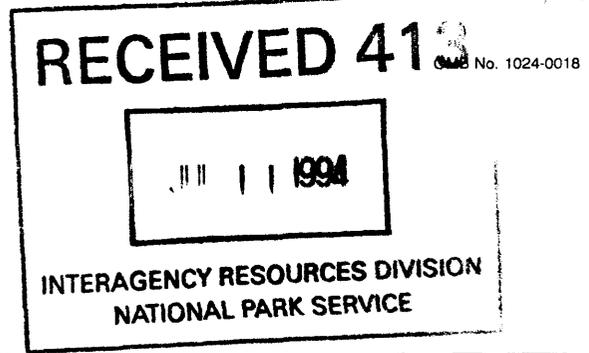


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM



1. Name of Property

historic name: O'Neil Lumber Company Office

other name/site number: 24FH

2. Location

street & number: 424 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not for publication: n/a  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.)

Maurel Sheff 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): \_\_\_\_\_

for  
Signature of the Keeper  
Edson H. Beall

Date of Action  
8-24-94

Entered in the  
National Register

---

**5. Classification**

---

Ownership of Property:  private  public-local  public-State  public-FederalCategory of Property:  building(s)  district  site  structure  object**Number of Resources within Property**

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</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>1</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 storeCurrent Functions:  
COMMERCE/specialty store

---

**7. Description**

---

Architectural Classification:  
other: two-bay western commercial styleMaterials:  
foundation: concrete  
roof: asphalt  
walls: brick  
other: n/a**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION**

The O'Neil Lumber Company Office is a two-story brick commercial building with a flat roof covered with asphalt. There is a two-story gabled wing at the rear. The cornice is corbelled, and the window sills and keystones are concrete. The basement is native rock; the rock is still exposed on the interior. The storefront entrance has been remodeled; part of the first floor now has stucco exterior wall cladding, although the north side is still the original brick. The two corners of the building on the front elevation have fluted concrete pilaster bases at ground level. The second-story front windows are pairs of double-hung single-pane units set within brick relieving arches with cast concrete voussoirs and keystones. The building was connected to the building to the south that no longer exists. There is a second-story door on the south elevation that used to connect to the other building (access to the upstairs of the existing building was through the building to the south), and a door has been cut into the first floor near the front. There are three arched windows on the south (one has been converted to a door). Both buildings used to have large painted signs on the sides advertising the business. The rear of the building has been modified; the south side of the gabled wing has been built up with bricks to match the flat roof of the front building. The original wiring and plumbing have been replaced, but a clawfoot bathtub in the upstairs restroom is still in place, as are some of the original fixtures. The building was originally heated with a coal and wood burner. This has been replaced with a gas furnace, and the coal chute has been removed within the past few years. The original access to the basement was through a trap door at the rear of the building. The current owner has constructed a stairway to the basement and a stairway to the second floor, where the business' office is located.

The Kalispell Mural Society is planning to paint a mural depicting a timber industry-related scene on the south side of the building.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Applicable National Register Criteria: A, C

Areas of Significance: Architecture, Commerce

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): n/a

Period(s) of Significance: 1909-1943

Significant Person(s): n/a

Significant Dates: 1909

Cultural Affiliation: n/a

Architect/Builder(s): Grey, Frank

**NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The O'Neil Lumber Company Office is the last remaining physical evidence of one of Kalispell's most important businesses for over 80 years. The building is eligible under Criterion A for the contributions of the O'Neil Lumber Company and its founders to the development of the Kalispell area. The two-story brick commercial structure was constructed in 1909 by Frank Grey for the O'Neil Lumber Company. The building is also significant as a well-preserved example of brick western commercial architecture in Kalispell.

The O'Neil family was one of the most prominent families in Kalispell during the historic period. The parents of the family were DeWitt Clinton and Belle O'Neil. He was a Civil War veteran and was born in New York in 1839. Beginning in 1873, they farmed in Kansas, and in 1881 they moved to Rich Hill, Missouri. DeWitt married Belle Frear in Pennsylvania in 1866, and they had six children (Ernest, Greeley, Charles I., Clinton D., John, and Mary), all of whom later moved to Kalispell to take advantage of the better economic opportunities. In 1898 DeWitt and Belle O'Neil joined some of their children in the Flathead Valley. In the Flathead, DeWitt first worked as a teamster and salesman, bookkeeper and collector for his sons' lumber business. In 1901 he bought three acres of land (north of today's fairgrounds), built a house, and established a garden and fruit trees. As his health failed, he and his wife spent three winters in California and one in Texas. He died in 1916 at the age of 76. Belle later sold their home and moved into Kalispell with her sons Clinton and Charles, moving in 1918 to California with Charles. She passed away in 1935 at the age of 87 in Pomona, California.

Clinton DeWitt O'Neil was born in Kansas in 1877. He went to school in Missouri, then joined his brother Charles in Belt, Montana in 1894, where he worked at the Butte and Montana Company planing mill. In January of 1895 Clinton and Charles moved to Kalispell, where Charles became manager of the retail yard of the Butte and Montana Company and Clinton worked at their sawmill. In 1896 Charles and Clinton purchased the retail lumber yard. In 1899 Clinton went to Great Falls to work for the Burn & O'Neil Lumber Company, and he married Emma Engeman in 1900. Emma, who had been raised in Minnesota, was also the daughter of a Union soldier. In 1901 they returned to Kalispell and he organized the C. D. O'Neil Lumber Company, merging five local lumber yards into the company. The next year he formed a partnership with his brother Charles I. After C. I. moved to California in 1918, Clinton became sole owner of the lumber yard (later his children were firm members). Clinton was a volunteer fireman for many years and served as chief of the fire department for about eight years. He was a republican and was an active member of the Presbyterian Church, the Kiwanis Club, the Montana Retail Lumberman's Association, and the Western Retail Lumberman's Association. His hobbies included woodworking and designing toys and games, which he pursued in a workshop in the basement of his house. Emma was involved with the women's suffrage movement. Clinton and Emma O'Neil had four children (Vera Ann, Wilda May, Carle and DeWitt). Clinton died in 1956 at the age of 79.

Charles I. O'Neil was born in Wyoming County, Pennsylvania in 1869. Educated in Kansas and Missouri, he came to Montana in 1891, working as manager of a retail lumber yard in Monarch. He worked for the same company in other towns. While in Belt, his younger brother Clinton joined him, and together they moved to Kalispell in 1895, where C. I. managed the retail department of the Butte & Montana Company. He soon purchased the lumber yard. He was one of the directors of the Northwestern Lumber Company. In 1902 he and his brother Clinton became partners, organizing the O'Neil Lumber Company which became one of the largest retail lumber yards in the state. In 1904 C. I. married Kathryn Fingado. She had come to Montana in 1899 and taught school and homesteaded on Flathead Lake (this became the family's summer home, and after it burned she gave it to the Presbyterian Church as a youth camp). Kathryn's mother Anne Fingado, an Austrian immigrant, lived with the O'Neils some of the time. In 1918 the O'Neils moved to Pomona,

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8

O'Neil Lumber Company Office

Page 1

California for health reasons, and he engaged in the lumber business there while continuing to serve as president of the Kalispell company. C. I. O'Neil lived at 526 1st Avenue West for many years, across the street from his brother Clinton. The O'Neils' sons Larry and Charles founded the Forest Products Company in Kalispell in 1936, with their father's uncut timber lands northwest of Kalispell as a resource base. They had a saw mill, a planer and a retail yard in Kalispell for many years.

Horace Greeley O'Neil joined his brothers in Kalispell in 1898, working in the O'Neil Lumber Company yard and later serving as yard manager at Whitefish and Havre. He is last listed in the Kalispell City Directories in 1905-06. He later settled in Spokane, Washington.

The O'Neil Lumber Company (known until 1902 as the Northwestern Lumber Company) was originally located across the street at 401 Main Street (according to a ca. 1905 photograph, there also was a wood frame office located near the railroad tracks and a Missoula Mercantile Company warehouse). In 1904, the company was reported as employing only union help. In 1900, when the federal population census was taken, Charles I. and Horace G. O'Neil, both single at that time, were living together at this address. That same year the company built a \$1,000 warehouse. The company office was located on the east side of Main Street until 1909, when the new office building was constructed at 424 Main Street. Since at least 1899, however, some of the company lumber yards had been located on the west side of the street. In 1899, only blocks 1 and 2 in the northeast corner were occupied by the lumber yard and a lime house. In 1903, according to the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, much of the block (except for two dwellings) was occupied by lumber yards, a lime house, and a wood shed, with cordwood piles to the south. By 1910 almost all of the block was occupied by the O'Neil lumber yard, including a wagon shed, a lumber shed, the woodworking shop, the brick office built with a sash and door section behind it, and several smaller buildings.

From approximately 1925 until 1927 the Holiness Methodist Episcopal Church was located on the second floor of the brick office building. The gabled rear wing was being used at that time for sash, door and roofing storage (it had this function until at least 1955).

The two-story brick office building that still exists was constructed in 1909 by Frank Grey of Kalispell. The next year, the company built a two-story wood frame building on 5th Street to house a woodworking room where employees would assemble window and door frames. Higher freight rates allowed the company to begin competing with Minneapolis, according to a local newspaper article.

In 1921, the company had extensive retail yards, a planing mill, a sash, window, door and box factory, and owned 5,000 acres of timber land near Kalispell. A 1926 description of the company is as follows:

Here you may obtain rough, smooth, planed and fancy lumber of all kinds. Because the O'Neil Lumber company operates its own sawing and planing mills, it is in a position to take care of all kinds of special orders that you want to place.

Here too, you will find all kinds of paint, roofing paper, cement, lime, plaster and hardware of all kinds needed in completing a house such as hinges, door knobs, screws, nails, locks, etc. In fact, you can buy everything here to build a home with.

At the O'Neil Lumber company you can have all broken glass replaced. Fuel of all kinds is also handled by this company. The slogan "From the forest to the user" tells in itself just what kinds of products you can expect from a company operating on such a large scale.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8

O'Neil Lumber Company Office

Page 2

---

In 1939, an advertisement for the company mentioned that they offered unpainted built-in furniture, Lehigh Portland cement, roofing, shingles, insulation wood from Hawaii, mahogany from the Philippines and a delivery service. At that time the company had 20 employees. The company also operated lumber yards in Great Falls and in Havre. At one time they also operated a planing mill in Kalispell. The company also reportedly built several standardized residences in Kalispell.

In 1928 the O'Neil Lumber Company had a brick building constructed across the street from their office, on the former site of the dry sheds, which they rented out as two storefronts. The large one-story building to the south of the office was built after 1927, and it was demolished in the 1980s.

After Clinton D. O'Neil retired, his heirs continued to operate the business under the management of DeWitt O'Neil. The O'Neil Lumber Company closed its doors to business in 1985, having been managed by four generations of the O'Neil family.

## 9. Major Bibliographic References

*Daily Inter Lake*: January 25, 1895, p. 3; "C. D. O'Neil Finds Life Can Begin at 77," February 11, 1954, p. 13; "Floundered on Economic Waters," December 8, 1985; "Larry O'Neil," obituary on file at the Family History Center, Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints, Kalispell, Montana.

*Flathead Monitor*: July 17, 1924, p. 10; July 30, 1925, p. 8; "O'Neil Lumber Company," December 16, 1926, p. 21; "Kalispell Is Making Many Improvements," August 9, 1928, p. 1.

*Kalispell Bee*: December 20, 1900, p. 11; "A New Lumber Company," March 29, 1901; January 22, 1904, p. 5; May 24, 1904, p. 5; August 3, 1909, p. 3; June 28, 1910, p. 3; "DeWitt Clinton O'Neil," May 23, 1916, p. 5.

*Kalispell Journal*: January 17, 1910; March 25, 1912.

*Kalispell News*: "New Industry Makes Bow To The City Of Kalispell," September 30, 1936, p. 1; "Who's Who In Kalispell," September 1, 1937, p. 1.

*Kalispell Times*: August 31, 1939, advertisement; "Call Comes to Comrade O'Neil," May 24, 1916.

O'Neil, Charles I. and DeWitt C., "A Biography," (Kalispell, MT: O'Neil Printers, 1945), available in Flathead County Library, Montana - Kalispell - Pioneers file, pp. 12-15.

O'Neil, Clinton D., *Timber n' Injuns* (Kalispell, MT: Kalispell News-Farm Journal Printing., 1955), pp. 39, 53-54.

Sanders, Helen Fitzgerald, *History of Montana* (Chicago, IL: Lewis Publishing Co., 1913), vol. 3, p. 1492.

Smith, Robert (current owner), interview with Kathy McKay, June 1, 1993.

Stout, Tom, *Montana, Its Story and Biography* (Chicago, IL: American Historical Society, 1921), vol. 3, pp. 851-52.

United States Population Census, Kalispell, Montana, 1910, 1920.

### 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

**Acreage of Property:** less than one acre

**UTM References:**

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	11	699800	5341170

### Verbal Boundary Description

Block 75, lot 5, 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

name/title: Robert A. Smith	telephone:
street & number: 424 Main Street	state: MT
city or town: Kalispell	zip code: 59901