

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

EDWARD M. COTTER

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United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: EDWARD M. COTTER

Other Name/Site Number: FIREFIGHTER; W.S. GRATTAN; Fireboat EDWARD M. COTTER

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: Michigan and Ohio streets on the Buffalo River

Not for publication: __

City/Town: Buffalo

Vicinity: __

State: New York

County: Erie

Code: 029

Zip Code: __

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: __

Public-Local: X

Public-State: __

Public-Federal: __

Category of Property

Building(s): __

District: __

Site: __

Structure: X

Object: __

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

__

1

1

Noncontributing

__ buildings

__ sites

__ structures

__ objects

0 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 0

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: N/A

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4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this _____ 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 set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

____ Entered in the National Register _____

____ Determined eligible for the National Register _____

____ Determined not eligible for the National Register _____

____ Removed from the National Register _____

____ Other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

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6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: Government Sub:
Current: Government Sub:

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: N/A

MATERIALS:

Foundation: N/A
Walls: N/A
Roof: N/A
Other: N/A

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

Edward M. Cotter (Official Number 81722), built in 1900 as *W.S. Grattan* (1900-1953) and later renamed *Firefighter* (1953-1954) is an operating fireboat of the Buffalo (New York) Fire Department. Designated "Engine 20," *Edward M. Cotter* is moored on the Buffalo River at the foot of Ohio Street, adjacent to the Michigan Street Bridge. From the fireboat station, *Edward M. Cotter* is within easy reach of Buffalo Harbor, Lake Erie, and the Niagara River.

W.S. GRATTAN AS BUILT AND MODIFIED

W.S. Grattan, now *Edward M. Cotter*, is a steel-hulled vessel constructed with double-riveted plates laid in an "inner-and-outer" strake method over single 4 x 4 angle frames. The fireboat is 118 feet long with a 24-foot beam, 11.5-foot depth of hold, and 7.1-foot draft. *Edward M. Cotter* is registered at 208 gross, 141 net, and displaces 178 tons.¹ The hull is distinguished by a heavily reinforced bow with a projecting stem that enables the boat to function as an icebreaker in the winter. As built in 1900, *W.S. Grattan* had a low single deckhouse that stepped up to a cabin that stepped up again to an elevated pilothouse.

Grattan's single screw was propelled by two vertical direct-acting compound marine steam engines each with 20- x 22-inch cylinders. The vessel was capable of 12-knot speeds. Steam was provided by two Babcock and Wilcox 10- x 9-foot water tube boilers exhausting into twin stacks. The fireboat's 9,000-gallon per minute capacity was powered by three double-acting pumps manufactured by the American Fire Engine Company. The pumps provided water to three monitors (two forward and one aft) and to two manifolds each with 6 connections for 2-inch and 1/2-inch fire hose.²

In July 1928 *Grattan* was seriously damaged when she was overwhelmed by fire and the boilers exploded. The fireboat was rebuilt in 1930 retaining the original hull, deckhouse, engines, and pumps. The pilothouse was raised to the upper (boat) deck level and an elevated, cross-braced steel "turret tower" was installed at the aft end of the upper deck. A monitor was placed atop the pilothouse and the after monitor was placed atop the turret tower, giving *W.S. Grattan* four monitors. Photographic evidence indicates a hose reel may have been placed aft on the fantail. Below decks, the original coal-fired boilers, destroyed in the 1928 fire and explosion, were replaced with oil-fired boilers.

In 1953 the fireboat was modernized. There were few external changes: 1) the turret tower was removed and its monitor emplaced on a hydraulically-elevated tower with a sliding ladder; 2) the twin stacks were replaced with lower, more streamlined "dummy" funnels that housed the new engines' exhaust; and 3) a fifth monitor was added aft on the fantail. Internal changes were more comprehensive; the original steam engines and the 1930 boilers were removed and replaced with four Caterpillar D-397 engines. The single shaft was removed, the tube blanked, and new twin screws installed. The original double-acting steam pumps were also removed and replaced with four DeLaval centrifugal pumps each rated at

¹ *Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States....* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 19...) p.

² *Report of the Commissioners of the Buffalo Fire Department For the Year Ending June 30, 1908.* (Buffalo, New York: The Wenborne Sumner Company, 1908), p. 202.

3750 gpm at 160 pounds per square inch. These changes increased *Edward M. Cotter's* horsepower to 950 and the pumping capacity to 15,000 gpm at 160 psi.³

PRESENT APPEARANCE OF *EDWARD M. COTTER*

Painted red with white trim and black deck equipment and railings, *Edward M. Cotter's* name is emblazoned in raised white letters at the bow and on the transom. The vessel has not been substantially changed since her 1953 modernization and has since undergone periodical maintenance and occasional repairs.

The main deck is largely taken up by the deckhouse. Forward the deck is occupied by a single towing bitt, electrically-driven winch, towing bits, one forward, the other aft at the fantail, a capstan, electrically-driven windlass manufactured by the Ideal Windlass Company, a hatch abaft the windlass that leads below to the chain locker, a Navy-style anchor, and the two 4-inch, 6,000 gpm bow monitors. These monitors are probably original to the fireboat; they appear in a July 1920 photograph of *W.S. Grattan*. A row of monitor nozzle ties line the front of the deckhouse on a rack. The bulwarks forward also carry several steel "pipe nozzle stands" that hold the nozzles of loose hoses that can be mounted on the rail like small swivel guns.

Moving aft, doors leading to the interior line the deckhouse port and starboard. Near the pilothouse, stairways set into the house connect the main deck with the upper deck. Large doors on either beam swing up and latch open admitting access to the manifolds, which are protected inside the deckhouse from freezing winter weather. There are eight connections on each manifold -- seven are for 3-1/2-inch reduced 2-1/2-inch or 1-1/2-inch fire hose, and one was added in 1953 for foam. Aft of the manifolds are doors that also swing up to pass rubber hose from the foam booster lines.

Aft at the fantail the deck mounts a single towing bitt, electrically-driven capstan, and the 4-inch, 6,000 gpm stern monitor that was installed in 1953. Two ladders on the after end of the deckhouse connect the main and upper decks. The after bulwark has a manual tiller for the rudder mounted to it; this tiller is used with block and tackle if the hydraulic steering is disabled.

The deckhouse is divided into four compartments on the main deck level. The first from forward is the observation room. A large open space, the observation room is lined with open windows forward. A couch contoured to fit the curving forward bulkhead faces aft to a small table anchored to the deck and pierced by the water line leading up to the pilothouse monitor. The observation room is painted light green; the deck is covered with off-white linoleum. The observation room also houses a small galley with stainless steel counter, sink, hot plate, and refrigerator. A passage runs aft from the observation room; to port is a stairway running up to the pilothouse and a small cabin, known as the forward bunkroom, which also serves as a first aid room. To starboard abaft the galley is a small head with marine toilet, shower, and sink. A door at the end of the passage leads to the upper engine room.

The upper engine room has a large open well with a stairway that leads below to the engine room. A smaller well and stairway are located farther aft. At the main deck level the upper engine room contains *Cotter's* oil-fired furnace, a small boiler, tanks that hold 230 gallons of foam, and two reels of red rubber 1-inch "booster" hose for the foam. The after bunkroom is located aft abaft the electrical panel. A bulkhead separates the upper

³ 5 sheets of plans showing conversions to *W.S. Grattan*, A.M. Deering Naval Architects, Chicago, Illinois, (1952). Original blueprints on file at Engine 20, Buffalo Fire Department, Buffalo, New York.

engineroom from the hose room. Access to the hose room is from the main deck. The hose room has four rows of wooden racks that hold 40 50-foot lengths of 2-1/2 inch, 10 lengths of 3-1/2-inch, and 6 lengths of 1-1/2-inch fire hose. Farthest aft is another separate compartment, the nozzle room, in which nozzles, spanners, couplings, line, and an acetylene torch are stowed.

The upper (boat) deck lies atop the deckhouse. It is open and runs around the beams and front of the pilothouse, branching out to form two navigation bridges. The deck is surrounded by an open pipe rail, painted black, on which are mounted two 1-mile pay searchlights port and starboard and two aft-mounted floodlights. The unscripted bell is mounted forward at this level on the pilothouse. The upper deck holds the pilothouse, the two stacks, four air intake funnels, the elevating tower with its sliding ladder and single 2-1/2-inch, 1,900 gpm monitor, and an aluminum extension ladder. The upper deck originally carried two lifeboats mounted on davits; these have been replaced by a single aluminum rowboat stowed keel up on the after starboard quarter of the deck. A ladder aft of the pilothouse leads up to the pilothouse roof which is surmounted by a pipe rail, 2-1/2-inch 2,300 gpm monitor, navigational instruments, searchlight, and loudspeaker. The interior of the pilothouse is reached by doors to port and starboard or by stairs that lead up from the observation room below. The pilothouse is roomy; it houses only a couch, hinged chart table, the steel wheel, throttles for the engines, and binnacle. The deck is covered with off-white linoleum and the interior is painted light green.

Below the main deck, the hull is divided into four spaces. The first is the forepeak which is divided longitudinally into a chain locker and ballast (trim) tank. Aft of the forepeak is a space that holds four tanks that hold air to start the Diesel engines with 200 lbs. of pressure. Aft of this space is the engineroom, which occupies most of the hull. The engineroom is lined to port and starboard by riveted steel fuel and water ballast tanks. The four fuel tanks hold a total of 7,300 gallons of No. 1 Diesel oil. The water ballast tanks, in addition to trimming the fireboat, are used during the winter months as an inside cooling system for the engines, the water cooling the Diesels when their running temperature exceeds 80 degrees F. There are six ballast tanks; one forward, four in the engineroom, and one aft.

Two of the fireboat's four engines are forward and two are aft. The engines, Caterpillar D-397s, are each rated at 475 hp at 1,500 rpm. The forward engines are used for pumping and are paired with a DeLaval pump that draws directly from the river or lake from intakes below the waterline. The compressor for the air tanks is located slightly forward and to starboard of the starboard engine. The after engines are also paired to DeLaval pumps. Primarily used for propulsion, these engines are also employed for pumping to bring the boat up to its full 15,000 gpm capacity. Each engine has an air-operated Falk marine clutch and transmission. The engineroom is surrounded by the 12-inch belt line that feeds water to the monitors and manifolds; the belt line is connected to the pumps by pipes.

Aft of the propulsion engines are two 50 kw Caterpillar D-311, 4-cylinder, 220-volt generators. The generators are battery started; the batteries and charger are located to starboard. The generators are operated alternately; only one is needed to supply the fireboat's needs. Aft the generators are two bilge pumps. A bulkhead separates the engineroom from the steering gear room; here, at the stern, the shafts pass through the hull and the C.H. Wheeler-manufactured hydraulic steering gear is housed along with the control unit for the hydraulic elevating tower two decks above. The No. 5 water ballast tank, previously mentioned, is located below the steering gear room.

Edward M. Cotter is well-maintained and in good condition. While twice modified, *Edward M. Cotter* retains a strong identity as a 1900-built vessel in hull form, construction, and configuration. The fireboat's 1930 rebuilding did little to change her basic character. The 1953 modernization, while replacing her machinery below deck, represents the continuing use of *Edward M. Cotter* in her important career and an adaptation to new, more efficient

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technology that increased *Cotter's* capacity, horsepower and ultimately her life.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
Nationally: X Statewide: Locally:

Applicable National Register Criteria: A X B C X D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A B C D E F G

NHL Criteria: 1, 4

NHL Theme [1987] XII. Business
 L. Shipping and Transportation

 XIV. Transportation
 B. Ships, Boats, Lighthouses, and Other Structures

NHL Theme [1994] V. Developing the American Economy
 3. transportation and communication

Areas of Significance: Government; Architecture [Naval]

Period(s) of Significance: 1900-1946

Significant Dates: 1900, 1928, 1930

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Crescent Shipbuilding Company

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

The fireboat/icebreaker *Edward M. Cotter*, built in 1900 as *W.S. Grattan*, later renamed *Firefighter* and known by her present name since 1954, is the oldest fireboat operating on the Great Lakes. While conforming to the national fireboat type, *Cotter* exemplifies features specific to her Lakes use on frequently frozen waterways. She is also the oldest fireboat left in service in the United States. Built for the nationally important port of Buffalo, *W.S. Grattan* augmented the city's two-vessel fireboat fleet as the new Welland Canal neared completion and Buffalo prepared to greet the world at the upcoming Pan-American International Exposition. Serving both the needs of Buffalo as a floating fire pumping station, supplying water to the city's high-pressure fire lines, and as a firefighting and icebreaking ally of the port's shipping and waterfront industry, *Edward S. Cotter* has participated in every major conflagration in Buffalo since 1900. The only American fireboat known to have made the supreme sacrifice while firefighting, *Cotter* was overwhelmed by flames and exploded in July 1928. Rebuilt in 1930, the fireboat continued her career through the years of Buffalo's decline as a major port. Still in service after 89 years, *Cotter* is expected to reach her centennial in commission and full operation.

The preceding statement of significance is based on the more detailed statements that follow.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AMERICAN FIREBOAT

The concept of using vessels to fight fires on other vessels and along a port's waterfront dates to mid-18th century London. In the United States, pumps and hand-engines were placed on "floats" or small boats as early as 1809, when New York firefighters did so. Fireboats were the direct result of the Industrial Revolution, specifically the development of marine steam. The 19th century development of large-volume marine steam pumps provided sufficient pressure for effective firefighting. The first steam pump afloat used to fight fires was placed aboard a barge in London in 1852. Harbor tugs and towboats, the most common steam-powered vessel type in any given harbor, became the optimum firefighting vessels. Very few vessels were designed and built as fireboats; rather, many tugs were fitted with pumps and monitors for auxiliary fireboat use. New York's first fireboat, for example, was a tugboat under contract to the port for firefighting. The need for full-time fireboats and for maximum capability for combating serious blazes on wooden ships and the wooden waterfronts of the late 19th and early 20th century compelled many fire departments in port cities to design and construct their own fireboats. "Owing to the comparatively temporary nature of American building construction, the fireboat has been developed in the United States more rapidly than in foreign countries, and to-day the boats of largest capacity are to be found over here."¹ While fireboat development did not blossom until after 1888. As early as 1896, marine architect H. De B. Parsons, speaking before the Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers, noted that "Fire-boats are of such importance to all marine cities, that they are properly regarded as a permanent and indispensable feature of their fire equipments."²

The origins of fireboats are reflected in the general form and design that distinguishes American fireboats through the present day. In 1927, typical fireboats in the United States

¹ Charles C. West, "Centrifugal Pump Fire-Boats," *Transactions of the Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers*, Vol. XVI (New York: Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers, 1908), p. 211.

² H. De B. Parsons, "American Fire-Boats," *Transactions of the Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers*, Vol. IV (New York: Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers, 1896) p. 49.

were described as having the same general dimensions and hull lines of those of a harbor towboat. "The fireboat is a self-propelling hull of towboat form containing powerful pumps drawing from surrounding water and discharging streams of water through strategically mounted monitors."³ While various communities designed their fireboats individually and without any known nationally accented plan, the dictates of function determined the form so closely that a national type was developed. The basic form remained unchanged with few exceptions save more modern pumping and delivery systems, a shift from wood hulls to steel, and adapting fireboats from steam to gasoline, and finally to Diesel-electric power.

CONSTRUCTION AND CAREER OF *W.S. GRATTAN*

Buffalo, located at the northeast end of Lake Erie, and in proximity to Lake Ontario, the Welland Canal, and the Niagara River, is the second largest city in New York state and was until recent times one of the principal ports on the Great Lakes. Buffalo is also a major industrial center, with diverse industries that include flour-milling, rubber, iron and steel manufacturing, meat-packing, gypsum products, and automobile, airplane, and furniture production. First settled in the 18th century, Buffalo was laid out and established in the early years of the 19th century. The city boomed into prominence as the terminus of the Erie Canal after 1822. A reciprocal trade between Buffalo and Chicago ensured the city's fortunes as coal was shipped to Chicago while grain was shipped to Buffalo. The port of Buffalo was busily engaged both in trade on the Lakes and as a transshipment point for bulk freight and cargoes landed on piers and loaded into canal boats for the trip to New York. Buffalo prospered in the mid- and late 19th century. Port statistics increased and inexpensive hydroelectric power from the Niagara River assisted industrialization.⁴

A volunteer fire department was formally organized in Buffalo in 1831. As the city grew, new industries developed, and maritime trade and commerce boomed, causing pressure for a professional fire department to increase. In July 1880, the Buffalo Fire Department was reorganized as a paid organization. The firefighting needs of the port were recognized, and in 1887 Buffalo's first fireboat, *George R. Potter*, a 4,000 gpm locally built vessel, went into service. *George R. Potter* was augmented by *John M. Hutchinson*, a 5,000 gpm fireboat built at Buffalo in 1893.⁵

The need for an additional fireboat was made clear in 1898 when Buffalo, like other major port cities, constructed a "fireboat pipeline" water system fed by fireboats serving as floating pumping stations when the need arose. A number of pipelines were built, all running from Lake Erie and the Buffalo and Niagara rivers into the high-value district downtown. Whenever a major alarm in the district was sounded, a fireboat got underway, proceeded to the high-pressure inlet, hooked up lines, and began pumping. The construction of additional lines began to tax the ability of *Potter* or *Hutchinson* to be all places at all times, and plans to build a new, powerful fireboat were announced.

³ A.C. Hardy, *American Ship Types: A Review of the Work, Characteristics, and Construction of Ship Types Peculiar to the Waters of the North American Continent*. (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1927), p. 166.

⁴ Harlan Hatcher and Eric A. Walter. *A Pictorial History of the Great Lakes*, (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1963), pp. 235-38, passim.

⁵ Jack Supple, *History of the Buffalo Fire Department, 1880-1979* (Kansas City: Kansas City Printing and Graphic Communication, 1980) pp. 85-90, passim.

The Buffalo *Evening News* announced the pending arrival of the new fireboat on the March 6, 1899, noting she would also serve as an icebreaker. The boat was not ready by July 1900, when Buffalo's Fire Commissioners published the Department's annual report. "Work on the new fireboat . . . now under construction at the Crescent Shipyard, Elizabeth, N.J., is progressing very rapidly. When completed, this boat will be the equal, if not the superior, of anything of its kind afloat, and will give ample protection to the property along our waterfront for years to come."⁶ The boat was delivered in 1900. Christened *W.S. Grattan* for Buffalo Fire Commissioner William S. Grattan, the fireboat entered into service in 1900. The Buffalo Fire Department noted in 1901 that the new fireboat "has proved a valuable addition...."⁷

The fireboat's career has been split between fireboat duty and icebreaking, keeping Buffalo harbor open in the winter and keeping the city's water intake free of ice. Responding to every major downtown alarm to pump water into the fireboat line, the fireboat's "periods of frantic, dangerous activity are separated by long stretches of routine maintenance, patrols, and plain old time-killing."⁸ Another duty was the rescue of fishermen stranded on ice floes in the winter.⁹ *W.S. Grattan* received her own firehouse in 1910 at the intersection of Michigan Avenue and Ohio street -- the berth presently used by *Edward Cotter* after 79 years of service.

W.S. Grattan is the only fireboat known to have succumbed to flames while fighting a fire. Just after midnight on Friday, July 27, 1928, the oil barge *Cahill* caught fire while moored at the foot of Maurice Street. Arriving on the scene, *W.S. Grattan* poured water on the burning barge while land companies sprayed nearby piers and buildings to keep the fire from spreading. Burning oil from *Cahill* drifted 300 yards across the river to the oil-laden tanker *B.B. McColl*. As *Grattan's* monitors worked on the barge, *McColl* blew up, throwing burning oil on the fireboat. The men jumped into the water as *Grattan* was caught "in a blanket of flame." Many of the firemen were injured: one man, engineer Thomas Lynch, too badly burned to hold fast to a line, slipped below the surface and drowned. The burning fireboat was damaged further when the unattended boilers ran dry and exploded. When the flames were finally extinguished 17 hours after the fire started, the barge, tanker, fireboat, and a land pumper were heavily damaged. The toll was 1 dead, 28 injured, and nearly a million dollars' damage.¹⁰

The city's first fireboat, *George R. Potter*, laid up in reserve in 1926, was called back into service to replace *Grattan* while the city fathers wrangled over rebuilding the gutted vessel while suffering through the first throes of the Great Depression. Debate raged for more than two years as the city considered repair, building a new fireboat, or purchasing the Duluth, Missabe & Iron Range Railroad's offer of the tug *McGonigle*. Many were adamant in their

⁶ *Report of the Commissioners of the Buffalo Fire Department For the Year Ending June 30, 1900* (Buffalo: The Wenborne-Sumner Company, Printers, 1900), p. 8.

⁷ *Report of the Commissioners of the Buffalo Fire Department For the Year Ending June 30, 1901* (Buffalo: The Wenborne-Sumner Company, Printers, 1901) p. 5.

⁸ *Buffalo Evening News*, February 15, 1964.

⁹ Paul Ditzel, "Fireboats," (1988), manuscript in publication.

¹⁰ *Buffalo Evening News*, July 27, 1928.

refusal of the railroad tug. "We're not in the market for any stuff like that.... If we buy any more tugs we'll buy them new," stated Fire Commissioner George W. Hedden.¹¹ In 1930, the decision was made to repair *W.S. Grattan*, the city voting the money. Various proposals for triple duty followed as work progressed; the fireboat was also to serve as port icebreaker and a police patrol boat. Finally, on November 19, 1930, *W.S. Grattan* returned to service after a \$50,000 rebuild at the Buffalo Drydock Co. The coal-burning boilers were replaced with oil-fired ones, and other modifications made *Grattan* more powerful. Commissioner Hedden said he was "confident that the *Grattan* would fight a fire on the highest points of waterfront (grain) elevators and buildings."¹²

The next major fire the rebuilt fireboat fought was at the recently-completed cereal plant of General Mills, which burned on February 15, 1940. The fire spread rapidly, and several companies, including *W.S. Grattan*, worked on the blaze for hours as winter cold coated the firefighters, engines, and fireboat with thick ice. *Grattan* fought another tanker fire on October 29, 1951, when the tug *Dauntless*, towing the gasoline-laden barge *Morania* collided with the freighter *Penobscot*. The explosion and fire killed 11 before *Grattan* and a land company extinguished the fire.¹³

In 1952, *Grattan's* aged engines were in need of replacement. That year, the Department noted, "Plans and specifications for the rebuilding of the fireboat *Grattan* have been completed and bids received during December 1952 for this project. When completed, our fireboat will be the most powerful and efficient fireboat on the Great Lakes."¹⁴ In 1953 the fireboat was sent to Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, where the engine, boilers, and pumps were replaced with Diesel engines and DeLaval centrifugal pumps. The name of the vessel was changed in June 1953 by vote of the Buffalo City Council to *Firefighter*.¹⁵ Returning to service in the Fall of 1953, the fireboat did not carry her new name for long. In 1954, Edward M. Cotter, president of Fire Fighters Local 282, AFL-CIO, the Buffalo local, died, and the boat was renamed again in his honor.¹⁶ In 1955, the original 1910 firehouse assigned to *Edward M. Cotter* was torn down and rebuilt. The 1955 firehouse is used by *Cotter* at the present time.

The most notable recent event in *Edward M. Cotter's* career occurred on October 7, 1960, when she became the first U.S. fireboat to cross the international line to fight a fire. The Maple Leaf Mill in Colburne, Ontario, Canada caught fire on the evening of October 7. Beyond the resources of the local department, the fire was out of control. Ontario authorities contacted Buffalo and asked for *Cotter*. Departing Buffalo at 10:30 pm with additional crew from Engine 8 aboard and escorted by a US Coast Guard cutter, *Edward M. Cotter* made an hour and 16 minute run across Lake Erie. The fire was extinguished after 4 hours of pumping at maximum capacity; *Edward M. Cotter* departed at 4:10 am. The action brought no formal reward save the heartfelt thanks of Colburne's citizens.¹⁷

¹¹ Buffalo *Evening News*, November 22, 1929.

¹² Buffalo *Evening News*, November 18, 1930.

¹³ Supple, *op cit.*, pp. 99, 101-102.

¹⁴ *Annual Report of the Buffalo Fire Department* (Buffalo: Buffalo Fire Department, 1953) n.p.

¹⁵ Buffalo *Evening News*, June 24, 1953.

¹⁶ Ditzel, *op cit.*

¹⁷ *Ibid*, and Supple, *History of the Buffalo Fire Department*, p. 104.

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Edward M. Cotter continued in service through the 1960s, when Buffalo remained a major port, and continued into the 1970s, surviving crippling budget cuts that seriously hurt the Buffalo Fire Department. *Cotter* fought a waterfront fire at the Pillsbury Mills at 250 Ganson Street on January 2, 1972, a more typical firefighting assignment for the boat than fires aboard vessels. The boat remains in service in 1989 despite a shift from wooden waterfronts to concrete and a decline in shipping. After 1980, arriving bulk and general cargo declined from 454,749 tons and 59 arrivals to 19,060 tons and 39 arrivals in 1987.¹⁸ While shipping has declined, the need for *Edward M. Cotter* as an icebreaker and waterfront fireboat continues, and it is likely that the fireboat, the source of much pride by her crew, will see her 100th birthday.

¹⁸ NFTA Port of Buffalo Tonnage and Vessel Statistics, 1970-1987, fact sheet provided by Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority. Statistics are not available for 1988-1989.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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West, Charles C. "Centrifugal Pump Fire-Boats," *Transactions of the Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers*, Vol. XVI (New York: Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers, 1908).

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- Previously Listed in the National Register.
- Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
- Designated a National Historic Landmark.
- Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #
- Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

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United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

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Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government **Buffalo Fire Department**
- University
- Other (Specify Repository):

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreeage of Property: .1 acres

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing
17 676070 4747455

Verbal Boundary Description:

All that area encompassed within the extreme length and breadth of the vessel.

Boundary Justification:

The Boundary encompasses the entire area of *Edward M. Cotter* as she floats at her berth.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: James P. Delgado, Maritime Historian
National Park Service
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, D.C. 37127

Telephone: (202) 343-9528
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