



BLACK ROCK DESERT
HIGH ROCK CANYON
EMIGRANT TRAILS



NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA

RABBIT HOLE SPRINGS

What's in a Name? Why is the Spring called "Rabbit Hole?"

"After traveling about fifteen miles (eastward from Black Rock) we began to discover dim rabbit trails running in the same direction in which we were traveling. As we advanced the trails became more plain, and there were others constantly coming in, all pointing in the general direction toward a ledge of granite boulders which we could see before us. Approaching, ...we could see a green mound where all the trails seemed to enter, and on examining the place closely we found a small hole in the top of the mound, in which a little puddle of water stood within a few inches of the surface....Digging down in this clay we made a basin large enough to hold several gallons and by dark we had quite a supply of good pure water....Great numbers of rabbits came around us and we killed all we wanted of them. This is the place always since known as Rabbit Hole Springs(1)." Lindsay Applegate 1846

The Journey from Antelope Springs to Rabbit Hole Spring

After watering and feeding their animals, the next stop for the emigrants on the Applegate trail was Rabbit Hole Spring.

*"It was now twenty miles or more to Rabbit Springs, the next water....,"
Alonzo Delano Aug. 16, 1849. (1)*

Rabbit Hole offered the emigrants little reprieve from the dry desert conditions. The water was available, but scarce, and often times there wasn't enough to feed the cattle. This created an even more treacherous environment as the emigrants had to travel another 22 miles before they came to the next water source.

"The trail from Rabbit Hole to Black Rock was probably the cruelest segment of the journey for the ApplegateLassen travelers. It was a waterless 22 mile stretch across a rugged sage plain and the unvegetated Black Rock Desert. Most of the emigrants embarked on this portion in August and September as it was necessary to arrive at the Sierras before the snows made the mountains impassable. Without the merest hillock [small hill] or bush for shade, the heat was blistering and unmerciful. Some trains resorted to taking their bearings by the stars and traveling the route by moonlight(1)."



Black Rock Desert
Hayes Lindsay 2007

1. McGuckian, Peggy. Emigrant Trails in the Black Rock Desert. U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management. Winnemucca, NV. 1978.