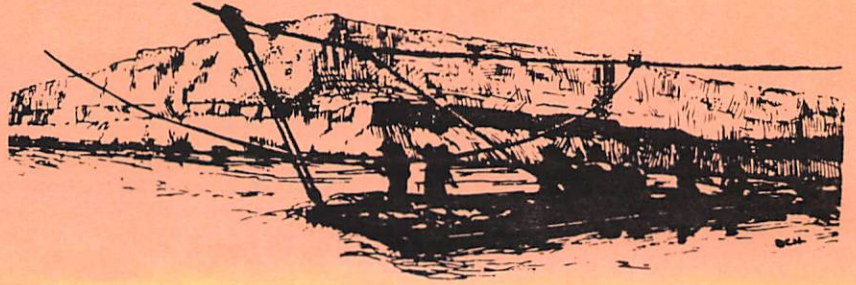


# Glen Canyon

National Recreation Area  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

## Lees Ferry



Located 15.3 miles (24.4 km) down the river from Glen Canyon Dam, Lees Ferry is a meeting of the old and new.

A natural corridor between Utah and Arizona, Lees Ferry figured prominently in the exploration and settlement of the surrounding canyon country. The Lees Ferry and Lonely Dell Ranch Historic Districts offer a glimpse into western pioneer life of the late 1800's.

Lees Ferry continues to be a center of activity for people visiting the area. Here, adventurous visitors begin river rafting trips through the Grand Canyon. From April to October, rafters launch daily for 5 to 14-day trips. Backpackers hiking the Paria Canyon Primitive Area finish at Lees Ferry after a 4-day journey down the Paria River. Highway travelers exploring the area's National Parks stop at Navajo Bridge, one of only seven land crossings of the Colorado River for 750 miles (1200 km).

A "Walking Tour Guide" of Lees Ferry and Lonely Dell Ranch Historic Districts may be purchased for 25¢ from self-service stands located at either the Lees Ferry or Lonely Dell Historic Districts.

Lees Ferry may be reached from Page by driving 23 miles (37 km) south on Hwy. 89 to Bitter Springs. Then, turn north on Hwy. 89A and drive 14 miles (22 km) to Navajo Bridge. After crossing the Colorado River, the Lees Ferry junction is approximately 300 yards (90 m) on the right.

### LEES FERRY HISTORIC DISTRICT

Located approximately 100 yards (90 m) upriver from the boat launch ramp on the Colorado River are several historic buildings. The small rock structure, built by Charles H. Spencer in 1913, functioned until 1923 as a post office for area residents and gold miners working the canyons.

The largest and most historically significant building in this area is the rectangular structure commonly called Lees Ferry Fort. Built by Mormons from St. George for protection during the Navajo uprising in 1874, the building later served, in an effort to restore friendly relations, as a Navajo trading post.

Further upriver, from 1916 through the 1950's, the U.S. Geological Survey constructed several different buildings from which the river flow from the Colorado was measured.

Even further upriver, the American Placer Company, owned by Charles Spencer, attempted gold extraction from the chindle shale in the early 1900's. A large boiler, and the sunken remains of the steamboat, *Charles H. Spencer*, can be seen here.

Approximately one mile (1.6 km) upriver from the historic district is Lees Ferry's most important ferry crossing site. Here, ferryboats operated from 1873 to 1928. Most of the early Mormon emigrants from Utah crossed at this site, as they heeded their church's call to settle Arizona.

### LONELY DELL RANCH HISTORIC DISTRICT

In 1871, John Doyle Lee (for whom the ferry is named) became the first permanent resident of the area. Lee established a ranch on the valley floor, within a large meander of the Paria River. Crops and livestock raised here provided economic support for ferry operators, their families, and others, through the 1940's. The ranch was named "Lonely Dell" in reference to Emma Lee's description of the landscape when she first saw it in December, 1871.

Located at the ranch site is a log cabin believed to have been built by John D. Lee in the early 1870's. The small log building near the cabin was used as a blacksmith shop. A fruit orchard of pear, apricot, peach, and plum trees is

maintained by the National Park Service, creating a semblance of the historic scene. Next to Emma's cabin, a long rock building, constructed in 1916 by the Bar Z ranch, functioned as a hub for cattle ranching activities. This structure remains much as it did in 1916. Leo and Hazel Weaver, one of many ranch owners, added a wood-frame wing on the east end of this rock house in 1936. The ranch cemetery, located about 200 yards (180 m) northwest of the ranch buildings, contains up to twenty graves dating from 1874 to 1928. Buried here are four of Warren Johnson's children, who contracted diphtheria from a passing traveler and died within a period of four weeks.





## HIKING AT LEES FERRY

This is rugged country. Temperatures can be extreme, ranging from 0° to 110°F (-18° to 42°C). Flash floods are possible during stormy weather, even when it's not raining where you are. Always carry plenty of water--one gallon (4 L) per person per day is recommended. Ask at the ranger station for further information and current hiking conditions.

● **One Mile River Trail** This trail starts at the Lees Ferry Historic Fort, and follows the old wagon road to the upper ferry crossing site. The round-trip walk takes less than an hour.

● **Spencer Trail** This very strenuous trail, which is not maintained, begins at marker post #6 along the One Mile River Trail, and climbs a 1500 ft. (457 m) vertical cliff. This trail, a historic route, is extremely difficult to follow. Attempt this hike in cool weather and allow at least 3 hours to complete it.

● **Cathedral Wash** Parking for this hike is at the second pullout from Highway 89A, along Lees Ferry Road. This two mile hike (3.2 km) is not along a defined "trail." Instead, the course follows the intermittent stream bed, or "wash," inside a narrow canyon with interesting rock formations. During wet periods, be alert for flash floods, mud holes, and plunge pools.

