

56-891

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



### National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

#### 1. Name of Property

historic name F.N. BURT COMPANY FACTORY "C"

other names/site number Bison Storage

name of related multiple property listing N/A

#### 2. Location

street & number 1502 Niagara Street [ ] not for publication

city or town Buffalo [ ] vicinity

state New York code NY county Erie code 029 zip code 14213-1104

#### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] nomination [ ] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements as set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [X] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [ ] nationally [ ] statewide [X] locally. ([ ] see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Michael P. Lynch Deputy SHPO  
Signature of certifying official/Title

9 FEB 2017  
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. ([ ] see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that the property is:
  - entered in the National Register
    - [ ] see continuation sheet
  - determined eligible for the National Register
    - [ ] see continuation sheet
  - determined not eligible for the National Register
  - removed from the National Register
  - other (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Alysis Albrecht

date of action

4/17/17

**F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"**

**Erie County, New York**

Name of Property

County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(enter categories from instructions)

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/MANUFACTURING/

DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling/Apartment

Manufacturing facility

COMMERCE/TRADE/warehouse

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AMERICAN/

foundation concrete

Commercial Style (Daylight Factory)

walls concrete, brick

roof membrane

other

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

**F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"**

**Erie County, New York**

Name of Property

County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all boxes that apply.)

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location
- C** a birthplace or grave
- D** a cemetery
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested. **NPS #32,196**
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by historic American Building Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance:**

(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY

ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance:**

1911 - 1932

**Significant Dates:**

1911, 1932

**Significant Person:**

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation:**

N/A

**Architect/Builder:**

R.J. Reidpath & Sons/Turner Construction Co.

F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"

Erie County, New York

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** 0.44 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>17</u>	<u>671520</u>	<u>4754621</u>	3	<u>17</u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>17</u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	4	<u>17</u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Kerry Traynor [Edited by Jennifer Walkowski, NYSHPO]

organization kta preservation specialists date 1/30/2017

street & number 422 Parker Avenue telephone 716.864.0628

city or town Buffalo state NY zip code 14216

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location  
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner** (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name Robert Corrao

street & number 9159 Main Street telephone (716) 908-8899

city or town Clarence state NY zip code 14031

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20503

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F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

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Narrative Description

F.N. Burt Company Factory "C" is a seven-story reinforced concrete factory building designed by R.J. Reidpath & Sons, and built by Turner Construction Company in 1911.<sup>1</sup> The long, narrow, rectangular building is nine bays in length and two bays wide. Niagara Street, a major traffic artery along the Niagara River, is located to the east, and railroad tracks that carry CSX and Amtrak trains are to the west. The main entrance is located in the last bay to the north, facing Niagara Street. The fenestration reflects the daylight factory design, with large window units divided by spandrels. The bays feature multi-light sash windows, except at the first floor facing Niagara Street and the first and second floors at the railroad tracks, where the windows are multi-light industrial sash units. The windows throughout are replacement units that match the historic units.<sup>2</sup> To the north is a single-story brick masonry loading dock (ca. 1940) and a single story concrete block warehouse (ca. 1955); both are non-historic additions connected to the north end of the building.

Factory "C" is located on Niagara Street approximately 3.5 miles northwest of downtown Buffalo. Directly to the building's west side is the CSX/Belt Line Railroad and to the east residential neighborhoods. The Belt Line, a 15-mile rail loop that encircles the city, was constructed in 1883 by the New York Central Railroad and is currently owned by CSX. Historically it transported people and goods around the city and provided connections to the larger railroad systems that linked Buffalo to the rest of the country. Industrial and working class neighborhoods developed along the loop and along Niagara Street, which was also a major transportation artery.<sup>3</sup> Interstate I-190 and the Niagara River are also located to the west of Factory "C."

In 1911 the neighborhood surrounding Factory "C" was defined by factories and industry to the west of Niagara Street, adjacent to the Belt Line and the Black Rock Canal, while to the west the neighborhood was residential. Today, Niagara Street remains a mix of commercial, industrial and residential in the neighborhood adjacent to Factory "C."

<sup>1</sup> "Catalogs and Trade Publications of Value," In *Concrete Engineering*, 5, no. 10 (October 1, 1910): 34. The publication notes the dimensions of the building and that Turner Construction Co. was awarded the project and the architect of record was Robert J. Reidpath & Sons. "Buffalo, N.Y. Contracts Awarded," In *The American Contractor* 31, no. 35 (August 27, 1910): 42. This publication notes Reidpath & Sons as the architect and Turner Construction Co. as the general contractor and also that work, which would cost "about \$100,000" had not yet started.

<sup>2</sup> Period photos and historic windows that remained extant, though deteriorated provided the details and information for the windows to be replicated.

<sup>3</sup> Niagara Street was declared a public highway in 1826. In 1860 the Buffalo Street Railway Company was formed and Niagara Street was one of the first streets in Buffalo to acquire tracts. The International Railway Company took possession of the local streetcar companies in 1902 and by 1908 the cars were longer and heavier.

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F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"

Name of Property

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**Exterior**

East Elevation – Niagara Street

The east elevation of the 1911 reinforced concrete factory is defined by the rhythm of structural bays with tripled windows within each bay. The elevation is nine bays wide and runs 147-ft along Niagara Street. Each bay is the same width, except for the entrance bay to the north, which is narrower.

At the bay to the north a single eight-over-eight sash window locates the stair landing between floors. At the first floor the windows are two-over-two industrial sash units and at the upper floors they are six-over-six. A cast reinforced concrete window sill extends across each bay, stepping out to continue around the pilaster. A continuous cast reinforced concrete cornice at the first floor steps down to define the entrance to the north. The pilasters continue vertically, terminating at a simple entablature and cornice. The horizontal members are defined at each pilaster by a recessed band top and bottom of the intersection. The concrete has been painted.<sup>4</sup> There are two entrances into the building: one located in the middle bay and the second is located at the outer bay to the north. The entrance to the north leads to a vestibule and stair providing access to the upper floors. This entrance is defined by a simple, unadorned concrete cornice and entablature.

To the north the seven-story factory connects to a single story brick addition constructed ca. 1940 and a single story concrete block addition built after 1950.<sup>5</sup> The single story building to the north features two large overhead doors and a pedestrian entrance. The single story concrete block addition has a large overhead doors and a pedestrian entrance at the north and south bays.

West Elevation (Belt Line/CSX Elevation)

The west elevation retains a high level of integrity and exhibits a simply detailed industrial concrete aesthetic, with refined exposed aggregate finish.<sup>6</sup> The vertical piers and horizontal beams that define each bay are subtly detailed, each with three lines scored in the concrete. The horizontal beams "cross" the pilasters, defined by a recessed band top and bottom. Above the beam the concrete spandrel panel is slightly recessed below a continuous concrete sill. Three six-over-six sash windows occupy each bay except as described below.<sup>7</sup> At the

<sup>4</sup> A 1917 photograph and a rendering (ca. 1920) show the original parti. See Figures 1 and 2.

<sup>5</sup> The concrete block addition does not appear on the 1950 Sanborn Map.

<sup>6</sup> Michael Hein, "Historical Timeline of Concrete," *Historical Timeline of Concrete*, University of Auburn, <http://www.auburn.edu/academic/architecture/bsc/classes/bsc314/timeline/timeline.htm>. Hein notes that exposed aggregate was introduced as a method of concrete surfacing and a step in concrete aesthetic by J.H. Chubb of the Universal Portland Cement Company in 1907.

<sup>7</sup> Typically in reinforced concrete industrial buildings the windows are industrial steel units and the spandrel panels are brick. Fireproof buildings also featured steel industrial sash windows.

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F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"

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first and second floors the windows are one-over-one industrial sash units, except at the first floor of the second, third and fourth bays from the south, where there are paired multi-light wooden doors. A fixed window with transom is centrally located at the second through seventh floors of the second bay from the south. A door had been located at this location, providing access to a fire escape. The outer bay to the south is similar in arrangement except there are four windows, as opposed to three, in the second through the seventh floors of each bay. There is no fenestration in the bay to the north. It is likely that industrial metal sash units were used on the first and second floors of the west elevation because of the adjacency to the railroad lines and canal. The composition is terminated by an unadorned entablature and cornice.

The single story brick addition to the north has a small loading bay and platform. Two window openings to the north and one to the south of the loading door have been infilled. There is one loading dock and platform on the single story cinder block addition to the north.

North Elevation

The second through seventh floors are visible on the north elevation, although the sixth and a portion of the seventh are covered by a billboard sign. The first four floors are brick masonry and the fifth through seventh floors have a horizontal concrete beam. The lower, brick masonry wall was part of the adjacent four-story Baynes Carriage Works, which was demolished by ca. 1940. (Figures 1 and 8) There are two openings that have been infilled with brick on the second, third and fourth floors, and one infilled opening on the fifth floor. The infilled openings are located at the stairwell and freight elevator. The door opening at the fifth floor provided access, via a fire escape, to the roof of the now demolished four-story building in order to meet fire code.<sup>8</sup>

South Elevation

The south elevation is two bays wide. The elevation is defined by the vertical and horizontal reinforced concrete framing members and a non-historic stair tower.

**Interior**

The interior of the F.N. Burt Company Factory "C" is simply organized. The main entrance and vertical circulation are located in the bay to the north. The cast concrete stair, with metal pipe rails, runs east/west, landing at the east elevation, with eight-over-eight sash windows located between each floor. To the west of the stair is a freight elevator. A restaurant is located on the first floor, which remains open, with concrete octagonal

<sup>8</sup> Department of Labor, *The Bulletin of the New York State Industrial Commission* 3, no. 7 (April, 1918): 165. The New York State Industrial Commission conducted hearing on buildings that had code violations. The four story brick masonry building had wood stairs and did not provide sufficient fire egress.

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F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"

Name of Property

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columns running north-south slightly to the east of center. Although concrete throughout, the upper floors and stair treads are maple.<sup>9</sup> A fitness room and tenant lobby are located in the ca. 1940 addition and tenant parking is in the portion constructed after 1950.

First Floor

A restaurant is located in the first floor of the factory, which retains its open plan. A line of octagonal shaped columns run the length of the building to the east of center, supporting concrete beams and the concrete floor slab above. The concrete framing system is exposed on the perimeter walls. Two-over-two metal sash windows are located along the east and west elevations. Paired, multi-light doors are also located on the west elevation. A mechanical room is located to the south as is access to a stair tower that has been added to the south elevation.

A tenant lounge and fitness room are located in the ca. 1940 single story brick masonry addition to the north. This lobby connects with a car garage located in the post-1950 concrete block area.

Upper Floors

While historically the upper floors consisted of large open floor plates, suitable for flexible factory production areas, the current tax credit rehabilitation of the building has inserted one- and two-bedroom apartments in these spaces of the upper floors, each accessed by a central corridor running north-south and maintaining the general axial orientation of the building. The octagonal shaped concrete columns project beyond the plane of the west corridor wall and support concrete beams and slab, which remain exposed throughout. As one expects, the diameter of the concrete columns diminishes at each successive floor. The floors are all maple. The windows on the second floor of the west elevation are two-over-two industrial sash units. At all other locations the windows are six-over-six sash units.

Vertical Circulation

The main stairs are located in the northeast corner of the building. They are cast concrete, with maple at the landings and at the treads. The rail is pipe. A brick masonry wall and fire door separates the stair from the apartments. A door opening in the north wall of the stair landing on the second through fifth floors has been infilled with brick. A freight elevator is located to the west of the stair. A stair tower has been added to the south elevation.

<sup>9</sup> "Catalogs and Trade Publications of Value," In *Concrete Engineering*, 5, no. 10 (October 1, 1910): 34. The publication notes the finish: "Reinforced concrete throughout with maple floors."



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F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"

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Statement of Significance:

Summary

The F.N. Burt Company Factory "C" building, located at 1502 Niagara Street, meets National Register Criterion C in the area of architecture, as an excellent example of a reinforced concrete frame daylight factory building constructed in 1911. While the open bays in a "daylight" factory typically utilized industrial steel windows and concrete floors, Factory "C" featured six-over-six double hung wooden sash units and maple floors. The aesthetic of the composition is achieved through the detailing and articulation of the exposed aggregate finish, a relatively new method of concrete surfacing intended as an aesthetic.<sup>10</sup> The building was designed by Buffalo architect R.J. Reidpath & Sons and built by Turner Construction Company.

F.N. Burt Company Factory "C" is also significant under Criterion A in the area of industry. The company was the largest producer of "built-up" boxes for cigarettes and, later, cosmetics in the United States. The main headquarters and Factory "A" of the company, located 500 Seneca Street in Buffalo, was listed on the National Register in 2013. Additionally, at its peak, the company operated two additional factories, "B" and "C" at other locations in the city to secure the large number of "girl operatives" necessary for production.<sup>11</sup> As has been well documented, factory operatives often worked under deplorable conditions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Factory "C" is significant as an example of a factory that is in contrast to the typical factory condition at the time. The building was documented as being well built, modern, well ventilated, lighted and heated. The employees of the company were noted as being treated well and happy in their work. The building is also notable for its association with Mary R. Cass, who became general manager of the company in 1911 and, at the time, was one of the most successful women executives in the country.<sup>12</sup>

The period of significance begins with the construction of Factory "C" in 1911 and ends when the F.N. Burt Company moved its operations from the building in 1932.<sup>13</sup> This marks the era when the building and company were at its most prominent and encompasses all significant architectural changes and developments made to the building.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Hein, "Historical Timeline of Concrete," *Historical Timeline of Concrete*, University of Auburn, <http://www.auburn.edu/academic/architecture/bsc/classes/bsc314/timeline/timeline.htm>. J.H. Chubb of the Universal Portland Cement Company developed the technique in 1907.

<sup>11</sup> The term "girl operatives" was used throughout period literature. Refer to footnote 20 below.

<sup>12</sup> This nomination is not seeking significance under criterion B for the association with Mary Cass, as her significance is perhaps best connected to the F.N. Burt main administrative offices in Factory "A" at 500 Seneca Street, where she would have worked on a more daily basis. This nomination provides additional information, enriching our knowledge of Ms. Cass and her role in the F.N. Burt company.

<sup>13</sup> The city of Buffalo directories note F.N. Burt occupying the Niagara Street property until 1932.

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F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"

Name of Property

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F.N. Burt & Company

Business Born in Woodshed Netted Fortune. Notwithstanding crude start, Fred N. Burt became industrial chief.

*The Shears*, 1921

Frederick Northrup Burt began his career as a printer, working for the Buffalo publisher Matthews, Northrup & Company, Art-Printing Works. After learning the trade he purchased a printing press, some type and opened his own business out of his mother's woodshed on Niagara Street, near Rhode Island, in 1886.<sup>14</sup> The small company printed deposit slips and other items for banks, which his wife would deliver to clients.<sup>15</sup> Within a year he had established the business and moved to the third floor at 440 Main Street, where he had eight people working for him. Among these employees was Mary R. Cass, who was just out of high school. Cass, who at the time made four dollars a week, remained with the company, and eventually became general manager of the F.N. Burt Company, one of the most successful female executives in the country.<sup>16</sup>

Burt's early printing business expanded to include printing for druggists. As part of this work, Burt had to provide prescription, pill and powder boxes, which he bought from Batavia.<sup>17</sup> This proved to be inefficient and, as a result, Burt began to make the boxes by hand.<sup>18</sup> Burt's business grew and, in 1891, he moved to the Howard Building at 459 Washington Street, occupying two floors. Parallel with his printing business, Burt saw his set-up box-making interest grow, and the company was manufacturing boxes out of the Berrick Building at Swan and Ellicott Streets.<sup>19</sup> Their first orders were principally making soap boxes for the Larkin Soap Company.<sup>20</sup> The box manufacturing business continued to grow and "the Burt Company was operating in four different buildings, which was very inconvenient, so in 1900 a four-story structure was erected at Seneca and Hamburg Streets and into this building all four of the plants were moved."<sup>21</sup> The F.N. Burt Company, despite its modest beginnings, would become the "world's largest paper box manufacturers."

<sup>14</sup> "Business Born in Woodshed Netted Fortune," In *The Shears* 29, no. 338 (1921): 189.

<sup>15</sup> Richard C. Hill, *Twentieth Century Buffalo: An Illustrated Compendium*, (Buffalo: Matthews-Northrup Works, 1902), 7. Burt's father, Henry W. Burt was one of the founders of the German-American Bank that was organized in May 1882. In 1901 he was elected president of the bank and is credited with its success.

<sup>16</sup> "Business Born in Woodshed," 190.

<sup>17</sup> F. N. Burt, "A Girl Who Made Good," In *The Shears* 29, no. 338 (1921): 83.

<sup>18</sup> "Business Born in Woodshed," 189.

<sup>19</sup> Set-up boxes allow for individual packaging with paperboard rectangle and separate rectangular cover. The set-up boxes were folded into shape and glued. Folding cartons, on the other hand, could be shipped flat and sent to retailers where they would be assembled and glued.

<sup>20</sup> F. N. Burt, "A Girl Who Made Good," 83. The handcrafted boxes were made by Ada Freebury (Mrs. McAnally) who was still with the company in 1921.

<sup>21</sup> "Business Born in Woodshed," 189; F. N. Burt, "A Girl Who Made Good," 83.

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F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"

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World's Largest Paper Box Manufacturers in Buffalo F. N. Burt Company, Ltd., makes 85 per cent of all set-up cigarette boxes used in the United States – Other Products by the Millions.

*Buffalo Live Wire*, 1922

The company continued to expand at the 500 Seneca Street location, with two buildings constructed in 1903, and another constructed in 1910. Part of the early expansion included locating factory buildings and a warehouse in other parts of the city. While this might seem to have the same "inconvenience" as cited by F. N. Burt prior to the construction of Factory "A" at 500 Seneca Street, the motive was a product of work force utilization. "The business of the company is conducted in three main factories known as 'A,' 'B' and 'C,' located in different parts of the city in order to secure readily the large number of girl operatives which a business of this sort demands."<sup>22</sup> Factory "A," was located at Seneca and Hamburg Streets, Factory "B," occupied the Werner Building at 1113 Main Street, and Factory "C" was located in the old Baynes Carriage Works at 1502 Niagara Street. Factory "C" had 350-ft frontage on Niagara Street and was 50-ft deep.<sup>23</sup> A warehouse was located at 236-248 Scott Street. The F.N. Burt Company purchased the four- and six-story brick masonry factory buildings and property on Niagara Street owned by William Baynes in 1906.<sup>24</sup> It was not until 1911 that a "modern" reinforced concrete building was constructed at the Niagara Street location.

In 1906 the F.N. Burt Company incorporated, with Burt taking 2,994 shares, and a single share was sold to his wife, Katrina, to his son, Henry, and to Lyndon C. Palmer, Mary R. Cass, William J. Gunnell, and Duane B. Tuttle. At the time the business had a capital stock of \$500,000.<sup>25</sup> The company's tremendous growth continued, "producing small and ornate packaging had been incredibly successful, reducing transportation and manufacturing costs, that it allowed them to have as 'near a monopoly in our particular lines as it is possible to obtain,' and indeed, by 1909 F.N. Burt was producing 98 percent of all cigarette boxes in the United States."<sup>26</sup> That same year, the F.N. Burt Company, Ltd. was formed through the merger of the F.N. Burt Company with Canadian companies Morton Co., Ltd, Toronto, Ontario, the Merchants' Counter Check Book Co., Ltd., Toronto and Carter-Crume Co., Ltd.<sup>27</sup> The newly merged company owned three factories and one warehouse in

<sup>22</sup> Charles Stephenson, "A Paper Box Factory Cost System" In *Business: A Magazine for Office, Store and Factory* (January 1, 1909): 361-70. Stephenson discusses the F.N. Burt Company's method of keeping track of materials and accounts among their three factories. One of the comments in the article provided the work-force justification as to why it was necessary to locate the factories in different parts of the city.

<sup>23</sup> F. N. Burt "A Girl Who Made Good," 83. Factory "B" was relocated from 1133 Main Street to a larger building at 1010 Main Street, at the corner of Goodrich in 1911. Factory "C" was the only building located away from the main complex at 500 Hamburg Street that was not an existing building, was a new construction.

<sup>24</sup> *Memorial and Family History of Erie County, New York: Biographical and Genealogical*, (New York: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1906-1908), 216. Baynes maintained his carriage factory at the Niagara Street location until he died on August 8, 1905.

<sup>25</sup> "F.N. Burt & Company," In *The Paper Box Maker and American Bookbinder* 14, no. 10 (August, 1906): 3.

<sup>26</sup> Caitlin Boyle and Derek King. *F.N. Burt Company Factory National Register of Historic Places Registration form*, (s.l:s.n., 2013), Section 8, Page 3.

<sup>27</sup> John Moody, *Moody's Manual of Investments, American and Foreign*, (London: Fred. C. Mathieson & Sons, 1917), 899

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Buffalo, and two factories and one warehouse in Toronto. In 1910 the company acquired the Dominion Paper Box Co., Ltd of Toronto. The head office was moved to Toronto, Ontario, with Canadian S.J. Moore, president, A.E Ames, vice-president in Toronto, and F.N. Burt, vice-president in Buffalo. Burt remained on the board of directors of the newly formed company and was involved in running the Buffalo factories until he retired in 1911, at which time Mary R. Cass was appointed General Manager.<sup>28</sup>

F.N. Burt Factory "C"

In 1906 the F.N. Burt Company purchased the Baynes Carriage Work Factory on Niagara Street.<sup>29</sup> Baynes Carriage Work consisted of a four- and six-story mill building with a 350-frontage on Niagara Street and was 50-ft deep.<sup>30</sup> In 1911 the F.N. Burt Company added a seven-story reinforced concrete factory, measuring 47-ft by 147-ft, to the south of the four-story brick masonry building. The north elevation of the new construction incorporated the south elevation of the four-story brick and continued with a concrete frame structure on the fifth through seventh floors. (Figures 1 and 8) The four-story building, which was not fireproof, was used primarily for storage and connected to the stair of the reinforced concrete building at each floor. Openings that have been infilled on the north elevation show where the two connected. The six-story building, which was sprinkled, had manufacturing on the first through fifth floors, and the sixth floor was used for storage.<sup>31</sup> The functions on each floor of the seven-story reinforced concrete building are not known.<sup>32</sup> Stand-up boxes are small and the machines used to make them are compact. Given the large number of boxes produced by the F.N. Burt Company it is likely that the factory floors accommodated the largest number of machines possible, while providing space for the operator and circulation. It is also probable that the dining room and washrooms were in the basement level.

In 1916 it was ordered that the four-story building to the north be razed, cited for multiple code violations.<sup>33</sup> A publication in *The Iron Age* in February 1916 notes that plans had been filed for the enlargement of the factory.<sup>34</sup> An appeal made on January 31, 1917 indicated that F.N. Burt Company "will not build for some time to come" because of the high cost of materials and therefore wanted to maintain the four-story building. Conditions as part of the appeal included the installation of new fire escapes and fireproof self-closing doors. An opening on the fifth-floor of the seven-story fireproof building, with self-closing fireproof door was to lead

<sup>28</sup> F. N. Burt, "A Girl Who Made Good," 83.

<sup>29</sup> *Farm Implement* 17, no. 7 (August 27, 1903): 16. Baynes had purchased the factory and property in 1903 from Buffalo Spring & Gear Company, who had entered bankruptcy. Baynes conducted business at the carriage factory until he died on August 8, 1905. *Memorial and Family History of Erie County, New York*, Volume 2, (New York: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1906-08), 217.

<sup>30</sup> "A Girl Who Made Good," 82-85. F.N. Burt notes the building dimension.

<sup>31</sup> Department of Labor, *The Bulletin of the New York State Industrial Commission* 3, no. 7 (April, 1918): 165.

<sup>32</sup> The *Sanborn Maps* note that admittance into the buildings was denied to the surveyors.

<sup>33</sup> *Opcit.*, 165.

<sup>34</sup> "Machinery Markets and News of the Works," In *The Iron Age* 97, no. 6 (February 10, 1916): 409.

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to the roof of the four-story building.<sup>35</sup> These openings have since been infilled. It is likely that these buildings remained in service through F.N. Burt's occupancy of the property ending in 1932.

The F.N. Burt Company Factory "C" remained vacant until 1940, when it was used as warehouse space by a variety of tenants. At this time the four-story and six-story brick masonry buildings were demolished, and replaced by the single story, ca. 1940 loading bay and later the larger single story ca. 1950 concrete block loading dock to the north to accommodate the needs of the new tenants.<sup>36</sup> In the 1940s, the American Sales Book Co. used the building; in the 1950s, the building was used as a warehouse by Colonial Crafts Wholesale Furniture dealers and a few other short-term tenants. Duggan's Trucking Inc. used the building as a warehouse from the 1960s to 2013 and, in the 1990s, Refrigerated Trucking Service was at 1502 Niagara Street.<sup>37</sup> Bison Storage and Warehouse Corporation occupied the building from the 1940s to 2013.

### Working Conditions in Factories

It is to the direct, immediate and permanent interest of all citizens that evil and harmful conditions shall be brought to light; that workmen be taught their dangers and how they can best protect themselves from injury; that enlightened and considerate employers shall be enabled to introduce the best protective devices and methods, and that those who willfully ruin the bodies of their fellow men shall be exposed and compelled to change their ways.<sup>38</sup>

Preliminary Report of the Factory  
Investigating Commission, 1912

During the late nineteenth century industrial growth in the United States surged. The expansion of manufacturing resulted in the need for a large number of factory workers. With the introduction of electricity, newer and faster machines were developed to increase productivity, which in turn led to an even greater demand for a cheap labor force. At the beginning of the nineteenth century this labor force became readily available as

<sup>35</sup> Department of Labor, *The Bulletin of the New York State Industrial Commission* 5, no. 10 (July, 1920): 197 and In 1916 F.N. Burt Company, Ltd. had filed plans for the enlargement of its factory on Niagara Street, suggesting that it was responding to the requirement to "raze" the 4-story building in compliance with fire code issues. The six-story addition was never constructed. The company installed the required sprinkler system, fire doors and fire escapes as required.

<sup>36</sup> The 1950 *Sanborn Map* shows the single story brick masonry building, but does not show the cinderblock addition. A gas station is located on this lot on the map. The four story building windows had segmental arches, as seen on the interior elevation and historic photos. The existing building have loading bays and the infilled windows on the east and west elevations do not have segmental heads suggesting that this is not the first floor of the older four-story building.

<sup>37</sup> *Buffalo, New York, City Directory*, 1925-2013.

<sup>38</sup> State of New York, *Preliminary Report of the Factory Investigating Commission Volume 2*, (Albany: The Argus Company, 1912), 8-9.

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fewer workers were needed on farms because of improved farming methods and a large number of people immigrated to the United States. People moved to the cities in search of work and often found it in factories.

Factory work was monotonous. The operator, as workers were called, often performed the same task repetitively for a minimum of ten hours a day, six days a week. In order to save money employers often hired woman and children to work, since they were paid less than men. Women were paid as little as six dollars a week, or three hundred and fifty-two dollars a year. "At the turn of the century it took an annual income of at least \$600 to live comfortably, but the average factory worker made between \$400-\$500 per year."<sup>39</sup> The census reports of 1905 showed that in New York State the average weekly earnings of men employed in industry was \$11.79; women \$6.54 and children \$3.64.<sup>40</sup> Even though child labor laws were passed limiting the number of hours children could work to eight per day, these laws were rarely enforced.

Female workers typically performed unskilled or semi-skilled machine work. Lack of government regulation often led to unsafe and unhealthy work conditions, which resulted in a high incidence of industrial accidents. "In 1900 industrial accidents killed thirty-five thousand workers each year and maimed five hundred thousand others."<sup>41</sup> Options for revolt by the workers was limited. Although some labor unions existed, most industrial workers were not union members, as they were restricted to skilled laborers.

During the Progressive Era several states passed legislation that established minimum wages for women, maximum work hours and workman's compensation.<sup>42</sup> The Woman's Trade Union League, founded in the United States in 1903, helped spearhead the drive for many of these measures. Despite legislation, "organized labor opposed minimum-wage laws for woman because it preferred to win such measures through collective bargaining or strikes rather than through legislation."<sup>43</sup> Strangely, businesses supported workers compensation plans, while unions opposed them since the benefits were not that good and many workers were excluded. Businesses preferred workers compensation as opposed to the large payouts the courts often awarded in injury cases. Despite the push for reform, conditions did not generally improve in the early decades of the twentieth century.

<sup>39</sup>"Working Conditions in Factories (Issue)," In *Gale Encyclopedia of U.S. Economic History*, 2000,  
<http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G2-3406401046.html>.

<sup>40</sup> *Preliminary Report of the Factory Investigating Commission*, 8.

<sup>41</sup> "Working Conditions in Factories (Issue)"

<sup>42</sup> The Progressive Era began as a social movement and grew into a political movement in response to economic and social problems industrialization introduced into America. The Era ran between 1890 – 1920, and is associated with social reformers such as Jane Addams, and journalists such as Jacob Riis and Ida Tarbel. President Roosevelt, who became president of the United States in 1901, believed in corporate America, but also recognized that corporate greed could not get out of hand, which led to trust-busting and federal regulation of business.

<sup>43</sup> "Working Conditions in Factories (Issue)"

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In 1911 The Factory Investigating Commission of the State of New York was appointed "to the end that such remedial legislation be enacted as will eliminate existing peril to the life and health of operatives and other occupants in existing or new structures."<sup>44</sup> The commission was formed in response to the Triangle Waist Company fire in March 1911 that resulted in the loss of one hundred and forty-three lives in the factory. "Public attention was directed not only to the dangers which threaten employees because of inadequate fire-escape facilities, and because of the lack of precautions against fire, but also to the less obvious but greater menace of unsanitary conditions."<sup>45</sup> The commission investigated conditions in factories throughout New York State, including Buffalo, that included: hazard to life because of fire (inadequate fire escapes and exits, number of persons working in the factories, arrangement of machinery, fire drills); accident prevention (machinery guards); danger to life and health because of unsanitary conditions (ventilation, lighting, hours of labor, filth), and occupational diseases (industrial consumption, lead poisoning, bone diseases).

The results of the commission were published in *Preliminary Report of the Factory Investigating Commission, 1912*. On November 27, 1911 the commission conducted hearings in Buffalo, New York. The report documents the transcripts of the public hearing including testimony given by Alexander G. McKenzie, who was a factory inspector, and A. Joseph Ball, who was hired by the commission to inspect Buffalo factories. The inspectors visited factories to determine safety compliance, such as guarded machines, fire-escapes on the exterior, guarded elevators, the condition of access to the stairs, and sanitary conditions. The inspector would also record the number of employees, record of accidents, and number of children and minors employed.<sup>46</sup> The conditions in factories in Buffalo at the time had a number of significant issues, including wooden stairs in the six-story Buffalo Forge Building that exited onto wooden bridges leading to another building. The only way to get out of the building was across the wooden bridges.<sup>47</sup> The building was also described as having unguarded machinery and as being filthy, with dirty floors and walls, and unwashed windows. The R.M. Company on Republic Street employed four hundred men and boys, and eighty girls.<sup>48</sup> The girls ranged in age between fourteen and twenty. Many of the workers were observed to have bandaged or lost fingers, and it was noted that there were accidents on the "average about every other day."<sup>49</sup> Injured employees received no pay while recovering from the accident.<sup>50</sup> The toilets were described as being out of order, and there was no ventilation for fumes of the acid ore from the gas furnace, except by windows which were closed in the winter. Other factories described in the report had similar conditions including unsanitary toilet rooms, lack of ventilation, poor lighting and unguarded machines; wood stairs, and a lack of fire-escapes. When Mr. Ball was asked if the factories he described were "typical of a great many factories you examined in Buffalo?" his answer was "to a

<sup>44</sup> *Preliminary Report of the Factory Investigating Commission Volume 2, 7.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 887.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 782-83.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 785.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 786.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 787.

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great extent" and there are a "very few modern factories."<sup>51</sup> When asked about the F.N. Burt Factories, another investigator, Violet Pike, who was a graduate of Vassar College, replied that "these factories are in excellent condition from a sanitary point of view; they are very modern, and very well built and very well ventilated, lighted and heated in every particular."<sup>52</sup> She went on to say that in one factory "eight hundred were employed, there were at least a hundred young girls between fourteen and sixteen. ... They worked there by permission of the Board of Health." Most of the workers were girls between fourteen and sixteen, and up to twenty.<sup>53</sup>

**Working Conditions at the F.N. Burt Factory "C"**

The plant may be filled with efficiency and automatic machinery, but the officials and employes (sic) have not become machines also. The stranger feels the warmth of human fellowship in the air, the feeling of friendliness that comes when folks enjoy their work and are putting in their best licks. All of which may or may not be traceable to the start of this great business in a tiny woodshed.<sup>54</sup>

"Business Born in Woodshed," 1921

The F.N. Burt Company, Ltd., as noted in testimony to the Factory Investigating Commission, had modern factories that were well ventilated, adequately heated, lighted and sanitary. Factory "C", a reinforced concrete fireproof structure also had a sprinkler system with two water supplies and, as documented on a 1917 photo, fire escapes on the exterior of the building.<sup>55</sup> (Figure 3) Interestingly the concrete floors at Factory "C" were covered with maple throughout, except at the basement. This was an unnecessary expense, and one wonders if it was done to ease standing on concrete all day, in addition to reducing the vibration of the machinery. The risers and landings, where there were no machines, also had maple flooring. Further, the windows, except for the industrial metal sash units at first two floors facing the railroad and canal, were wood sash. It is possible that this was intended to provide a view for the operator that was less "industrial."

Between one thousand and fifteen hundred girls were employed in the factories, depending on the season of the year and number of orders. "The majority of these operatives are of foreign birth or origin, many being unable to speak English, to say nothing of reading or writing it. Through its welfare department the firm is making constant efforts to educate and improve the condition of this large and heterogeneous force."<sup>56</sup> The employees were described as happy in their work. "For them we conduct a benefit association, we have a public library

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 797

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 762

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 762

<sup>54</sup> Employees is spelt "employes" in the publication.

<sup>55</sup> Department of Labor, *The Bulletin of the New York State Industrial Commission* 5, no. 10 (July, 1920): 197.

<sup>56</sup> "A Paper Box Factory Cost System," 361.



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branch, we have dining rooms, we have frequent dances and we have social secretaries who do nothing else, but look after the welfare of the employes (sic)."<sup>57</sup> The company also held annual picnics for their employees. On August 5<sup>th</sup>, 1916 the outing was at Fort Niagara Beach, where "3000 were present, and there was dancing, swimming, games and 'eats' galore. It was a Burt gathering exclusively and they owned the whole beach for that day."<sup>58</sup> The factories each fielded sports teams; "the annual baseball clash between Factory 'A' and 'C' resulted in another win for Factory 'C.' This latter team has been winning with great regularity for the past three or four years, but 'A' expected to turn the tables on them this year."<sup>59</sup> Management was present at the picnics, "if anywhere near when an even of this kind takes place, Mr. Burt makes it a point to be present; in fact it would never seem complete without his presence. Miss Mary R. Cass ... was also present, and took an active interest in the running of the games."<sup>60</sup> The involvement of company management, rivalry among the factories and annual picnic suggest a factory environment quite different from that typically described in the early twentieth century.

Organization of events, such as the picnic, were largely the work of the F.N. Burt Company's Mutual Benefit Association. In 1914 the chairman of the picnic committee was from Factory "C." The Benefit Association was made up of employees, who paid dues. There was a president, vice president, social secretary, and treasurer. The association paid out sick benefits and in 1914 had a total cash on hand of \$2,104.72.<sup>61</sup>

The description of the F.N. Burt Company, Ltd. and the treatment of its employees is in stark contrast to the description of other factories in the *Factory Investigating Commission Report*, suggesting that the owners of the F.N. Burt Company, including Mary R. Cass, had a somewhat paternal attitude toward their operators, the majority of whom were young, immigrant girls who could not yet speak English.

### Miss Mary R. Cass

A notable proof of the evolution in commercial matters within the past two or three decades and the position assumed by women in modern business is afforded by the career of Miss Mary R. Cass, who to-day is the manager of the Buffalo plants of the F.N. Burt Company, Ltd.

*Practical Druggist and Pharmaceutical  
Review of Reviews*, Volume 34<sup>62</sup>

<sup>57</sup>"Business Born in Woodshed," 190

<sup>58</sup>"Annual Picnic of F. N. Burt Company, Ltd.," In *Practical Druggist and Pharmaceutical Review of Reviewers* 34, no. 8 (August, 1916): 72.

<sup>59</sup>"Burt Outing.," In *The Paper Box Maker and American Bookbinder* 23, no. 10 (January, 1915): 24.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 24.

<sup>61</sup>"Burt Benefit Assn.," In *The Paper Box Maker and American Bookbinder* 23, no. 1 (November, 1914): 18.

<sup>62</sup>"Notable Successes and How Achieved," In *The Paper Box Maker and American Bookbinder* 34, no. 3 (March, 1916): 21

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On February 3, 1891, Mary Cass, one of the first eight employees, began work for F.N. Burt. Cass was a shrewd and energetic business woman who realized the importance of providing the best possible goods and service to the customer. In 1906, when the stock company F.N. Burt Co., Inc. was formed, Mary R. Cass was named vice-president. Burt retired from the day-to-day running of the company in 1911 and his logical successor was Cass.<sup>63</sup> "Mr. Moore requested me to name my successor. I told him that Miss Cass had been my 'right hand man' for many years; ... and, that while she was a woman, I knew of no better or more competent person than Miss Cass to assume my duties."<sup>64</sup> In addition to "that fixity of purpose that wins out in the end, but has a special significance when the character of the business is considered, with its many feminine workers, providing them an object lesson such as will give encouragement to aspire to greater things."<sup>65</sup>

Despite her success in business, Cass was still part of a male-dominated world. "She has had some difficulty to contend with the almost universal antipathy of men toward taking orders from a woman."<sup>66</sup> She was not eligible for membership in a Rotary Club; however, she did attend the Cincinnati International Convention in 1915 and was featured in a Rotary article in 1918. While the article praised the ability of Cass, its bias concerning women in the workplace and modern society evidences to a greater extent the strides Mary Cass had made in establishing herself as a successful executive in the "world's largest manufacturer of small paper boxes, with 3000 employees and three large factories under her charge."<sup>67</sup> Cass played golf, could drive an automobile, and believed that "women have the ability to be successful in business – if they apply themselves to their work and stick to it."<sup>68</sup> However the article is quick to point out that her "womanly side" preferred "lighter plays" and "can use two handkerchiefs when seeing one of the weeping plays that the supposedly normal woman loves to sob over."<sup>69</sup> In 1918 it was not that Cass was a successful executive, general manager of a \$2,750,000 corporation, it was, at least according to *The Rotarian*, a club in which she was not eligible for membership, that "a woman may be successful in business without losing those traits of the feminine character which usually are designated as 'womanly'."<sup>70</sup> The situation did not change to a great extent and on February 2, 1921, at the "testimonial dinner" celebrating her "thirty years of service" to the company, she was the only woman present at the dinner given in her honor.<sup>71</sup>

Cass was an executive leader for over thirty-years in the industrial world dominated by males. She was noted for her executive ability and vision that helped grow the F.N. Burt Company, but possibly more important was

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 21

<sup>64</sup> F. N. Burt, "A Girl Who Made Good," 84.

<sup>65</sup> "Notable Successes and How Achieved," 21.

<sup>66</sup> F. N. Burt, "A Girl Who Made Good," 83

<sup>67</sup> "Successful in Business," 148. Note employees is spelt "employes" in the publication.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 148

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 148

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 148

<sup>71</sup> "Woman Thirty Years with the Firm," In *The Shears* 29, no. 338 (1921): 81.

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"her kindness and consideration [that] have kept the company's history free from the pages of industrial strife."<sup>72</sup> It is also probably that this kindness and consideration resulted in a better work environment for the young, immigrant female operators who made up the majority of their workforce.<sup>73</sup> Cass retired in 1935 and died on August 12, 1945 at the age of 75.<sup>74</sup>

**Early Twentieth-century Reinforced Concrete Frame Factory Construction**

Concrete is a fire resistant compound made from sand, gravel and cement. The cement, when mixed with water, hydrates and becomes hard, binding the sand and gravel together. Concrete is strong when compressed; however, it lacks tensile strength. Concrete, as a building material dates back 300 BC and the Roman's use of *opus caementicium*.<sup>75</sup> The use of concrete fell out of practice after the "Sack of Rome" in 410AD, and it was not until 1756 when John Smeaton, A British engineer, "rediscovered" hydraulic cement by testing mortar in fresh and salt water.<sup>76</sup> Bry Higgins patented hydraulic cement for exterior use (stucco) in 1779. Patents for hydraulic cement were given to various European and American inventors between 1796 and 1824. In 1824, Joseph Aspdin, a mason from Leeds, England, patented a mixture of clay and limestone, which had been crushed and fired in a kiln as "Portland Cement," a process of ingredients and methods similar to those used today.<sup>77</sup> The first great demand for cement in the United States was the construction of the Erie Canal in 1825. The idea of reinforcing concrete was first presented in a publication entitled, "The Encyclopedia of Cottage, Farm and Village Architecture" by John C. Loudon, which proposed a lattice of iron rods embedded in concrete. Although structures had been constructed in concrete, including William B. Wilkinson's concrete servant's quarters, the material was not in widespread use.<sup>78</sup> Wilkinson's use of reinforced concrete through the inclusion of steel in the concrete matrix improved the material's fire resistance and compensated for concrete's lack of tensile resistance. In 1884, American Ernest Ransome (1844-1917) received a patent for a system of embedding steel rods into concrete, the beginning of reinforced concrete.<sup>79</sup> Reinforced concrete combines the compressive

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 81

<sup>73</sup> Harold Coppins, "The Other Side of Miss Cass," In *The Shears* 29, no. 338 (1921): 85. Cass adopted a young boy in 1911 and, according to Coppins, "accepts the further responsibility of the care of her maid's child, a little girl." This statement gives a general indication into the maternal side of Cass, who had no children of her own.

<sup>74</sup> Cass is buried in Forest Lawn Cemetery, Buffalo, New York. Ancestry.com. *U.S., Find A Grave Index, 1600s-Current* [database online]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2012.

<sup>75</sup> The oldest known surviving concrete is in the former Yugoslavia, thought to be laid in 5,600 BC using red lime as the cement. The Roman's used a pink sand, *pozzolana*, which was a fine volcanic ash that was a siliceous or siliceous and aluminous material with little or no cementitious characteristics, but when mixed with water chemically reacts with calcium hydroxide to form compounds with qualities similar to cement.

<sup>76</sup> Cement, specifically portland cement, like *pozzolana*, is a hydraulic material consisting of two-thirds calcium silicates by weight. Joseph Aspdin developed portland cement in England.

<sup>77</sup> The name 'portland' comes from the materials resemblance to stone quarried on the Isle of Portland off the British coast.

<sup>78</sup> William Wilkinson was a published architect in Oxford, England. In 1854 he applied for a patent for "fireproof" concrete construction.

<sup>79</sup> Ernest Ransome (1852-1917) was an English-born architect and engineer. His father's business produced artificial stone, a process he had patented in 1844. Ernest worked in the family business until he moved to the United States in the 1870s. Ransome

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and fire resistant qualities of concrete, with the tensile qualities of steel resulting in a complementary combination of materials. Reinforce concrete, as a poured, formable, cast-in-place material, would become the perfect system for industrial buildings. Reinforced concrete structural framing allows for large open spans with wide bays on the exterior walls for light and ventilation. This, in combination with elevators and hoists, gave rise to the "daylight factory," a typology perfectly suited to meet the functional requirements of warehouses and factories.<sup>80</sup> Henry Turner was a young engineer in Ransome's office. Turner saw the great potential in reinforced concrete, and in 1902 bought Ransome's reinforcing bar patent.

**Turner Construction Company**

In 1902, Henry Chandlee Turner (1871-1954), a civil engineer, established the Turner Construction Company. He had worked for Ernest Ransome, the pioneering force in the new field of reinforced concrete. Turner believed the material had significant commercial potential, and his newly formed company specialized in reinforced concrete. Although Turner Construction was well capitalized with \$25,000, a relatively large sum in 1902, it began with modest projects. Its first contract, with a fee of \$650, was a concrete vault for the Thrift Bank in Brooklyn, New York. One of the more interesting early commissions, and one that illustrates Turner's shrewd business acumen, was for staircases constructed for the new subway system being built in New York City. The design had called for the stairs to be constructed out of steel; however, Turner believed they could be built less expensively out of concrete. Having no basis to estimate the cost, Turner's solution was to look at public bidding records to determine the cost of a comparable steel version, and then to provide a bid for concrete stairs that were modestly less expensive. Turner Construction would construct almost fifty additional concrete stairs for the subway system. The company's first large commission was a 180,000-square-foot, fire-proof paper factory for industrialist Robert Gair, constructed ca. 1903. The company continued to deliver on time and, as a result, had repeat clients, including Gair. Other clients included Western Electric, Standard Oil, Kodak, and Colgate, among others and, by 1916, Turner Construction had bases in Buffalo and Boston. Its work in Buffalo includes a number of National Register listed properties, including The Robertson-Cataract Building (10NR06171, listed 12/08/2012), The Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company Warehouse (15NR00082, listed 11/24/2015), and the Alling & Cory Buffalo Warehouse (09NR06075, listed 02/17/2010) In 1917 Turner was among the founders of the American Concrete Institute, and the company had completed \$35 million worth of contracts, without ever missing a deadline. As appears to be the case, as with the F.N. Burt and Mary Cass, that the early success of Turner Construction can be attributed to the vision and diligence of Henry Turner, "a vigorous leader as president of Turner, he placed his imprint on almost everything it did, profoundly influencing

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experimented with "ferro-concrete", and patented a system of inserting iron rods in concrete to improve tensile strength. The material was used in the construction of bridges and eventually concrete frame industrial architecture. The material would prove to be relatively inexpensive, easily standardized and fireproof.

<sup>80</sup> Reyner Banham discusses the revolutionary impact of reinforced concrete in *Concrete Atlantis: US Industrial Building and European Modern Architecture 1900 - 1925*.

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its core values, the character of its staff and the execution of its work” and the company, which was “warmly praised for their work ethic, integrity and sense of honor.”<sup>81</sup> The company has maintained the presence of a “Turner” in its senior leadership for most of its existence and continues as one of the largest construction management companies in the United States.

The beauty of the industrial aesthetic is found in the simple vertical and horizontal repetitive proportion and rhythm of the bays, defined by the concrete frame, spandrel and large window openings on the exterior; and wide open spaces defined by their material composition and column grid on the interior.

**R.J. Reidpath & Son – Architects**

As designers for industry, the Reidpaths show a telling mixture of conservatism and adventure – reluctant to abandon tried and economical traditional usages, but not loath to investigate new and reasonable ones that promised assured profit for their clients and themselves.

Reyner Banham<sup>82</sup>

Robert J. Reidpath is noted for his design of traditional late nineteenth century brick mill buildings and, with his son Elbert Hubbard Reidpath, early twentieth century reinforced concrete factory and warehouse buildings. His early brick masonry buildings featured segmentally arched windows and bull-nosed brick detailing, while his reinforced-concrete daylight factories ranged from referencing classical ornamental detailing, to being pure studies of the utility and beauty of material composition, as seen at the F.N. Burt Company Factory “C” building. As noted in contemporary magazines, such as *The American Contractor*, *American Architect and Architect*, *Architectural File*, *The Iron Age* and *The American Architect* among others, the firm designed a large number of reinforced concrete factories and warehouses in the early decades of the twentieth century, including the Larkin Factory Buildings between 1900 and 1914 in Buffalo’s Hydraulics/Larkin neighborhood and the National Register listed Alling & Cory Warehouse (09NR06075, listed 02/17/2010) and the Houk Manufacturing Company (13NR06513, listed 2/14/2014).<sup>83</sup> R.J. Reidpath and Sons are significant for their contribution to the design of the reinforced concrete daylight factory aesthetic in the early twentieth century.

<sup>81</sup> The history of the Turner Construction Company is documented in “Special Centennial Issue: A Century of Excellence 1902 – 2002.”

<sup>82</sup> In *A Concrete Atlantis*, architectural critic Reyner Banham discusses the significance of the early twentieth century reinforced concrete built form including the grain elevators and daylight factories.

<sup>83</sup> Frank Lloyd Wright designed the Larkin Administration Building in 1904

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 14

F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State

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Summary

Designed by Buffalo architect R.J. Reidpath and Sons, and constructed by Turner Construction in 1911, F.N. Burt Company, Ltd. Factory "C" retains a good level of integrity, meeting National Register Criterion C, as an good representative example of a reinforced concrete daylight factory, whose aesthetic is derived from the subtle detailing of its monochromatic exposed aggregate concrete. The factory is also significant meeting Criterion A in the area of industry for its association with the prominent F.N. Burt Company, which is notable for its connection to Mary R. Cass, one of the most successful female executives in the early twentieth century. In addition to its use of a modern building material and aesthetic, the F.N. Burt Company took a modern approach to how factory workers were treated, which was not typical in the industrial workplace in the early twentieth century. While some of the factory was demolished due to safety concerns, the remaining building retains sufficient fabric to speak to the significance and modern technology of the significant box manufacturer. The period of significance begins with the construction of Factory "C" in 1911 and ends when the F.N. Burt Company left the property and it became vacant in 1932.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 1

F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State

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F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"

Name of Property

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Section 9 Page 2

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Continuation Sheet

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F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 10 Page 1

F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary is indicated with a heavy line on the attached maps with scale.

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses all property historically and presently associated with this building.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 10 Page 2

**F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"**

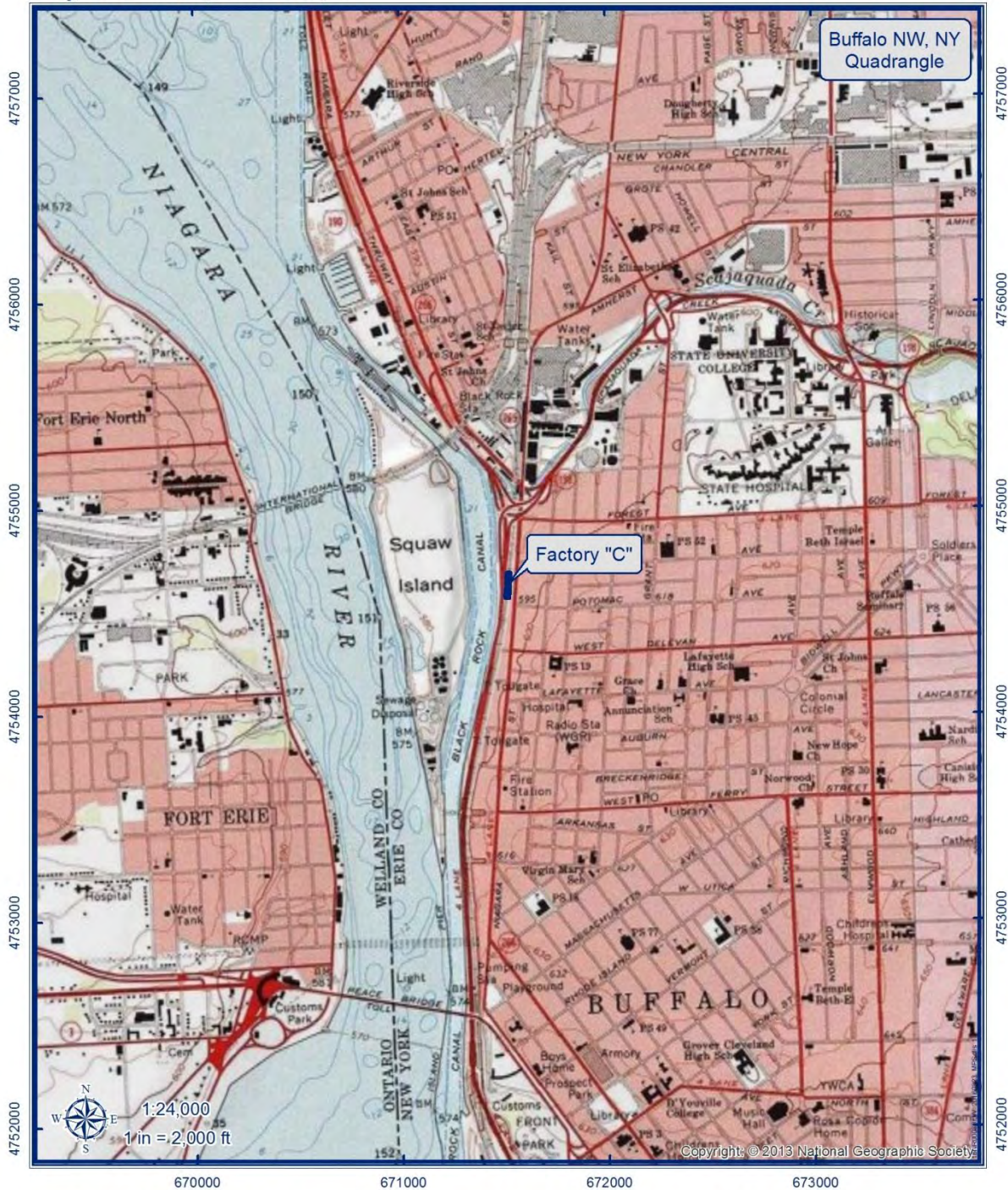
**Name of Property**

**Erie County, New York**

**County and State**

FN Burt Company Factory "C"  
City of Buffalo, Erie Co., NY

1502 Niagara St.  
Buffalo, NY 14213-1104



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N  
Projection: Transverse Mercator  
Datum: North American 1983  
Units: Meter



**Parks, Recreation  
and Historic Preservation**

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National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet

Section 10 Page 3

**F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"**

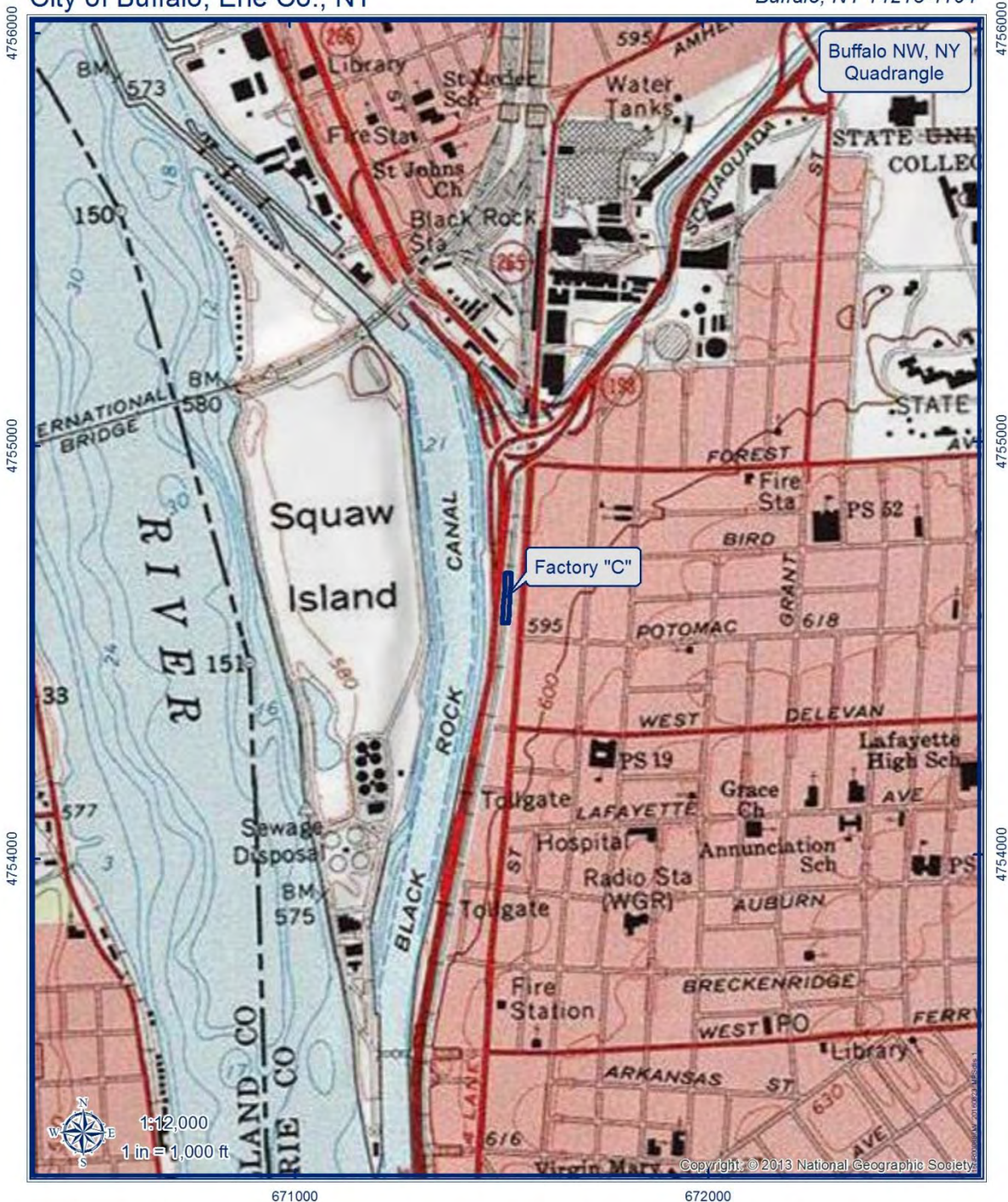
Name of Property

**Erie County, New York**

**County and State**

FN Burt Company Factory "C"  
City of Buffalo, Erie Co., NY

1502 Niagara St.  
Buffalo, NY 14213-1104



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N  
Projection: Transverse Mercator  
Datum: North American 1983  
Units: Meter



Parks, Recreation  
and Historic Preservation

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

**F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"**

Name of Property

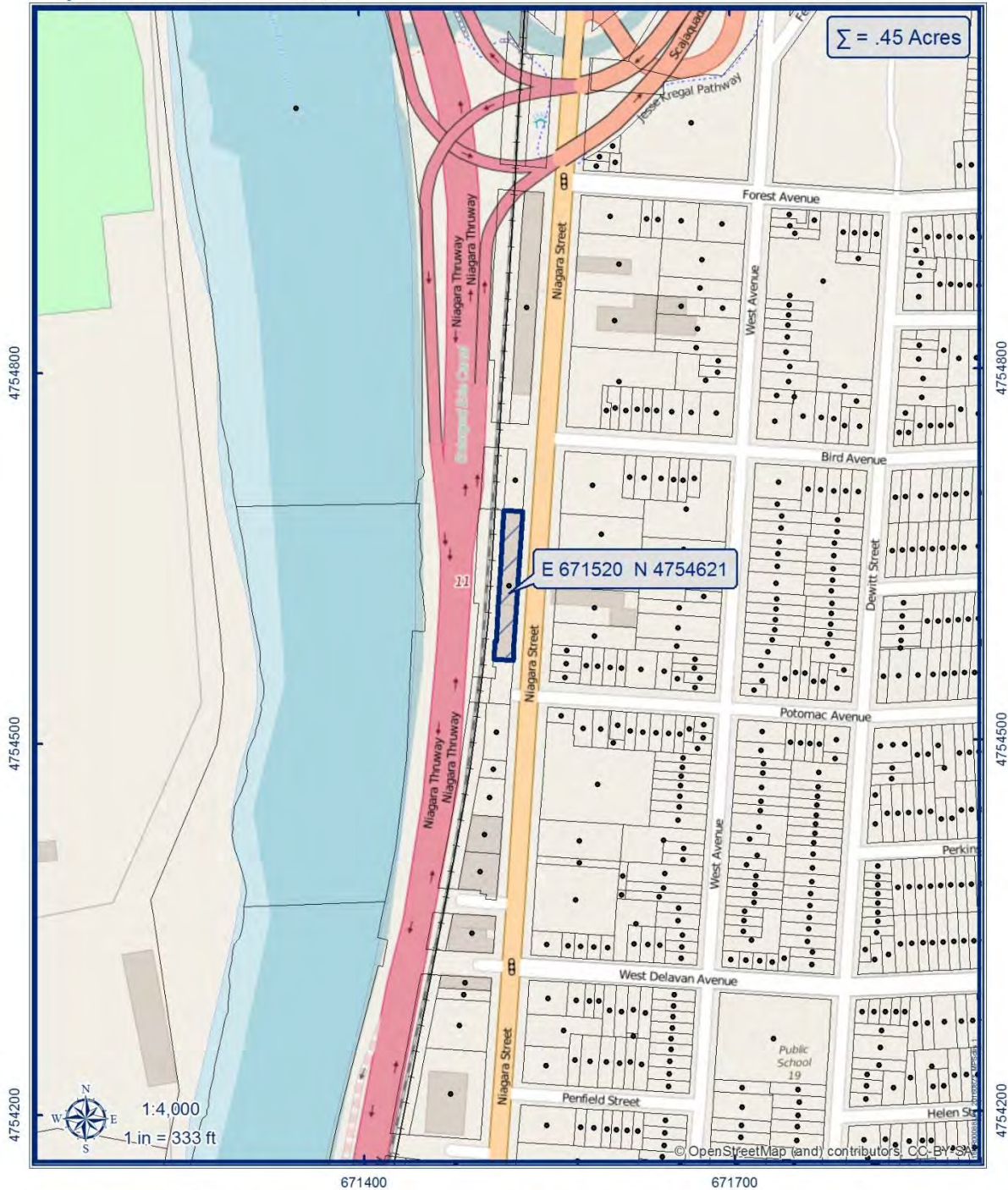
**Erie County, New York**

County and State

Section 10 Page 4

FN Burt Company Factory "C"  
City of Buffalo, Erie Co., NY

1502 Niagara St.  
Buffalo, NY 14213-1104



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N  
Projection: Transverse Mercator  
Datum: North American 1983  
Units: Meter



Factory C



Parks, Recreation  
and Historic Preservation

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 10 Page 5

**F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"**

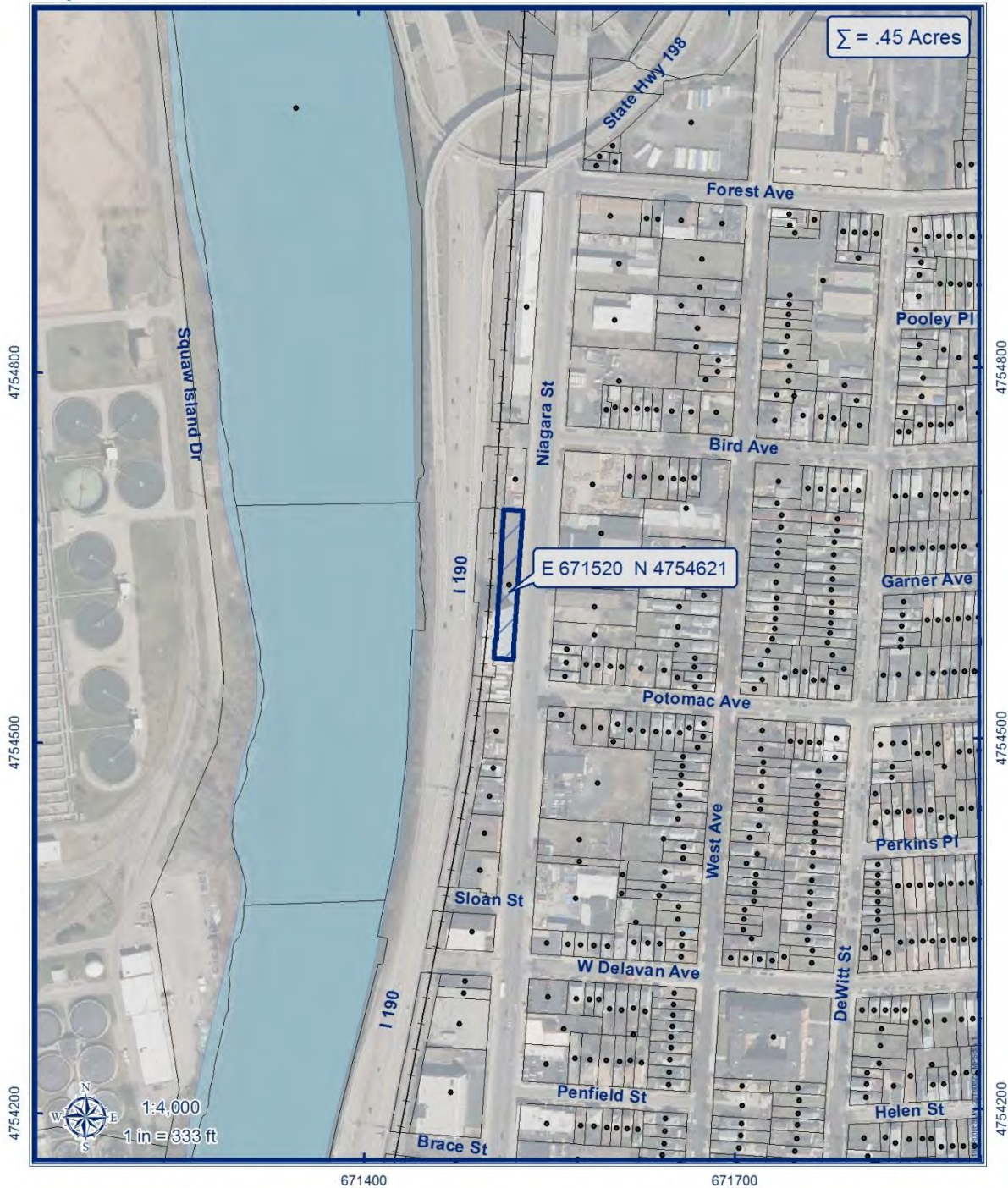
Name of Property

**Erie County, New York**

County and State

FN Burt Company Factory "C"  
City of Buffalo, Erie Co., NY

1502 Niagara St.  
Buffalo, NY 14213-1104



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N  
Projection: Transverse Mercator  
Datum: North American 1983  
Units: Meter



Parks, Recreation  
and Historic Preservation

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State

Section 11 Page 1

Additional Information

Photo Log:

Name of Property: F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"  
City or Vicinity: Buffalo  
County: Erie  
State: New York  
Name of Photographer: Carmina-Wood-Morris  
Date of Photographs: August, 2016  
Location of Original Digital Files: Carmina-Wood-Morris, PC, Buffalo, NY 14216

NY\_Erie County\_F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"\_0001  
East elevation looking southwest along Niagara Street.

NY\_Erie County\_F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"\_0002  
East elevation looking northwest along Niagara Street showing ca. 1955 single story warehouse addition.

NY\_Erie County\_F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"\_0003  
West elevation looking southeast showing 1911 factory block and ca. 1955 single story warehouse addition facing "Beltline" and, when constructed, the Erie Canal.

NY\_Erie County\_F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"\_0004  
West elevation looking northeast showing ca. 1955 single story warehouse addition and 1911 factory block facing "Beltline" and, when constructed, the Erie Canal.

Name of Property: F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"  
City or Vicinity: Buffalo  
County: Erie  
State: New York  
Name of Photographer: Kerry L. Traynor  
Date of Photographs: July, 2016  
Location of Original Digital Files: kta preservation specialists; 422 Parker Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14216

NY\_Erie County\_F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"\_0005  
Detail of stair showing original hardwood floor, pipe railing, hardwood treads on top of cast concrete strings, treads and risers.

NY\_Erie County\_F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"\_0006

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F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"

Name of Property

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Section 11 Page 2

Detail of opening on north elevation that has been infilled with brick. The opening connected to a four-story building to the north that was demolished after 1932. The demolished building had been cited for numerous code violations.

Name of Property: F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"  
City or Vicinity: Buffalo  
County: Erie  
State: New York  
Name of Photographer: Kerry L. Traynor  
Date of Photographs: August, 2016  
Location of Original Digital Files: kta preservation specialists; 422 Parker Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14216

NY\_Erie County\_F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"\_0007

View of fire door, stair landing second floor. Fire doors separated the stairs from the factory floors.

NY\_Erie County\_F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"\_0008

Looking east showing window at landing typical between floors, and cast concrete stair, with wood tread and pipe railing.

NY\_Erie County\_F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"\_0009

View along corridor, typical, showing exposed concrete framing and hardwood floors. Concrete columns are visible along corridor.

Name of Property: F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"  
City or Vicinity: Buffalo  
County: Erie  
State: New York  
Name of Photographer: Kerry L. Traynor  
Date of Photographs: July, 2016  
Location of Original Digital Files: kta preservation specialists; 422 Parker Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14216

NY\_Erie County\_F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"\_0010

Looking northwest into a typical apartment showing concrete framing at ceilings, hardwood floors and sash windows.

Name of Property: F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"  
City or Vicinity: Buffalo  
County: Erie  
State: New York  
Name of Photographer: Kerry L. Traynor  
Date of Photographs: August, 2016  
Location of Original Digital Files: kta preservation specialists; 422 Parker Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14216



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F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"

Name of Property

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NY\_Erie County\_F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"\_0011

Looking southeast showing concrete framing at ceilings, hardwood floors and concrete column at wall.

NY\_Erie County\_F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"\_0012

Looking northeast showing concrete framing at ceilings, hardwood floors and concrete column at wall.

NY\_Erie County\_F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"\_0013

Looking southeast showing concrete framing at ceilings, hardwood floors and concrete column at wall.

Note: concrete column is thinner indicating that the unit is located at an upper floor.

NY\_Erie County\_F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"\_0014

View of apartment unit showing corridor with concrete framing at ceilings, hardwood floors concrete pilaster at wall and sash window.

Name of Property:	F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"
City or Vicinity:	Buffalo
County:	Erie
State:	New York
Name of Photographer:	Kerry L. Traynor
Date of Photographs:	July, 2016
Location of Original Digital Files:	kta preservation specialists; 422 Parker Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14216

NY\_Erie County\_F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"\_0015

View looking southwest showing concrete framing at ceilings, hardwood floors, concrete column at wall and sash window.

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Section 11 Page 4

F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"

Name of Property

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**Figure 1. Rendering of Factory "C" (ca. 1920).** Seven-story reinforced concrete factory building next to four-story and six-story buildings formerly Baynes Carriage Works. Source "Big Deal: 1502 Niagara Street Purchased," Source: *Buffalo Rising Online*. Refer to Figure 8 showing the buildings on the 1916 Sanborn Map.

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Continuation Sheet

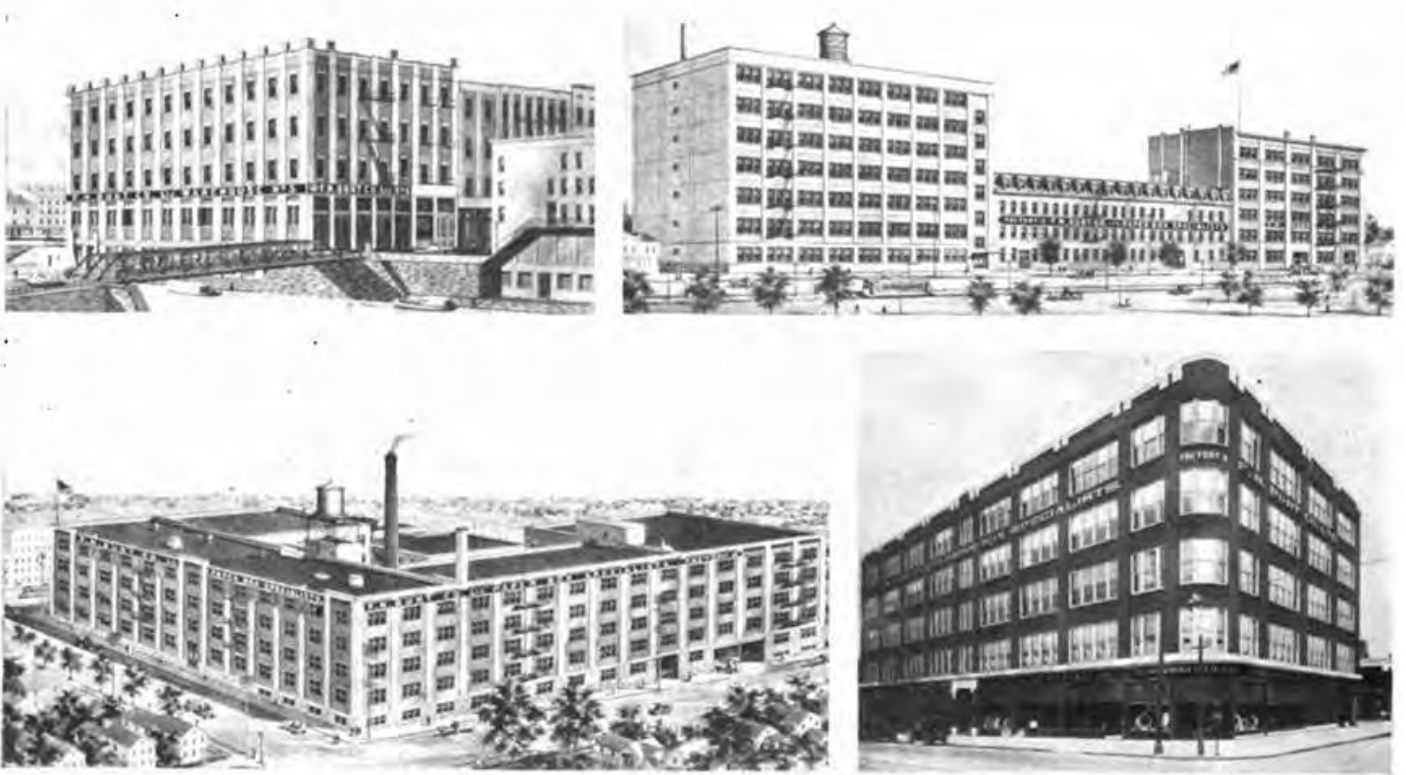
Section 11 Page 5

F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State



BUFFALO FACTORIES OF F. N. BURT COMPANY, LTD.  
This is the largest paper box manufactory in the world

**Figure 2. Image showing four FN Burt Co. factories (1914)**

The image at the upper right is the Factory "C" building. The site at the lower left is the previously-listed FN Burt Factory "A" main offices. Factory "B", shown in the lower right, was not built specifically for the Burt company and has been significantly altered and does not appear to be NRE. The building shown at the upper left was a warehouse building at 236-248 Scott Street, not extant. *Source: "Greater Buffalo & Niagara Frontier"*

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Section 11 Page 6

F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"

Name of Property

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1502 Niagara in 1917 Reidpath *Achievement in Building Design* BHM Image

**Figure 2.** 1917 Photograph of Factory "C". Reidpath *Achievement in Building*. (Buffalo History Museum)

United States Department of the Interior  
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Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 7

F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

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If your 29-30-31 Pill Boxes are not made with  
Edge of Collars Covered as shown above,  
*You Are Getting Inferior Boxes.*

**Burt Boxes are Superior to  
All Others**

In Quality and Finish, and Cost you no more  
Assorted Colors or Old Style Bronze, same price

When Ordering of Your Jobber  
**Specify BURT Boxes**

We Distribute Pill and Powder Boxes only  
through Jobbers and Label and Box Houses

**F. N. Burt Company, Ltd.**  
*Specialists in Small Paper Boxes*  
Buffalo, N. Y.

Figure 4. Advertisement in "The Practical Druggist," 1916

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Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 8

F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"

Name of Property

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# Make an EXTRA profit by Sending all Small-Box Orders Here

WE MAKE SMALL BOXES ONLY—pill and powder boxes—any Small Box—  
the largest we have made is the two-pound chocolate size.

We want specially large orders for Small Boxes out of the ordinary in shape, size, style and finish. We don't ask you to solicit for us—just send

on the orders you can't handle yourself and we will see you make money by it.

As specialists in this one branch of the box in-

dustry, we can give unusual service in quality, delivery and price.

When that next *Small-Box* man comes in, get in touch with us. Tell us

what he wants, and we will be able to make a profitable sale for both of us and give the man complete satisfaction as well.

LET US SEND YOU ONE OF OUR PAMPHLETS

**F. N. Burt Company, Limited**

Buffalo, New York  
Toronto, Canada

Figure 5. Advertisement in "The Paper Box Maker," 1914. Note Burt "Buffalo Logo."

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**F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"**

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

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Section 11 Page 9

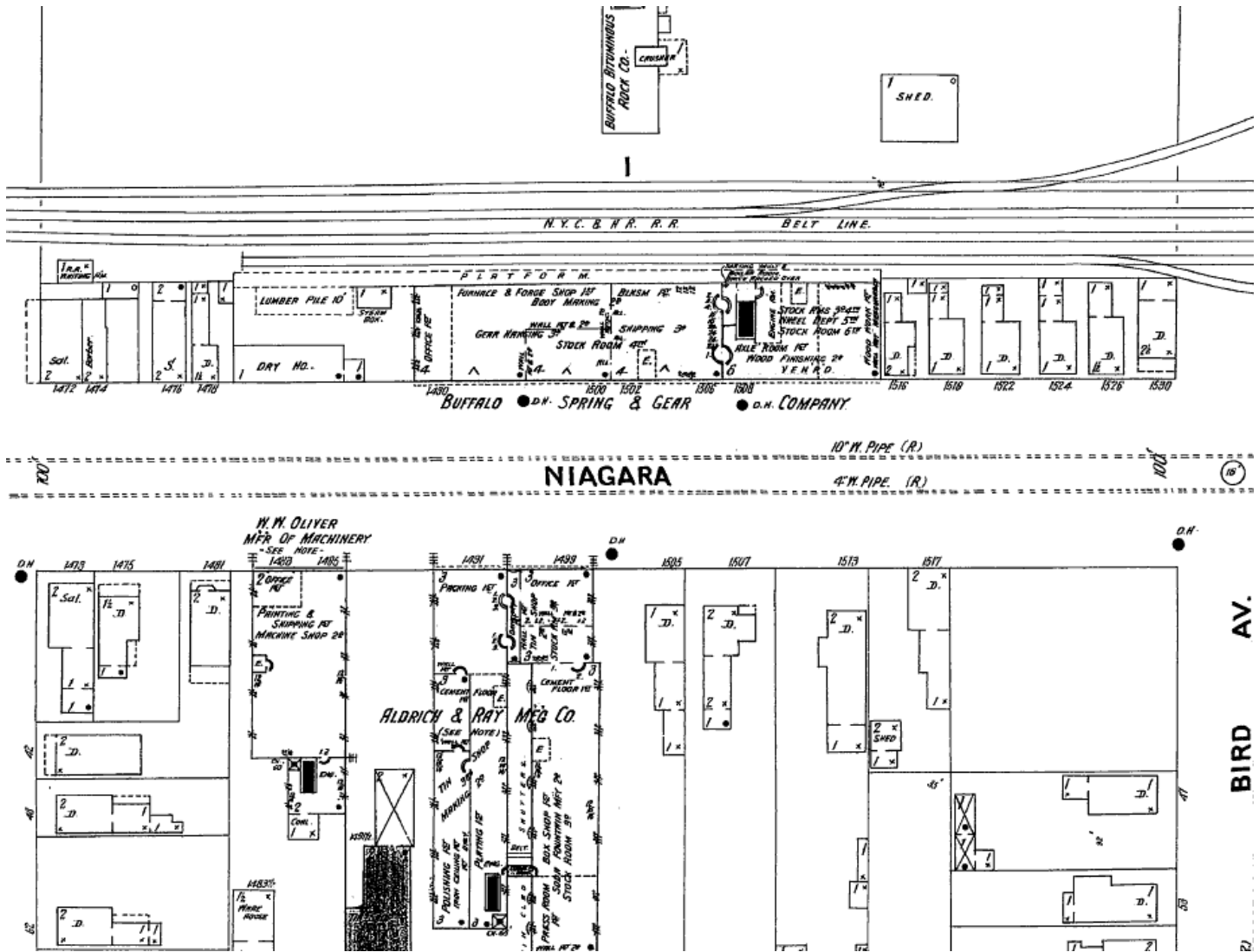


Figure 6. Buffalo Sanborn Map 1889-1900 vol. 4, 1900, Sheet 329. Buffalo Spring and Gear occupies the Niagara Street property that F.N. Burt will purchase in 1906.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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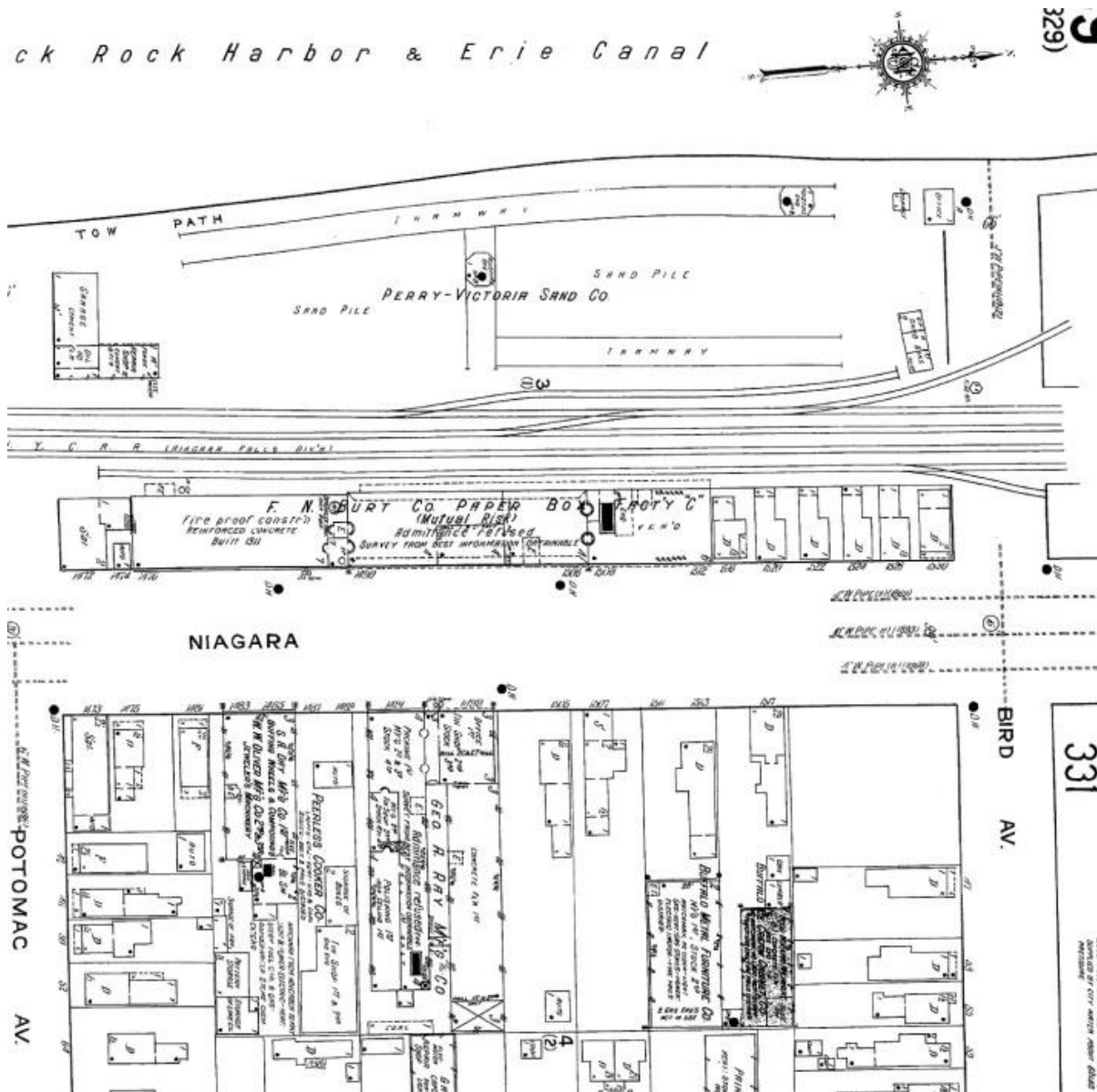
Section 11 Page 10

F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

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**Figure 7.** Buffalo Sanborn Map 1916-1940 vol. 4, 1916, Sheet 339. Note that the 7 story reinforced concrete building has been constructed and the 4-story and 6-story mill buildings remain. Also note relationship to the railroad to the west and neighborhood to the east.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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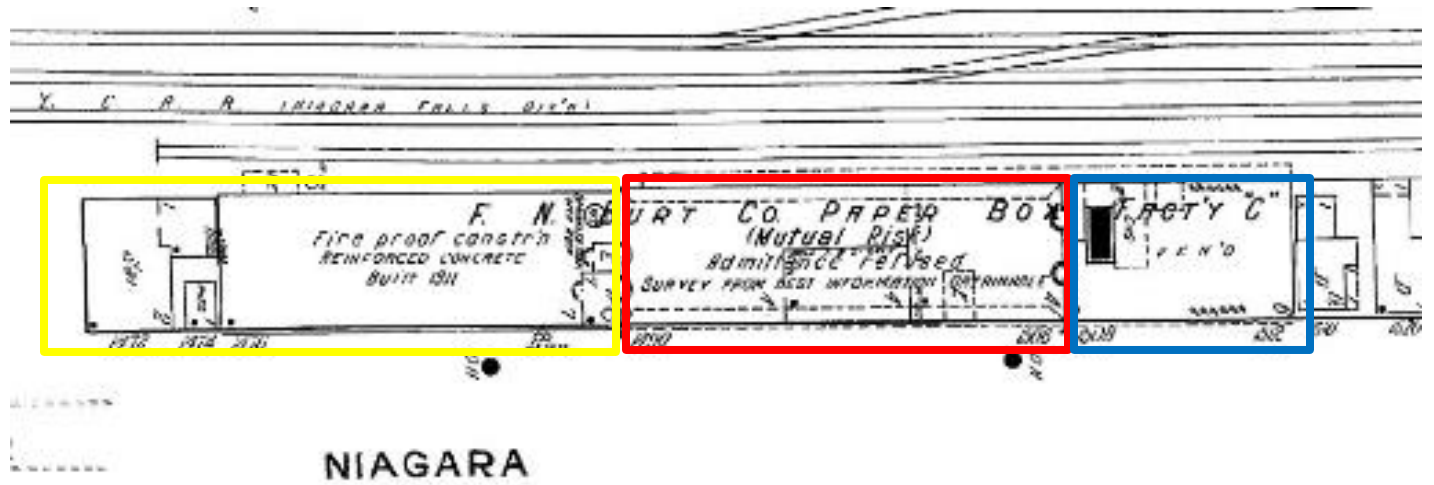
Section 11 Page 11

F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

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7-story Factory "C" (1911)



4-story Mill Building, formerly Baynes Carriage Works (ca. 1880, demolished ca. 1940)



6-story Mill Building, formerly Baynes Carriage Works (ca. 1880, demolished ca. 1940)

**Figure 8.** Buffalo Sanborn Map 1916-1940 vol. 4, 1916, Sheet 339. Detail of Factory "C." Refer to Figure 1 for photograph of the property.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet

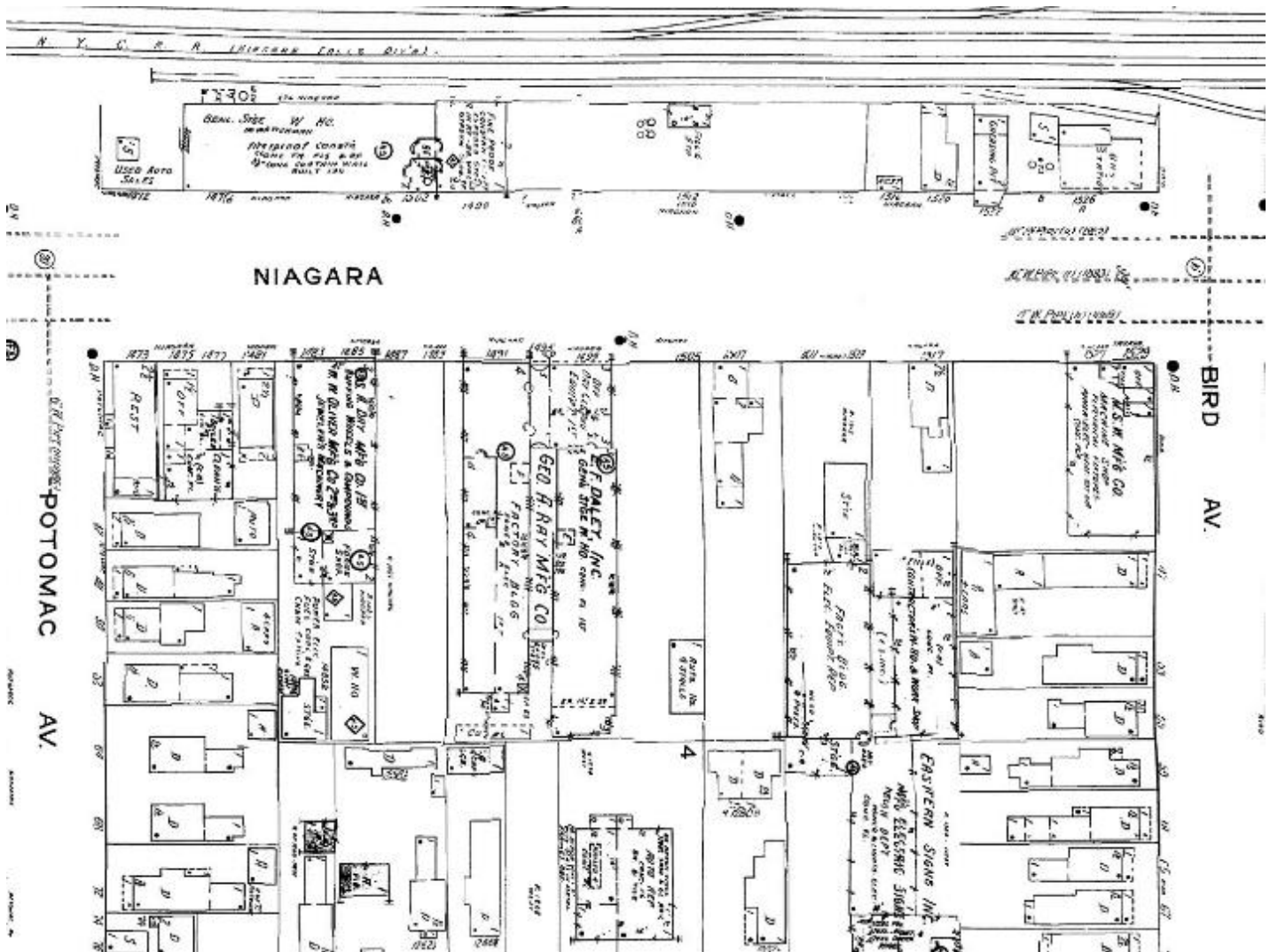
Section 11 Page 12

F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State



**Figure 9.** Buffalo Sanborn Map 1925-Feb. 1951 vol. 4, 1916-May 1950, Sheet 339. Note that the 4-story and 6-story mill buildings have been demolished. A single story masonry loading dock building has been constructed adjacent to the 7-story reinforced concrete factory. A gas station is located where the 6-story building was located.

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Continuation Sheet

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F.N. Burt Company Factory "C"

Name of Property

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County and State

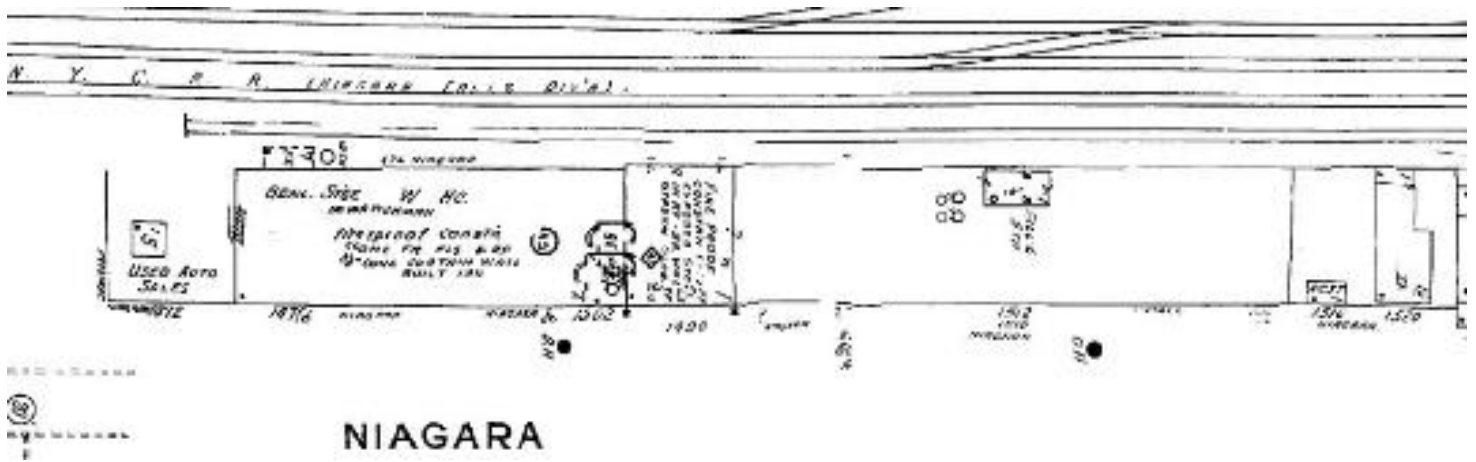


Figure 10. Buffalo Sanborn Map 1925-Feb. 1951 vol. 4, 1916-May 1950, Sheet 339. Detail of Factory "C" property.



5  
ION

WASH

NEW 2 STAIRS  
Pascenella  
1000 S. 10th Street  
Pascenella.com

Pascenella  
1000 S. 10th Street  
Pascenella.com

PINTO



Maximize Your Productivity  
Hohl Machine & Conveyor Co.  
1000 Industrial Blvd  
Cincinnati, OH 45228  
513-763-1100

















MECHANICAL















UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received:  Date of Pending List:  Date of 16th Day:  Date of 45th Day:  Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

- |                                       |  |   |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PDIL | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape       | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver       | <input type="checkbox"/> National        | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other        | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP             | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
|                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG             |   |

Accept  Return  Reject  Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria

Reviewer Alexis Abernathy Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2236 Date \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



**Parks, Recreation  
and Historic Preservation**

ANDREW M. CUOMO  
Governor

ROSE HARVEY  
Commissioner



17 February 2017

Alexis Abernathy  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 Eye St. NW, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Re: National Register Nomination

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

I am pleased to submit the following three nominations, all on disc, to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register:

George T. Robinson House, Jefferson County  
F.N. Burt Company Factory "C," Erie County  
Waterloo Downtown Historic District, Seneca County

Please feel free to call me at 518.268.2165 if you have any questions.

Sincerely:

Kathleen LaFrank  
National Register Coordinator  
New York State Historic Preservation Office