

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Kalispell-American Laundry

other name/site number: 24FH

2. Location

street & number: 121 First Avenue East

not for publication: n/a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.)

Manville Shep 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:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register <u> </u> see continuation sheet determined eligible for the National Register	<u>Edson B. Beall</u> Signature of the Keeper	_____ Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> <u> </u> see continuation sheet determined not eligible for the National Register	<u>Entered in the</u> National Register	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> <u> </u> see continuation sheet removed from the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> <u> </u> see continuation sheet other (explain): _____	_____	_____

5. Classification

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

Category of Property: X 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:

INDUSTRY

Current Functions:

INDUSTRY

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

other: Prairie commercial

Materials:

foundation: CONCRETE
roof: ASPHALT
walls: BRICK
other: N/A

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The Kalispell-American Laundry building has excellent historic architectural integrity. The one-story orange brick commercial building has a stepped, parapeted roof with concrete and metal coping, a concrete foundation, red brick trim (primarily soldier rows in a belt above the awning and below the windows on the front elevation), a metal awning supported by wooden brackets, and the words "19 LAUNDRY 19" in a terra cotta signboard above the front entrance. The multi-paned windows are fixed units with transoms and are arranged in groups of two and three. The original front double doors have been replaced with a single door with sidelights. There are two large bay doors at the rear of the building. The main part of the building, which is the open, central portion, still has the original high pressed metal ceiling.

A 1920 description of the new laundry building is as follows:

It was especially designed and built to meet all the requirements of the latest type of a modern laundry plant, with a view of economy in time and space; special attention was given to ventilation and the comfort of employees. The front portion of the building is devoted to offices, display and girls' recreation quarters, the central or major portion by the laundry proper, and the rear by the heating plant, storage and delivery. The structure is practically fireproof, with fenestra steel ventilating windows throughout. The plant

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7

Kalispell-American Laundry

Page 1

comprises an equipment of the most modern type and adequate for the requirements of a city of 25,000. The plant has a capacity of turning out work to the extent of \$2,000.00 per week.

In 1927 the Kalispell-American Laundry built a brick two-room addition on the north end of the rear of the laundry to house a dry cleaning department (see attached copies of drawings). The addition was designed by Kalispell architect Fred Brinkman, and the work was done by contractor Henry Hansman (this addition has since been removed). The installation of the equipment was under the supervision of George Leghorn, the engineer for the Glover Continuous Cleaning Corporation.

One piece of machinery has been in use in the laundry since at least 1951. This is the "mushroom ironer." The rest of the machinery is all new since 1951. The flow of laundry is much the same (delivery of dirty laundry at the rear of the building, moving into the central work area). The laundry is no longer folded by hand, and the laundry is no longer hauled out of the extractor by manual labor; since the late 1960s a hoist on an overhead track performs this task. All the machinery is still steam-powered. In 1951 the boiler at the rear of the building that provided the steam power was fueled by wood shavings. In 1959 it was converted to crude oil, and since 1964 the laundry has used gas to generate the steam and also to heat the building.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria: A, B, C

Areas of Significance: Architecture
Industry

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): n/a

Period(s) of Significance: 1919-1943

Significant Person(s): Pauline, Robert

Significant Dates: 1919

Cultural Affiliation: n/a

Architect/Builder(s): Riffo, Marion; Brinkman, Fred

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Kalispell American Laundry building is an excellent example of a commercial structure built for a specialized purpose. The building was designed by Kalispell architect Marion Riffo and was built in 1919 for approximately \$20,000. The Kalispell American Laundry is significant under Criterion A for its importance in the development of Kalispell, B for its association with its proprietor Robert Pauline, and C for its architectural significance.

The building is one of the few remaining Prairie commercial-style buildings in Kalispell (several others have been demolished or destroyed by fire). Identifying features of the style include the horizontal emphasis of the design and the human-scale proportions (versus the grandiosity of earlier storefronts).

Laundries were important businesses in early Kalispell because they provided two needed services: baths, and clean clothes. The Kalispell American Laundry had its beginnings in two separate laundry businesses, the Kalispell Steam Laundry and the American Laundry Company. These companies were merged in 1918, and in 1919 Robert Pauline bought the company out.

The Kalispell Steam Laundry was founded in the spring of 1895 by Sidney H. Butler, who was an important person in the Flathead's early history. Butler located on a homestead in Tobacco Plains in 1884 (his sister Mrs. Fraser was reportedly the first white woman to live in that area). In 1892 Butler was elected to the state legislature. He was known as the "father of Flathead County," as he introduced the bill creating the county to the state legislature, and he urged the selection of Kalispell as the county seat even though he had a ranch near Columbia Falls. Butler was a man of "the highest integrity"; W. A. Clark was reportedly unable to buy his vote during his senatorial campaign. Butler was born in Watertown, Wisconsin, in 1859. He grew up in Chicago, where his father was a member of the city bar. Butler went to Wyoming in 1881 and then Idaho before coming to northwest Montana. In 1895 Butler purchased a steam laundry outfit in Chicago and set up the business in Kalispell, offering laundry and bath services. That year he married Bessie Sands from Chicago. In 1900 a local newspaper reported that Butler had sold his farm near Columbia Falls and was planning to move to Chicago. The Butlers returned in 1905, living in Kalispell for a time, although he soon was in charge of a trading store in Arlee. They are subsequently listed in the 1907-08 and the 1913 Kalispell City Directories, but no others. Butler passed away in 1914.

An 1895 description of the Kalispell Steam Laundry, located at 28 1st Street East (in a building that no longer exists), reported that the bathing department featured "fine porcelain bath tubs with hot and cold water." The construction of the original plant was supervised by a man who had been in the laundry business since 1876 named D. H. Sager. Butler purchased the "steam laundry outfit" in Chicago, and a local newspaper commented that it would compete with the Japanese (actually Chinese) laundries in Kalispell. The clothes washing department featured steam-heated equipment, including an American No. 3 washer that had a capacity of 100 shirts, and a centrifugal extractor that made 1300 revolutions per minute and prepared clothes for the mangle.

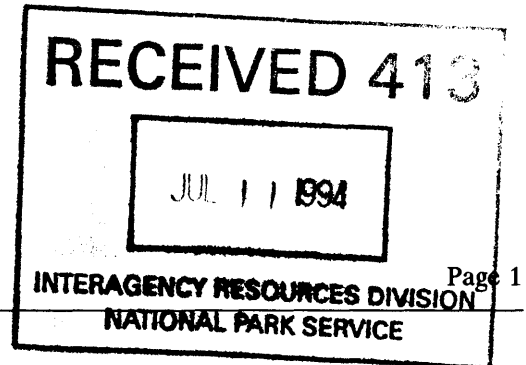
Sidney Butler owned the Kalispell Steam Laundry until 1899, when he sold it to Charles Lindlahr (later one of the owners of the Kalispell Malting & Brewing Company). That same year Lindlahr sold the business to Phil Jacoby (a jeweler) and W. B. Bowen. Bowen sold his interest almost immediately to Robert Pauline and J. W. Paul (both railroad engineers), and Pauline then managed the business for several decades with various partners. In 1900 D. H. Campbell bought Jacoby's

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8

Kalispell-American Laundry



interest in the laundry, and two years later Pauline was the sole proprietor of the business. In 1903 J. D. Kaylor bought half interest in the laundry, and he was a partner until he sold his interest in 1908 to Pauline.

In 1901 Robert Pauline moved the business to a new location on 1st Avenue East, on the site of the existing laundry (the south half). The original laundry on the lots was a wood frame building that the *Inter Lake* had vacated (it had previously housed Kalispell's first post office), and Pauline had it remodeled in 1901 for approximately \$2,000. According to a 1901 description of the building, "The entire upper half of the front of the Kalispell Steam Laundry, in new quarters, is ornamented with a vividly colored sign, illustrated and embellished." The article mentioned that the laundry featured several new mechanical appliances and complete bathroom and shower bath accommodations.

A 1910 description of the Kalispell Steam Laundry described it as the largest plant of its kind in the county. The equipment at that time consisted of "the latest patented washing machines, centrifugal wringers, tumblers, a 104 inch mangle electric bosom, collar and cuff ironers, a 15 h. p. electric motor and a supplementary boiler and powerful engine for operating the machinery in case of requirement and for furnishing heat and steam." The employees, the article said, were experts in their respective lines, and the business paid more than \$8,000 each year for labor. The company ran wagons for the convenience of its customers (in 1908, Pauline had more than 40 applicants hoping to drive his new laundry wagon, and a local newspaper commented, "A thing of beauty is a joy forever").

Robert Pauline was born in 1871 in Greenock, Scotland, and he immigrated with his family to Canada at the age of 1 1/2. At age 10 he moved with his parents to St. Paul, Minnesota. He worked as an apprentice machinist in the railroad shops in St. Paul (his father was a railroad engineer), and he came west with the Great Northern Railway construction crew. He worked as a railroad engineer for several years, and he lived in Kalispell since 1892 (he was called "one of the most trusted and competent engineers on the Great Northern" in 1897). He and Alice Gates were married in 1897 in Kalispell, and they had four children. Pauline served as a volunteer fireman, fire chief, president of the chamber of commerce, charter member of the Kiwanis club, mayor of Kalispell from 1912-22 and 1926-28, president of the Montana State Laundrymen's Association, a member of the Masons, a member of the Shriners and a member of the state Senate from 1919-43. Pauline retired from the railroad in 1902, after which time he and partners ran the Kalispell Steam Laundry. In 1924 he and Frank Linderman purchased the Kalispell Hotel and ran it for a few years; Pauline took care of the hotel's laundry needs. Alice Pauline had lived in Kalispell since 1895 when she moved to Kalispell to join her brother C. F. Gates, the principal of Central School. Alice Pauline taught high school until her marriage in 1897, and she served for many years as the vice president and secretary of the Kalispell-American Laundry. She was a Parliamentarian, member of the American Legion Auxiliary, the Methodist Church, the Eastern Star, the Women's Republican Club, served as president of the Century Club, and reportedly owned the first women's bicycle in Kalispell, which she rode in a woollen "bicycle suit" that had a full knee-length skirt and bloomers. Her rose garden was reportedly one of the first in Kalispell. Robert Pauline passed away in 1947, Alice Pauline in 1954.

The American Laundry Company was founded by the French brothers in May of 1900. Located on Main Street across from the McIntosh Opera House for many years, in 1917 it moved onto the same block as the Kalispell Steam Laundry, in the corner building at 7 1st Avenue East. A 1910 description of the American Laundry Company described it as manufacturing its own soap and using pure water and starch and bluing (bleach) of the "best quality". The business employed from 10 to 16 "expert operatives." The modern equipment included washing machines, centrifugal clothes wringers, clothes tumblers, a ten-foot mangle for flat work, and "the latest designs in cuff, collar, neckband, sleeve and bosom ironers."

Fred French was born in Allegan County, Michigan, in 1861. After working on his father's farm, he learned the barber's trade and followed it for 18 years, coming to Montana in 1886. He worked in Helena and then Great Falls. Coming to Kalispell in 1900, he first boarded in the northwest part of town with his English wife Hattie and their two children. He

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8

Kalispell-American Laundry

Page 2

later lived in a large house on the west side of Kalispell and rented rooms out, sometimes to laundry employees. French soon organized the American Steam Laundry with his brother, William H. French. The laundry was located on Main Street across from the McIntosh Opera House, and it had patrons from as far away as Troy and Shelby, Montana. The *Daily Inter Lake* commented that the French brothers' "strict attention to business and progressive methods...have won them a friend each time they have secured a patron." Fred French served as city alderman for two years and was a member of the Odd Fellows, Modern Woodmen of America, the Kalispell Club, and the Chamber of Commerce. His second marriage was to A. C. Thompson of Pennsylvania (in 1912). By 1922, Fred French had moved to Portland, Oregon, and his brother William had moved by 1917 to Spokane.

In 1903 laundry workers at the two businesses described above went on strike, one of a very few strikes of Kalispell businesses. The laundry workers demanded a \$1.00 per week raise, overtime pay, 10-hour days (they were averaging 12-13-hour days), and a re-classification of their jobs (the jobs as classified then were hand washers, ironers, mangers, polishers, body and "bnd" ironers, starchers, engineer and fireman, office clerk, bookkeeper and clerk, washers 2 and washers 3). After the laundry workers walked off the job, in July of 1903 the American Laundryworkers' Union established a cooperative laundry in Kalispell. Local union members donated their time to repair and remodel the building rented by the laundryworkers' union. The French brothers and Robert Pauline refused to negotiate with the union and announced that they would remain closed until they could secure new help unless the strikers returned on the terms set by the owners. On July 27 the two established laundries opened for business with scab workers and a few union members who returned to their jobs. The striking members were "busily at work" in the cooperative laundry, and by July 31 they were turning work away while they waited for machinery. The strikers voted not to declare the two laundries "unfair," as their customers would have nowhere to go if not to them. The union membership voted to invest money in the purchase of equipment for the cooperative laundry and to purchase the lot and enlarge the building. By September, however, the strike had been declared a failure. In that month "practically all of the help in both laundries" organized a branch of the Shirt Waist and Laundry Workers' Union of America. The cooperative laundry was short-lived, as the union members evidently returned to their old jobs when the strike failed. In 1904, the *Kalispell Bee* mentioned that the Kalispell Steam Laundry employed only union help, so perhaps conditions and pay scales had improved with the organization of the local branch of the union.

In August of 1918 Kalispell's two competing laundries were consolidated and incorporated under the firm name of Kalispell-American Laundry in order to "economize on administration and save on fuel and overhead." Robert Pauline became president of the company, Fred French the vice president, and his wife Anna the secretary. The firm was located in the building of the American Laundry Company at 7 1st Avenue East, "the best lighted of any in the state," until the existing building was constructed the next year. At that time the laundry used several hydraulic washers to clean the clothes, a centrifugal extractor to dry them, and irons. According to a 1918 article, each department was in charge of an "expert in that particular line," and there were "distinct and separate" machines for handling each part of a shirt and collar. The business also had departments for washing woolens, mending, and drying towels. The plants used electric power, with a large boiler for steaming and heating water and operating the heating plant.

Robert Pauline purchased the interest of the Frenches in the business in May of 1919. The north half of the lots now occupied by the Kalispell American Laundry building was used for many years as a storage place for fuel, machinery, oil and so on associated with the laundry. The new building occupies five city lots. Robert Pauline felt that the old location of his laundry, further south on 1st Avenue East, was a better location for the laundry. He hired Kalispell architect Marion Rizzo to design the new building, and it was constructed in 1919 for approximately \$20,000 by Kalispell contractors Frank Grey and George Simmonds. When the Kalispell-American Laundry moved into its new building in October of 1919, the *Kalispell Bee* commented that "The whistle has been missed by the business men and school teachers, too." In the summer of 1920 the laundry employed six men and 19 "girls."

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8

Kalispell-American Laundry

Page 3

In 1921 Robert Pauline hosted an open house in the new laundry building. The equipment featured modern washers and "spinning baskets," "drying tumblers," steam-heated presses, large flat work ironers for linens, short finishing units, collar finishing equipment, curtain dryers, and conveyors for carrying the garments from one department to another.

In 1930 Donald Pauline (Robert and Alice Pauline's son) moved to Kalispell to take over the management of the Kalispell-American Laundry. He had been associated with a large laundry in Portland for three years. The laundry remained in the ownership of Robert Pauline and then of Alice Pauline until 1949. The building later housed the Kalispell Laundry and Dry Cleaners, and it is currently owned and occupied by the High Country Linen Supply.

9. Major Bibliographic References

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

Acresage of Property: less than one acre

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	11	699850	5341540

Verbal Boundary Description

Block 44, Lots 12-15, Section 7, 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: May 1993
street & number: 491 Eckelberry Dr.	telephone: (406) 892-1538
city or town: Columbia Falls	state: Montana zip code: 59912

Property Owner

name: High Country Linen Supply, c/o Joe Topel		
street & number: 111 E. Spruce		
city or town: Missoula	state: MT	zip code: 59802

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9

Kalispell-American Laundry

Page 1

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- Kalispell Times*: "French Laundry Will Change Location," February 1, 1917, p. 1; "The Laundry Merger Creates Splendid Plant," August 15, 1918, p. 1; October 16, 1919; "Linderman and Pauline Buy Hotel," January 3, 1924, p. 1; "Perfect Dry Cleaning at Kalispell Laundry," August 4, 1927, p. 1; December 24, 1936; "Robert Pauline," December 4, 1947.
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- Sanders, Helen Fitzgerald, *History of Montana* (Chicago, IL: Lewis Publishing Co., 1913), vol. 3, pp. 1334-35, 1516-1517.
- United States Population Census, Kalispell, 1900.