McDOWELL DR. AND MRS. TONY AND JANET ROSS

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Neighbors

Family finds dream in 'new,' old home

By Joetta Sack Journal Staff Writer

Tony and Janet Ross had always dreamed of buying and restoring an old house. But when they moved to Brentwood, they found their only choices were antebellum mansions or new homes.

"There aren't many old homes in Brentwood," Janet Ross said, adding that her husband, a family physician, wanted to stay close to his office in Brentwood.

Like many families, the Rosses built a new home. Although the family was happy in the home, it lacked character, Janet Ross said.

They recently fulfilled their dream of owning an old home when they purchased a 100-yearold farmhouse on Murray Lane.

"When this came available, we thought it would be great to own an old house in the middle of Brentwood," Ross said. "We fell in love with it."

She immediately began calling historical societies and the city of Brentwood for information on the house's history, but surprisingly, there was no record of the house in historical files.

"It was a shock to me when they called and said 'We have an old house," " Linda Lynch, community relations director for the city of Brentwood, said, "We didn't realize it was even in the city."

She eventually contacted local historian T. Vance Little to help search for the history of the house.

The two are currently searching for information through deeds, Little said. The prior owners, Bob and Suzanne Roddy, had also researched deeds and compiled a list of previous owners.

Little recently discovered that the house was actually built on the site of another home which burned.

That house was probably built about 1840. Little believes. No one is sure when the present home was



"Before we bought the house, we had a man who specializes in old houses inspect it." Ross said. After inspecting the foundation, "he thought it was built around 1890."

"It is shown on an 1878 map I have," Little said. "I don't know whether it was this house or the previous one."

The house was located on the old road to Franklin, called the "Middle Road," which is now Granny White Pike. This route was often taken by Andrew Jackson and other travelers because it went by Granny White's original house faced toward that

Ross believes she has found the found guilty. remains of the original road in the . The house has since passed wooded area next to the house. through many hands, but has been care of." Suzanne Roddy had also found a kept in good condition through the

"We're going to go back there and mark it this fall," Ross said.

The present home was originally owned by J.P. McDowell, an early sculer of Brentwood, McDowell bought the property, which then contained 258 acres, in 1873.

In 1877, according to court records. McDowell sued several preserve it," she said. "We don't neighbors for \$5,000 in a fracas over a hog, "In January 1877, with fist, sticks, guns, and other weapons they beat McDowell and wounded him so badly that he was added, noting that the four main tavern, Little said. He believed the confined for a month," according to a lawsuit filed in November 1877. Five of the six men sued were metic work, but not change the

cemetery with unmarked graves. the house and installed a heating and cooling system

house, and brought it up to the 20th century," Ross said.

nal structure.

Ross said she planned to redecorate, but was adamant not to alter the original structure of the house. "It goes against my grain not to

ever want to change the original

"It doesn't look like the original structure has been changed," she rooms are completely symmetrical. "We're going to do some major cosstructure."

"For its age, its been well taken

Each of the original rooms had a

years. Its previous owners rewired fireplace, she said, but two have room, master bedroom, and bathbeen closed off in recent years.

"I'd give anything if I could uti- ago. "They did a lot of work to the lize them, but I know it would be so costly," Ross said.

"The kitchen will be our biggest project," she said. "I'm a big cook, at the house from the road, you and we need it to be just a little more functional."

Several times, previous owners added more rooms to the original five-room house. One addition of two bedrooms was apparently built on a back porch in the 1950s, Ross said, pointing out the sloping ceilings and uneven floors.

"There was probably a back porch, and they just built on.

"If you don't love old houses, this stuff would bug you," she said, adding that her friends thought she was crazy to buy the house.

Another addition, with a family

room, was added about 10 years

Ross calls it a "potpourri of a house."

"The nice thing is when you look can't tell it's been added on," she

"It will never look like a new, modern house, and we don't want it

Because of the remodeling and additions, the house will not be eligible for the National Historic Register, but will be registered in the Brentwood Historic Trust, which was formed in March.

Ross said she hopes to pass the house on to their two children, Adam, 6, and Ellen, 3,

"We felt like this was the sort of house you'd want to be in forever."



their new, old home. Above, this view shows how well the additions blend in to the origi-



