

WITCHET REMODELING

"Turning old into new again!"

By Judi E. Loomis

When Sam Lipscomb and his crew from Witchet Remodeling tackle a remodeling job on an old house, or for any ancient structure, they look at it as a challenge. For the past 27 years Lipscomb has been delighting homeowners who appreciate the originality of their home and want it restored to its natural polish and beauty.

"I would estimate that we have probably renovated over a dozen historical homes since we started the company," Lipscomb says. "We totally remodeled and returned the historic beauty to the Bartling's one room school house, and while that was a big job, the results are absolutely wonderful. Right now we are working on renovating another historical home in South Whitley off of State Road 14. We are totally restoring that home back to its original dwelling."

Lipscomb enjoys what he does and appreciates the relationships he has built with homeowners over the years. Did he plan to be an historical remodeler all his life? As he puts it, it was almost by accident.

"When I got out of the service I almost fell into the trade," adds Lipscomb. "I always wondered what I would be when I grew up and never figured it out. After being in the military I did know what I did not want to do. I was fortunate enough to fall into the trade and had some good mentors that helped me get my head together and found something I loved and stayed with it."

As Lipscomb says, "Anybody can build a house. Remodeling presents a lot more challenges because you don't want it to look remodeled when you are finished. You want it to look like it has always been part of the home. Also, when you remodel you want to take the character of the people you are working with and blend it into their new remodeled surroundings."

Lipscomb generally has a three man crew, especially during the winter months. They work on a property until they have to wait on another subcontractor (electrical, plumbing, heating and cooling), to get their portion of the remodel done. Lipscomb hires subcontractors who are affiliated with remodeling versus new building because he believes renovating old homes requires a special skill.

"New home builders are a little more independent," says Lipscomb. "They generally offer the homeowner plans A, B, and C, and unless you get into the \$400 and \$500 thousand dollar

homes they are pretty straight forward plans.”

The name of Lipscomb’s company is as unique as the construction they perform. The word “witchet” relates to some of the very same tools that were used back in Roman times.

“Witchet” is an early 19th Century tool that made square pegs round,” adds Lipscomb. “When they made post and beam construction they would take a green piece of wood, carve it down and pound it into the structure joining the pieces together. That’s the way it started, and that’s the type of tool they used.”

Some of the more challenging projects Lipscomb has worked on involved lifting roofs off of old structures, refurbishing them, and lowering them back on.

“I really don’t look at those jobs as tough, it’s more challenging and fun,” Lipscomb says. “When I remodeled the Bartling’s old school house I had to cut the beam that held the slate roof up in order to lower the ceiling, and it was a major support beam. Linnea Bartling, one of the owners, was so nervous she didn’t even show up that day. But, we had scaffolding up there supporting the beam, and we really did know what we were doing.”

Witchet Remodeling
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Call for an appointment

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