

Manning Cabin

Based on Clemensen (1987)

History of Levi Manning and the Cabin

The Manning Cabin sits in the Rincon Mountains in Saguaro National Park (SAGU). The cabin belonged to Levi H. Manning, a successful businessman and one-term Mayor of Tucson. Manning had the cabin built in 1905 for use as a mountain summer home. The cabin was a retreat for his family from the heat of Tucson and a place where they could entertain friends. He was the first to build and own such a retreat in the mountains.

Levi Manning was born in North Carolina, attended college in Mississippi, and moved to Tucson in 1884. He held a number of jobs in Tucson (e.g., reporter, U.S. Surveyor General for Arizona Territory), and by 1900 he established the L.H. Manning and Company commission brokerage house. By 1910, he had expanded his activities into the ranching business.

In 1904, Manning filed for a 160 acre homestead in the Rincon Mountains. He had an eleven mile wagon road built to access the site of the proposed cabin. In 1905 Manning hired men to build the cabin, using pack horses and wagons to transport the needed materials to the site. Trees for the cabin came from the immediate vicinity. The log structure contained a living room with a fireplace, a kitchen, two bedrooms, and two small bunk rooms. The cabin also housed a piano, brought up from the Rincon Valley via the wagon road.



Forest Service employees (probably), circa 1909-1910

FACT SHEET



Levi Manning & family members in front of the cabin, circa 1906

The Manning family used the cabin as a summer home from mid-summer 1905 to mid-1907. In 1907, the area became part of the Coronado National Forest. For several subsequent years, Manning leased the land from the Forest Service but did not use the cabin again. For the next 13-14 years, the cabin was visited only rarely by a forest ranger or other passer-by.

The Manning Cabin was repaired and reconditioned in 1922 by the Forest Service for use in housing a fire watch and trail crew. During this time period, the central part of the cabin was removed due to decay. This essentially resulted in the cabin's conversion into two separate structures. The Park Service acquired the national monument (later becoming a park) in 1940, and for some years NPS fire personnel stayed in the structures during fire seasons. The structures, however, continued to decay. Repair on the two structures began again in 1943, and the central portion was reconstructed as a walkway. Repairs and improvements continued to be made over the years. There was a break in use of the cabin from 1958-1977.

The historical importance of the cabin was formally recognized in 1975 when it was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

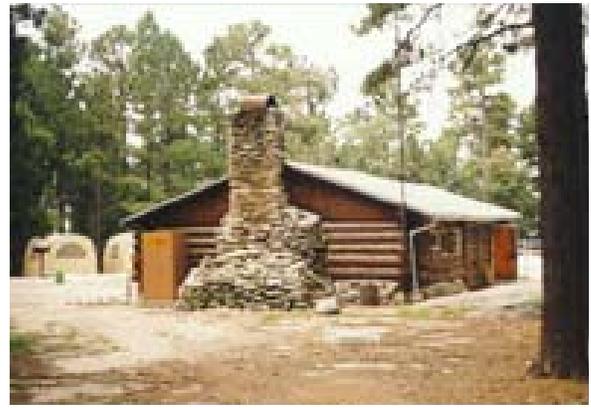
The Manning Cabin Today

In more recent years, the cabin has been used by biological researchers and backcountry rangers. It still maintains the

same general layout and character as in Levi Manning's day. Located in the northeastern area of the eastern unit of SAGU, within the Saguaro Wilderness Area, visitors to the park may reach the cabin via a back country hiking trail.

References

Clemensen, A.B. 1987. Cattle, copper, and cactus: the History of Saguaro National Monument, Arizona. Historic Resource Study, Saguaro National Monument, NPS, Denver Service Center.



The Manning Cabin today