

The Land Between the Lakes Heritage Geocache Challenge 2025 Grocery Stores in LBL

In each geocache box, you should find a sign in sheet, date logbook and 150 aluminum tree tags. We have stamped each tag with numbering specific to that cache location. Collect 1 tree tag per geocache from each of the 7 locations.

- Bring your 7 different tree tags to the Golden Pond Visitor Center.
- Exchange them for a special Challenge Coin created just for this event.
- For extra bragging rights, each Challenge Coin is individually numbered from 1-150.
- Once participants have redeemed all tree tags and collected all Challenge Coins, this years geocache challenge ends.
- After closing the challenge, we collect the boxes to prepare for next years event.

Contact Chris Thornock with any suggestions and comments 270-924-2015 or christopher.thornock@usda.gov



GEOCACHING

Congratulations, you've found it! (Intentionally or not)

It's part of a worldwide game loved by GPS (Global Positioning System) users who are on the internet. It's like a scavenger hunt—its called geocaching. A GPS user hides a "treasure" (this container) and publishes the exact coordinates so other GPS users can go on a "treasure hunt" to find it.

IF YOU FOUND THIS CONTAINER BY ACCIDENT
Great! You can join us! We only ask:

- Please don't move or vandalize the container. The real fun is just finding it and recording the visit.
- Go ahead and take something if you like. But also leave something too.

www.geocaching.com

Please respect and protect our local heritage by leaving all the cultural material in its current location. Do not remove or disturb the artifacts.



Payne's General Store



Mrs. Rowena Payne opened her grocery store in the 1920s, in Sardis. The store served as a vital resource for the community, especially in the early days when the roads were poor. Due to those conditions, Mrs. Payne had to meet grocery deliveries in a wagon because trucks couldn't reach the store. The store was a lifeline for the community, ensuring residents had access to food and supplies despite infrastructural challenges.



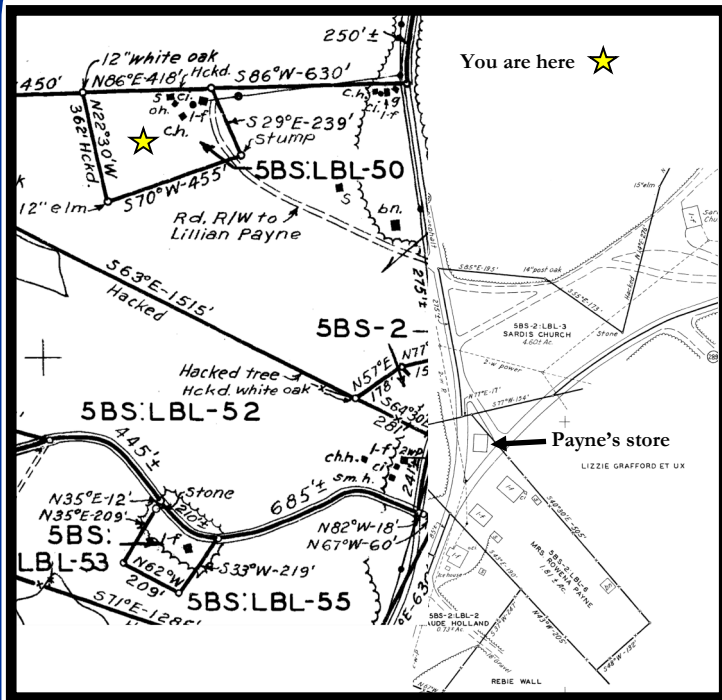
Rowena Aldridge, even as a child, she has a look that means business



Sardis School, circa 1935.

Before Rowena opened the grocery store she was a teacher at the Sardis school. Mrs. Payne was very proud of her community and the education they provided. In an oral history interview she stated that there were several doctors that came from her community, including one of Rowena's grandsons, and one governor. However, her motivation for opening the store was the need to care for her son, who had diabetes. She wanted a job where she could both work and look after him.

The Sardis Community



Tract map of Rowena's store and Lillian Payne's home site. These are 2 separate tracts that were combined to provide a general idea of the community layout.

A World of Their Own

You are standing at the homesite of Lillian Payne who married Rowena's son David Henry. The Sardis community was like many others in the BTR in that everyone knew each other and families tended to stay close by. If you explore Lillian's homesite you may notice items that may have been purchased or ordered through Rowena's store, such as the green lampshade. You could also explore the site of Rowena's home which would have been adjacent to her store.

During the early 1900s many people would not have had a vehicle and likely relied on horses, wagons, and walking to get around. As you explore the area just imagine family and friends going to church, going to Mrs. Payne's store or kids walking to school. Based on Mrs. Payne's oral history and the map of homesites this would have been a vibrant community. Sardis, like other populations in the BTR appears to create their own self-sustaining world.

A Community of Integrity

Mrs. Payne emphasizes the honesty and trustworthiness of the people in her community, noting she never experienced theft in the 30 years she ran the store. Her description of the people who frequented the store, including those who made moonshine, suggests it was a gathering place where people socialized and built relationships. This highlights that there was a great deal of trust and mutual respect among community members.

Mrs. Payne's grocery store was more than just a place of commerce. It played a significant social role, strengthening community ties, providing a familiar and trusted space for residents to interact, and reflecting the values of the close-knit community it served.



Inside Rowena Payne's Grocery store

In the end when TVA was insisting that the last remaining residents leave the BTR in 1968, Rowena refused to leave. In her 70s she remained resolute that she would not leave especially if there were people left in the BTR who needed food and supplies. She held on valiantly counting her coins by feeling them since her eyesight was nearly gone.



The Payne's Grocery Store, with her houses in the back left and right.