

Historical
Walking Tours of
Kalispell,
Montana

Flathead County





Great Northern Train #1141 Kalispell, Montana. Road pilot, oil burner. March 1939.

Ron V. Nixon photographer

photo from Museum of the Rockies

Second edition, 2009

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Power of the Pen

INTRODUCTION

Kalispell, Montana, began as a railroad town and this fact shaped its history for many years. The townsite was platted in the spring of 1891 in order to serve as the division point for the Great Northern Railway that was being constructed from St. Paul, Minnesota, to Seattle, Washington. Soon after "the iron horse snorted in the garden of Eden," the earlier town of Demersville (located just four miles to the southeast of the new town of Kalispell) became a ghost town. Many of its buildings were moved on log rollers across the open prairie to Kalispell.

Although Kalispell was founded as a railroad town, the period of rail glory did not last long. In 1904 the Great Northern Railway relocated the main line to the north with Whitefish as the new division point. Many railroad employees moved to Whitefish that fall. Even so, Kalispell did not fade away.

By that time, Kalispell had established itself as the trade and financial center of the Flathead Valley and beyond. The young town was chosen to be the county seat in 1893, and a great variety of services were concentrated in the town including a hospital, numerous churches, office of city, county and federal government agencies, schools, banks, hotels, an opera house, lodge halls, a library and a great variety of stores and manufacturers including a brewery and several flour mills.

Various regional events also helped the town prosper, such as the opening of the Flathead Indian Reservation to the south to white settlement in 1910. Kalispell, as one of the towns that registered homesteaders, experienced a short boom in this period. The opening of the



photo from Northwest Montana Historical Society

highway at Marias Pass over the Continental Divide in 1930 again provided Kalispell with more business and activity. In addition, Kalispell remained the center of the lumber industry in northwest Montana for many years, and in the 1930's people came to Kalispell because it was considered to have relatively fertile farmlands.

Kalispell's prosperity also is due to the efforts of local boosters who called Kalispell the national "Gateway to Glacier Park" after the park was created in 1910. The slogan "All Roads Lead to Kalispell" was popular for some time. Many of Kalispell's early settlers had come to the area on the recommendation of family or friends who were already living in the Flathead Valley, and they created a close-knit community despite varying places of origin and diverse cultures and even languages. Many of Kalispell's settlers came from the Midwest, or from Scandinavia, Germany or Britain. In its early years the town had a substantial Chinese community, mostly single men who ran laundries, restaurants, and Oriental goods stores. The railroad employed Japanese crews who lived in separate boarding houses in Kalispell.

In the 1890s, residences were typically one-story wood frame buildings, and business blocks were one- or two-story wood frame buildings with false fronts. As the town grew, many of the original wood business buildings were replaced with more substantial brick buildings. Many of Kalispell's largest residences were constructed during the prosperous years of the early 1900s and 1910s, quite a number of them designed by local architects. The following walking tour allows you to observe the physical evidence of Kalispell's history.

—Kathryn McKay



photo from Northwest Montana Historical Society

The Historical Walking Tour of Kalispell, Montana

MAIN STREET WALKING TOUR

1. Historically: Carnegie Library, built 1903;
Currently: Hockaday Museum of Art
302 2nd Avenue East

The Carnegie Library was built in 1903 by a father-son contractor-architect team. The building cost



\$10,000, which was donated by New York philanthropist Andrew Carnegie. One of the library's innovative programs was the distribution of books and old magazines to logging camps. The city library remained in this building until 1969.

The Library is a masonry, Classical Revival-style building with a distinctive domed octagonal entry. The high basement is constructed of coursed rough-dressed gray sandstone from the Columbus quarries near Butte and the pressed red brick was brought in by railroad from Wisconsin. Call 406-755-5268.

2. Historically: City Water Department, built 1927; Currently: City Municipal Court
336 1st Avenue East

The City Water Department building was designed in the Georgian Revival style by Kalispell architect Fred Brinkman and reflects the pride early Kalispell residents took in their public buildings. The setting



of this building has changed substantially since it was built in 1927. The city's two-story jail, built in 1891, was located just to the south of the Water Department and later became a lodging house. In 1918 Lew Somers and his wife were accused in a civil action of running a "bawdy house" at that address. South of the city jail was a large feed stable complex that was in business until approximately 1915.

3. Historically: City Service Station, built 1931; Currently: KCFW Television
401 1st Avenue East

This Art Deco service station was constructed in 1931 from a design by Kalispell architect Fred Brinkman. It was completed in early 1931 and the



City Service Company station operated there until approximately 1940, when the business was then called Phil's Texaco. The building cost \$13,000 to construct, including the architect's fees. When it opened

there were five pumps in operation. It was unusual for its time in that all departments of automobile services were included in the one building. By 1968 the KCFW TV station was located at this address. A 1991 remodeling of the building kept the feeling of the original design, although the building has been significantly modified. The most significant change is the extension of the northwest corner of the building, effectively placing the tower in the center of the building instead of at its entrance.

4. Historically: Henry Good Garage, built 1928;
Currently: Coco & Boo
402 1st Avenue East

Henry Good, Flathead Valley logging contractor and investor, had this garage built in 1928 in just over 60 days for \$25,000. At the same time, he began work



on the Montgomery Ward store on Main Street less than a block away. This one-story garage is constructed of concrete and cream-colored pressed brick with red sandstone trim and shields. The corner entrance originally had a diagonal driveway to accommodate a drive-through gasoline, oil and grease service with two gasoline pumps; this driveway has now been enclosed.

5. Historically: Sauser-Mercord Building, built 1901, 1925; Currently: Camas Creek
338-340 Main Street

The Sauser-Mercord Building is actually two separate buildings constructed in 1901 (south half) and 1925 (north half). George McMahon constructed the original building in 1901 to house his undertaking



and second-hand furniture business. He soon sold his business to William P. Sherman. Sherman, and later his widow Nora and her children, operated an undertaking business, sold pianos, and lived on the second floor of the building until 1929, when they moved to their new funeral home across the alley at 343 1st Avenue West. Nora Sherman, an Irish immigrant, was reportedly the first woman in Montana to become a licensed undertaker.

6. Historically: Montgomery Ward Store, built 1929; Currently: Alpine Lighting
333 Main Street

The construction of this building, designed by Kalispell architect Fred Brinkman and built by Henry Good (logging contractor, farmer and real estate



owner), marked the expansion of the business district south along Main Street after its initial development farther north during the previous decades. When the Montgomery Ward store opened here in 1929, it employed approximately 80 people and carried toys, auto accessories,

tires, hardware, sporting goods, stoves and ranges, radios, paint, furniture, house furnishings, dry

goods, shoes, clothing and general merchandise. The automobile service station on the corner was built in 1935.

7. Historically: Gamble Store, built 1948;
Currently: Main Street Arts & Craft
327 Main Street



8. Historically: O'Neil Print Shop, built 1926;
Currently: Trippets Printing
323 Main Street

The building was designed by Kalispell architect Fred Brinkman and completed in November of 1926 to house the printing business of Ernest O'Neil. The O'Neil family was one of the most prominent families in Kalispell. Ernest O'Neil was



born in Pennsylvania in 1867, moving when young to Missouri with his parents. He married Frieda E. Gerth and in 1898 they came to Kalispell (Ernest's three brothers were already in Kalispell and had founded the O'Neil Lumber Company). O'Neil had been an apprentice printer in Missouri. In Kalispell he worked on the Inter Lake as a printer when he arrived, until he opened his own printing shop in 1908 that he operated until his death in 1944.

9. Built 1936; Currently: Interior Outfitting
322 Main Street

This building was constructed in 1936 for Kalispell businessman Charles Cyr at an estimated cost of \$20,000. From approximately 1936 until at least 1943 the W.G. Woodward store occupied the building. This one-story commercial building has a brick front façade and cantilevered canopy. At the rear



of the building the windows are six-over-six-light double-hung and the sills and lintels are concrete.

10. Historically: Griffin Block, built 1891-1894;
Currently: Ceres Bakery
318 Main Street

This commercial business block was constructed between 1891 and 1894 and was owned by Walter H. Griffin until 1926. Griffin and his partner George Stannard had a real estate and insurance business on the first floor and Griffin lived in an upstairs apartment all the time he owned the building. Griffin was a friend of Alexander Bell and Griffin's ideas reportedly helped Bell develop the telephone. From

approximately 1936 until 1941, Gus Thompson and his family lived at this address (see 140 Main Street). This two-story block is of wood frame construction and has a gabled roof.



11. Historically: Whipps Block, built 1904, 1909, 1910; Currently: Big Sky Martial Arts, Byte Savvy
301-309 Main Street

The Whipps Block reflects the optimism of Kalispell's leading citizens in the very year that the Great Northern Railway moved the railroad division point from Kalispell to Whitefish. William Carvoso organized the first bank in the



area, Northwestern Bank. In 1904 he erected the Whipps Block to house his business, the Kalispell Liquor & Tobacco Company and others. Whipps became the first elected mayor of Kalispell in 1893. Called the "Czar," he accomplished much toward the development of Kalispell during his four terms as mayor but often met with opposition. Whipps was also an active advocate of the creation of Glacier National Park.

12. Historically: Masonic Temple, built 1904;
Currently: Masonic Temple/Chuck Olsen Real
Estate

241 Main Street

The Masonic Temple, like the Whipps Block to its south, was designed by architect George Shanley of Kalispell and built in 1904. The Carter Mercantile moved into the first floor of this building in 1906



and reportedly could handle 200 shoppers at one time. The original business office and cashier's desk were about nine feet high, so the manager could sit at his desk and see every department.

During World War I, the local Red Cross had work rooms in the basement of the building. In November 1917 a reporter described the area as filled with 115 "liberty-loving, home-loving women, all so busy with needle and thread doing the things that will 'make democracy safe.'"

13. Historically: Knight & Twining Block, built 1908; Currently: Coins and Carats

237 Main Street

The Knight & Twining Block was built in 1908 by two building contractors who were also brothers-in-law, and they owned the building until 1923 (notice the "K&T" in the brickwork near the roof line).

Photographer T.J. Hileman's studio was located in this building from 1916-38. Hileman was well-known for his photographs of Glacier National Park scenes; in 1925 he was appointed official photographer for the Great Northern Railway. In 1913 Hileman married his assistant Alice Georgsen; they were the first couple to be married in the park. In 1936 Hileman installed "trimmings" of polished Vermont granite on the front of the building.

In recent years an automobile damaged the granite, some of which was then made into a counter top that is still in use in the store.



14. Historically: Fair Department Store/Montana Meat Market Building, built 1901;
Currently: J.D. Morell's
227 Main Street

This building was considered “one of the most modern and up to date

store buildings in the state” when it was completed in 1901 for the Fair Department Store. The Fair was a member of the Montana, Washington and Oregon Cash Buyers’ Union, a group of 50 merchants that purchased in bulk directly from manufacturers. The two owners of the Kalispell store handled the rubber goods for the union.



15. Built 1899-1903; Currently: J. Thomas Salon
228 Main Street

This commercial structure was constructed in 1901
by contractors and partners Knight & Twining with



a high second floor
that was used for many
years as a lodge hall.
The contract for the
stone and brick work
was done by Kalispell
mason John Stahl. The
brick corbelling along
the cornice is typical
of John Stahl's brick-
work and of Knight &
Twining buildings.
The Buffalo Block

adjacent to this building to the south was destroyed
by fire in 1976. That building was constructed in
1910 with money resulting from the sale of Charles
Conrad's herd of buffalo. Before the Buffalo Block
was constructed, large temporary buildings were
constructed on this corner to house the crowds of
people coming to Kalispell to register for land on the
newly opened Flathead Indian Reservation.

16. Historically: Anerson's Style Shop, built
1941; Currently: The Refinery, Mimi's Bridal
222 Main Street

The Anerson Style Shop features an Art Nouveau-
style façade. Since its construction in 1941 the
building has been occupied by a ladies' apparel



store. The display cases
on the interior are the
original cabinetry. In
1933, the Flathead
Monitor described Karl
Anerson's women's-
wear shop (in an earlier
building on this site) as
"the headquarters for
style and correctness in
Kalispell" with gar-
ments that represented
"the latest whim of
fashion."

17. Historically: Calbick Block, built 1906;
221 Main Street

The Calbick Block was built in 1906 for real estate agent William Calbick and his son Frank Calbick



who had a jewelry store in this location for many decades; the building remained in the family until 1956. William Calbick kept up with the times. In 1907, as Powers & Eckholm's first paving job, the wood sidewalk in front of the store was replaced with a "perfect" concrete sidewalk. In 1908 William Calbick had a brown stone tile placed on the front of the building to designate it as the Cal-

bick Block. The next year, Frank Calbick installed a "mammoth burglar proof safe" in the store for his jewels and gold.

18. Historically: Adams Building, built 1895;
Currently: Fawn
217 Main Street

The 1895 Adams Block is a two-story brick busi-



ness block with several distinctive decorative features. These include a triangular pediment with diamond-point brick and the date "A.D. 1895" in stone beneath it. Two finials hang down from either side of

the pediment and a row of small brick arches runs beneath the cornice. The upper floor has three arched windows; the one in the center was originally an oriel window but this was bricked in between 1939 and 1954. The three windows are surmounted by brick arches springing from a belt of rough-cut stone.

The two remaining windows have four panes each and the semi-circular transoms are filled in. A belt of rough-cut stone runs beneath the windows forming their sills. The business block was constructed in 1895 for Gurdon H. Adams and it remained in the Adams family until 1980. From 1901 on it was connected with the store to the south, 219 Main Street, which was built by Adams in that year.

19. Built 1895; Currently: Flathead Beacon
213 Main Street



20. Historically: Site of the New Conrad Building,
built 1910; Currently: Sterling Title
211 Main Street



21. Historically: Site of Conrad National Bank (no longer exists), ca. 1910; Currently: Glacier Bank
202 Main Street

photo from Northwest Montana Historical Society



22. Historically: Ford Block Building, built 1898;
Currently: Montana Frameworks
141 Main Street

In February of 1895 the Flathead Herald-Journal reported that James Ford and his partner Shelton were planning to build a business block on the corner of Main and 2nd Streets. Ground was not broken, however, until June 1898. The Ford Block replaced the 37-room Hicks Hotel (also known as the Grand Central Block), complete with bar and restaurant, that was built in 1892 with a brick veneer for Ed Hicks. Hicks was originally from England and he had operated a hotel in Demersville. He report-



edly built the Grand Central Hotel to give “an impression of solidity” through photographs so he could get a loan in England. In February 1894 that building was destroyed by fire, and the lots were vacant and a “loafing place” until the Ford Block was constructed.

The Ford Block generally had two storefronts on Main Street and three on 2nd Street East, with a hallway and entry to the upper floor centered on 2nd Street East.

23. Historically: Pastime Bar, built 1900;
 Currently: Columbine Gallery
 140 Main Street

In 1925 John Gus Thompson moved his pool



hall and cigar store business to this building. Thompson was nationally known to baseball fans as the pitcher for the Pittsburgh Pirates in the first World Series in 1903. Thompson attended the University of Iowa to study law and while there he pitched for the school team. He met

Edna Knapp in Iowa and when she moved to Kalispell he followed and they were married. In 1902 he began the practice of law in Helena, but later gave it up “on the advice of [U.S. Senator] Carter.” After the 1903 World Series Thompson and his wife homesteaded in the Flathead Valley. In 1904 he again returned to baseball, pitching for the Pirates, the St. Louis Cardinals and other teams. His last year with professional baseball was 1909. When Thompson died in 1958, he was thought to be the last survivor of the first World Series.

24. Historically: First National Bank, built 1891;
Currently: Wheeler Jewelry

139 Main Street

The First National Bank building is the oldest brick commercial building in Kalispell and may have been the first brick building in town. It was built in the fall of 1891 and the bank remained at this location until 1905. A pre-1905 sign reading FIRST NATIONAL



BANK, painted on the rear of the building above the second-floor windows, is still visible from the alley.

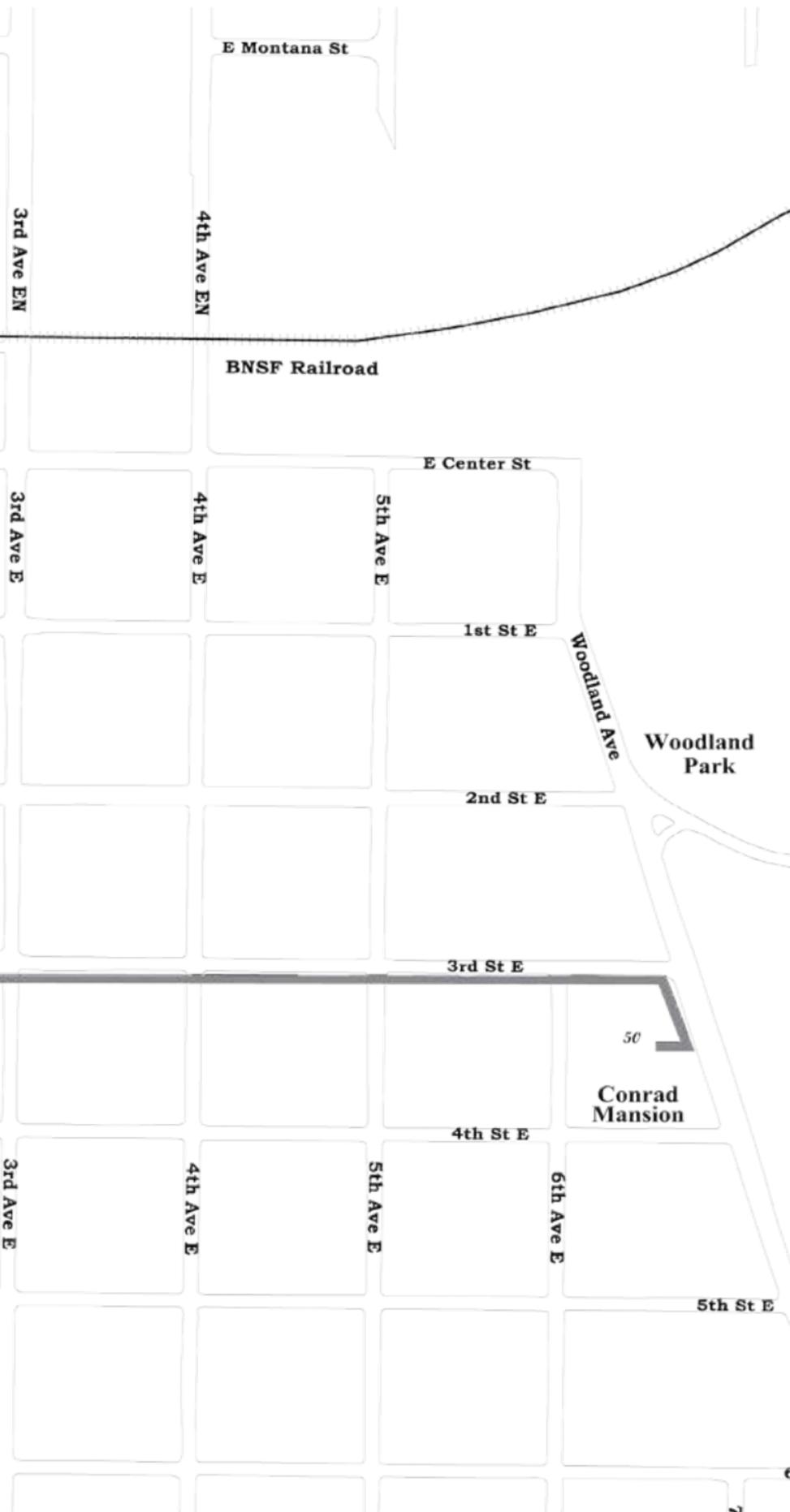
25. Historically: Kalispell Drug Company, built 1908;
Currently: Shorty's

136 Main Street

M.F. McClung began excavation for this building in June of 1908, after the wood frame Parlor Café building was moved off Main Street. After the Kalispell Drug Company had moved into the new building, the “Kalispell Bee” described it as “all plate glass and mahogany and artistic turns.” A 1910 article described the business: “The interior fittings are all in curly birch, beautifully finished with a mahogany effect. A wealth of plate glass beveled mirrors, handsome



to the County Courthouse



special thanks to Cookie Davies, city of Kalispell, for this map

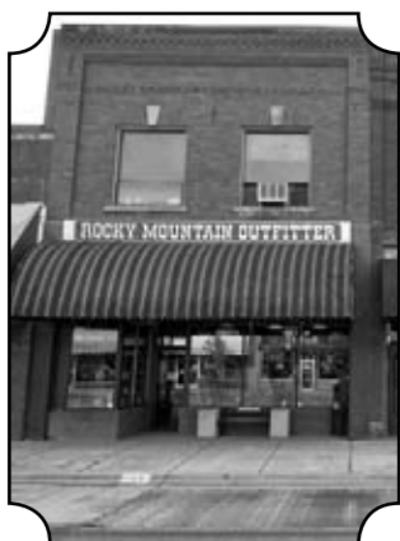


show cases with marble bases, and wall cases all in the same handsome design are features of the furnishings....As pharmaceutical chemists and scientific prescription druggists, the company pays special attention

to the accurate compounding of physicians' prescriptions and a feature of the business is the handsome, new, sanitary soda fountain, where the purest of fruit juices are used for flavoring and courteous attendants are in charge."

26. Historically: Eagle Shoe Company, built 1908; Currently: Rocky Mountain Outfitters
135 Main Street

The building was constructed between 1903 and



1910, and in approximately 1911 Tom Bogart and Arthur Hollensteiner traded their one-story brick building to the north for this one because they needed more space for their shoe store.

The proprietors of Eagle Shoe had a good reputation from the beginning. The Inter Lake in 1893 commented about Bogart and Hollensteiner, "These boys are always courteous and obliging and have by dint

of enterprise and fair dealing built up a considerable trade." They did engage in some interesting marketing techniques. For example, in December of 1896, every 20th time the bell rang at the store a pair of shoes was given away. In 1904, the Kalispell Bee listed the Eagle Shoe Company as one of the Kalispell stores that employed only union members. According to Kalispell logger Glen Montgomery,

the Eagle Shoe Company had to replace their wood floors every other year because loggers' caulked boots chewed them up so badly.

27. Historically: Jordan's Café/Silver Dollar Saloon, built 1899-1903; Currently: Noice Studio
127 Main Street

The Hamm Brewing Company of St. Paul, Minnesota, had this building constructed in 1901. In 1907 Walter Jordan purchased the business and operated a saloon until 1919, when the Volstead Act establishing Prohibition was passed. Beginning in 1927, Minnie Jordan operated Jordan's Café in the building for several decades.



The Jordan's Café building

has had rooms for rent on the second floor since it was built. In 1910, at least 16 single men were listed as living at this address. Their occupations ranged from bartender to logger, from house carpenter to bank cashier, from cigar maker to blacksmith.

The pressed metal façade was designed to imitate rock-faced coursed stone, with an egg-and-dart pattern along the sides, floral swags along the top, and pilasters surmounted by decorative metal pineapples.

28. Historically: Edwards Block, built 1899;
Currently: Imagination Station, Flowers by Hansen, Elusive Image
124-132 Main Street

John Harrington Edwards was a prominent citizen of Kalispell in the 1890s and again in the 1920s. Born in New Hampshire in 1866, he came to Kalispell in 1891 and served as one of Kalispell's first aldermen, a member of the first volunteer fire department, assistant secretary of the Kalispell Townsite Company and as a



member of the first city council. He married Mary Dixen in Ottumwa, Iowa, in 1893. Two years later she was reportedly the first white woman to visit Avalanche Lake in what later became Glacier National Park. Mrs. Edwards was prominent in church work and Kalispell society, and Mr. Edwards, according to the “Kalispell Bee” in 1905, was “the most prominent public benefactor Kalispell has had.” In July of 1899 Edwards announced that he would build a divided brick building...and by December tenants were moving into the two storefronts, even though the previous month the plate glass for the Edwards Block had been smashed at the Kalispell freight depot.

29. Historically: Brewery Saloon/The Palm, built 1892; Currently: Sassafras
120 Main Street

The Brewery Saloon/The Palm was constructed by Charles Lindlahr as a saloon associated with the Kalispell Malting & Brewing Company and later



additions created room for the Kalispell Club (a men’s social club) and Kalispell’s first bowling alley. The Brewery Saloon started as a one-story, 25’x 60’ brick structure built the spring of 1892. When

opened, the Inter Lake described it as “one of the neatest and best furnished bar rooms in the state,” with new oak furniture purchased from Brunswick & Balk Collender, manufacturer of bar fixtures. The saloon opened on June 30, 1892, before the brewery was constructed. The bar itself was oak with a mahogany bar top, and the saloon featured French mirrors and brass trimmings. An 1894 advertisement for the Brewery Saloon mentioned “Choice Wines, Liquor and Cigars, Kalispell draft beer on tap at 5 cents per glass. Free lunch served at the bar.” That same year the Lindlahr brothers installed two lights that were “more brilliant than day,” and by 1895 the saloon was connected to the brewery by telephone.

30. Historically: Hansen Cleaners, built 1910-1915; Currently: Caper's Restaurant
121 Main Street

The building on this lot was originally two separate buildings. On the 1927 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, the one on the north was a shoe shine parlor; the one



on the south was a barber shop. The lot was vacant until at least 1910, which was unusual for this part of Main Street.

31. Historically: The Brust Block Building, built 1928; Currently: The Stone Chair
115 Main Street

The Brust Block is a primary element of the Main Street Commercial Historic District because of its excellent historic integrity. It is one of the few examples of a late 1920s commercial building in Kalispell. Built in 1928 by contractor Henry Hansman for tailor



Reinholt Brust, the building remained in the Brust family until 1975. It replaced an 1891 building on that location that had been occupied over the years by a furniture store, saloon, insurance office, paint shop, cobbler's shop, restaurant, and Brust's tailor shop. In 1928, the 'Kalispell Times' commented that "The first consideration was splendid light, and the building was modeled for all other conveniences."

32. Historically: The Duncan Block, built 1908;
Currently: Overflowing Cup

111 Main Street

The original building on this lot was built in 1891 and housed a hardware store, furnished rooms, a confectionery and fruit store, a feed store, a bakery, a law office, and a photographer's studio. That building and two others to the north were all destroyed by fire in 1902; the lot



remained vacant until 1908. In April of 1908, Tyson Duncan let the contract to E.N. Lippincott to dig the foundation for his new two-story brick building on

his lot. One of the problems of construction was that a stream with collapsing banks flowed through the basement of the new building.

33. Historically: Kalispell Hotel, built 1911;
Currently: Kalispell Grand Hotel
102 Main Street

The Kalispell Hotel was designed by Kalispell architect Marion Rizzo and built by local contractor B. Brice Gilliland. In 1912 the hotel management



installed a large flashing electric sign reading KALISPELL HOTEL on the roof of the hotel, angled to face the railroad depot. According to the Kalispell Journal, "It represents a beautiful arrangement of lights and will no doubt draw more night trade to the hotel than would a dozen spielers at the trains." Rooms in the Kalispell Hotel were originally \$2 per night.

Nationally known Montana author, Frank Bird Linderman, leased and managed the hotel from 1924 until 1926 and was able to continue writing because of the profits from the sale of the hotel lease and furniture.

34. Historically: McIntosh Opera House, built 1896, 1903; Currently: Western Outdoor and Norm's News
48 Main Street

John McIntosh built the McIntosh Opera House in 1896; he and a partner added the building to the north in 1903. The upper floor served Flathead Valley residents as an opera house (seating capacity 1,000), lodge meeting hall, ballroom, theater, roller skating rink, high school graduation auditorium, etc. One of the first shows was "Little Lord Fauntle-



roy." The showing of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" had one of the largest audiences, drawing over 1100 people. Admission usually ranged from 50 cents to \$1. Eugene Debs, labor leader and Socialist candidate for president, spoke at the Opera House in 1902. Inside the corner entrance of the building is a large, ornate back bar and bar set that was reportedly moved to a bar in Kalispell from Demersville in 1894. Today, the first floor is still used for retail space, but the upstairs has been vacant for a number of years.

35. Historically: Great Northern Railway Depot, built 1899, 1928; Currently: Kalispell Chamber of Commerce
15 Depot Loop

The Great Northern Railway Depot served trans-continental passengers from 1892 until 1904 when the main line of the railroad was relocated to go through Whitefish instead of Kalispell. Kalispell then was served by a branch line until the passenger train known as the "Gallop-in' Goose" made its last run from Columbia Falls to Kalispell in 1950. The Great Northern Railway erected a number of



other buildings and structures along the railroad tracks. In Kalispell these included a brick roundhouse, a water tank, a repair shop, a coal chute, a turntable, a section house, a tool house, an express room, a boarding house for Japanese workers, an ice house and an office building. These buildings no longer exist.

As part of a 1928 remodeling project, the depot's brick walls were covered with stucco and the overhanging eaves were shortened by about four feet. The improvements made the Great Northern depot grounds "a show place rather than an eye-sore," according to a local newspaper. The exterior appearance of the depot today is much the same as it looked in 1928.

36. Historically: Kalispell Monument Works, built 1911; Currently: The Emporium
71st Avenue East

The Kalispell Monument Works was built near



the railroad tracks to allow for delivery of heavy materials to the rear of the building via a spur line.

A traveling crane carried the granite or other stone from the railroad car to any part of the work room or show room. The stock included monuments made of Barre (Vermont), Scottish, Swedish, Quincy (Massachusetts) and Monticello granites and also Vermont, Georgia, Italian, Colorado Yale and New York marbles.

37. Historically: Continental Oil Co. Gas Station, built ca. 1932; Currently: Ju Ju Bees
35 1st Avenue East

The Continental Oil company Filling Station is an excellent example of the “domestic” filling station popular in the 1920s and 1930s. The Tudor-style building was owned by the Continental Oil company until 1964.

The site was originally occupied by the West Hotel, long a landmark in Kalispell. Built in 1891 before the Great Northern Railway even reached the new town of Kalispell, the West Hotel was a three-story building strategically located just one block from the railroad depot. In fact, this corner location was con-



sidered “the exact center of activity” in the 1890’s. In later years 1st Avenue East became the transportation corridor of Kalispell, lined at first with liverys and feed stables and blacksmiths, gradually shifting to bicycle repair shops, automobile repair shops, new and used car dealers, and filling stations supplying gasoline and oil to automobile travelers.

The lots to the north of the filling station have always been vacant. During the West Hotel era beginning in the 1890s, the grounds north of the hotel were flooded to create an ice skating rink.

38. Historically: Site of Northern Idaho & Montana Power Co., built 1910;
Currently: Centurytel
111 1st Avenue East



photo from Northwest Montana Historical Society

39. Historically: Liberty Theatre, built 1920;
Currently: Liberty Theatre
120 1st Avenue East
The Liberty Theatre was designed by Kalispell architect Marion Rippo in 1920 for Marius Ander-



son, who was involved in its management for many years. The Liberty Theatre opened on January 24, 1921, with a showing of the film "Humoresque" with music provided by a pipe organ. Just before opening night in 1921 the Kalispell Times reported that the

theater walls and decorations were painted in white, French gray and cloud tints, and the furniture and fittings were in green leather and plush. In 1929 the theater managers purchased “talkie” equipment that “sprayed” the theater with sound. The first movie with sound shown in the Liberty was “The Godless Girl.”

40. Historically: Anderson Theatre Co., built ca. 1948; Currently: 1st Ave E Cafe
128 1st Avenue East



41. Historically: Kalispell-American Laundry, built 1919; Currently: Kalispell Laundry
121 1st Avenue East
Laundries played an important role in early Kalispell because they provided two needed services: baths



and clean clothes. In 1921 the laundry’s equipment included modern washers and “spinning baskets, “drying tumblers,” steam-heated presses, large flat

work ironers for linens, collar finishing equipment, curtain dryers and conveyors for carrying the garments from one department to another.

42. Historically: Daily Inter Lake Building, built 1919; Currently: Digital Planet
131 1st Avenue East



This one-story commercial structure was constructed in 1919 to house the “Daily Inter Lake”, replacing a one-story wood frame building the newspaper had used since 1901 (the company previously had been located two doors to the north). The “Inter Lake” was founded as a weekly newspaper in Demersville by C.O. Ingalls in 1889. The newspaper, including the building and the printing machinery, was moved to Kalispell in 1891. Robert Goshorn was the publisher until 1913 and in 1907 the newspaper became a daily. It is still published daily in Kalispell. From approximately 1936 until 1939 insurance agent James Jorgensen, Jr. occupied the building. He had the front façade of the building remodeled to its present appearance during this period by Kalispell architect Fred Brinkman.

43. Built circa 1919; Currently: Designworks
133-137 1st Avenue East



44. Historically: Montana Hotel, built 1910;
Currently: The Montana Building
142 1st Avenue East

The original businesses on the 2nd Street East side of the Montana Hotel were a “metropolitan cigar store”



and Hay’s Café. The latter, run by A.H. Hay, operated out of this building from 1910-1918 and again from 1929-1933.

Alfred H. Hay was a well-known restaurateur and businessman of the Flathead Valley. Born in China, he came to Missoula when 15 or 16 to join his uncle. Soon he began working as a cook in a private resi-

dence, where he was the “wonder of Missoula” for the dishes he prepared. Hay settled in the Flathead Valley in 1893, where he was best known for his Kalispell café and his Oriental goods store. For a number of years he also supervised the restaurants and some hotels along the railroad line from Essex, Montana to Seattle.

45. Historically: Central School, built 1894;
Currently: The Museum at Central School
124 2nd Avenue East

Central School originally housed Kalispell’s high school and grade school. The building was designed by Great Falls architect William White and constructed entirely out of local materials for \$20,000. As a contemporary newspaper commented, “The fact



that all the building material used in the construction of this school house is produced at home speaks volumes for the Flathead County and will ever stand as a monument to the wealth of resources abounding here.”

Five teachers were hired for the 1894-95 school year and “the new building was so attractive that the enrollment was raised from 125 to nearly 200 pupils.” In 1900 Central School became one of the first county high schools in Montana, occupying two rooms on the second floor of this building. All Kalispell seventh and eighth grade students were moved into Central School during the 1929-30 school year, establishing the first junior high school in the area. In 1998, the City of Kalispell completed a \$2.4 million renovation of the building as a history museum operated by the Northwest Montana Historical Society. The building is an excellent example of the Richard-

sonian Romanesque style of architecture. For hours call 406-756-8381.

46. Historically: Kalispell Mercantile Building, built 1892-1910; Currently: KM Building
200 1st Avenue East

The Missoula Mercantile (later renamed the Kalispell Mercantile) was one of the first businesses organized in northwest Montana and until it closed in 1980 it was one of the largest, most influential businesses in the Flathead Valley. Its customers relied on deliver-



ies by wagon, train and later truck to receive their purchases, which could be anything from chinaware to heavy farm equipment. The KM Building is actually a complex of buildings and additions constructed between 1892 and 1910.

47. Historically: Bank of Commerce, built 1920; Currently: Kalispell City Hall
201 1st Avenue East

In 1920 a Chicago firm designed a new building for the Bank of Commerce on this corner with a Neo-classical façade. The interior of the bank featured marble walls, counters, partitions, and floor and oak woodwork. Similar bank buildings were constructed



photo from Northwest Montana Historical Society

in many Montana towns during this period. The building has been remodeled several times, and the historic façade is now hidden.

48. Historically: Ross Medical Clinic, built 1939;
Currently: Attorneys Johnson, Berg, McEvoy
& Bostock

221 1st Avenue East

This lot was originally occupied by a blacksmith
and wagon shop

that was built in
1894. Designed by
Kalispell architect
Fred Brinkman, the
existing building first
housed the offices of
Dr. Fayette B. Ross,
Dr. J.R. DeLaney,
and Dr. John Roche,
a dentist. The Ross
Medical Clinic was
constructed so that a
second story could
be added at a later



date and in 1986 a second floor was added under the
direction of Brinkman & Lenon. It appears that this
building was designed intentionally to coordinate
with the earlier and adjacent Federal Building as the
same brick and window styles appear on both.

49. Historically: Federal Building, built 1917;
Currently: Flathead County Library
247 1st Avenue East

For many years this Colonial Revival-style building
housed the offices of the U.S. Post Office, the U.S.
Forest Service, the U.S. Land Office and the U.S.
Weather Bureau. It thus represents in physical form



the strong influence of the federal government on the Flathead Valley. The U.S. Forest Service, in particular, has had a very significant role in the development of the Flathead Valley because of its management of millions of acres of public land. The original flooring of the Post Office was yellow pine. The Kalispell Times commented in 1917 that “We think a good deal of vertical grain Oregon fir flooring in this section but the treasury architect hails from south of the Mason and Dixon line.”

50. Historically: Conrad Mansion, built 1895
300 Block of Woodland Avenue - corner of
4th Street East and Woodland Avenue

The Shingle-style Conrad Mansion was built for one of the founders of the Kalispell Townsite Company and the Conrad National Bank, Charles E. Conrad, and it remained in his family until 1975. Spokane architect Kirkland Cutter designed this large house and since its construction it has been a focal point of the east side residential area. Both the exterior and the interior of the gracious three-story house have been restored and the house contains turn-of-the-century furniture, toys and clothing. The house museum is described as the “most authentic pre-1900 Mansion in the Pacific Northwest” and guests experience local history by stepping back into a by-gone era. Guided tours of the Mansion are available on the hour from 10 am to 4 pm Tuesday thru Sunday from mid-May through mid-October and holiday tours are available from Thanksgiving until December 30th. For special events or more history go to www.conradmansion.com or 406-755-2166. Admission charged.



Thank you...

BRET BOUDA, PHOTOGRAPHER

**FLATHEAD CONVENTION &
VISITOR BUREAU**

**KALISPELL BUSINESS
IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT**

**NORTHWEST MONTANA
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

HISTORY IS POSH

MUSEUM OF THE ROCKIES

**KALISPELL DOWNTOWN
ASSOCIATION**

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*Walking Tour map is in the
center of this brochure.*



Front and back images: Great Northern Train No. 244 pulled by GN 1053, 4-6-0 locomotive on passenger train at Kalispell, MT May 13, 1942. Courtesy of the Museum of the Rockies, Ron V. Nixon, Photographer