

# MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD

For the Montana National Register of Historic Places Program and State Antiquities Database

Montana State Historic Preservation Office  
Montana Historical Society  
PO Box 201202, 1301 E. Lockey  
Helena, MT 59620-1202

Property Address: **918 Breckenridge St.**

Historic Address (if applicable): **918 Breckenridge St.**

City/Town: **Helena**

Site Number: **24LC2449**

(An historic district number may also apply.)

County: **Lewis and Clark**

Historic Name: **Albert R. and Annie L. Marshall Residence**

Original Owner(s): **Albert R. Marshall**

Current Ownership  Private  Public

Current Property Name:

Owner(s): **Ramler, Joseph P and Kody J**

Owner Address: **7180 Gunn Rd., Helena, MT 59602**

Phone:

Legal Location

PM: **Montana** Township: **10 N** Range: **03 W**

$\frac{1}{4}$   $\frac{1}{4}$  **NE**  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section: **31**

Lot(s): **15 & 16**

Block(s): **1**

Addition: **Valley View** Year of Addition: **1887**

USGS Quad Name: **Helena** Year: **1992**

Historic Use: **DOMESTIC/single-family residence**

Current Use: **DOMESTIC/single-family residence**

Construction Date: **1900**  Estimated  Actual

Original Location  Moved Date Moved:

UTM Reference [www.nris.mt.gov](http://www.nris.mt.gov)

NAD 27 or  NAD 83(preferred)

Zone: **12 T** Easting: **421486.19** Northing: **5159606.67**

Geocode: **05-1888-31-1-40-09-0000**

National Register of Historic Places

NRHP Listing Date:

Historic District:

NRHP Eligible:  Yes  No

Date of this document: **7/20/2016**

Form Prepared by: **Delia Hagen**

Address: **660 River Court, Missoula, MT 59801**

Daytime Phone: **(406) 360-0120**

MT SHPO USE ONLY

Eligible for NRHP:  yes  no

Criteria:  A  B  C  D

Date:

Evaluator:

Comments: Identifying Montana's African American Heritage Places Project.

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## Architectural Description

Property Name: Albert R. and Annie L. Marshall Residence

Site Number: 24LC2449

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### ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Architectural Style: **Other:** If Other, specify:

Property Type: **Residential** Specific Property Type: **Single-family dwelling**

Architect: **unknown** Architectural Firm/City/State:

Builder/Contractor: **unknown** Company/City/State:

Source of Information:

The property commonly known as 918 Breckenridge occupies a rectangular parcel on the north side of Breckenridge Street, which runs east-west. The house is located on the western portion of the long block bounded by N. Hoback St. to the west, 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. to the north, Breckenridge St. to the south, and N. Dakota to the east. It hugs the southern portion of the parcel, and is the only building on the property. City sidewalks run along the south side of the parcel. The house's front porch begins just a few feet north of the city sidewalk. A short concrete slab sidewalk connects the porch entrance to the sidewalk. Landscaping is limited to light shrubbery, and a small grassy front lawn.

Resting on concrete foundation walls, multiple bays define the irregularly-shaped one-story, wood-frame house. The main front-gable faces south onto Breckenridge. Single gabled wings protrude from both the east and west elevations, a shed extension - whose roof slopes down in a shallow pitch to the east - fills the northeast ell, and another shed roofed component extends across much of the north elevation. The north shed extension's roof pitches down to the north. A hipped roof open porch crosses the south gable-end elevation. Asphalt shingles cover all roof slopes, and modern horizontal vinyl siding clads the exterior walls. One-over-one wood-frame double-hung windows appear throughout the building unless otherwise noted.

#### *South (front) elevation:*

The south (front) elevation features a central bay with a full-width hipped porch and side-gabled bays at the east and west sides. A single step and break in the half-wall provide access to the wood-frame open porch at its south elevation's east side. Horizontal modern siding covers the deep half walls, which are capped with wide dimensional lumber, rounded at the edges. Slightly flared posts, decorated with narrow trims to mimic the appearance of Doric columns, support the roof. Protected by the porch, the house entry is located on the east side of the central bay's south elevation. The modern metal-clad door features a mock-nine-light window above two vertical panels. West of the entry, a large fixed window appears, covered by a six-over-two light storm. The side gable wings each contain a single window. The west side gabled bay is set farther north than the east.

#### *East and west (side) elevations:*

The east elevation contains four components. They are from south to north: the open front porch, side-gabled bay, front-gabled wing at center, a shed extension the infills the ell created by the main north-south roofline and the east wing, and another north shed roof extension. The front-gabled bay and shed extensions' east facades exist across the same plane. A single small, awning window divided into five vertical lights appears centered in the side-gable bay. The front-gabled bay contains one centered one-over-one double hung. The south shed bay contains two evenly-spaced windows, both one-over-ones, but the south window is considerably smaller. Finally, a large, single one-light fixed window punctuates the center of the north shed bay. Across the west elevation, the south bay contains a pair of one-over-one double hungs to the north side, and a single window of the same style to the south. The gable-front bay contains a centered one-over-one double hung. Neither the west elevation's northern bay(s) nor the entirety of the north elevation was accessible from the public right of way at the time of survey.

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History of Property

Property Name: Albert R. and Annie L. Marshall Residence

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## HISTORY OF PROPERTY

This property was first platted in 1887 as Lots 15 and 16 of Block 1 of the Valley View Addition, along the north side of Breckenridge Street, east of its intersection with S. Hoback Street. Tax records indicate the current house was built in 1900, and that date may be accurate: by 1892, when the Sanborn Fire Insurance Company first mapped the neighborhood, 918 Breckenridge contained a small square one-story dwelling that, like its neighbor at 922 Breckenridge, may have been torn down in subsequent years. By 1930, a larger one-story house occupied the south end of the lot, abutting the east property line. It may have been a replacement dwelling, but it could be the original house much enlarged and modified.

At that time, it was owned by Albert R. Marshall, who'd purchased Lots 15 and 16 from original owners Jennison and Elsa Perkins in 1888. Members of the African-American Marshall family would own and occupy 918 Breckenridge for some 40 years. Shortly after purchasing the property Missouri-born Albert, 28, married 17-year old Montana-born Annie L. Johnson, and by 1890 city directories listed the young couple at 918 Breckenridge.<sup>1</sup> That year, Albert worked as a "watchman" at the U.S. Assay Office, where he earned \$3 a day. All told, Albert worked at the U.S. Assay Office for 29 years, with his position there sometimes listed as custodian rather than watchman.

Albert died in 1907, leaving Annie with four sons, Albert D. (13), Eugene (5), Theodore (2) and Noble (1). As with many of Helena's African-American families, the surviving Marshalls lived in a multi-generational household supported by numerous wage earners and supplemented by boarders. In 1910, for instance, the household contained Annie (then working as a laundress) and her four children; Annie's brother Fred Johnson and his wife Minnie (both in their mid-20s and born in Montana), who worked as a hotel porter and a housekeeper, respectively; and 27-year-old lodger George (a.k.a. Curly) Douglas Campbell, a Missouri-born man who worked as a porter at a barber shop.<sup>2</sup> Campbell continued living with the Marshalls at 918 Breckenridge until at least 1918, when he registered for the draft.<sup>3</sup> That year found him working as a porter for Wallace Maciejewski. By that time, at least two of Annie's sons were also working, with Albert D.'s employer listed as the USA (he was likely a soldier) and teenaged Eugene a "shoe shiner" at the establishment of Antonio York (of the locally prominent black York family). Two years later, Albert was a bell hop at the Placer Hotel, and Eugene was working for the Anaconda Smelting and Refinery Co. in East Helena.

Annie Marshall lived at 918 Breckenridge until she died in 1925. Three years later her sons (two of whom lived elsewhere, with Albert D. in Butte and Noble L. in Spokane) conveyed the property to William E. Des Rosier. Along with Evelyn Nesbitt, Des Rosier owned 918 Breckenridge for almost 50 years. In 1975, Nesbitt and Des Rosier deeded it to John Allen and Marcia Holland, who owned it just three years before selling it to Paul and Santa Faulkenbury. Six years later, in 1984, the Faulkenburys conveyed 918 Breckenridge to Thomas J. Staples. From Staples the property went to Green & Murphy investments in 2003, and then to William James Hammerquist in 2004. The current owners, Joseph and Kody Ramler, acquired it from Hammerquist in 2014. Sanborn Maps suggest that the building's footprint has not been modified since before 1930.

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<sup>1</sup> Annie was the daughter of Helena residents Joseph R. and Theresa Johnson.

<sup>2</sup> Campbell is noted as well as working at the Manhattan Club.

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Information Sources/Bibliography

Property Name: Albert R. and Annie L. Marshall Residence

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## INFORMATION SOURCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Hagen, Delia. "National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form: African- American Heritage Places in Helena, MT," 2016.

Helena, City of, Town Plats

1887 Valley View Addition

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Statement of Significance

Property Name: Albert R. and Annie L. Marshall Residence

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## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

NRHP Listing Date:

NRHP Eligibility:  Yes  No  Individually  Contributing to Historic District  Noncontributing to Historic District

NRHP Criteria:  A  B  C  D

Area of Significance: **Ethnic Heritage & Social History** Period of Significance: **1888-1928**

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Purchased in 1888 by Albert Marshall, a black man from Missouri, the Marshall house is significant under NRHP Criterion A (local level) as a residential property associated with the history of African-American people in Helena, MT. Originally owned and occupied by the Marshall family during the heyday of the black community in Helena, the house remained the family's home until 1928, when Albert and Annie Marshall's adult sons conveyed the property, after Annie, who'd been widowed in 1907, died. The local black community had by then long been in decline. The Marshall house is thus associated with two significant historic contexts: its black owner-occupants lived there during the heyday of Helena's, and Montana's, African-American community, ca. 1875-1910, and they sold their home and left it in the midst of the community decline and endurance that followed, ca. 1910-1940. The property's period of significance is the period during which it was owned and occupied by African-American people, ie. 1888-1928.

The Marshall house represents these significant historic themes in a number of specific ways. Located near the black St. James AME Church (Site LC2430), it was one of multiple homes in the surrounding east-side neighborhood that housed a cluster of African-American people, often living in extended-multigenerational households. Like other black families in the region, Marshall family members migrated to Montana from border-states like Missouri. The economic activities of the Marshall-house residents likewise were representative. Like many African-American families in Helena, the home's owners took in boarders to help make ends meet and provide lodging to other local black people. Male residents of the home worked as porters, shoe shiners, bellhops, custodians—prototypical positions for black men, who in this period were oft-confined by structural racism to low-status, low-waged work. Women's labor, too, was typical: many black women worked at arduous jobs to help support their families, and positions like laundress and housekeeper were primary among them.

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Integrity

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**INTEGRITY** (location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, association)

Despite the modern siding and entry door, the house retains a high degree of integrity. The modern siding mimics the original horizontal wood clapboard. Its footprint and overall design remain unchanged since the historic period (pre-1930). Examples of original workmanship, such as the flared decorated porch columns, are present, and the original window materials are present throughout. Standing in its original location, the historic neighborhood provides its appropriate setting. Continuing its purpose as a single family residence, the house retains integrity of feeling and association.

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Photographs

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Feature #  
Facing: N

Description:

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Photographs

Property Name: Albert R. and Annie L. Marshall Residence

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Feature #  
Facing: NE

Description:



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Photographs

Property Name: Albert R. and Annie L. Marshall Residence

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Feature #  
Facing: NW

Description:

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Site Map

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# MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD

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Topographic Map

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## PROPERTY:

918 Breckenridge St  
Lewis and Clark County  
Helena, Montana

GeoCode:

05-1888-31-1-40-09-0000

LAT 46.585429

LON -112.024832