



BLACK ROCK DESERT  
HIGH ROCK CANYON  
EMIGRANT TRAILS



NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA

## LASSEN-CLAPPER MURDER SITE

*What do you think?*

### **Bitter Emigrant-**

- Lassen had advertised his fork of the Applegate Oregon Trail as a short-cut to the gold mines in California, when actually the trail was 200 miles longer than the other routes and passed through Lassen's ranch and trading post in the Sacramento Valley.
- After traveling for the nearly 2,000 miles to make it to California; and after they were nearly starved and exhausted, with worn out animals, the gold prospectors still had to travel over 130 miles to make it to the gold mines. Lassen's fork of the trail extended the journey long enough to put the emigrants in the roughest terrain during the most inclement months of the year.
- *Is it possible that one of the thousands of emigrants that Lassen tricked into taking his trail exacted revenge?*

### **Capitan Weatherlow-**

- Capitan Weatherlow was supposed to meet Lassen and his party, but didn't show up, so they were forced to camp. The next morning they awoke to gunshots, Clapper was dead first, and Lassen was shot soon after.

Captain Weatherlow and three companions were camped in the next canyon to the north one mile away.

- In 1862, Weatherlow retrieved Lassen's gun (a distinctive rifle) from a Paiute who had been killed (and who had reportedly killed two other prospectors).

The accuracy of the three shots fired from a substantial distance suggest the work of a superb marksman as a military man would be expected to be.

*Could it have been coincidence that Weatherlow found the gun on the same people that he tried to blame the murder on?*

### **Paiute Indians-**

- The night before the murders, it is said that a five member Paiute band made contact with Peter Lassen and asked him for ammunition.
- Lassen had always had a good relationship with the Paiute Indians, and gave them the ammunition.

No food or clothing were taken from the murder site, which was the typical style of the Paiutes.

- *Could the Paiutes have killed both men with such accuracy from a substantial distance as to only need to shoot two shots?*



Who Done It?