

**An INTERVIEW with BRIAN FINCH**  
about his historic house at 502 Calhoun Street  
for which he and Bill Hawse received the 2013 Award for Preservation.

***How long have you lived in this house?***

Two years; we moved in April 2011.

***What made you choose it?***

All of the natural wood work present inside the house – the original hardwood floors in almost every room, window and door moldings and the crown moldings on the first floor. The attention to detail the builder put into the house, which you will not find in the new construction of today. We have a deep respect for older homes and we even told our realtor we only wanted to look at houses built in the early 1900s.

***Do you know anything about the architect, builder and/or past owners?***

We are fortunate to know the entire history of the house, including who the builder was. In fact, we even spoke with the builder's great-granddaughter while we were researching the history of the house.

*(Editor: Finch and Hawse and their house were the subject of a [South Bend Tribune article](#) by Becky Emmons; Sept. 10, 2011)*

The builder was John Henry Wiekamp (father of local businessman and philanthropist Darwin Wiekamp), who operated a construction firm called "J. H. Wiekamp & Sons". The house was not a catalog/mail order house-kit. We believe John Henry Wiekamp was the architect as well – we believe our house was one of several house designs that Mr. Wiekamp sold to his clients when building homes.

The lumber used for construction came from Lowe Brothers Lumber Company's Mishawaka Lumber yard (I believe the lumber yard was located near present-day downtown Mishawaka) – one of the basement rafters still has a visible stamp that reads: "Lowe Bros Lumber Co."

Some info about the previous owners that I don't think was mentioned in the Becky Emmons article: the original owner, Wilfred Dudding, was a well-known local singer. Mr. Dudding often performed at local dance halls in South Bend and Mishawaka; he also sung at company picnics. Mr. Dudding had the house built as his wedding gift for his bride, Gladyce Doolittle. Wilfred and Gladyce Dudding were married in June 1912, and construction of the house was finished in early July 1912. On the evening of July 13, 1912, a surprise party for Wilfred and Gladyce was held at the house to celebrate their June wedding and their new house.

The Dudding family lived in the house until 1945. From 1945-57, the house changed hands several times. In 1957, the Gautier family moved in and lived here until 1994. Then it was purchased by a dean from Indiana University-South Bend. In 2010, the folks who live across the street (Lyman Samuel and Cathy Ganser) bought it under their company name, Calet Partnership, and they flipped it. Then the house was sold to us in April 2011.

***What is your favorite feature about the home?***

Being an old house lover, all of the typical old-house characteristics the house offers; such as the hardwood floors, the window, door and crown moldings, the built-ins, the solid and sturdy construction of the house. The big living room fireplace and the huge front porch.

***Has the house offered you any surprises over the years?***

Unfortunately, there have not been any fun surprises over the years. Some neat things are still present however; in the basement there are still pulleys hanging from the basement rafters that were used with the original coal heating system.

***Any special story about your time in it? Any strong memories to share?*** When we were researching the history of the house, we met the son of the original owners: Dick Dudding. Dick's parents sold the house in 1945 while he was serving in WWII; he was not aware his parents were going to sell the house. His last memory of the house was leaving to go off to war. When Dick returned home from war, his childhood home had already been sold and after that he occasionally drove down Calhoun Street past the house, keeping tabs on how the current owners of his childhood home were keeping up the house.

Hearing this background about Dick, we invited him, his wife, children and grand-children to come see the house. In August 2011, Dick and his family visited the house. He was in tears when he walked through the front door – he told us it was the first time he had been 'home' since he left for the war in the '40s, and that he never expected to set foot inside the house again. We spent that afternoon with Dick and his family and he shared his childhood memories of the house and neighborhood with Bill and me. It was a wonderful day.

***What project in the house are you the proudest of?***

The house was in such excellent condition when we purchased it, there was very little that Bill and I did to the house itself – other than decorating the home into our personal tastes. We did however put a lot of work into the yard; it's an on-going re-landscaping project of ours.

***Any future projects planned?***

Landscaping the yard; we would love to replace the current concrete walkways with brick walkways. Another plan is to take the unfinished basement space and create a family room and den that would mimic the original charm and integrity of the first and second floors of the house.

***How do you feel about your neighborhood?***

Battell Park/The Oaks is a very lovely neighborhood to reside in. It's a place where all of the neighbors are close-knit, where people take great pride in their well-kept lawns and look out for each other's homes at all times. It is a place where the Moms on the street act as second Moms to all the neighborhood children. We are very happy to be here. ::

Gathered and edited by  
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