

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 94000911

Date Listed: 8/24/94

Sauser-Mercord Building
Property Name

Flathead
County

MT
State

Kalispell MPS
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.


Signature of the Keeper

8/24/94
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Significance:

This is to clarify that the property is being nominated under both Criteria A and C, in the areas of Commerce and Architecture, respectively.

This information was confirmed with Chere Jiusto of the MT SHPO.

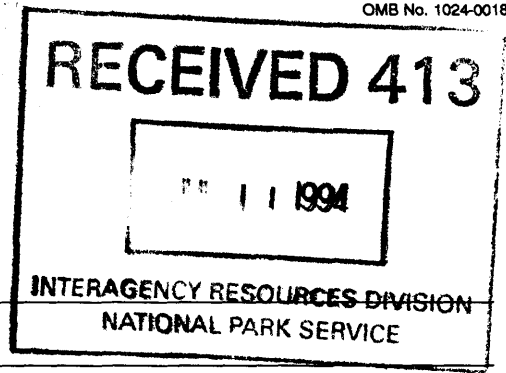
DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

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National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM



1. Name of Property

historic name: Sauser-Mercord Building

other name/site number: Sherman Funeral Home 24FH

2. Location

street & number: 223-340 Main Street

not for publication: n/a
vicinity: n/a

city/town: Kalispell

state: Montana code: MT county: Flathead code: 029 zip code: 59901

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 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.)

Mauro Shuff MT SHPO 6-28-94
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Montana State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency or 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

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this 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 see continuation sheet
- removed from the National Register see continuation sheet
- other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Shuff

8/24/94

5. Classification

Ownership of Property: private ___ public-local ___ public-State ___ public-Federal

Category of Property: building(s) ___ district ___ site ___ structure ___ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> building(s)
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: Historic and Architectural Properties of Kalispell, Montana

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:
COMMERCE/specialty store
DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

Current Functions:
COMMERCE/specialty store
DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification:
other: western commerical vernacular

Materials:
foundation: stone
roof: asphalt
walls: synthetics/rubber
other: n/a

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The two-story brick Sauser-Mercord Building is actually two separate buildings constructed in 1901 (south) and 1925 (north). The building on the south was evidently remodeled in 1925 when the Sauser building to the north was built (see attached pre-1925 historic photograph). The two buildings share a common wall but there is no access between the buildings. The buildings have the same projecting cornice with dentils, some corbeled brickwork under the cornice, and slightly arched windows with concrete sills. The windows are one-over-one-light wooden double-hung units. The first floors have been remodeled on the exterior. The building on the south originally had a projecting cornice with a centered parapet, two pairs of double-hung windows, and rough-dressed stone pilasters on each side of the front elevation. The building was built to be sturdy; the floor joists are 16" on center and are 2" X 16" in dimension. The front and sides of the building had large painted signs advertising Sherman's undertaking business. The basement is under the main part of the building on the south (not the rear addition) and has native rock walls and a concrete floor. The rear addition, added in the 1950s or 1960s, was built so that a second floor could be added, but it is still a one-story addition. The current owner of 340 Main Street has replaced the asphalt roof with rubber membrane and also installed an air conditioning system.

The upstairs of the building on the south is one apartment; on the north it is divided into two apartments.

Sherman & Son reportedly used an area of the basement as an embalming room. When Sherman & Son moved to their new building in 1929, a local newspaper mentioned that their original building would be remodeled and the "first floor reduced to sidewalk level."

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria: A, C

Areas of Significance: Architecture

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): n/a

Period(s) of Significance: 1901-1929

Significant Person(s): n/a

Significant Dates: 1901, 1925

Cultural Affiliation: n/a

Architect/Builder(s): Mercord, Frederick

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Sausser-Mercord Building is significant under Criterion A because of the use of the south half of the building (constructed in 1901) as an undertaking parlor for over two decades. It is also eligible for listing on the National Register under Criterion C because of the addition of a second building in 1925 and the remodeling in that year to make the two adjacent buildings appear as one. Together the buildings represent the typical brick commercial architecture of Main Streets in the West during the early part of the 20th century.

The south half of the Sausser-Mercord building was constructed in 1901 by George McMahon for his undertaking business for \$4,000. George R. McMahon was born in Janesville, Ohio, in 1864. He was married in Wisconsin in 1886, and his first wife died ten years later. He moved to Helena, then to a homestead near Columbia Falls. He was a member of the first Volunteer Fire Department of Kalispell, and was one of the first coroners and undertakers of the new town, being active in Demersville, Ashley and then Kalispell. In the 1890s, undertakers often supplemented their income with other lines of business. For example, in 1896 McMahon advertised himself as a "dealer in new and second-hand goods, upholstery, undertaking and embalming," and in 1900 a competitor, Nelson Willoughby, operated undertaking rooms in connection with the Kalispell Furniture Company. He was married in 1897 to Elizabeth Gilmore. When the 1900 federal census was taken, McMahon was living at 444 1st Avenue East with his wife and their four daughters, plus two boarders (plumber Alexander Chisholm and his wife Edith). In 1909 McMahon moved to Seattle, and he passed away there in 1935 at the age of 70.

McMahon sold his business in 1903 to William P. Sherman, an undertaker newly arrived from Seattle and Butte. Members of the Sherman family owned the building until 1944. Sherman, and later his widow Nora and her children, operated an undertaking business, sold pianos, and lived in the second floor of the building from 1903 until 1929, when they moved to their new funeral parlor at 343 1st Avenue West.

William Sherman was born in Dubuque County, Iowa, in 1866. In 1884 he moved to Butte, where he worked for a large furniture business. He then began to work for his brother, who was an undertaker in Butte, later becoming his brother's partner in the business. He took classes at the Reynard School of Embalming in New York and the Barnes School of Anatomy in Chicago. He then conducted undertaking businesses in Spokane and in Seattle before coming to Kalispell in 1903. By 1913 he had established branch offices in Whitefish, Eureka, and Libby, and he was also an agent in Kalispell for Star pianos. He also served as county coroner. Sherman was a member of the Episcopal Church, the Democratic party, the Masons, the Elks, and the Odd Fellows. In 1892 he married Nora K. Daugherty in Butte, who had come to the United States from Ireland in 1884 at the age of 18. The Shermans had seven children who survived infancy, some of whom attended school in Butte, Seattle, and Spokane while their parents lived in Kalispell. One daughter, Clara, studied music in Chicago and performed with the Glacier Park Band in the Lake McDonald Hotel in Glacier National Park. The Shermans had a summer home on Swan Lake.

William Sherman died in 1913. His widow Nora, who had been associated with him for many years in the undertaking business, continued as the business manager of the company and hired various licensed embalmers and funeral directors. By 1920 she had become a licensed undertaker herself, reportedly the first woman in the state to do so. A 1919 article about the branch in Whitefish mentioned that "Mrs. Sherman's services can always be had whenever a lady undertaker is desired." In 1919 W. J. Miller became a partner in the business, and he stayed with it until his retirement in 1925. Several of the Sherman children worked for the family business in varying capacities. Grace and Clara Sherman both worked as

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clerks for the business in the 1920s, and Roger Sherman dug graves and probably worked in other capacities as well. William E. Sherman managed the business after his father's death, but he was murdered in 1917. Nora Sherman moved to Eureka for a short time to manage the undertaking branch there, and later her daughter Nora took over that branch. Edward Sherman worked for the family business beginning in 1925. The business later became known as Sherman & Son, for Nora Sherman and her son Edward. He later leased the Kalispell Funeral Home and then purchased it in 1936 (343 1st Avenue West). He attended the Los Angeles School of Anatomy, Embalming and Sanitation, specializing in "restorative art," and became a licensed embalmer in California and Montana. Nora Sherman owned four undertaking establishments in Montana, with the business headquarters in Kalispell. After Nora Sherman retired she moved to Portland, Oregon, then to Quincy, Massachusetts. She passed away in 1960.

When the 1910 federal population census was taken, the Shermans were living in the upstairs apartment of the building, along with a 24-year-old servant. In 1920, Nora Sherman was living at this address with her six children.

The undertaker's hearse was a familiar sight in the city. In 1906 William Sherman purchased "a handsome team of coal black horses" to pull his hearse. In 1907 he purchased a white Cunningham hearse, "said to be the best in the world." According to the *Kalispell Bee*, "This hearse is a very artistic conception and is in very good taste for the funeral of a baby or young person. Sherman's white hearse is the only one in use this side of the main range." Soon, however, the Shermans became motorized. In 1927, for example, the firm received a black and gray Buick auto coach for use as a hearse.

The main competitor of the Shermans was the Waggener & Campbell Funeral Home, located nearby on Main Street. Both establishments built new, large residential-style funeral homes in the late 1920s. The county alternated giving county burials to each of the businesses.

After the Sherman funeral home moved out of the building, other businesses occupied the storefronts. In 1934, the Service Plumbing Company occupied the south half of the building, and from approximately 1936 until at least 1943 chiropractor Robert Kahle had his offices there.

The north half of the Sausser-Mercord building was constructed in 1925 for John Sausser by contractor Frederick Mercord to match the older, remodeled building to the south. Sausser occupied part of the building with his real estate business, and in 1926 a Piggly Wiggly store opened in the building. The building remained in the Sausser family until 1946. The Piggly Wiggly Store had moved out by 1934. The second floor of the building was occupied by the Sausser Apartments (five apartments), and the Sausser real estate company and the Flathead County Abstract Company occupied the first floor for many years. In 1944 Hubert Bell had the building remodeled by A. E. Mercer for a Firestone dealership.

9. Major Bibliographic References

The Call: advertisement, March 12, 1896, p. 1.
Cramer, Kenneth (current owner of 340 Main Street), interview with Kathy McKay, June 2, 1993.
Daily Inter Lake: "Wm. P. Sherman," November 14, 1910, p. 13; "Sherman & Miller Dissolve Partnership," March 10, 1925, p. 1; "George McMahan," May 25, 1935, p. 3; "Kalispell Funeral Home Purchased," June 4, 1936, p. 9; "Mrs. Nora K. Sherman," July 26, 1960, p. 3.
Flathead Herald-Journal: May 4, 1900; October 13, 1904.
Flathead Monitor: March 26, 1925, p. 8; "Kalispell Building," May 24, 1925, p. 1; February 11, 1926, p. 8; "Sherman & Son Receive," August 18, 1927, p. 1.
Kalispell Bee: December 18, 1901, p. 12; "McMahon's Successor," April 10, 1903, p. 5; February 6, 1906, p. 8; July 10, 1906, p. 2; March 19, 1907, p. 5; April 9, 1907, p. 8; June 7, 1907; July 23, 1907, p. 5.; May 12, 1916, p. 8; April 24, 1919, p. 8.

See continuation sheet

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 # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government (City of Kalispell)
 University
 Other - Specify Repository: Flathead County Library, Kalispell

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property: less than one acre

UTM References:

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	11	699775	5341250

Verbal Boundary Description

Block 66, lots 9 & 10, Section 18, Township 28 North, Range 21 West, Montana Principal Meridian.

Boundary Justification

The legally recorded boundary of this property encompasses the significant resources.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Kathy McKay, Historian	date: March 1993
street & number: 491 Eckelberry Dr.	telephone: (406) 892-1538
city or town: Columbia Falls	state: Montana zip code: 59912

Property Owner

(338 Main Street)
name: Richard C. and Deborah J. Garnett
street & number: 1006 Bancroft Avenue
city or town: Kalispell state: MT zip code: 83814

(340 Main Street)
name: Kenneth and Alice Cramer
street & number: 720 5th Avenue East
city or town: Kalispell state: MT zip code: 59901

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Kalispell Journal: "W. P. Sherman Dies," April 3, 1913, p. 1.

Kalispell News: "Who's Who In Kalispell," January 26, 1938, p. 1.

Kalispell Times: May 22, 1913; April 12, 1917; June 28, 1917; March 7, 1918; April 4, 1918; January 15, 1925; May 2, 1929;
November 9, 1944.

Chuck Mercord (grandson of Frederick Mercord), interview with Kathy McKay, August 1992.

Robertson, Vose, interview with Kathy McKay, April 7, 1992.

Sanders, Helen Fitzgerald, *History of Montana* (Chicago, IL: Lewis Publishing Co., 1913), vol. 3, pp. 1337-38.

Stout, Tom, *Montana, Its Story and Biography* (Chicago, IL: American Historical Society, 1921), vol. 3, pp. 819-820.