



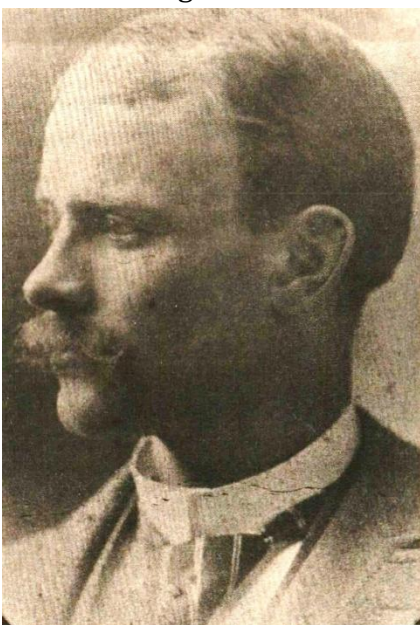
Richland Observer photo.

Levi H. and Myrtle Bancroft House, 277 N. Sheldon Street.

Designed in the Dutch Colonial Revival style with a gambrel roof, flared eaves and dormers, this house was the home of Levi H. Bancroft and Myrtle (DeLap) Bancroft.

The Dutch Colonial Revival style is distinguished by its gambrel roof, with or without flared eaves, and the frequent use of dormers. It was popular from around 1890 to 1930 in its various forms. A typical Victorian form from 1890 to 1900 was often cross-gabled with accompanying excesses including bric-a-brac (note original roof framing), columns for porches and entry, and fish scale siding. The gambrel style allowed an almost complete second floor without the expense of two-story construction.

Levi Horace Bancroft was born in Bear Valley Wisconsin on Dec. 26, 1861 and died in 1948. He attended Lone Rock high school and attended the University of Wisconsin, graduating with a law degree in 1884.



Levi H. Bancroft as a young man.

Levi Bancroft had a long legal and political career and was a well-known lawyer in the first half of the twentieth century. He first came to fame as the defense attorney in the infamous Rose Zoldoske murder case. Rose Zoldoske was eventually found guilty of poisoning Ella Maly, a rival for the affection of Dr. Mitchell. After six years of prison time, Governor Upham pardoned her on the last day of his term in office.

He was elected District Attorney for Richland County in 1888, served as County Judge from 1897 to 1902, served two terms in the Wisconsin Assembly, Attorney General of Wisconsin 1910 to 1912, Circuit Judge of the Fifth Judicial District of Wisconsin 1924 to 1932, and County Judge for Richland County a second time from 1938 to 1948. He also was Mayor of Richland Center and served on the committee that directed the construction of the Wisconsin capitol building.

Levi Bancroft was well-known as an orator and served as a representative of the State of Wisconsin at a number of national occasions. He was a staunch Republican and fought a number of political battles with prominent Richland County Progressives Judge Pearl Lincoln and Ada James.



Judge Bancroft and Frank Lloyd Wright. Randy Manning photo collection.

Another client of Judge Bancroft was the famous architect, Frank Lloyd Wright. Bancroft represented Wright in the nasty, well publicised divorce from his second wife Miriam Noel.

On June 11, 1890, Judge Bancroft and Miss Myrtle DeLap were married. She was the daughter of Richland Center's pioneer physician Dr. Robert H. DeLap, M.D. The children of this union were Carolyn, born in May of 1891, and Blaine, born in August of 1895.

Myrtle DeLap Bancroft was an artist of some talent. She studied painting at the Chicago Art Institute and had completed approximately 40 portraits of friends, relatives and noted persons. She was well-known in her time for painting portraits of governors, senators, judges and many prominent citizens of Wisconsin and the United States. Some of her subjects included Senator Isaac Stephenson; Supreme Court Justice Samuel Crawford; Governor Edward Schofield; Judge Frank Gilbert; Judge George A. Shaughnessy of Milwaukee; Charles F. Pfister,

Milwaukee Hotel man; and Supreme Court Justice R.D. Marshall.

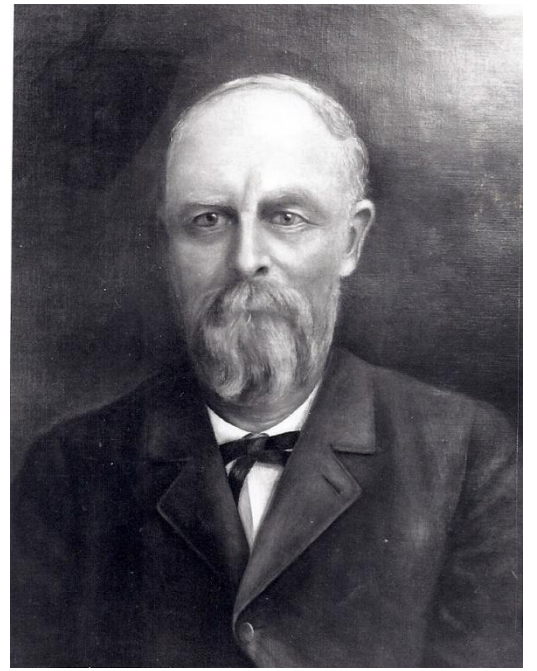
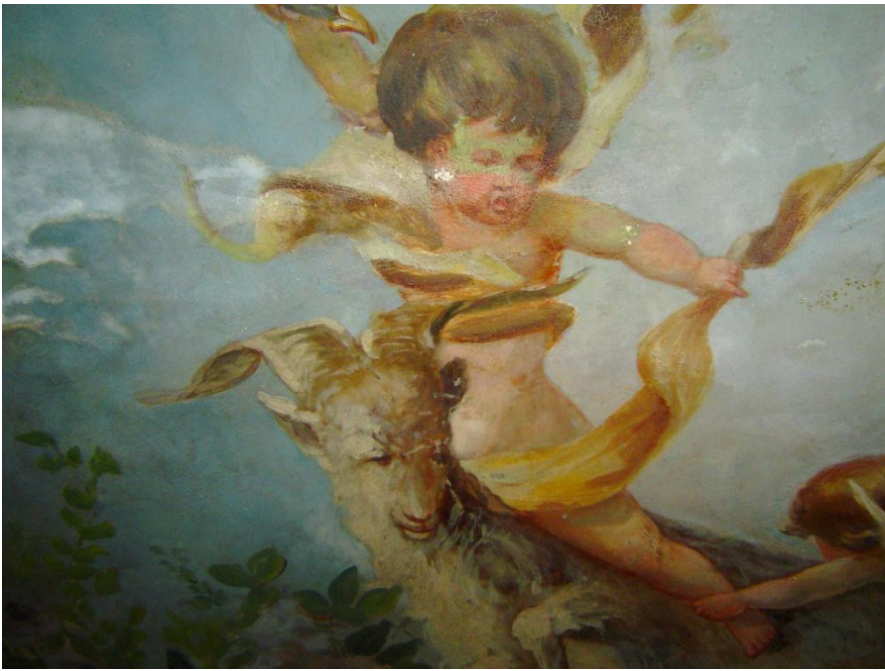


Myrtle DeLap Bancroft.

In 1901 she painted a portrait of Governor Robert M. LaFollette which hung in the state capitol. This portrait was purchased by Governor Walter Kohler to ensure it would not leave Wisconsin. It was then presented to the State Historical Society where it hung in a conspicuous space at the head of the main stairway. Subsequently, Bancroft heirs asked it be returned and the Historical Society acquiesced. Its current whereabouts remains a mystery.

There are a number of Myrtle Bancroft paintings still in Richland Center including portraits of W.H. Pier and F.P. Bowen.

Another feature of this house is the painting on the ceiling in the mother-in-law suite located on the south side of the building. The painting is of a cherub riding a goat which was salvaged from the 1904 fire that destroyed the Wisconsin State Capitol.



State Capitol Cherub and Frederick P. Bowen portrait.



Levi H. Bancroft; middle photo right, Myrtle Delap Bancroft; and Rose Zoldoske.