiar sight on the waters of the Northwest.

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Major Bibliographic References

"Lotus--A Notable Cruising Houseboat," Pacific Motorboat, December 1909, p. 24.

"Power Houseboat Lotus," The Rudder, December 1909, p. 347.

H.W. McCurdy, Maritime History of the Pacific Northwest, Seattle: 1909, p.160.

History of Seattle, S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1919, pp. 74-77.