

Fourteen years ago, Mike and Lisa Hummert found a top quality house for their growing family. They've been keeping it in tiptop shape ever since.

With their third child on the way in 1986, the Hummerts started looking for something larger than their two-bedroom bungalow. They looked and looked and had almost given up hope about finding a house they liked.

But as soon as they saw the reception hall of the August and Matilda Stroot house at 433 N. 20th, they knew it was the house for them.

"It was hard not to fall in love with it," Lisa said. "It's very homey. We liked the roominess and openness. We like the light and the wood."

Mike recognized the "fantastic carpentry work" on the stair case, the living room bookcases and built-in dining room

They had always wanted an older brick home, and this Prairie-style house was "top quality."

"The doors — they are so solid compared to new houses we looked at," Lisa said.

Architect Martin Geise's specifications to the contractor said the entire job is to be perfect in every respect.

The specifications called for "the best quarter-sawn red oak" on the first floor and "the best clear hard maple" for the kitchen floor. Geise called for "the best Damhorst brick" and "first quality" rubble work for the exterior.

Over the past 14 years, the Hummerts have been dedicated to keeping their historic home top quality. Because the house had been so well kept by the Stroot family, the Hummerts only had to do some freshening up and updating.

Mike worked his way through college at Fischer Builders, so with Lisa's help, he was able to do most of the work himself. The work included putting new fixtures and ceramic tile in the bathrooms.

When they moved in, there wasn't a single cabinet in the large kitchen. There is a large butler's pantry, which originally included an "icebox room," but the Hummerts wanted a more efficient kitchen.

Mike said they did the "destruction" or gutting themselves, and hired Fischer Builders to do the rest. They used tall oak cabinets with a simple design to match the simplicity of the house's Prairie-style interior.

With help from their families, they stripped all the butler's pantry cypress

cabinets and all the kitchen trim and stained it to match the oak cabinets.

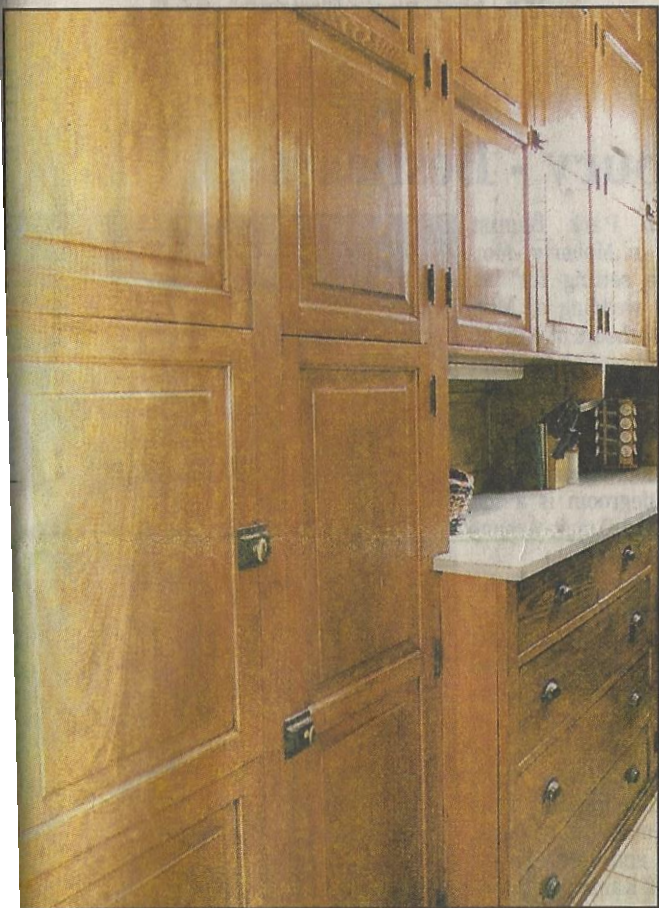
In the rest of the house, they just had to decorate to satisfy their taste which includes the natural colors that the Prairie School architects favored.

On the main floor, they left all the oak window trim exposed and put Nantucket veined sheer blinds on the downstairs windows to keep the rooms light and airy.

Recently, the Hummerts finished another "weekend warrior" project. They pried up the linoleum from the large upstairs landing, sanded, stained and put polyurethane on the yellow pine floors.

Preserving their home is a continual job, but the Hummerts don't mind it. They are just now on their "second go-around" of freshening up the inside.

"We like keeping our house neat," Lisa said. "We can really enjoy the before and after."



### AT A GLANCE

- **Original owner:** August C. and Matilda Stroot.
- **Architect:** Martin Geise.
- **Date of Construction:** 1917.
- **Special features:**
  - ✓ Low-pitched hip roof with wide overhanging eaves with triangular braces.
  - ✓ Tapestry brick.
  - ✓ Centered partial porch with brick supports and limestone toppers.
  - ✓ Centered front door with side-lights and transoms.
  - ✓ Limestone and decorative brick belt course below second-story windows.
  - ✓ Back porch on the first and second story.