

SPENCER CAMP  
Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument  
Littlefield vicinity  
Mohave County  
Arizona

HALS AZ-3-D  
*HALS AZ-3-D*

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FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

## HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY

### SPENCER CAMP

HALS AZ-3-D

- Location:** Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument, Littlefield vicinity, Mohave County, Arizona
- Spencer Camp is located on the Shivwits Plateau about 75 miles south of St. George, Utah, in township 30 north, range 11 west, section 10 (Gila and Salt River Meridian). Its geographic coordinates are latitude 36.019158, longitude -113.448367 (North American Datum of 1983). These coordinates represent the gate into the corral.
- Present Owner:** Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior
- Present Use:** Vacant; preserved as a cultural and natural site
- Significance:** Spencer Camp is one in a series of line camps formerly used to operate Jonathan Deyo Waring's Home Ranch grazing allotment, now known usually as Waring Ranch, a large cattle-grazing operation on a remote plateau north of the Grand Canyon in the Arizona Strip. Built and homesteaded by John Spencer between 1928 and 1933, Spencer Camp was purchased by Waring at an unknown date and incorporated into his extensive operation. Spencer Camp comprises a corral, a stock tank, and the ruins of a cabin.
- Historian:** Michael R. Harrison
- Project Information:** Spencer Camp, a component site of Waring Ranch, was documented by the Historic American Landscapes Survey of the Heritage Documentation Programs of the National Park Service. The principals involved were Richard O'Connor, Chief of Heritage Documentation Programs; Paul D. Dolinsky, Chief of the Historic American Landscapes Survey; and Jeff Bradybaugh, former Superintendent of Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument. The documentation was produced during the summer of 2010 by project supervisor Christopher Stevens, landscape architect, with Anne E. Kidd, architect; Alexander Matsov, architect; and R. Benjamin Lawrence, landscape architect intern. The large-format photography was completed by James Rosenthal. Jet Lowe created the aerial photography. The historical report was written by historian Michael R. Harrison in 2011.

**Related**

**Documentation:** For detailed information on specific sites within Waring Ranch, see the following HALS documentation:

Waring Ranch, HALS AZ-3  
Horse Valley Ranch, HALS AZ-3-A  
Pine Valley, HALS AZ-3-B  
Green Springs, HALS AZ-3-C  
Shanley Camp, HALS AZ-3-E  
Dinner Pocket, HALS AZ-3-F

For additional context on historic ranching and economic activity within the boundaries of Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument, see:

Tassi Ranch and Springs, HALS AZ-2  
Pine Ranch, HALS AZ-4  
Grand Gulch Mine, HAER AZ-78

**PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

Spencer Camp was one in a series of line camps used by J. D. Waring (1892–1982) to operate his ranch on the Kelly Point plateau north of the Grand Canyon. The history of the camp is given below. For a more complete discussion of the natural and historical context of Waring’s entire ranch, see the narrative overview in HALS No. AZ-3 (Waring Ranch).

John Spencer began living at the site later known as Spencer Camp in January 1928. Housing himself first in a tent, he built a log cabin in April 1928, the same month that he filed for stock-raising homestead entry on the entire surrounding section of public land, amounting to 640 acres. Later in the year, he excavated an earthen reservoir or tank to collect water near the cabin. During 1928 and 1929 he kept this tank filled by pumping water from an unknown source 1-1/2 miles away. He continued to live at the camp full time for the next few years, except for five months away in the summer and fall of 1929 and four months away in the summer and fall of 1930 “to obtain employment.” In 1929, he planted the posts for 4 miles of fencing, for which he stretched the wire the following year. He submitted final proof for his homestead claim on February 15, 1931, but before his patent could be issued, a protest was filed against his claim. Nothing is known about the nature of this protest, except that it delayed the issuance of his patent and that a General Land Office field investigation found no problems in the end. The government issued Spencer a patent for the land on February 9, 1933.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Land Entry Patent No. 1061410, Feb. 9, 1933 [John Spencer], Land Entry Files, Records of the Bureau of Land Management (RG 49), National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

Spencer subsequently sold the camp to rancher Jonathan Waring. The date of this sale has not been found, but one source suggests it may have been in the 1930s.<sup>2</sup> After using it for many years as part of his cattle-grazing operation, Waring in turn sold it back to the federal government in 1967 for management by the National Park Service as part of Lake Mead National Recreation Area.<sup>3</sup> The site has formed part of Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument since 2000.

## PART II. PHYSICAL INFORMATION

### **A. Landscape character and descriptive summary**

Spencer Camp is 9 miles south by road from J. D. Waring's ranch headquarters at Horse Valley. The site is moderately forested with juniper trees among fields of sagebrush and grasses. A roughly rectangular area of about 10.4 acres within the generally flat landscape is enclosed by barbed-wire and contains in its southwest corner the camp's single stock tank, its palisaded corral, and the ruins of its log cabin.

### **B. Character-defining features**

#### **1. Natural features**

**a. Topography:** Spencer Camp lies on flat land at an elevation of about 6,050 ft. John Spencer described the site's "shallow" soil in 1928 as being "underlain by lava flow. . . . None of the land can be profitably cultivated. Top soil inclined to be gravelly and full of volcanic boulders."<sup>4</sup> Areas of the site remain carpeted with basalt rocks today.

**b. Vegetation:** John Spencer wrote in 1928 that the camp site "contains no trees except scrub cedars fit only for fire wood or fence posts."<sup>5</sup> Today the site remains dominated by Utah juniper trees (*Juniperus osteosperma* – Spencer's "scrub cedars"), plus big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*) and various grasses. Pinyon pine (*Pinus monophylla*), prickly pear (*Opuntia* spp.), and cholla (*Optunia* spp.) are also seen.

**c. Water:** There is no perennial water source at Spencer Camp, but the bed of an intermittent stream runs generally south- and southwestward through the middle of the site. This stream supplies water seasonally to the camp's stock tank.

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<sup>2</sup> Betty Accomazzo, ed., *Arizona National Ranch Histories of Living Pioneer Stockman* [sic], vol. 4 (Phoenix: Arizona National Livestock Show, 1982), 84.

<sup>3</sup> The relevant warranty deed for Waring's sale of Spencer Camp to the federal government appears in Waring land files (L1425), Lake Mead National Recreation Area headquarters, Boulder City, Nev., folder "L1425 J. D. Waring (2 of 2) 4-6-66."

<sup>4</sup> Land Entry Patent No. 1061410.

<sup>5</sup> Land Entry Patent No. 1061410.

## 2. Designed features

**a. Spatial organization and circulation:** A single-track dirt approach road about 1/2 mile in length carries visitors east to the camp from the main north-south road along the Kelly Point Plateau. Two short, parallel entrance paths, only about 70' to 125' apart, connect the center of the camp to the approach road. A barbed-wire fence encloses a roughly rectangular area of the site about 780' wide x 580' long. One entrance path runs outside the western line of this fence; it once led to the cabin. The other entrance path runs inside the fence, and provides access to the corral. The camp's double corral, cabin, and stock tank are clustered in the southwest corner of the fenced enclosure, easily accessible from the two entrance paths.

**b. Views and vistas:** Spencer Camp is 1/4 mile west of the rim of Spring Canyon. Despite this proximity, the tree growth at the site blocks distant vistas. An exception is the view of Mount Dellenbaugh, 8 miles to the northwest, that is visible from approach road that leads to the camp.

**c. Constructed water features:** A reservoir or tank, located about 110' northeast of the cabin ruins, collects runoff and rainwater along the course of site's intermittent stream. The tank is about 155' long x 75' wide, and was built to provide a water source for grazing cattle. The tank is basically a shallow depression excavated into the ground; the earth moved aside during its creation forms a 3'- to 4'-high berm around the tank's perimeter. Because the tank is depressed about 5' or 6' below the level of the surrounding meadow, the berm gives it a maximum depth at its center of about 9'.

### **d. Buildings and structures:**

*Cabin ruins.* John Spencer built a 16' x 18' log cabin at the camp in 1928. It had four rooms and a composition roof and was built picket-log style with the wall logs set vertically. The cabin collapsed sometime between 1961 and 1966 and is now just a pile of sun-bleached log debris.<sup>6</sup>

Spencer also had a granary built of rock on the site, but its remains have not been located.<sup>7</sup>

*Corrals.* Two contiguous round corrals are located about 85' northwest of the cabin ruins. The palisade-like structures are constructed of juniper poles lashed together with two-strand barbed wire. Milled lumber forms the remains of the gate into the main, southern corral. The smaller, northern corral opens directly off the north side of the main corral.

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<sup>6</sup> Mike Belshaw and Ed Peplow, Jr., *Historic Resources Study, Lake Mead National Recreation Area, Nevada* (National Park Service report, Aug. 1980), 181; Patrick D. Nolan, *An Appraisal of the J.D. Waring Ranch located approximately 95 miles south of St. George, Utah, 1966*, 20, in Waring land files (L1425).

<sup>7</sup> Land Entry Patent No. 1061410.

**e. Small-scale features:** The fences at the camp are made of juniper poles strung with four lines of two-strand barbed wire. Some stretches of three-line fence and some woven-wire fencing also survive at the site. The chassis of an abandoned Volkswagen Type 2 Kombi panel van sits immediately south of the cabin ruins.

**f. Archeological sites:** Extensive archeological surveys carried out on the Kelly Point Plateau by the National Park Service in 1990 did not survey the land around Spencer Camp. Surveys at Shanley Camp, Price Pocket, and Dinner Pocket, all nearby, did find thousands of Native American ceramic, chipped stone, and ground stone artifacts from a variety of periods in extensive scatters, demonstrating a long history of native occupation in the area.<sup>8</sup>

### **PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

#### **A. Primary Sources**

Land Entry Files. Records of the Bureau of Land Management (RG 49). National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

Waring Ranch files. Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument headquarters, St. George, Utah.

Waring land files (L1425). Lake Mead National Recreation Area headquarters, Boulder City, Nevada.

#### **B. Secondary Sources**

Accomazzo, Betty, ed. *Arizona National Ranch Histories of Living Pioneer Stockman* [sic]. Vol. 4. Phoenix: Arizona National Livestock Show, 1982.

Belshaw, Mike, and Ed Peplow, Jr. *Historic Resources Study, Lake Mead National Recreation Area, Nevada*. National Park Service report, Aug. 1980.

Provencher, Shaun and Len Warner. *Cultural Landscapes Inventory for Waring Ranch, Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument*. National Park Service, 2003.

Wells, Susan J. *The Shivwits Plateau Survey: Archeology at Lake Mead National Recreation Area*. Publications in Anthropology 56. Western Archeological and Conservation Center, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1991.

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<sup>8</sup> See Susan J. Wells, *The Shivwits Plateau Survey: Archeology at Lake Mead National Recreation Area*, Publications in Anthropology 56 (Western Archeological and Conservation Center, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1991).

**FIGURE PAGE**



Figure 1. The earthen stock tank (left foreground) and the collapsed cabin (middle distance, to the right of the central tree) at Spencer Camp, 1966. View looking south. From Patrick D. Nolan, *An Appraisal of the J.D. Waring Ranch located approximately 95 miles south of St. George, Utah*, 1966, Waring land files (L1425), Lake Mead National Recreation Area headquarters, Boulder City, Nevada.