



EXPLANATION

Lees Ferry. John Doyle Lee moved to this isolated area in 1871 to escape prosecution for involvement in the Mountain Meadows massacre of 1857. Jacob Hamblin, who passed through this area several times in the late 1850s through 1860s, realized the potential of the location as a permanent ferry site, especially for Mormon missionaries and settlers relocating to Arizona. The ferry site was the only place for nearly 300 miles where a wagon could cross the river between Utah and Arizona. After being approached by Mormon leader Brigham Young, John D. Lee agreed to establish and operate the ferry (Fairley and others, 1994; Mesasles, 1981).

Lonely Dell Ranch. The ranch is referred to as "Lonely Dell" after Emma B. Lee's son, with description of the Lees Ferry area when the first saw it in 1871. Crog and livestock production provided an economic base for the ranch, their families, and others from 1872 through the 1880s. Ownership of the ranch changed hands many times after Lee was executed in 1877 and after Emma Lee left in 1879. Later residents were the Warren Johnson family (1874 to the 1890s), the James Emmet family (1890 to 1900), the Grand Canyon Cattle Company (1916 to the 1920s), and Leo Weaver (died ranch owner in the 1930s). The U.S. Government purchased the ranch in 1974 for inclusion in Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (Crampton and Ruoho, 1985; Mesasles, 1981; Ruoho and Crampton, 1992).

Former Mouth of Paria River. A photograph taken in 1910 by A.H. Jones (Ruoho and Crampton, 1992, p. 116) shows the mouth of the Paria River curving east near the present day parking lot and NPS maintenance facilities before emptying into the Colorado. During the flood of 1917, the mouth of the river shifted south-southwest about 1.5 km (0.9 mi) (Ruoho and Crampton, 1992).

Lee's Lookout. A circle of stones on this prominent knob of Shinarump Sandstone may have been used by prehistoric Indians, and later John D. Lee may have used it as a vantage point. From it, one can see far up and down the Colorado and Paria Rivers (Crampton and Ruoho, 1985; Ruoho and Crampton, 1992).

Dominguez-Escalante Campsite. On an exploratory expedition in 1776, two Spanish Franciscan priests and their entourage camped beside the Colorado River immediately beneath a ledge of Shinarump Sandstone. They named this spot "San Benito de Salapuedas," as a result of their frustration with difficult terrain and the menacing brown river. "San Benito" refers to an eighteenth-century canoe worn as a mark of punishment, and "Salapuedas" translates "get out if you can" (Chavez, 1976).

Post Office. An official United States post office was maintained at Lees Ferry from 1879 to 1923 (Ruoho and Crampton, 1992). This structure was probably built after 1913 (Crampton and Ruoho, 1985).

Lees Ferry Fort. This structure was built in 1874 primarily as a trading post to maintain peace between Navajo Indians and Anglo settlers in southern Utah. In later years it served as a residence, a school, and a mess hall (Ruoho and Crampton, 1992).

Spencer Buildings. The Spencer buildings were occupied by the U.S. Geological Survey beginning in the 1920s for operation of the Lees Ferry gaging station. The present buildings include one of several built by Charles H. Spencer before 1911 and another built by the U.S.G.S. in the 1930s. The U.S.G.S. raised the other buildings in 1980 to reduce vandalism by careless tourists (Eisinger and Horn, 1987; Ruoho and Crampton, 1992; Joseph, 1995).

Paddlewheel of the Navajo. This collapsed rear paddlewheel is part of the Navajo, a barge operated by the Southern California Edison Company from 1921 to 1923. It was used to collect drill-core samples during damsite studies in Glen Canyon (Ruoho and Crampton, 1992).

Spencer's Boiler. This is the staging area and the boiler for Spencer's hydraulic mining operation of 1910. Spencer intended to extract gold from the Chinle Formation (Triassic) by using steam-powered pumps to spray Colorado River water through high-pressure hoses at the overlying slopes of Chinle shale. However, slaking problems led to collapse of this tenuous endeavor. Rills and gullies from the slaking are present on the slopes directly uphill of the boiler (Mesasles, 1981; Ruoho and Crampton, 1992).

Original Ferry Crossing. Approximate location of the original ferry crossing as reported by Crampton and Ruoho (1985). The first ferry crossed in 1872, when Lee used Powell's boats to pull a group of Navajos across the river in return for blankets. In 1873 Lee's first barge, the Colorado, was in operation at this site for six months until the boat was cut loose by a falling tree and lost (Mesasles, 1981). This site may have been the upper ferry crossing when separate high- and low-water crossings were used between 1873 and 1888 (Eisinger and Horn, 1987).

The Charles H. Spencer. The weathered hull and boiler of the Charles H. Spencer, a flat-bottomed steamboat with a stern paddle wheel, are submerged here. This is the largest craft to float the Colorado River above Grand Canyon. In 1912, it was used in a futile attempt to transport coal from the Warm Creek mines to the steam boilers at Lees Ferry. The boilers powered a hydraulic gold-mining operation run by Charles H. Spencer (Mesasles, 1981; Ruoho and Crampton, 1992; Joseph, 1995).

Spencer Trail. Built in 1910 by Charles H. Spencer, this trail climbed to the canyon rim 450 m (1,500 ft) above the river. Spencer intended to pack coal by mule train from Warm Creek Canyon over the trail to Lees Ferry before the plan for hauling coal by boat was conceived. Although it was rarely used for hauling coal, the trail was favored by early travelers instead of the long, strenuous Dominguez Pass 4 km (2.5 mi) up the Paria River (Crampton and Ruoho, 1985; Ruoho and Crampton, 1992).

Main Ferry Site. In 1896, a heavy track cable was strung across the river to guide ferryboats; the cable and river current drove or ferried the barges across the river. Ferryboats operated here continuously from 1896 until 1928, when two passengers and ferryman Adolph Johnson drowned when the ferryboat overturned in a whirlpool. The following year Navajo Bridge was completed and ferry operations ceased. This site also includes some rock foundations of cabins that were used by ferryman and travelers (Eisinger and Horn, 1987; Ruoho and Crampton, 1992).

Stanton Road. This road was built in 1889 by Robert B. Stanton, who at the time was preparing to place a large gold dredge in Glen Canyon. Stanton skated numerous place claims extending upstream from Lees Ferry to Hite, and the road was maintained to keep the claims valid. However, machinery on the dredge was too inefficient to capture the "blow gold" in Glen Canyon, and the enterprise soon collapsed (Mesasles, 1981; Ruoho and Crampton, 1992).

Cableway Remains. A track cable and several wooden posts mark the anchoring system of the main ferry used from 1888 to 1908.

Cable Crossing Inscriptions. Pioneers traveling in small wagon trains between Utah and Arizona around the turn of the century carved their names on a rock near the crossing.

U.S.G.S. Cableway Remains. A tower and platform mark an abandoned cableway used by the U.S.G.S. in the early 1920s for measuring water level and sediment load.

Main Ferry Route. These are portions of the old road linking the Lees Backbone route to the main ferry crossing.

Navajo Camp. An abandoned one-room house was used historically as a camp by Navajo Indians who also built a number of stone lambing corrals nearby (Ruoho and Crampton, 1992).

Gaging Station. This station was built by the Southern California Edison Company in 1921 and has been operated by the U.S. Geological Survey since 1923. Water level used to calculate volume and sediment load of the Colorado River is measured here. This station is considered one of the most important on the Colorado River as it lies 2.2 km (1.4 mi) above the Compact Point, the geopolitical boundary between the Upper and Lower Colorado River Basins (Crampton and Ruoho, 1985; Eisinger and Horn, 1987; Ruoho and Crampton, 1992; Joseph, 1995).

Lees Backbone. From 1873 to 1878, Mormon emigrants drove wagons west from the Main Ferry Crossing over the steeply inclined outcrop of Shinarump Sandstone known as Lees Backbone. This route was considered one of the most treacherous crossings in the West, and emigrants feared it as much as the river crossing (Fairley and others, 1994). After 1878, the rugged Lees Backbone was used only during periods of high-river flow and was partly bypassed by a road built in 1888. During low-river flow, travelers crossed at the Lower Ferry Site built in 1878. When the Long Dugway was opened in 1898, Lees Backbone was abandoned completely (Fairley and others, 1994; Ruoho and Crampton, 1992).

Long Dugway. Built in 1888, the Long Dugway replaced the Lees Backbone route used by pioneers of the 1870s. The dugway was a great improvement over the arduous Lees Backbone and carried all traffic to and from the main ferry site (Mesasles, 1981; Ruoho and Crampton, 1992).

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TOPOGRAPHIC MAP SHOWING HISTORIC FEATURES OF THE LEES FERRY AREA, MARBLE CANYON, ARIZONA