

## **LOCAL LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT**

### **Walter Anderson Bunch House, ca.1919**

#### **ABSTRACT**

The Colonial Revival house at 111 Main Street in Asheboro's oldest neighborhood, with its striking, wrap-around veranda suggestive of Craftsman or even Prairie influences, was the home of two Asheboro mayors: Walter Anderson Bunch Jr. (1886-1961) and his son, John Charles Bunch (1923-1980). Walter Bunch acquired the property from the prosperous Robins family in 1919, and shortly thereafter built his family home. Bunch was an accountant and banker who served as mayor from 1931-1941. His term saw several local institutions take root, including a modern new hospital, the public library and a municipal golf course designed by famed Scottish golfer Donald J. Ross. John Bunch was an accountant, and served as mayor from 1957-1963. Significant civic improvement also occurred during his term, including passage of a nearly \$2 million bond for a new sewer plant. John continued to reside in his father's house through his tenure as mayor; it passed to him when Walter died in 1961. The house was built by Thomas Jefferson (T.J.) Lassiter, a contractor who constructed numerous houses in Asheboro, and worked with a local home building supply store to develop bungalow components that could be shipped elsewhere and rapidly assembled. The house is worthy of landmark designation because of its association with Walter and John Bunch, who as mayors and civic leaders contributed to the historic, cultural and social development of the City of Asheboro; because of its association with its builder, T.J. Lassiter, and his status as a successful entrepreneur whose reach extended beyond Asheboro to the southeastern United States; because of its exemplification of the Colonial Revival architectural style mediated by up-and-coming Craftsman influences and its high degree of architectural integrity; and because its location in the context of two similar, contemporaneous and highly original houses on either side provides an outstanding example of an affluent neighborhood in 1920s Asheboro. Although the interior of the Bunch House contains many fine and original features, this proposed designation covers only the exterior of the house and its lot (see Appendix A: Walter Bunch House Site Plan and Designation Boundary).

#### **HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND SIGNIFICANCE**

Walter Anderson Bunch, Jr. was born on a farm in Bruce Township, Guilford County, North Carolina, on March 16, 1886 to Walter Anderson Bunch and Emma Case Bunch. His father was a farmer and Methodist minister whose circuit included Asheboro. Bunch moved to Asheboro as a young man and worked a clerk for the McCrary-Redding Hardware Company rising to secretary and treasurer. The founders of that company, D.B. McCrary and T. Henry Redding, would go on to found the Acme-McCrary Hosiery Mill, Asheboro's leading industry much of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. In 1918, Bunch became secretary-treasurer of Peoples Building and Loan Association. At the time, the association was a struggling institution with assets of approximately \$50,000. He served with the association until his retirement in 1952 and saw its assets grow to more than \$1 million. A Rotarian and a Mason, he was active in First United Methodist Church.

Bunch took office as mayor from 1931 and served until 1941. During his consequential five terms, Asheboro grew in spite of the Great Depression. Randolph Hospital, of which Bunch

served as a director, was established; the Asheboro Public Library opened; and the Asheboro Municipal Golf Course, designed by famed Scottish golf course designer Donald J. Ross, was created. The Asheboro Municipal Building, an Art Deco masterpiece and Randolph County Historic Landmark still in use today as city hall, was built. Numerous other civic improvements occurred on Bunch's watch, including the hiring of the first paid firefighters other than the fire chief, the opening of a third city lake, and the extension of the water and sewer systems. (It should be noted that during the era of segregation, not all of these institutions and improvements were available to African American citizens on an equal basis, if at all.)

In 1914, Bunch married Annie L. Spencer; she passed away in 1916. He married Patricia (Pattie) Lowe of Farmer, N.C. in 1918. The couple had four children: Walter Anderson, III, Mary Elizabeth, Patricia Jane, and John Charles. Walter III rose to the rank of captain in the U.S. Army during World War II, and was killed in action in combat around St. Lo, France, on July 9, 1944.

After his retirement from Peoples Savings and Loan Association, Bunch moved with his wife to the family farm where he had grown up in Summerfield, North Carolina. He died at the farm at the age of 75 on May 1, 1961. His body is buried in Oaklawn Cemetery in Asheboro.

When Walter Bunch retired to his farm, his son John remained in the family home. An accountant, John followed in his father's footsteps as secretary of People's Savings and Loan, and as mayor, serving from 1957-1963. During this period, Asheboro undertook its first annexations, reconstituted its Planning Board, passed a \$1.995 million bond referendum for a new sewer plant, and redefined itself officially as a "city" rather than as a "town."

The Bunch house sits on property purchased by Walter Bunch from the Robins family. To the south next door is the similar 1924 Colonial Revival residence of Henry Moring Robins, who served as mayor of Asheboro from 1906-1907. The Bunch house was constructed on a lot purchased from the heirs of Henry Robins' father Marmaduke, who had owned most of the land bounded by Worth, Main and Elm streets, which, in turn, had been the estate of Alfred Henry Marsh, a merchant who was an important figure in the early history of Asheboro. The house passed to John Bunch on Walter's death in 1961 (see Appendix B, Chain of Title). It passed out of Bunch family ownership in 1969. In 1978, the interior was converted into four rooms for rent. It was remodeled in 1996 and returned to its original single-family format.

Both the Bunch house and the Robins house were built by Thomas Jefferson Lassiter, a local contractor born in nearby Farmer. "Mr. Bunch will have a good substantial home," Asheboro's newspaper, *The Courier*, declared on August 7, 1919, while the house was under construction. Lassiter built many homes in Asheboro. Lassiter also was known for his expertise in the Bungalow style house, and developed an enterprise with Asheboro's Home Building and Materials Company in which complete houses were produced, shipped all over the southeast, and assembled under Lassiter's supervision. Shortly after completion of the Robins house, Lassiter relocated to Florida, where he worked as a contractor and real estate broker, and later became involved in the citrus industry. He was killed in a car wreck in Fort Pierce, Florida, in 1957.

The Bunch house sit at the crest of a hill, flanked by the Robins house to the south and another Colonial Revival house to the north at the corner of Worth and Main, this one also demonstrating elements of the Bungalow style.

## ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

The Bunch house is designed in the distinctive Colonial Revival architectural style. The Colonial Revival style emerged in the early 1800s. There are many identifying features which typically include a gabled roof, clapboard siding, a symmetrical façade, centered entrance, multi-paned windows and a side porch or sunroom. The Colonial Revival style was the domain of fashionable architectural firms and was the favorite for large homes of wealthy clients. Colonial Revival style homes were extremely popular from 1900 to 1950.

The Colonial Revival style developed as an expression of the reinvigorated spirit of American nationalism spurred on by the Centennial Exposition, held in Philadelphia in 1876. Recalling the straightforward, balanced design of Georgian and Federal buildings, with their symmetrical window placements and pronounced entrances, Colonial Revival homes are among the most popular and enduring styles in American architecture.

The Bunch house is squarely in the Colonial Revival tradition with its boxy mass. The rear façade features three additions: a bathroom on the left, a kitchen on the right and a screened porch (now glass) in the center (see Appendix C; Bunch House Floor Plan). The kitchen and restroom additions may be contemporaneous with the main house; a different roof line suggests the porch might have been added later. If these additions are not contemporaneous, the dates of addition are not known. The additions, however, are subservient and do not detract from the original core of the house. By 1978, the interior of the house had been modified to provide four living spaces in a rooming house arrangement. In 1996, the house was remolded back to its original design of a single family home. The front door is original, as are dining room windows on the north side and a stairwell window on the east (rear) side. The glass in the dormer windows above the front door also is original. Where windows have been replaced, the replacements do not detract from the historical appearance of the house. The house retains the majority of its original architectural design elements, materials and workmanship, giving it a high degree of originality and architectural integrity.

Although definitively a Colonial Revival structure, the Bunch House was built at a time when Craftsman and English Cottage design had taken root nationwide. Some details, such as the deep eaves, the hip roof, the squat, hip-roofed dormer, and the deep, wrap-around veranda solidly supported on square columns (a balustrade, originally present, has been removed), indicate significant Craftsman influence. Indeed the long, horizontal line of the veranda may suggest a hint of Prairie style.

The Bunch House sits in the middle of a row of three Colonial Revival houses built for prominent residents in the same period, with the Dr. J.V. Hunter House (ca. 1915) the Henry Moring Robins House (1924) on either side. The Hunter house especially shows significant Craftsman influence in its hip roof, deep eaves and deep porch, as well as in the exposed rafters under the eaves. Earlier houses on both sides of Main Street to both the north and south reflect a more classic Colonial Revival style. Asheboro at the time was undergoing an explosion of residential development as the modern concept of subdivision began to take hold. In subdivisions envisioned for the less well-to-do, bungalow and cottage style houses predominated. The Hunter, Bunch and Robins houses appear transitional between an era of individualized construction and era in which the economies of building houses with a common plan – as evidenced by the bungalow kits T.J. Lassiter developed with the Home Building and Materials Company – prevailed, even for the houses of prominent community members.

The National Register of Historic Places considers seven factors to determine if a building retains its architectural integrity: location, design, workmanship, materials, association, feeling and setting. Although local historic landmarks do not have to meet National Register standards, it is useful to consider a proposed landmark against those standards.

- **Location, feeling and setting.** The Bunch House sits in its original location, which itself is historic given its association with the previous owners of the property, Marmaduke Robins and Alfred Marsh. The surrounding houses retain much of their original appearances, and while some have been modernized, no modern houses have been built in the immediate neighborhood. The neighborhood is Asheboro's oldest, and in proximity to the old Courthouse Square. The yard of the Bunch House is expansive and contains several older trees. While not on the scale of the McCrary houses around the corner on Worth Street, the Bunch House is clearly that of a community leader of the era.
- **Design, workmanship, materials.** The solid Colonial Revival design with elements of Craftsman style reflect the aesthetic of builder T.J. Lassiter, constructing a house that is a step up from his more ordinary bungalows. Lassiter's workmanship is evident in such features as the original siding, triple casement windows and interior woodwork.
- **Association.** The house is associated with two consequential Asheboro mayors, Walter Anderson Bunch Jr. and John Charles Bunch, both of whom had significant influence on the development of Asheboro in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Based on National Register standards, the Walter A. Bunch Jr. House retains its architectural integrity.

## SOURCES

“Architectural Style Guide,” *Historic New England* (<https://www.historicnewengland.org/for-homeowners-communities/your-old-or-historic-home/architectural-style-guide>). Historic New England, 2020.

Bunch, W. Edward. Personal Interview by former homeowner Mark Carter. 5 April 2019.

Holt, Ross A. *Mayors of Asheboro: Thumbnail Biographies*. Randolph County—Asheboro—Mayors File, Randolph Room, Randolph County Public Library, Asheboro. N.C. 2016.

“The home of Mr. Walter Bunch....” *The Courier* (Asheboro, N.C.). 7 August 1919. 5.

“T.J. Lassiter, Randolph Native Killed in Wreck.” *The Courier-Tribune* (Asheboro, N.C.), 19 August 1957, B10.

“W.A. Bunch, Former Mayor, Succumbs Today,” *The Courier-Tribune* (Asheboro, N.C.). 1 May 1961, 1.

“Walter Anderson Bunch.” *North Carolina: The Old North State and The New*. Vol. III: *North Carolina Biography*. Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1941. 391-392.

Whatley, Lowell McKay Jr. *The Architectural History of Randolph County, North Carolina*. Asheboro, N.C.: City of Asheboro et. al., 1985.

# Appendix A: Walter A. Bunch House

## Designation Boundary



REID	44704	OWNER	
PIN	7751926417	ADDRESS2	
TAXED ACREAGE	0.39	OWNER CITY	ASHEBORO
PROPERTY DESCRIPTION	S MAIN ST,E	OWNER STATE	NC
DEED BOOK & PAGE	002678/00504	OWNER ZIP	27203
PLAT BOOK & PAGE		LOCATION ADDRESS	111 S MAIN ST
OWNER	KESTNER, FARON RUSSELL (KESTNER, BRITTANY POWERS)	LOCATION ZIP	ASHEBORO,27203
OWNER ADDRESS	111 S MAIN ST	DATA REFRESHED	2/9/2020



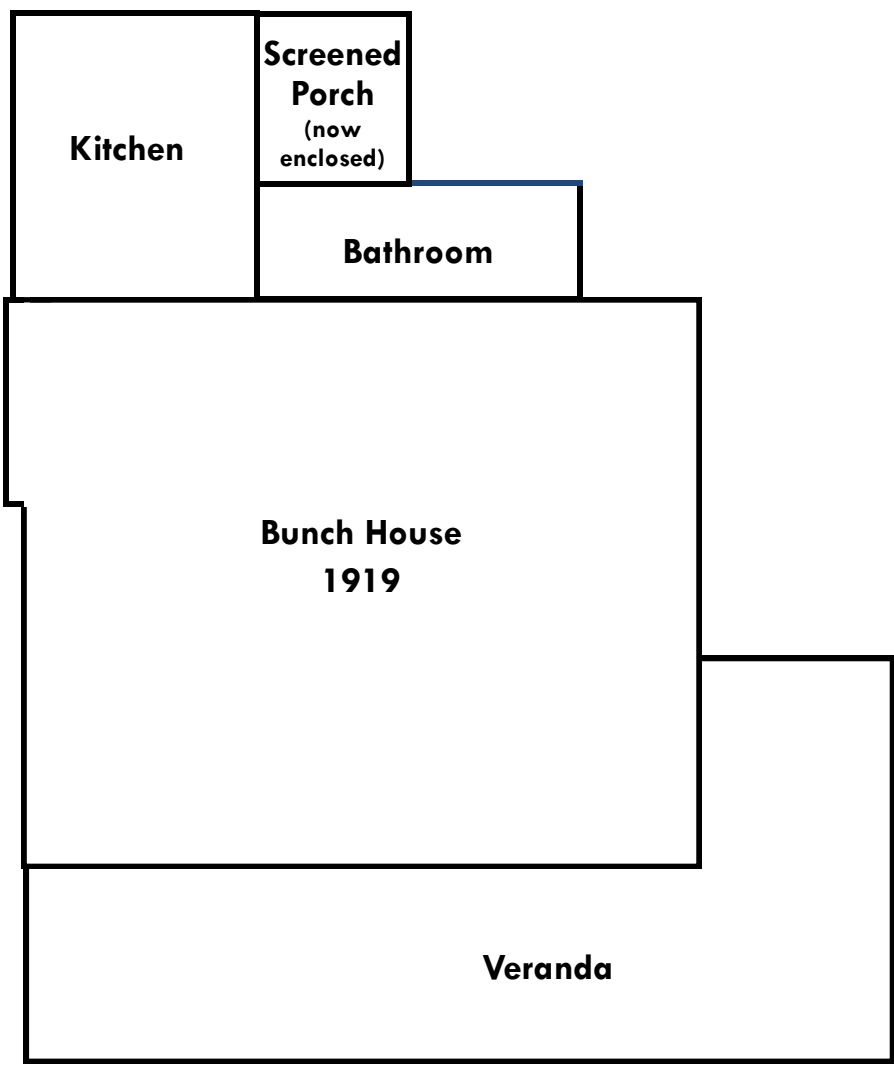
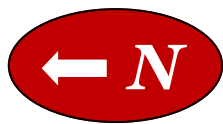
*Disclaimer: This map was compiled from recorded deeds, plats, and other public records and data. Users of this data are hereby notified that the aforementioned public information sources should be consulted for verification of the information. Randolph County, its agents and employees make no warranty as to the accuracy of the information on this map.*

Map Scale  
1 inch = 50 feet  
2/10/2020

## Appendix B: Chain of Title, Walter A. Bunch House

2019	DB 2678/504	Mark A. Carter and Katherine K. Carter to Faron Russell Kestner and Brittany Powers Kestner
2000	DB 1664/1270	Rory L. Lubic and Mary F. Lubic to Mark A. Carter and Katherine K. Carter
1993	DB 1373/485	Larry E. Plott and Maria S. Plott to Rory L. Lubic and Mary F. Lubic
1986	DB 1178/1737	Andorbar Inc. (formerly Dorothy Barnes Inc.) to Larry E. Plott and Maria S. Plott
1972	DB 1048/660	E.T. Walton and Clara B. Walton to Dorothy R. Barnes
1969	DB 1002/487	J.T. Carruthers, Trustee, and Gate City Savings and Loan to E.T. Walton
1969	DB 910/234	[Deed of Trust] John C. Bunch and Claudine C. Bunch to J.T. Carruthers, Trustee, and Gate City Savings and Loan Association
1961	DB 734/342	W.A. Bunch and Pattie L. Bunch to John C. Bunch and Claudine C. Bunch
1919	DB 173/419	Annie S. Robins; H.M. Robins and Maggie Lee Robins; Sidney S. Robins and Frances Robins; and Marmaduke Robins to Walter A. Bunch and Pat Bunch

# Appendix C: Walter A. Bunch House Floor Plan





# Bunch House: Tax Information

## and location within Asheboro



### Randolph County Tax Department

#### Property Summary

Data last updated on: 12/12/2019 Ownership current as of: 12/11/2019 Tax Year: 2020

REID 44704

PIN # 7751-92-8417

[Print Property Info](#)

[Search Results](#)

[New Search](#)

Location Address  
111 S MAIN ST

Property Description  
S MAIN ST E

Property Owner  
CARTER, MARK A; CARTER, KATHERINE D

Owner's Mailing Address  
PO BOX 4273  
ASHEBORO NC 27204

[Parcel](#)

[Buildings](#)

[Misc Improvements](#)

[Land](#)

[Deeds](#)

[Notes](#)

[Sales](#)

[Photos](#)

[Tax Bill](#)

[Map](#)

#### Administrative Data

Old Map#	
Market Area	5400
Township	ASHEBORO
Planning Jurisdiction	Asheboro
City	ASHEBORO
Fire District	
Spec District	Asheboro School
Land Class	SINGLE FAMILY RES
History REID 1	
History REID 2	
Acreage	0.39
Permit Date	
Permit #	

#### Transfer Information

Deed Date	06/15/2000
Deed Book	001664
Deed Page	01270
Revenue Stamps	0.00
Package Sale Date	06/15/2000
Package Sale Price	\$189,900
Land Sale Date	
Land Sale Price	

#### Improvement Summary

Total Buildings	1
Total Units	0
Total Living Area	3,166
Total Gross Leasable Area	0

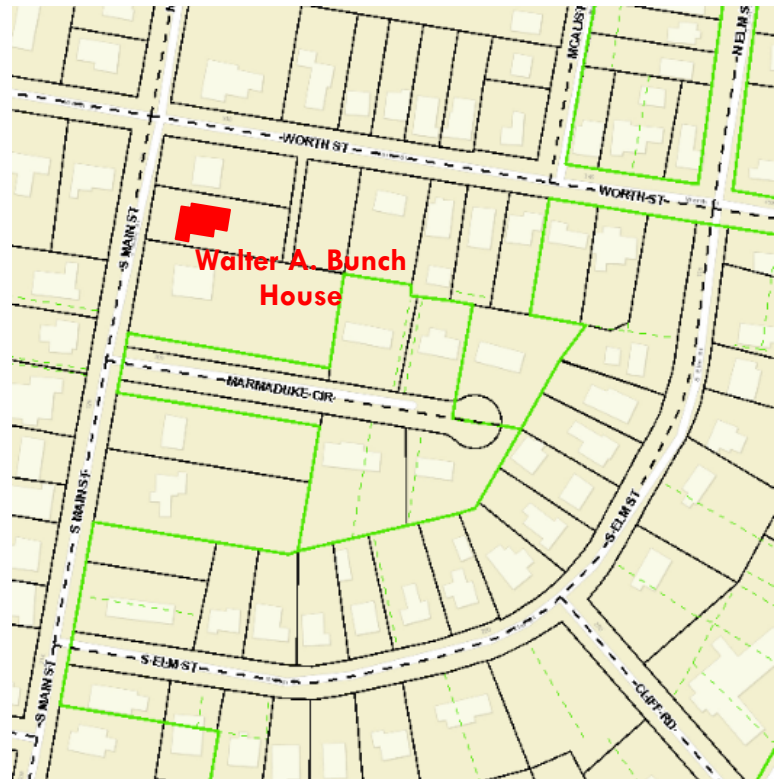
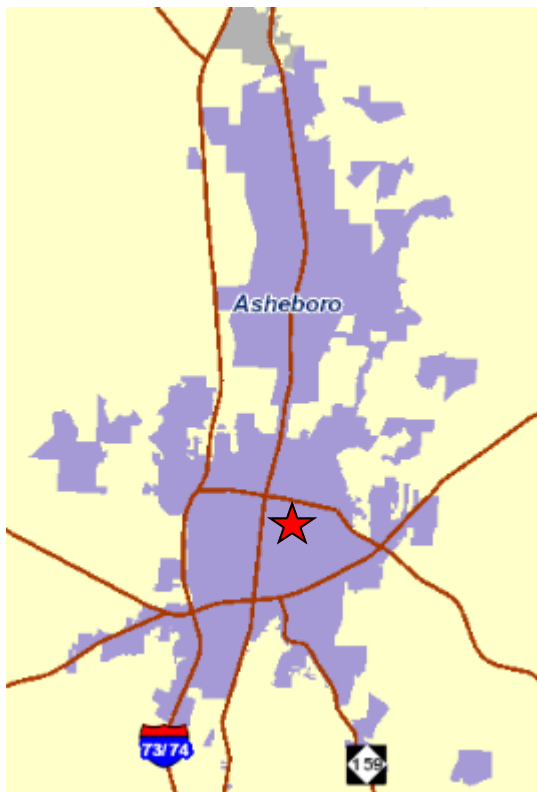
#### Property Value

Total Appraised Land Value	\$23,050
Total Appraised Building Value	\$180,170
Total Appraised Misc Improvements Value	

Other Exemptions	
Exemption Desc	

Use Value Deferred	
Historic Value Deferred	
Total Deferred Value	

Total Taxable Value	\$203,220
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## Walter A. Bunch House, 1919



*West (front) facade*

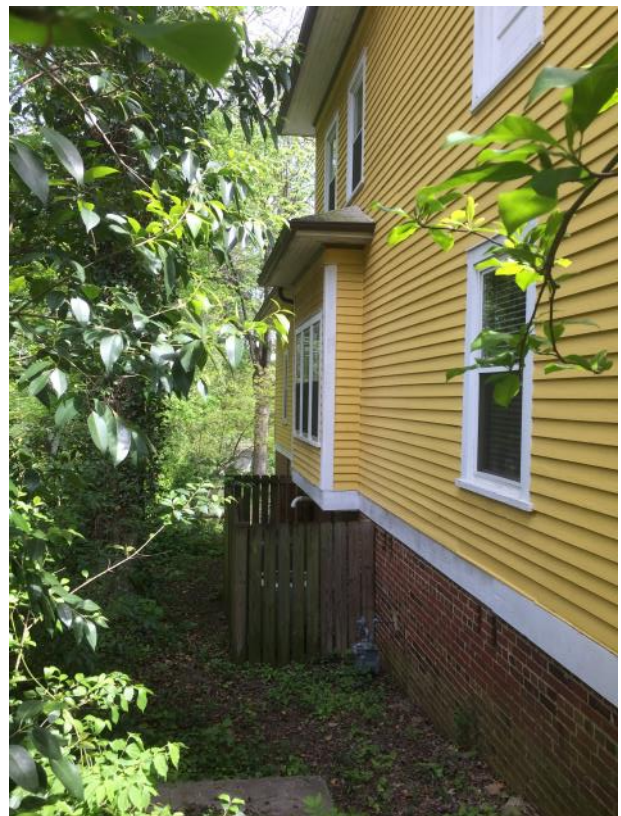




*East (rear) facade*

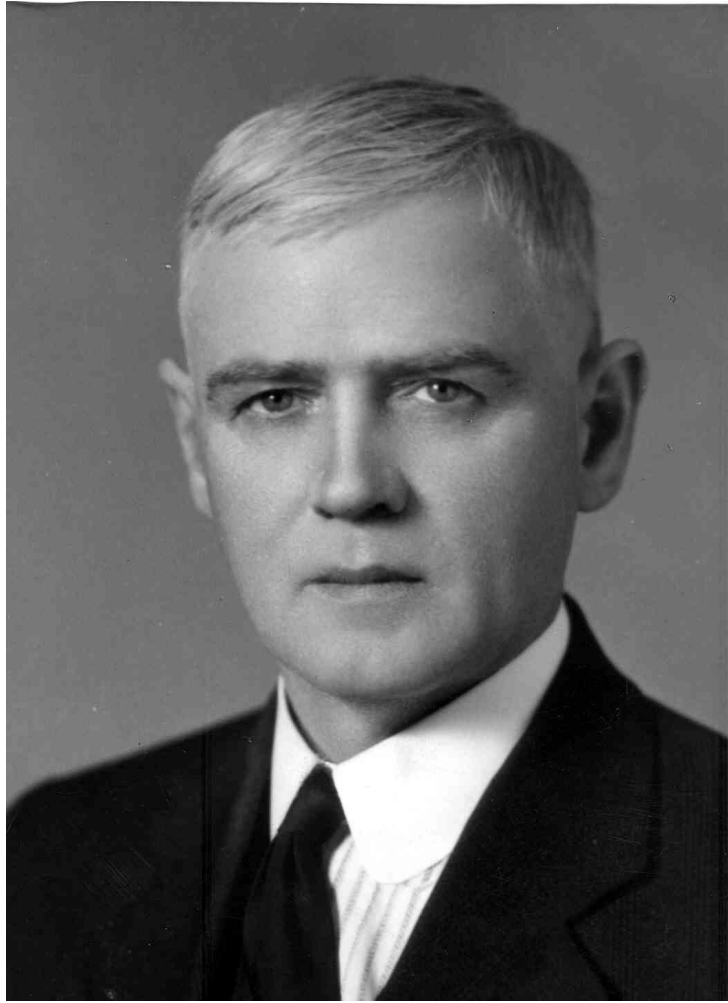


*South facade*



*North facade*





*Walter Anderson Bunch, Jr. (top) and John Charles Bunch (bottom).*