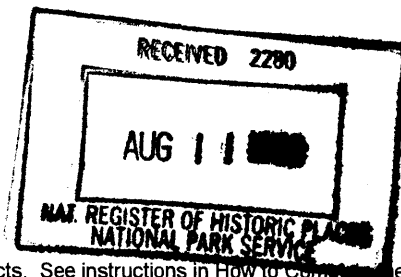


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

1114



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Büchler, Conrad A. House

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 236 Sala Avenue NA not for publication

city or town Westwego NA vicinity

state Louisiana code LA county Jefferson code 051 zip code 70094

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.)

Jonathan Fricker

August 5, 1999

Signature of certifying official/Title Jonathan Fricker, Date
Deputy SHPO, LA Dept. of Culture, Recreation and Tourism

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ 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
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): _____

for
Signature of Keeper Edson H. Beall Date of Action 9/9/99

Büchler, Conrad A. House
Name of property

Jefferson Parish, LA
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>3</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
NA

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat. Domestic

Sub. Single Dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat. Domestic

Sub. Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Bungalow/Craftsman
Colonial Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick
walls Weatherboard
roof Asphalt

other _____

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 1

The Conrad A. Büchler House, located in Westwego on the west bank of the Mississippi River near New Orleans, is a Craftsman bungalow constructed in 1911. Although the house was enlarged in two phases during the historic period, the quality and style of the work is virtually indistinguishable from the original work and in no way compromises the integrity of the house. Enclosed by an iron fence and situated on a large landscaped lot at 236 Sala Avenue (the primary residential street in historic Westwego), the Büchler property also includes two outbuildings constructed during the period of significance.

The Büchler House is one of Westwego's few residential structures that exhibits any level of architectural styling. Of the other styled residences in the area, this house is clearly the oldest. Commissioned in 1911 by Conrad Büchler's mother-in-law and designed by architect W.R. Burke of New Orleans, the Craftsman house became Büchler's home following his 1913 marriage. He continued to live in the house until his death in 1935. The house remains in the Büchler family and is currently owned and occupied by his daughter and son-in-law.

The house, sided with wood weatherboards, exhibits several hallmarks of Craftsman styling. The low-pitched cross-gable roof is decorated with exposed rafter tails; false beams embellish the roof's rake edge. An eight-light rectangular transom pierces the front gable. The attached porch features exposed notched rafter tails; the ceiling of the porch is constructed of beaded board. The porch eave is supported by a series of posts exhibiting simple geometric forms characteristic of Craftsman designs. The two corner supports are formed by three posts surmounting a base decorated with sunk panels; further evidence of Craftsman styling is revealed in the through joinery at these corner supports. The remaining two supports are similar, but are in a floor-to-ceiling form. Although typical of very early (prior to 1910) Craftsman-styled residential buildings, the floor-to-ceiling porch posts on this 1911 building (a very early example of Craftsman styling in the New Orleans area) also suggest a Colonial Revival influence. An obvious modification is the addition of a cast iron balustrade at the porch-work which appears to have been completed prior to the National Register "50-year cutoff."

Although Edwin Nye Bruce's work on the development of Westwego accurately characterizes the typical Westwego house as unstyled, he mistakenly indicates that "the use of shutters that can be closed is unknown." Indeed, the Büchler House features its original fully operable louvered shutters at the windows and front door.

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Section 7 Page 2

The original house included a formal parlor, a primary living space, a dining room, and three bedrooms. A rear porch was added *circa* 1915; the porch was enclosed prior to 1927—at the same time, the kitchen was constructed to the rear of the porch in a gabled ell. In 1936, a fourth bedroom and bathroom were added in a second (rear) cross gable. The original house features a 12-foot ceiling height, while the additions were finished with eight-foot ceilings.

The master bedroom (located at the original cross gable) features narrow vertical ribbon windows of stained glass with a simple geometric pattern—all elements in keeping with the Craftsman style. Full-length windows at the porch repeat this geometric styling, with a two-light bottom sash surmounted by a four-light window surrounded by geometrically patterned stained glass. The front door is also treated in this styling: a four-panel cypress sash door features a top panel of stained glass in geometric design—a treatment common to the period and style. Original specifications for the house describe the glass as “opalescent.” The door is surmounted by an eight-light rectangular transom. The original portion of the house primarily features two-over-two windows, except where stained glass is featured; the additions feature six-over-six windows.

Interior detailing includes crown molding and cypress doors detailed in a Colonial Revival shouldered design; simple cypress millwork befitting Craftsman styling is found throughout the house. More distinct is the original cypress and glass cabinetry located in the original dining room, decorated with touches of beadwork and featuring Colonial Revival detailing similar to the interior doors. The original kitchen features tile counters and was updated in the 1940s with maple cabinets suggestive of the Art Deco style.

As indicated, the Büchler nomination also includes two dependencies—both of which are considered contributing elements to the nomination, as they date from the period of significance and exhibit architectural styling similar to that of the house. The current owner (Büchler’s daughter) indicates that she does not recall a time when the greenhouse did not exist. It seems reasonable to deduce that the greenhouse was constructed *circa* 1920—at generally the same time as the garage building. Typical of a greenhouse, the building is wood frame enclosed with glass. A single multi-light door provides entry to the front-gabled building, while horizontal pivot windows provide ventilation for growing plants. In a typical Craftsman style, the low-pitched roof is articulated with exposed rafter tails and false roof beams embellished with triangular knee braces.

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The *circa* 1920 garage building features a side-gabled roof with original asbestos shingles and tile ridge caps, as well as eaves decorated with exposed rafter tails. The building is composed of a two-car garage bay with additional work and storage space. The primary entrance to the garage (adjacent to the vehicular entrance) features a three-panel multi-light sash door, with a small overhang supported by triangular knee braces.

Although the Büchler house has received several additions, the quality of the work in no way affects the property's integrity. Moreover, the work was completed during the historic period; the property therefore clearly retains eligibility for the National Register.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" next to the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations NA
(Mark "X" next to all that apply.)

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Politics/Government

Period of Significance

1913-35

Significant Dates

1919-21

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Conrad A. Büchler

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

W R. Burke, Architect

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

- Previous documentation on file (NPS):** NA
- 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
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

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CONTINUATION SHEET**Section 8 Page 1

The 1911 Conrad A. Büchler House is locally significant in the area of politics and government because of the contributions made by Büchler during his 1919-21 tenure as the first mayor of Westwego, Louisiana. The period of significance for this property spans from 1913, the year Büchler moved into the house, until his death in 1935.

Although Vic Pitre is widely recognized for his contributions to early Westwego as its first elected and longest serving mayor (see National Register nomination for Vic Pitre House), Conrad Büchler also made significant contributions to the burgeoning village which received its charter immediately prior to his appointment as mayor. Because Büchler had been elected in 1920 to the position of district attorney for the area serving Jefferson, St. Charles, and St. John the Baptist Parishes, he did not run for mayor in the first election in 1921. Vic Pitre's 20-year service as mayor of Westwego began after that election.

Although Westwego was settled beginning in the mid-nineteenth century by the French of the Bayou Lafourche and Barataria areas, the railroad, wharves, and Westwego Canal set the stage for the bursts of development during the late nineteenth century in the area known today as Westwego (named to commemorate the thousands of travelers who crossed to the west bank of the Mississippi River at that point). In its early years, the area was alternately known as Salaville, in honor of Pablo Sala, who is regarded as the founder of the town. The small population of the area was somewhat increased in 1893 by the influx of refugees from the hurricane-devastated Chenière Caminada (near Barataria Bay and the Gulf of Mexico). Population increases continued through the first several decades of the twentieth century as depression economics drove many rural families toward urban areas; many relatives of those who had emigrated from the bayou parishes during the late nineteenth century arrived at that time.

History suggests that Büchler was the primary force in the effort to incorporate a growing Westwego, bringing Louisiana governor Ruffin G. Pleasant to the area in 1919 to view the conditions on Sala Avenue. Immediately following the visit, a charter was granted to the Village of Westwego with Pleasant appointing Büchler as mayor. The charter allowed Westwego to self-govern and limited their reliance on parish-level government. The first action of the Büchler administration was to order an official census of Westwego so that the village would be recognized as a town (having a population greater than 1000).

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As the first mayor of Westwego, Büchler and his administration (initially composed of three aldermen and a secretary) were responsible for bringing order to the chaos of a newly formed government, not only through the institution of local laws, but also by executing the mundane tasks that are required to ensure the smooth operation of any organization. While the purchase of a typewriter, file cabinet, and stationery may not be the most glamorous aspect of government activity, such chores are required in order to establish regimen to a new organization. Operational activities established under Büchler's direction also included the rental of town hall space; the creation and commission of a town seal; the commission of an official map of Westwego; the establishment of salaries; and the arrangement of bank accounts to ensure the village's fiscal responsibility.

Among the more substantial issues which Büchler and his aldermen tackled in creating and maintaining order during his administration were road repairs, taxation, permits, speed limits, arrest and imprisonment procedures, and the appointment of a town engineer. Vices addressed in the early ordinances included vandalism, public disturbance, discharge of firearms, public gambling, and the public use of vulgar language.

Clearly, a primary responsibility in the establishment and proper function of a new organization (and a government in particular) is the development of revenue. In early Westwego ordinances, taxes were established for businesses operating within the village's incorporated limits. It was also determined that licenses would be required to sell liquor, taxes would be levied on travelling shows, and permits would be required for dances either charging admission or selling refreshments. Within two months of its charter, the Village of Westwego had collected \$2030.00.

With the development of revenue ensured, Büchler's administration was able to address infrastructure improvements. Among those completed during his tenure were road repairs and the graveling of streets, the construction of gravel sidewalks and a system of ditches to improve drainage on the main streets of the town, and the installation of street lamps.

It was under Büchler's administration that electrical power was brought to Westwego through an agreement with the South New Orleans Light and Traction Company; in 1921, a \$100,000 bond passed that would allow the construction of a water system to serve the town. Clearly, the effort was designed to provide the best system possible:

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Section 8 Page 3

the town enlisted the services of an engineer to discuss proposals for a water system and Büchler and others visited Morgan City and Plaquemine in order to gain a better understanding of those towns' systems.

Ditch repairs and new culverts, the addition of a water supply and electrical power, and road improvements were important to all Westwego residents, but especially relevant to businesses and Westwego's commercial seafood industry, which was the largest fish and shrimp supplier in the New Orleans area—providing more than two-thirds of the seafood consumed in the New Orleans market.

Among the Büchler administration's greatest accomplishments (and greatest difficulties) was the purchase of a Mississippi River ferry franchise which operated between Westwego and the Walnut Street landing in Uptown New Orleans. Although the town purchased a \$50,000.00 lease to share operation of the ferry, it soon became clear that the ferry company and operators were not acting in accordance with the lease agreement—failing to allow the ferry to operate at night and forcing passengers to ferry across the river in a smaller (and probably less secure) vessel if the ferry was being cleaned. A series of letters from Westwego officials to the ferry company appear to have allayed their concerns.

A 1920 smallpox outbreak appears to have been the first health- or safety-related emergency handled by the town, with compulsory vaccination being required of all Westwego residents and a quarantine instituted at the homes of those known to carry the disease, including the use of a guard at those residences. The town handled this crisis one year before the State of Louisiana began requiring incorporated areas to create boards of health.

Although the plan was eventually rejected, Büchler's administration considered the purchase of a building to be remodeled to serve as the town hall; interestingly, the architect commissioned to render an opinion and plans for the building's renovation was W.R. Burke, the same architect who designed the Büchler house at 236 Sala Avenue.

Described in *Louisiana: Its Builders and Its Industries* (1924) as "a potent factor in the political life of his city," Büchler's progressive political leadership clearly had a palpable effect on the village soon after his appointment as mayor: "immediately great was the activity in and around that place." Büchler was also well-known in Westwego civic

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circles, having served as president of both his district's bar association and the Westwego Chamber of Commerce, as well as a director of the First National Bank of Jefferson Parish.

Upon leaving office, Buchler commented that the efforts to establish Westwego had been, from the beginning, "an uphill battle." Regardless of the difficulties associated with assuming leadership of a new municipality, Buchler's administration clearly made a measurable impact on the development of Westwego as a viable town. While his mayoral tenure was short, particularly as compared to the 20-year service of his successor Vic Pitre, it is clear that Büchler had a fundamental effect not only on the establishment of order in the governmental process, but also in allowing the area to achieve an identity as a municipality.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 1

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bruce, Edwin Nye. "The Growth and Development of Westwego." Unpublished manuscript.

Louisiana Publishers Association. "C.A. Büchler." *Louisiana: Its Builders and Its Industries* (1924): 64+.

"C.A. Büchler, 47, Former District Prosecutor, Dies." *Times-Picayune* [New Orleans, La.]. 27 Apr. 1935: 2.

Minutes of the Town of Westwego. September 19, 1919 to May 2, 1921.

Minutes of the Village of Westwego. January 28, 1919 to July 21, 1919.

Reeves, William D. *Westwego: From Cheniere to Canal*. Jefferson Parish Historical Series Monograph 14. Westwego, La.: Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Alario, Sr., 1996.

Swanson, Betsy. *Historic Jefferson Parish: From Shore to Shore*. Gretna, La.: Pelican, 1975.

Büchler, Conrad A. House
Name of property

Jefferson Parish, LA
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

1 15 775810 3312560

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title National Register Staff

organization Division of Historic Preservation date May 1999

street & number P.O. Box 44247 telephone (225) 342-8160

city or town Baton Rouge state LA zip code 70804

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS** map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white** photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Mary Büchler Smith

street & number 236 Sala Avenue telephone (504) 341-3182

city or town Westwego state LA zip code 70094

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

Büchler, Conrad A. House
Name of property

Jefferson Parish, LA
County and State

NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Section 10 Page 1

LEGAL PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

Lots 58, 60, 62 & 64, Sala Subdivision, Westwego, Louisiana.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

Boundary follows legal property lines.