

## The Decline of a Community

The community at Gladie was built on logging and ironically also contributed to its decline. Flooding of the Red River, partially attributed to mass logging, was devastating. Flooding created great hardship for families relying on subsistence farming.



*Mass Logging in the Red River Gorge*

With the decline of the timber industry, many of the families that once called Gladie home began leave the area in search of new fortunes elsewhere. Some residents would remain until the early 1950's. One such family was the Gibbs. When the Gibbs left, the cabin would later be occupied by a few others and then used for storage.



*Gladie Cabin 1950's*



*Gladie Cabin during restoration*

## Forest Service

It was not until 1987 that the U.S. Forest Service acquired the Gladie cabin and surrounding land. The restoration of the cabin would begin in 1988; it was a tremendous undertaking with the help of numerous community members and volunteers. While restoring the cabin it was discovered that the cabin had been dismantled and moved to its current location at an unknown date. The cabin remains original with the exception of some logs that had to be removed and replaced. Logs from nearby barns and cabins were used as replacements and are clearly marked with aluminum tags.

## Visiting the Cabin today

Today visitors can get a glance into the past while visiting the Gladie Historic site. Visitors are also encouraged to view other points of interest on the grounds such as the display barn, the moonshine still, and sorghum mill. Visitors may also see the original sunburst quilt, try some weaving on the loom, and learn to play an Appalachian dulcimer in the Gladie Visitor Center.

## For more information

Gladie Visitor Center  
3451 Sky Bridge Road  
KY 715  
Stanton, KY 40380  
606-663-8100

Daniel Boone National Forest  
Supervisor's Office  
1700 Bypass Road  
Winchester, KY 403891  
859-745-3100

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# Gladie Creek Historic Site

## Daniel Boone National Forest



*Gladie Historic Cabin*



*Gladie Cabin before Restoration*



U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Forest Service  
Southern Region

2014



*Historic Gladie Cabin*

## Introduction

Visitors to the Red River Gorge have the fortune to view one of the few remaining historic log cabins in Kentucky. The picturesque Gladie cabin seen today has gone through many transformations. After considerable and ongoing restoration efforts from volunteers and Forest Service employees, visitors can now experience what life was once like on Gladie Creek.

## Settlement

One of the first families to settle in the Gladie Creek area was the Ledfords. They moved from Harlan County to Menifee County in the mid 1870's. The Ledfords were responsible for the construction of the Gladie Cabin. Cabins at this time were hand crafted by their owners. Construction of a cabin would begin with the felling of chestnut trees, which were then hand hewn with a broad axe. Next, the spaces between the logs were chinked using a mixture of mud and grass. Finally, bolts of white oak were hand split to make shingles that were used to roof the cabin. Fireplaces, which were the primary source for heat and cooking, were painstakingly laid by hand.

## Livelihood

Subsistence farming was the livelihood of the Ledfords. Subsistence farmers made or grew most everything they owned. Livestock was essential. Chickens were raised for eggs, hogs for meat, cows for milk, sheep for wool, and mules for plowing the land.

To feed the livestock, large quantities of corn were grown in the area's fertile soil. Corn was also ground into meal for cornbread and other food items. What little money they had come from selling surplus corn, tobacco, and sorghum cane. Livestock was also sold or traded for goods which could not be made.



*Feeding the hogs with corn*

For fresh vegetables, families would grow a garden with tomatoes, beans, peas, squash, cucumbers, potatoes, and cabbage. Seeds would be saved and replanted the next year.

In the event of a flood or drought, a family would turn to hunting wild game and gathering wild plants to supplement their diet. Wild plants were also gathered and used for medicinal purposes. For instance ginseng was often used to soothe an upset stomach or help with fatigue. Other commonly collected medicinal plants included bloodroot and yellow root.

## Everyday activities

Everyday activities were quite different than those of today. Families needed to be as self-sufficient as possible. This required hard work from every member of the family.

Daily chores would often include tending to crops and livestock, gardening, quilting, cooking, cleaning, preserving food, and chopping wood among many others. Some families even did their own blacksmithing.

Store bought clothes were hard to come by, therefore wool sheared from sheep would be spun into thread, weaved into cloth on a loom, and sewed into clothing by hand.

Red River Gorge settlers also had to create their own entertainment. Singing and dancing accompanied by instruments such as the dulcimer, fiddle, and banjo were very popular. Storytelling was also common and has deep roots in eastern Kentucky culture.



*Stella Ledford*



*Dana Lumber Company*

## A Community Begins

From the 1880's to the 1920's logging was the major industry in the Red River Gorge. Loggers and their families settled along Gladie Creek. The mouth of Gladie Creek became a community gathering center with a school, a post office, a small store, a cemetery. Members of the community would often attend church services, dance workings, corn shuckings, and other events.



*Gladie Schoolhouse*

By 1900, the Gladie Creek property was owned by Joseph B. Ledford, who inherited it from his uncle, James Ledford. In 1901 Joseph's daughter Nellie married Stanle Gibbs and moved into the Gladie cabin. Nellie served as a teacher in the one room school house. The Gibbs were responsible for building the addition and framing seen in the 1950's photo. The framing helped preserve the existing cabin.