



BLACK ROCK DESERT
HIGH ROCK CANYON
EMIGRANT TRAILS



NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA

SOLDIER MEADOWS

Shady Land Dealings:

- In the 1870's a man named Eliot Crutcher began acquiring lands in The Black Rock Desert area.
- From that day up until the 1930's; when the land was owned by one large land firm, a series of shady land dealings occurred.
- Around the early 1800's the federal government came up with an idea to section land off into small 10 acre plots to sell in order to raise money for schools. Nevada was lagging behind in this campaign, so they asked the government if they could set up their own system of selling land. The government allowed this, and Nevada began allowing farmers to purchase land. The maximum amount of land that any one person could purchase was 320 acres. Some ranchers, who wanted to own more land, would have their relatives and employees purchase the land, using the ranchers money, and transfer the lands to the rancher at a cost of \$1.00.
- Bartholemew Burke, a rancher and land owner, bought lands from his employee, Wetherby, for only \$1.00. This was a common figure quoted when an employee was acting for his boss in acquiring state lands.
- Crutcher, also had some shady employee-involved land dealings. His employee, Holloway, acquired 80 acres of land in Soldier Meadows and sold it to Crutcher for \$1.00 on October 7, 1884.
- Thomas W. Conyers, another employee of Crutchers acquired patent to 320 acres in the Soldier Meadows basin on October 15, 1884- after he sold them to Crutcher on November, 23, 1883 for \$1.00.
- Crutcher also managed to acquire his own state land in the Soldier Meadows basin on October 16, 1884.
- Crutcher's relative, William, acquired 320 acres, including 80 acres in the Soldier Meadows basin for \$1.00.
- Miller, like many land holder and ranchers before him, continued the practice of using employees and family members to illegally acquire additional state lands, including some in the Soldier Meadows basin. Miller did, however, pay more than Crutcher for the transactions at \$5.00 a piece.

All information gathered from: Historic Context for the Soldier Meadows Basin by: David Valentine

