UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM
FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME
HISTORIC Barker Dam
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION
STREET & NUMBER Not applicable
CITY, TOWN Joshua Tree National Monument
STATE California
VICINITY OF Twentynine Palms
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT Forty-third
COUNTY Riverside
CITY, TOWN Riverside
STATE California (92502)

3 CLASSIFICATION
CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC
PRIVATE
BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

IN PROCESS
BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

OCCUPIED
UNOCCUPIED
WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE

PRESENT USE

AGRICULTURE
COMMERCIAL
EDUCATIONAL
ENTERTAINMENT
GOVERNMENT
INDUSTRIAL
MILITARY
MUSEUM
PARK
PRIVATE RESIDENCE
RELIGIOUS
SCIENTIFIC
TRANSPORTATION
OTHER

4 AGENCY
REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)
National Park Service - Western Region Office
STREET & NUMBER 450 Golden Gate Avenue - Box 36063
CITY, TOWN San Francisco
STATE California (94102)

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Riverside County Recorder's Office
STREET & NUMBER P.O. Box 751
CITY, TOWN Riverside
STATE California (92502)

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
TITLE
DATE
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
CITY, TOWN
STATE
DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

- EXCELLENT
- GOOD
- FAIR
- DETERIORATED
- RUINS
- UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

- X UNALTERED
- ALTERED
- ORIGINAL SITE
- MOVED

CHECK ONE

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Barker Dam consists of a structure of cement and stone faced with stone about nine feet high with a later concrete addition three feet high, raising the total height to twelve feet. The dam, including the addition, is about 150 feet long. Its design is rather odd, incorporating several indentations. Above the dam is a low wall of dry stone probably intended to keep livestock out of the deeper part of the tank formed behind the dam. ("Tank" is a rural western term for reservoir.)

Below the dam is a crude pond fed by a pipe from the reservoir. The pond consists of two low circular walls of concentric design. The pipe apparently fed water into the center circle for human consumption, and it overflowed into the outer circle for consumption by stock in the canyon below the dam.
Barker Dam is of local historical significance under the category of agriculture. The dam is typical of such structures erected by cattlemen in arid desert regions to impound run-off rainwater from infrequent desert cloudbursts in an artificial "tank" or reservoir in order to provide water for their stock. This particular dam created a sizeable "tank" which served a number of cattlemen over the years. In less rocky terrain, earthwork dams were more common, but the rocky, boulder-strwnn high desert topography in what is now Joshua Tree National Monument together with the character of its arroyos apparently encouraged construction of dams employing cement and local rock rather than earth.

The above statement of significance is based upon the following historical data:

A local cattleman named C.O. Barker constructed a nine-foot high cement dam faced with native stone in 1900. Construction required sixteen eight-day-long trips to haul the cement, wooden forms, mixing equipment and other material from Banning to the site of the dam. When completed, the dam impounded run-off rainwater from desert storms to form a reservoir where cattle could obtain water. Subsequent to 1917, at an unknown date, another local cattleman named William F. Keys obtained ownership of the dam, and using concrete, he raised its height from nine to twelve feet in order to increase the amount of water the dam was capable of impounding. The dam, still serviceable, provided water for stock as long as cattle were run within its vicinity.
Fact File, Joshua Tree National Monument Library
Interviews with William F. Keys

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY

UTM REFERENCES

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

ORGANIZATION

STREET & NUMBER

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
Barker Dam

Joshua Tree National Monument__Twentynine Palms__Riverside__California

February 1973

View looking west from inside dam basin at low water level.
(In the immediate foreground is remains of a rubble wall laid without mortar, perhaps to keep stock out of area behind dam at times of low water)
NAME
HISTORIC Barker Dam

LOCATION
CITY, TOWN
Joshua Tree National Monument

VICINITY OF
Twentynine Palms

COUNTY
Riverside

STATE
California

PHOTO REFERENCE
PHOTO CREDIT
National Park Service photo

DATE OF PHOTO
February 1973

NEGATIVE FILED AT
Joshua Tree National Monument

Twentynine Palms, California

IDENTIFICATION
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET
Looking eastward at downhill face of Barker Dam, showing original construction by C.O. Barker and later addition by W.F. Keys

PHOTO NO 2/3
NAME
Historic Barker Dam

LOCATION
City, Town Joshua Tree National Monument Vicinity of Twentynine Palms County Riverside State California

PHOTO REFERENCE
Photo Credit National Park Service photo
Date of Photo February 1973
Negative Filed At Joshua Tree National Monument Twentynine Palms, California

IDENTIFICATION
Describe View, Direction, ETC. If District, Give Building Name & Street Stock watering tank west (downstream) from Barker Dam

Photo No. 3
Barker Dam
Joshua Tree National Monument
Riverside County, California

(NB) A 11 579200 3765940
(SE) B 11 579210 3765570
(SW) C 11 578830 3765560
(NW) D 11 578820 3765930

The northeast quarter of this area is also covered by 1:24,000 scale map of the Twentynine Palms 7.5 minute quadrangle, surveyed in 1955.