

FROM THE ARCHIVES ...

Taken from the National Register Nomination for NSHD

The single-family home at 912 North L St, was built in the Craftsman Style in 1909. The cost was \$3200; it was designed with six rooms and a bath. In addition, it featured a **Dutch kitchen**, and an upstairs balcony off the front bedroom.

It was the home of Leonard J. Brown, President and Manager, Tacoma Engraving Co., and his wife, Myrtle Soule, and their son and daughter.

Brown was a native of Washington Territory, having been born on a farm south of Olympia in 1873. His father taught in the first school in Olympia. When he was not teaching, the elder Brown worked as an explorer for the government, and as such became one of the first white men to go into the Lake Chelan District.

Leonard attended the first Olympia School, and then studied at the Olympia Collegiate Institute.

As a boy growing up in Olympia, Leonard had the distinction of serving as an office aide to the first governor of Washington State, Elisha P. Ferry. Ferry used to have Leonard sit down and listen while he practiced his speeches.



912 N L St.

Leonard came to Tacoma in the early 1890's to attend Puget Sound College. He managed to work his way through school by selling illustrations he drew in a studio he had created in his dorm room. For 18 years he made his living illustrating, then bought an interest in the Tacoma Engraving Company.

What is a "Dutch kitchen?"

Marshall McClintock explains - -

The first thing to understand is that "**Dutch kitchen**," as used above, is realtor-hype. It was as truthful in 1909 as it is today. So, what we're really talking about here is a 1909 kitchen ... period.

But here's what I'd guess they were trying to call out by using that term. It probably had built-in cabinets like we have today in kitchens. In 1909 that would have been a new thing. Most kitchens had furniture pieces that provided storage, and built-in cabinetry was typically found only in the 'butler's pantry.' Efficient use of space was something meant by "Dutch" even today. Going with that same idea, I'm guessing that this "Dutch kitchen" was probably designed more for use by the owner family, as opposed to paid help. There might even have been a built-in breakfast nook, suggesting you might actually eat in the kitchen, and not the dining room!

By 1909 there was a 'servant crisis', meaning there were fewer and fewer people willing to enter 'service' due to better paying jobs elsewhere.

Better-off folks, except the more wealthy, were switching to maids and cooks who came to the house on a daily schedule, and lived elsewhere.

So, how do you turn this trend in kitchens into a selling point? Why, this fine new house provides a "Dutch kitchen" that is pleasantly but efficiently designed with copious storage right at hand, to give a time-saving but pleasant place to "spend time" - never 'work', of course. . .

I seriously doubt there was anything specifically "Dutch" about this kitchen. It was just a way to call out positively the changes that were generally taking place in home-building.