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CABIN IN THE WOODS

NANCY GREEN/THE STAR-HERALD

Bethel Hill, home of Tom and Susan Bailey, located off Highway 35 north of Kosciusko in the area of Bethel Methodist Church.

Bethel Hill a 'dream come true' for Attala native

By Nancy Green
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Three-in-one best describes Dr. Tom Bailey's log cabin, Bethel Hill. It took shape from log cabins transported from Kentucky Lake, Tennessee, and assembled into an impressive residence in Attala County.

The cabin is the culmination of a dream Attala County native Bailey has carried during his 38-year career in veterinary medicine.

"Here is where I want to be," he said as he and his wife Susan showed their home located off Highway 35 north of Kosciusko, in the vicinity of Bethel Methodist Church.

He said his dream of returning to Attala County never faded as his career took him all over the world.

The cabin could be appropriately called a jigsaw puzzle as it was put together from a dogtrot, a second cabin and logs salvaged from another. Bailey located the cabins near Kentucky Lake and in Big Sandy, Tenn. One dates to 1860 and details in the construction of another dates it to the 1700s. A fire had slightly damaged one of the cabins, but logs were salvaged and used in the assembly.

Each structure was dismantled and each log numbered. In August 2014, a truck carrying the logs arrived at the Attala County site.

John Reynolds with J & K Custom Builders was the mastermind in the assembly, according to Bailey. He had the foundation ready when the truck arrived.

No matter how much you plan, draw or create, first day it all flies out the window, Bailey said in telling of the cabin's assembly. He was quick to praise Reynolds for having the answers and knowledge in making everything come together in the puzzle.

Entry is made to an open and spacious living area. It is here where the first of the couple's planning and collecting is seen.

Hanging above a long table, which the couple crafted from pine boards, is a light fixture, which Bailey said is a tribute to his grandfather Homer Brett. It features a wagon wheel reminiscent of the farm and his granddad hauling logs to Vaiden. Parts from a horse harness and other items contribute to the fixture, which is a conversation piece. His grandmother's 1876 pie safe dominates a wall in the dining area. Scales used to weigh cotton hang nearby from a horse tie ring.

A combination storage and utility room separates the living area from master bedroom and bath. The barn door with glass panels leading into the bedroom once served at the entry of a church in Sioux Falls, S.D. The door opens and closes by means of a metal slide.

Tin panels taken from the roof of an abandoned shed on the grounds are used on two walls of the bedroom. Wainscoting is from flooring in the original cabin. Doors on each side of the bedroom open to porches. Most doors were salvaged from structures in Iowa.

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Tom and Susan Bailey (right) with John Reynolds, who is credited by Bailey as being the mastermind in the assembly of two cabins and logs from another to create the finished cabin.

A loft bedroom and bath complete the living space of the cabin. A hand turned railing outlining the loft was fashioned from trees on the acreage surrounding the cabin.

Several pheasant trophies indicate Bailey's interest in hunting.

The couple formerly lived in Sioux Falls, S.D., but now live in Spencer, Iowa, as they continue to work toward completion of the cabin.

" I have 38 good years in veterinary medicine," Bailey said. Before joining Encore, a pharmaceutical company, he taught at Mississippi State University and Virginia Tech.

His work has taken him to dairies in 45 of the 50 states, to South Africa, Spain, Panama, Dominican Republic, Canada and other areas around the world.

"Here is where I want to be. At Bethel Hill, " said Bailey. He is the son of the late Thomas and Mildred Brett Bailey.

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(from left) One of the cabins brought from Kentucky Lake, Tennessee; wagon wheel light fixture, a tribute to grandfather Homer Brett; bedroom wall paneled with tin; living space combined with kitchen and dining.