

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD

Montana State Historic Preservation Office
Montana Historical Society
PO Box 201202, 1410 8th Ave
Helena, MT 59620-1202

Property Address: **602 South Idaho**

Historic Address (if applicable):

City/Town: **Butte**

Site Number: **24SB0991**

(An historic district number may also apply.)

County: **Silver Bow**

Historic Name: **Shaffer's Chapel**

Original Owner(s): **African Methodist Episcopal Church**

Current Ownership Private Public

Current Property Name:

Owner(s): **Sierra, James R.**

Owner Address: **4549 186th Street
Redondo Beach, CA, 90278**

Phone:

Legal Location

PM: **Montana** Township: **3N** Range: **8W**

$\frac{1}{4}$ $\frac{1}{4}$ **SW** $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section: **13**

Lot(s): **11-12**

Block(s): **3**

Addition: **Travonia** Year of Addition:

USGS Quad Name: Year:

Historic Use: **Religious**

Current Use: **Religious**

Construction Date: **1901** Estimated Actual

Original Location Moved Date Moved:

UTM Reference www.nris.mt.gov

NAD 27 or NAD 83(preferred)

Zone: **12** Easting: **380759** Northing: **5095949**

National Register of Historic Places

NRHP Listing Date:

Historic District:

NRHP Eligible: Yes No

Date of this document: **7/2/2015**

Form Prepared by: **Anthony Wood**

Address: **1410 8th Avenue, Helena MT 59620-1202**

Daytime Phone: **406-444-7715**

MT SHPO USE ONLY

Eligible for NRHP: yes no

Criteria: A B C D

Date:

Evaluator:

Comments: Updated property record form written as part of the "Identifying Montana's African American Heritage Places Project."

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merge pages with this form

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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: **African American History** Period of Significance: **1901-1964**

Architectural Style: **Other** If Other, specify:
Property Type: **Religious** Specific Property Type: **Church Building**
Architect: Architectural Firm/City/State:
Builder/Contractor: Company/City/State:
Source of Information:

Architectural Description:

Setting & Location

The church building located at 602 South Idaho (also 210 West Platinum) sits on lots 11 and 12 of block 3 in the Travonia addition of Butte. 602 South Idaho is bounded by West Platinum to the north, West Aluminum to the south, South Montana to the East, and South Idaho to the West. The church stands in the south central part of uptown Butte. Only three blocks to the east of South Idaho and Platinum is the Emma mine neighborhood, home to a considerable number of African Americans during the first half of the twentieth century. The buildings on either side of South Idaho's 600 block all are contributing to Butte's South Central Historic District. The west side of South Idaho features seven adjacent two-story four-plex apartment buildings, all dating to approximately 1900, as well as several other one-story single family homes. The east side of South Idaho, with the church building on the corner, also features several similar four-plex apartments, and several single family homes.

The West façade of the church meets the cement sidewalk on the north side, around the exterior bell tower, in which the front door to the building is set. A narrow strip of grass begins on the east side of the façade, and continues to the south side of the structure, where a large grass lawn separates the church from the adjacent building. The north elevation rises up from the sidewalk running adjacent to West Platinum Street. The rear of the building features a gravel driveway lying between the church and the two-story, rectangular house that occupies the same lot.

Introduction

The church building at 602 South Idaho is a one-story rectangular gable front structure. The original brick veneer exterior walls have since been covered in white stucco plaster that extends down to the ground, likely covering the cement wall foundation that supports the building. The gabled roof, which was originally shingled, has been replaced with red metal roofing. The remainder of a rectangular bell tower extends from the northwest corner of the building. The south elevation of the tower contains the front door of the church. The top of the bell tower appears to have been removed, perhaps once featuring a hipped or pyramidal roof.

West Façade

The west façade features only one window, located in the center of the first story. The three-light gothic arch window, set over a stone sill, sits to the south side of the protruding exterior bell tower. The tower stands at one and a half stories tall, with a top section that appears to be the remnant of a pitched roof that has since been removed. The white plaster veneer walls on the lower half of the tower match that of the rest of the buildings first story. The south elevation of the tower contains the front door. What appears to be an original door frame stands about eight feet tall. Within the larger cutout frame, the new wood door, painted white, faces south. The front elevation of the tower features only one deviation from the white stucco plaster on the first story. A small cornerstone inscribed with the words "Shaffer's Chapel, AME Church, Erected 1901" sits at the bottom north corner of the elevation. The gable front features horizontal siding that sits above a full gable return. The slope and height of the gable return extends into a pent roof that surrounds the protruding tower. Above the tower's pent roof, horizontal siding mirrors that of the gable front.



SHAFFER'S CHAPEL
602 S. IDAHO, BUTTE, MT

North Elevation

The north elevation of 602 South Idaho features four windows set within the white plaster veneer. The west most window sits in the north elevation of the bell tower. The first story of the tower contains this single light fixed window. The main section of the building features three, equally spaced gothic arched, two-light fixed windows. Each window sits above a stone sill, and all window surrounds are painted white. The east most of the three gothic arched windows no longer contains glass panes, and has been boarded. The stucco plaster walls terminate beneath the eaves of the metal sheet roof.

South Elevation

The south elevation of the building features three identical gothic arched, two-light, fixed pane windows, one at the center of the elevation, and one on either side, equidistant from the center. The south elevation of the building, still stucco plaster veneer, has been painted grey. However, the elevation still features white stone sills and wood window surrounds. The south elevation terminates beneath the eaves of the metal sheet roof.

Rear Elevation

The southern side of the rear elevation features a small clapboard-covered extension that shelters steep concrete stairs that lead to a basement-level storage room. The extension features a deck roof, covered with asphalt shingles above the south facing door entry, connected to a sloped roof that parallels the side of the building, following the slope of the stairwell to the ground. Just off center to the north, a single wood panel door sits within the otherwise empty rear stucco plaster veneer. The stucco wall terminates at the bottom of a full gable return. The gable front, mirrors that of the west façade, and features horizontal, white siding.

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History of the Property

The African Methodist Church in Butte

Ostensibly, the copper king William Clark built the small wooden church building that now sits on the corner of Platinum and Idaho as a gift for the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and the black citizens of Butte in 1901. The congregation, only numbering around 20 regular members at the time, moved from their original church building on the corner of Idaho and Mercury, subsequently occupied by the Bethel Baptist Church, the only other black congregation in Butte.¹ Reverend Jordan Allen occupied the pulpit at the new church from 1901, to sometime in 1904, when he moved to Denver, CO for a year, before returning to Montana to pastor St. James A.M.E. Church in Helena starting in 1906.² In truth, Rev. Allen remained in Butte nearly twice as long as most pastors that would lead services at the little church that came to be known as Shaffer's Chapel.

Bishop Cornelius T. Shaffer

Cornelius T. Shaffer first appears in various Civil War army documents; listed as a private in the 100 U.S. Col'd Infantry Company K. Shaffer enlisted on September 4, 1864 and was discharged September 14 of 1865.³ Although the exact date of his birth is unknown, the scattered annals of the African Methodist Episcopal Church during the turn of the century list Shaffer as being born sometime in 1847.⁴ City directories list Shaffer as a pastor in the A.M.E. church of Kansas City, but little else is mentioned about him until 1900.⁵ In the minutes of the General Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Ohio, of that year, church leaders elected Cornelius Shaffer as a bishop.⁶ In 1902, Bishop C.T. Shaffer filled the African American papers of Butte and Helena with news of his impending visit. *The Butte New Age*, whose assistant editor, John Duncan was a member of the A.M. E Church, wrote that the Bishop, just returned from time in West Africa, had come to dedicate Shaffer's Chapel that Sunday before traveling to preach in Helena.⁷

Shaffer's Chapel 1901-1964

After Reverend Jordan Allen left Butte in 1904, Rev. Benjamin McIntyre filled the pulpit. Like Rev. Allen, McIntyre resided at the church. Also like Allen, McIntyre only stayed in Butte for a very short time, through 1906.⁸ In fact, from the years of 1902 until 1918 (when the Butte Polk stopped listing Shaffer Chapel's pastor), twelve different reverends lead services.⁹ This was not unique to Shaffer's Chapel, however. During the early years of religious expansion in the west, governing church bodies often sent new pastors out West to lead congregations before heading larger, urban churches back east. Similarly, hard winters and low pay made keeping new pastors difficult for rural western churches.

Unlike its many reverends during the first twenty years, Shaffer's Chapel was a mainstay for Butte's African American community. By 1915, the congregation had more than doubled in size, boasting over 30 members, doubtlessly with many more attending.¹⁰ Even during the first year of the A.M.E. church at the new location, *the Butte New Age*, which only ran from 1902-1903, printed multiple pieces on the community events put on by the church, or that centered around its members. On March 6, 1913, when Booker T. Washington visited Butte, Shaffer's Chapel hosted the famous black activist, historian, and writer, with the reception dinner held at the church.¹¹ Likewise, Armeta Duncan, a leading member of Shaffer's Chapel, recalls in an interview that W.E.B. Dubious came to Butte to lecture at the college and the black churches. She playfully bragged that both Dubious and Washington visited the Duncan

¹ Richard Gibson. "Booker T. Washington Comes to Butte." *Butte History and Lost Butte*, February 6, 2013, accessed June 26, 2015, online at <http://buttehistory.blogspot.com>.

² R.L. Polk & Co., *Polk's 1902-1904 Butte (Silver Bow County, Mont.) City Directory*.

³ Ancestry.com, Index of U.S. Civil War Soldiers, 1861-1865. Cornelius Shaffer. Accessed online at ancestry.com.

⁴ Rev. James Handy, *Scraps of African Methodist Episcopal History, 1826-1911*. (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2000.) Electronic edition, accessed June 26, 2015, online at <http://docsouth.unc.edu/church/handy/handy.html>.

⁵ R.L. Polk & Co., *Polk's 1902 Kansas City, Missouri, City Directory*, 218. Accessed online at ancestry.com

⁶ Rev. James Handy, *Scraps of African Methodist Episcopal History, 1826-1911*. p. 312. (Electronic edition, accessed June 26, 2015, online at <http://docsouth.unc.edu/church/handy/handy.html>).

⁷ *The Butte New Age*, (Butte, Montana, 1902-1903.) *Chronicling America*. Accessed online at <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov>.

⁸ R.L. Polk & Co., *Polk's 1904-1906 Butte (Silver Bow County, Mont.) City Directory*.

⁹ R.L. Polk & Co., *Polk's 1906-1918 Butte (Silver Bow County, Mont.) City Directory*.

¹⁰ R.L. Polk & Co., *Polk's 1915 Butte (Silver Bow County, Mont.) City Directory*, 50.

¹¹ Richard Gibson. "Booker T. Washington Comes to Butte." *Butte History and Lost Butte*, February 6, 2013, accessed June 26, 2015, online at <http://buttehistory.blogspot.com>.

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home during their trips to Butte.¹² After WWII, the black population dwindled in the Mining City. Butte's other African American Church, Bethel Baptist, closed during this time. However, even with the diminished community, Shaffer's Chapel continued until 1964.¹³

¹² Armeta Duncan, interview by Quintard Taylor, "Mrs. Armeta Duncan." April 4, 1974. Spokane, Wash: Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections, Washington State University Libraries, 2002.

¹³ R.L. Polk & Co., Polk's 1964 Butte (Silver Bow County, Mont.) City Directory.

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Information Sources/Bibliography

Ancestry.com. Searches for Cornelius T. Shaffer. Results included: Index of U.S. Soldiers in the Civil War; Polk City Directories, Kansas City, 1902-1904. Accessed online at www.ancestry.com.

Chroniclingamerica.loc.gov. Access to Historic Newspapers included: *The Butte New Age* (1902-1903); *The Butte Daily Bulletin* (1918-1921); *The Montana Plaindealer* (1906-1911). Accessed online at www.chroniclingamerica.loc.gov.

Duncan, Armeta. Interview by Taylor, Quintard. "Mrs. Armeta Duncan, April 4, 1974." Spokane, Wash: Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections, Washington State University Libraries, 2002.

Gibson, Richard. "Booker T. Washington Comes to Butte." *Butte History and Lost Butte*, February 6, 2013, accessed June 26, 2015, online at <http://buttehistory.blogspot.com>.

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R.L. Polk & Co. *Polk's Butte (Silver Bow County, Mont.) City Directory*, Salt Lake City, UT: R.L. Polk & Co., 1902, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1906, 1907, 1908, 1909, 1910, 1911, 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1923, and 1964.

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Statement of Significance

The building at 602 South Idaho is listed in the National Register as a contributing building within the Butte-Anaconda National Historic Landmark district. It gains further significance for its association with the history of the African American community in Butte and Montana, as well as its association with the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The building historically known as Shaffer's Chapel is the only remaining church building in Butte that once hosted an all-black congregation, and was one of the only public centers of the African American community during the twentieth century. In addition, Shaffer's Chapel is one of only 31 extant buildings out of 103 original structures identified as having significance to the history of African Americans in Butte.

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Integrity (location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, association)

The integrity of structure is severely diminished by the multiple changes in materials, workmanship, and association. The church building at 602 South Idaho has gone through several major changes, notably the stucco plaster siding, metal roof, new front door, and removal of the bell tower roof, the setting and design certainly retain much of the original feel. The neighborhood remains the same as it was at the time of construction in 1901. The church still functions in some capacity as a church, but no longer retains any present connection with the African Methodist Church, or the African American community of Butte.

Though the building is not individually eligible, its prior contribution to the south central historic district of Butte, and its overwhelming significance to the history of African Americans in Butte make Shaffer's Chapel at 602 South Idaho an integral piece of Butte's history.

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Photographs



Shaffer's Chapel
West façade, facing east
7/11/15
Photograph by Anthony Wood

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Shaffer's Chapel
South Elevation, facing northeast
7/11/15
Photograph by Anthony Wood

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Shaffer's Chapel
North elevation, facing south
7/11/15
Photograph by Anthony Wood

Site Map/Aerial Photo

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Shaffer's Chapel
602 South Idaho St
Butte, Mt
T03 N R08 W S13

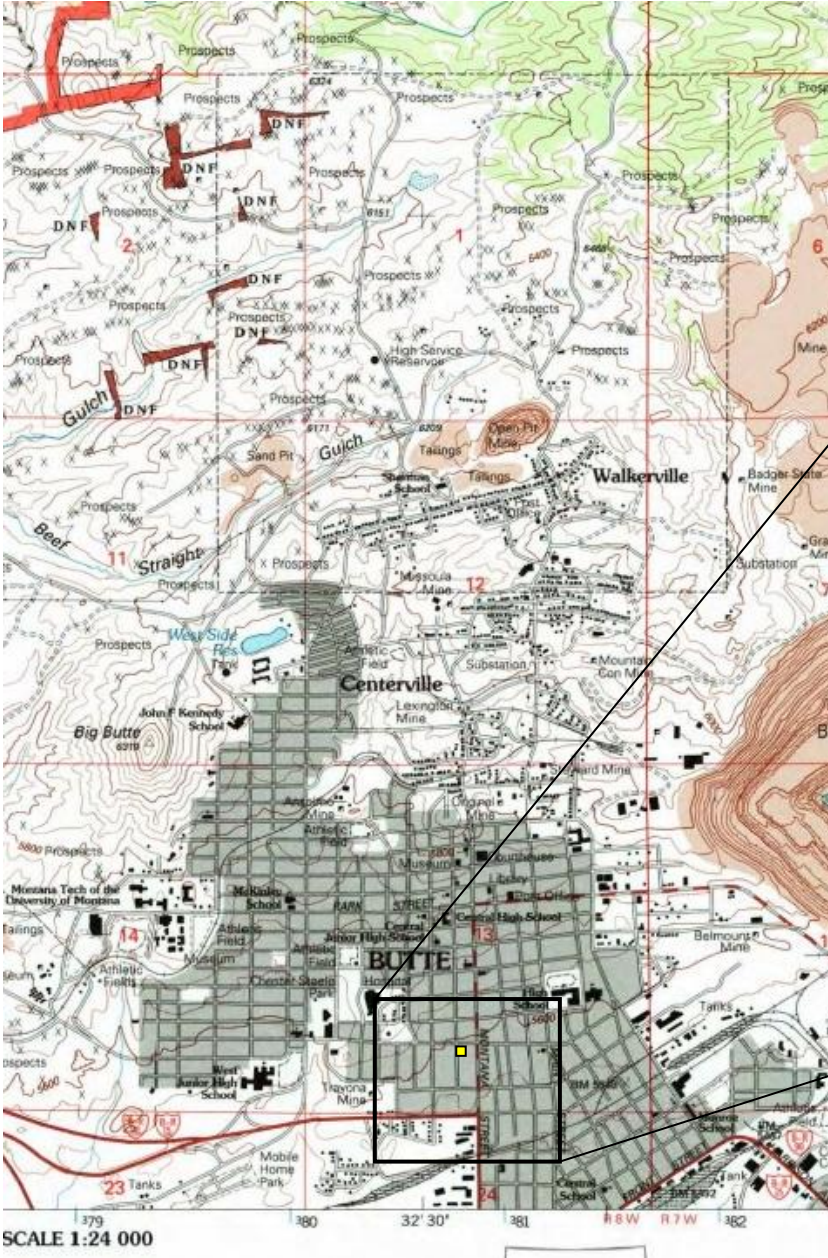


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Topographic Map



Shaffer's Chapel
602 South Idaho St
Butte, Mt
USGS Topographic Map 1:24K