

# RECONNOITERING IN THE EASTERN SIERRA NEVADA & GREAT BASIN BY 4-WHEEL-DRIVE

*Hosted and Powered by [4WDTrips.net](http://4WDTrips.net)*

[HOME PAGE](#)

RESN&GB4x4 Trips:

## The Hunt for Susan Coon

**Note: Text contains footnotes, clicking on the footnote number will take one's browser down to the note. Clicking on the number next to the footnote will return one to the text.**

It's a hot, July day, the 18<sup>th</sup>, 1849. It's dusty, the flies are miserable and biting. My wife, children and myself are dirty and dusty. We pulled away from the main Humboldt River channel along with several other wagons in this caravan and have turned off onto Lassen's trail. Our main goal is about 12 or 13 miles away, to some springs which will be our first water since leaving the meager Humboldt. The natives and the unknown will be our only companions that will require myself and the other gentlemen in our caravan on our toes and our rifles at the ready. We have a rudimentary map and some vague directions as our only guide. – Editorial License of the Sagebrush Reconnoiterer writing as if from an imaginary journal of an emigrant over the Lassen-Applegate emigrant trail.

Oregon road here leaves it, and runs on a W. course towards a gap in the mountains.

(Riv to Gap) Springs in the Pass — ( $\frac{1}{2}$ m. to left of road,)	12 m
Rabbit Hole Springs (15)	13 "
Black Rock 7 m. beyond B.	
Rock B valley spg.	20 "
(20 m. to Mud Lake) (25)	(69 m)

From Ogden's R. to Black Rock, is known as "*the dry stretch*" and to perform the journey in safety, emigrants should send an advance party on 2 or 3 days ahead, to dig out large tanks for the water at the springs, which will supply their animals. At the 1st. spg. is some grass, at the 2<sup>d</sup> little or none, but at Black Rock probably plenty.

Mileage between campsites along the southern portion of the Lassen-Applegate Trail immediately north of the Humboldt River to the Black Rock Desert. From Goldsborough Bruff, his publication "Cherokee Guide", 1849. As published in "Bureau of Land Management Nevada – Contributions to the Study of Cultural Resources; Emigrant Trails in the Black Rock Desert; Technical

*A warm August morning, this being the 12<sup>th</sup> day of August, 1860. We pull away from our camp at Antelope Springs with heavy hearts and mixed emotions, as my beloved wife, Susan, has died last night giving birth to my son that I have christened Robert. Susan, my darling wife, was buried among the thickets in a mountain dell overlooking an empty land. Frank Dunn spent the entire night cutting a fitting but rough stone to mark Susan's grave here. I hope to return some day to find Susan's resting place and bring her "home" to California. - More editorial license from the mind of the Sagebrush Reconnoiterer as if from an imaginary diary that might have been written by Isaac Coon, August 12, 1860.*

July 9, 1862 – Two Unionville men, James Bailey and William Cook, were slaughtered by marauding natives July 9<sup>th</sup> , while in the Antelope Springs region north and west of the "big bend" of the Humboldt River.

It's the Great Depression, the year is 1932. Robert E. Coon, now 72 years old, stands at the lonely grave of the mother he never knew. He was guided here by a local trapper who knew of the stone headstone at Antelope Springs.

It is a cold February day. It's gloomy, overcast and threatening to snow. The perfect day to stand at a historic site of tragedy. My wife, dog and I jump into our modern covered wagon - a 2002 Toyota Tacoma 4WD pickup truck, and head southwest. Along with me are some general coordinates programmed into my Garmin eTrex GPS unit, a copy of a small portion from a topo map and the desire to stand at the trailside grave of Susan Coon. In this day of stereophonic music, quiet vehicular cabins, high speed transportation with climate control; it is difficult to put yourselves into the hobnail boots of our ancestors from more than 150 years ago and imagine the suffering and anxiety that they faced on a moment to moment basis as they plodded along at the

mercy of the elements and circumstances in large, rough riding wagons pulled by smelly and noisy beasts. As we modern emigrants speed along Interstate 80 at speeds per ten minutes what emigrants traveled on a good day, we tend to whine, complain and think the world ends when the batteries on our MP3 player or iPhone crap out or we see that the next rest area is farther than the perceived capacity of our bladders.

But first, a bit of history of where I'm heading and its significance in Nevada history. In 1846, there was no state of Nevada nor California, and the region was still owned by Mexico. There were only rudimentary pathways through the sagebrush – the coming of the Transcontinental railroad (Central Pacific) was nearly two decades into the future. The primary “highway” of the day was the rough and dusty path that ran along the Humboldt River across northern Nevada. At the “big bend” of the Humboldt – and this river is so convoluted along its entire path I haven't a clue as to which big bend was the “big bend” – Jesse and Lindsay Applegate created a trail to take emigrants into the fertile Willamette Valley of central Oregon. It left the Humboldt River at a point now under the waters of Rye Patch Reservoir, Pershing County, Nevada that was at one time called Lassen's Meadows; trended north and west across barren hills and then the really sterile Black Rock Desert; thereupon into northeastern California just south of the Oregon border. In 1848, Peter Lassen, namesake of the future Lassen County, California and the state's still active volcano, Mount Lassen; advertised the trail and a connection south to guide emigrants to his trading post situated near present day Susanville, California; and touted it as a way to cross the Sierra Nevada to the gold fields at lower elevations and easier gradients than the infamous Donner Pass farther south along the main emigrant trail. The trail had its highest volume of travelers during the wild stampede to California in 1849, but was used thereafter for some time by those who didn't have enough spare cash for the fare for the transcontinental railroad then making its way across the United States or preferred to go their independent ways.

At the time of my sojourn into the Antelope Springs region, there were at least two guide books published on the Lassen-Applegate trail. I don't own nor had read either of them, but did have a copy of the “**Bureau of Land Management Nevada – Contributions to the Study of Cultural Resources; Emigrant Trails in the Black Rock Desert; Technical Report No. 6, April 1980.**” This field study of the trail contains enough human suffering and tragedy to fuel the desire to see some of the land for myself. One tragedy in particular, summed up only in a very short paragraph, was the death of Susan Coon at Antelope Spring and the visitation of the grave of the mother he never knew by the son she never knew 72 years later. This one really struck my heartstrings the most. I wanted to find Susan's grave for myself. Her grave is still marked by the broken slab of native stone carved by a stone carver with the caravan she traveled with, one of the few original headstones along the trail.

In addition to the grave of Susan Coon, the BLM book alludes to two men murdered at the springs by Indians; and whose bodies are “presumably” buried there. Another element to the mystery at Antelope Spring. I didn't expect to find anything else at Antelope Spring, I would be happy enough simply to find Susan's grave.

Not having the guide books, and only the rudimentary facts given in the BLM book as well as the knowledge that unique railroad track markers were put in place a few decades ago by Trails West and the Oregon-California Trails Association to demarcate the trail, I decided to make for myself a search for the grave of Susan Coon. Checking the few topographic maps I had of Nevada, and getting coordinates off an old version of computer map software <sup>1</sup>, I made my way to the site, located about an hour southwest of my home. I figured it would be fairly easy to find the Susan Coon grave site. But it didn't turn out the case.

Antelope Springs – a series of seeps – is located near the northern foot of 6,892 foot high Majuba Mountain, located in the Majuba Mountains west of Rye Patch Reservoir and slightly north of west of the community of Imlay on Interstate 80. The topographic map shows a road leading to Little Antelope Spring, then up a branch of the canyon, thence over a saddle to round the western side of Majuba Mountain, then back down into the broad and long nameless valley <sup>2</sup> that runs due north from the northern end of the lofty Humboldt Range and the Humboldt River, and well north to nearly the Oregon border.

---

1 Delorme Street Atlas USA version 6.0.

2 The valley that Rye Patch Reservoir is located isn't named; but basically the same valley merges with Desert and Quinn River Valleys to the north.



**CLICK ON IMAGE TO ENLARGE**  
The area of the grave of Susan Coon.



**CLICK ON IMAGE TO ENLARGE**  
The historical marker for the Lassen-Applegate trail at Imlay.

But here in lay the first element of the mystery that made this search a bit difficult. One of the few paper U.S.G.S. maps that I had, the Scossa, NV topographic quadrant, show Antelope Springs as Antelope Spring and Little Antelope Spring; as well as another unnamed spring above them. My Delorme Street Atlas USA software shows a site as "Big Antelope Spring" in the same vicinity as appeared on the topographic map. Fortunately, I took the coordinates to program into my Garmin eTrex from Big Antelope Spring shown on Delorme <sup>3</sup>, as I found out later that my print out from the topo map are for a separate set of springs having the place name of Antelope only 1.5 miles to the west of what really was my target location. If I had programmed my eTrex with those springs, I may have never found the graves I was looking for.

On an increasingly gloomy day, my wife, or small dog and I left our home near Winnemucca, went into town to gas up and get a cup of hot coffee at McDonald's, then started westbound on Interstate 80. Exiting onto the frontage road about 25 minutes away in the small Union Pacific Railroad whistle crossing and freeway frontage hamlet of Imlay, we started our search for Susan Coon at the Nevada State Historical Landmark #49, marked "Applegate Lassen Emigrant Cutoff." This is located at the junction with the county dirt road north to Jungo and Sulphur from the western end of Imlay and a short distance from the end of the frontage road along I-80. At this point, we had traveled only 37.2 miles from our home.

<sup>3</sup> On pretty much all computer map software, coordinates are displayed for wherever your cursor is located, thus making it easy to program these into a GPS device to follow to your desired location.



**CLICK ON IMAGE TO ENLARGE**  
Sighting southwest along the Humboldt River at the Callahan Bridge north of Imlay.

At a point 4.25 miles north of the historical marker, one comes to the Callahan Bridge crossing the Humboldt River, which is marked on many maps. Here one will find one of the railroad rail markers marking the main California emigrant route along the Humboldt River, as well as a second rail added to it to note the Lassen-Applegate trail. My wife and I spent a relaxing ten minutes at the bridge, enjoying the soft burbling sounds of the Humboldt as it flowed to fill up it's sink some 65 miles southwest of this point. The waters that flowed below me might have been born from any point from all across northern and even well to the south into central Nevada <sup>4</sup>.



**CLICK ON IMAGE TO ENLARGE**  
One of the Trails West markers along the main California emigrant trail. View of the Callahan Bridge over the Humboldt River; as well as the Humboldt Range; are seen in the background.



**CLICK ON IMAGE TO ENLARGE**  
A close-up of the Trails West marker just north of the Callahan Bridge over the Humboldt River.



**CLICK ON IMAGE TO ENLARGE**  
A view southwest along the Humboldt River. The Humboldt Range dominates the background.



**CLICK ON IMAGE TO ENLARGE**  
**Along the county road westbound toward Antelope Spring. The distinctive shape of Majuba Mountain is prominent just to the right of my GPS.**

My eTrex was telling me that my final destination was nearly 14.5 miles due west of the bridge, and the unique shape of 6,892 foot high Majuba Mountain was in plain sight. I had no idea as to exactly where Antelope Springs were on the mountain, at the time I only had the understanding that they were somewhere on its eastern flank <sup>5</sup>. We pressed on over the very good maintained dirt road.



**CLICK ON IMAGE TO ENLARGE**  
**One might be able to put themselves mentally into the shoes of our ancestors as they trod through this lonely section of the Lassen-Applegate trail if one stops here, exits their vehicle and sticks around long enough to realize the silence and distance to soak in. The lofty peaks of the Humboldt Range are in the distance.**

The road rounded the dry northern end of Rye Patch Reservoir, its flat and shallow bottom filled with yellow rye grass. The county road then shot due west, county maintenance workers with dump trucks and a grader were working on a section that likely was a fairly large mud bog during the winter. At some point along here, the Lassen-Applegate trail exited the reservoir <sup>6</sup> and paralleled itself with the county road. Reportedly small

- 
- 4 The Reese River, which is born high in the Toiyabe Range not far north of Tonopah, empties into the Humboldt at Battle Mountain.
- 5 The series of springs that make up the Antelope group are not on Majuba Mountain, but on the northern side of a small ridge of hills north of the mountain.
- 6 A portion of the primary California emigrant trail, as well as its junction with the Lassen-Applegate trail, is in most cases under the waters of Rye Patch Reservoir. There is a Trails-West marker at the point the route exits the high water mark.

sections of the original tracks can still be found on the ground. In the early to mid-1900s, scattered relics left behind by Oregon and northern California bound emigrants could still be found; but now they have succumbed to time, elements and human pilfering. At a point 11.5 miles from Callahan Bridge, the road begins to climb the foot of the Majuba Mountains, heading for Antelope Pass, which separates the Majuba Mountains from the Antelope Range. At a point 13.9 miles from the Humboldt, I notice a road heading due west, whereas the county road makes a broad sweep north, then straight west again. At the time I didn't realize that the side road I had spied was the original Lassen-Applegate route.

But ahead in my line of sight a couple tenths of a mile away was another Trails West marker and a tree by the side of the road. Here was Willow Spring. I set my sights on that point.

Willow Spring was just far enough off the main emigrant road, and put out such a meager water supply, it wasn't used much. Most emigrants continued ahead and then turned south to Antelope Springs to end their first day along the trail after branching off the main California emigrant trail along the Humboldt. On this gloomy day, I found enough water emanating from the spring to produce a flow of water for a few dozen yards. From the main county road another road ran straight south a few hundred feet to meet up again with the main emigrant trail.



**CLICK ON IMAGE TO ENLARGE**  
The Trails West marker at Willow Spring. The view is west.



**CLICK ON IMAGE TO ENLARGE**  
Willow Spring with its small output of water along the north side of the county road. The view is northwest.



**CLICK ON IMAGE TO ENLARGE**  
The view eastward from the Trails West marker at Willow Spring.

We followed the emigrant trail 1.5 miles west, where we found another Trails West marker at the junction of

the road south to Antelope Spring. Some guidebooks claim this road is a "tire killer," but I found the road to be only lightly eroded but reasonably smooth two-track road; punctuated here and there with a few small stones poking up from the ground. In actuality, in good, dry weather, a 2WD pickup could make the entire trip.



**CLICK ON IMAGE TO  
ENLARGE**

Driving west along the main  
Lassen-Applegate trail.



**CLICK ON IMAGE TO  
ENLARGE**

The Trails West marker  
pointing the way to Antelope  
Spring. The road turns left  
(south) to Antelope, this view  
continues west along the main  
trail.



**CLICK ON IMAGE TO  
ENLARGE**

Sighting along the main  
Lassen-Applegate trail from  
the Antelope Spring marker.



**CLICK ON IMAGE TO  
ENLARGE**

The road south to Big  
Antelope Spring.



**CLICK ON IMAGE TO  
ENLARGE**

**Big Antelope Spring. At the  
time I thought I was at  
Antelope Spring. And later I  
thought I was at Little  
Antelope Spring. Am I  
confused yet? You bet!**

We turned south for Antelope Springs. I could see a thicket of willows spilling from a gulch in some nearly barren hills north of the northern base of Majuba Mountain, its craggy summit visible from our vantage. Patches of snow and solid snow cover on sun protected slopes were more in existence here. I drove slightly more than 1.5 miles south to where the road ended at what I thought was Antelope Spring: a small plot of grassy meadow large enough to park three or four vehicles, punctuated by a boggy section of ice covered pockets of water at an elevation of 5,487 feet above sea level. It all ended abruptly at the base of a small prow of the split of two gulches that ran south up the hillside north of Majuba Mountain.



**CLICK ON IMAGE TO  
ENLARGE**

**The view northeast from Big  
Antelope Spring. Except I  
still thought I was at  
Antelope Spring. But I was  
beginning to realize  
differently ...**

Now, where was the grave of Susan Coon? The BLM book had a photo taken likely in the late 1970s when field work was done in the making of the book (published 1980). I climbed the bluff, all of 20 feet high, and walked along its easy and lightly sloping gradient as it increased in width. My wife, disabled, stayed in the truck working on her crocheting. Looking about, it was a pleasant looking country – punctuated by juniper and piñon pine, which increased in thickness as the elevation increased. I stumbled about from one side to the other on the intervening ridge between the two gulches, trying to get the hang of the lay of the land in reference to my printed topographic map for about a half hour. Nothing seemed to match, not even the road system south of Antelope Spring, which was nowhere to be seen on the ground. High above, on the bare ground on the sunny western facing slope, I could see a road angling upward to cross over the saddle between me and Majuba's bulk. But I could not locate its origin.

I happened upon fragments of worked over obsidian – an indication that Indians did pass this way or chose to stay here at least during summer months. I could not locate anything in sight as to the origin of the obsidian. Pretty soon I stumbled across a pile of rocks. Was this the remains of the headstone of Susan Coon's grave? It didn't give that appearance, but looked to me as if it might originally had been a stone claim marker cairn. There was a large scoop of earth missing in the embankment, sagebrush covered, which indicated an old prospect.



**CLICK ON IMAGE TO  
ENLARGE**

**Was this the grave of Susan  
Coon, now completely  
obliterated after all these  
years? I began to consult my  
map seriously by now. And I  
began to realize - incorrectly  
- that I was at Little  
Antelope Spring.**

I really studied the map hard. And then it became apparent by the contours and markings indicating prospects and mine adits that I was likely at what was labeled Little Antelope Spring <sup>7</sup>. Antelope Spring was some distance back the way I had come in from. I determined I needed to backtrack a bit and cut off my search at the stone cairn at coordinates N40° 41.256'; W118° 29.625', elevation of 5,542 feet.<sup>8</sup>

For now, I was getting chilled. No sun, gloomy overcast and a frigid wind was blowing. Time for a thermos of hot chicken noodle soup and a peanut butter sandwich in the warm cab of the Tacoma.

As I ate my soup and sandwich, I studied the map and pondered the habits of the emigrants when it came to camping each night. Likely a wagon party would circle their wagons for protection from the elements and any unfriendly animals or humans. They would need space to do so. And they would likely desire an open location for maximum visibility. Neither space or visibility was afforded here in the gulch that I was located. The countryside at the spring climbed quickly, affording innumerable vantage points for enemies to shoot down onto any travelers from. No, the emigrants must have camped elsewhere close by – close enough to gather water for themselves and stock, but far enough away to get into some open country for protection and visibility. And likely very near that point would be the grave of Susan Coon.

After finishing my meal, I backtracked for nearly a mile; or to about where I thought the topo map was indicating Antelope Spring. The topography was similar enough I still thought I was somewhere on that map. But I could see nothing indicating any surface water or water even close to the surface – just sagebrush and an occasional juniper bush. In addition, the lay of the land was progressively flatter, not the convoluted face of the intervening hills between me and Majuba Mountain. Now I was really getting confused.

---

7 I was actually at Big Antelope Spring. This was the site of the graves, fortunately. However, I found out several weeks later that my printed map was for a series of springs – also called Antelope – located 1.5 miles west. My map printout was from the Scossa, NV U.S.G.S. quadrant; whereas my location at Big Antelope Spring is on the Majuba Mountain, NV quadrant. I did not at the time have a copy of the Majuba Mountain quadrant.

8 Datum settings on my Garmin eTrex was set to NAD27 CONU or North American Datum 1927 Continental United States, which all 7.5 minute topographic maps are based.



**CLICK ON IMAGE TO  
ENLARGE**

**Here I am actually within sight of the graves. I took the road to the right of the photo in search of Antelope Spring, shown on my topo map (actually more than a mile away to my west), and overlooked Susan Coon's grave in plain sight.**

I turned around and went back toward Little Antelope Spring. At a point 532 feet from the end of the road, a lone tall juniper tree stands on the south side of the road. I parked here for a minute. The map and ground conflicted. A road was supposed to be leaving this point and heading back north and west to rejoin the main emigrant road. It made sense – westbound emigrants would want to cut off every little bit they could from this detour. But no road was visible to my eyes. Where was I?

I didn't know it at the time, but I was in sight of Susan Coon's grave.

A dirt track that I missed on the way in climbed from the juniper tree and straight up the hillside. It likely was the origin of the road south over Majuba Mountain that I saw earlier. But again this road conflicts with the topo map, which shows the road going up the gulch. It was obvious from what I could see with my eyes that such a road couldn't confine itself to the gulch for long, as in a short distance the gulch climbed straight up and became part of the broad, bare face of the mountain. I started up the truck and drove up this road for about 200 yards south from the juniper tree, looking eastward out my window trying to ascertain if it went to Antelope Spring, which was shown off the road in from Willow Spring by some distance. Maybe at height I could spot something to clue me in.

And yet while my eyes scanned the topography outside my window at a distance, I drove right by Susan Coon's grave, it hiding in plain sight maybe 100 feet from the tip of my nose.

Seeing nothing as I climbed up the hillside, it becoming obvious that no emigrant in his right mind would take the time and trouble to get their heavy wagons up this way at the end of a long and tiring day, I retreated to the juniper tree and parked for good. My Garmin eTrex in hand, along with that printed topo map and my digital camera and digital video camera, I started on foot looking for clues. But nothing seemed to fit in my mind. Everything seemed all wrong. It was, but I didn't know it at the time.

But this time, just plain dumb luck, as it were, would be on my side for once.



**CLICK ON IMAGE TO  
ENLARGE**

**The grave of James Bailey, at  
the foot of the hillside only  
yards from the main road to  
Big Antelope Spring.**

A dim pathway seemed to show up through the sagebrush in an easterly direction from the juniper. I followed. Suddenly, my eyes picked out a slight mound covered in broken reddish rock. Something reflecting the sky showed up in the middle. Under a square of plexiglass inlaid into the ground was the words:

## **JAMES BAILEY**

### **1824 – 1862**

The plexiglass appeared to cover a portion of original headstone that bore these words, which was likely originally inlaid into the broken stone about me. But who was Bailey? A prospector that worked the adits and prospects shown on the map; maybe a builder of the very stone cairn that I saw earlier? Why was he buried here? <sup>9</sup> His grave lay at edge of the flat around the juniper tree, very close to where any emigrant party might be camping; as well as being very near the road into Big Antelope Spring. Furthermore, was he one of the two unnamed men in the BLM thesis “presumably” buried here? Why didn't the BLM book mention Bailey, if he indeed was one of them?

But Bailey's grave gave me a new focus in which to start a serious search for the grave of Susan Coon. I started a wide search in broad circles around the Bailey grave in search for her grave. The BLM book photo of Susan's grave doesn't show any background, so that was of no help. I stumbled around in the brush, returning often to Bailey's grave to get my bearings. After an hour, I was about to give up. It was getting colder, the sky

<sup>9</sup> Due to the sensitive nature of remote graves, I will not give the GPS coordinates of the grave of Bailey or Susan Coon. Trails West does not pinpoint the graves either nor is Big Antelope Spring marked with one of their markers. The Oregon-California Trails Association does have a plaque at the grave of Susan Coon, but it is hidden to the eyes of those casually passing by. Anyone interested in finding the graves should be able to do so on the subtle clues I give in this essay and by topographic maps. If you visit the site of the graves of Susan Coon and James Bailey, please respect these unique and historic artifacts for the sake of their descendants and the general public who wish to visit and admire the sites.

threatening to do something, the wind picking up. As I approached the truck, dejected yet possessing somewhat a feeling of satisfaction as to the finding of Bailey's grave, my eyes picked out another subtle path lead up the hill due south from the juniper and toward a dense thicket in winter bare above me.

And then I saw it.

A small cross. It obviously was modern. It simply read:

## JAS. BAILEY \* WM. COOK UNIONVILLE, NEV. KILLED HERE 9 / JUL / 1862



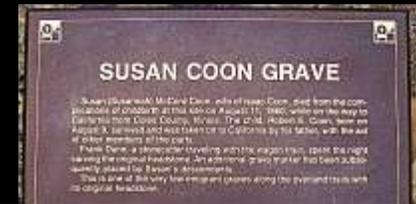
CLICK ON IMAGE TO  
ENLARGE

A monument to the location of the murders of James Bailey and William Cook. I already found the grave of Bailey, where was Cook? Was he buried here under my feet, or elsewhere nearby?

The two men murdered by Indians! Then I saw it – the grave of Susan Coon! It was maybe 35 feet to my left as I faced the cross bearing the names of James Bailey and William Cook.

I now had another piece of the puzzle of James Bailey and William Cook. Were they two prospectors from Unionville, which is about 27 miles southeast of my position? <sup>10</sup>

But questions still spun in my mind – Why were they killed here, only a few feet from the grave of Susan Coon, who had been buried 23 months earlier? Why was Bailey buried down below on the flat, instead of at the site of their murder? And where was the body of Cook?



<sup>10</sup>The book **WESTERN PLACES: THE HUMBOLDT RANGE**, by Alan Patera, contains a list of Unionville's residents, as well as residents in other towns scattered through the Humboldt Range. There is a Dr. James M. Bailey listed as a Unionville dentist and election judge, but gives the date the name is mentioned in the Unionville newspaper as June, 1863, or nearly a year after the murder of James Bailey. There is no listing for William Cook.



**CLICK ON IMAGE TO  
ENLARGE**

I was in a somber place, the site of human suffering and tragedy. Even the sky started to cry – in the form of frozen tears. At first a few snow flurries flew by me as I studied the grave of Susan Coon. I was happy to find her. But the site left me filled with as many questions as answers. Within a few minutes as I stood there in somber respect, the sky unleashed a blizzard of snow and soon visibility dropped to only a quarter mile.



**CLICK ON IMAGE TO ENLARGE**  
Exiting the Big Antelope Spring area in the increasing snowfall.

Our original plan was to proceed from Susan Coon's grave north to the ghost town of Scossa, but with the increasing snowfall, the snow sticking to whiten the ground, and the advancing hour – indeed, it had taken me considerable time to locate the graves; we decided to return to Winnemucca and leave Susan Coon, James Bailey and William Cook to rest in peace beneath the ground at Antelope Springs. A trip to Scossa and other nearby ghost town sites would have to wait for another day.

And on another day, I need to return to Antelope Spring and really take a good look for the grave of William Cook and maybe others buried here, now that I now know where to begin my search.

Into the increasing blizzard I drove back eastward over the Lassen-Applegate trail, happy in my finding Susan Coon and James Bailey.



**CLICK ON IMAGE TO ENLARGE**  
Willow Spring. The Trails West marker at left.

**Epilogue:** In the time after I visited the site of the graves of Susan Coon and James Bailey, I purchased the National Geographic TOPO! Nevada software at the recommendation of a friend of mine. My current software is adequate but not as good as topographic mapping software for locating landmarks and plotting courses. After the purchase of TOPO! and reviewing my course, I immediately found the answer to my nagging

questions regarding discrepancies between my printed topo map and what I found on the ground. It was indeed fortunate that I picked the wrong Antelope to begin my search for Susan Coon, based upon old map software that was in dire need of replacing.

### TRIP LOG

BEGINNING MILEAGE ON TACOMA: 133,081	STARTING TIME (Leaving my Home): 10:38 AM	RETURN TIME (At My Home): 5:01 PM
ENDING MILEAGE ON TACOMA: 133,194	TRIP MILEAGE (TACOMA): 113.0	TRIP MILEAGE (GPS): 114 (including walking w/unit clipped to my belt)
TRIP TIME: 6 hours, 11 minutes, 18 seconds	AVERAGE MOVING SPEED: 16.9 mph	HIGHEST SPEED: 71.1 mph

©2010 D.A. Wright  
All Rights Reserved

Page Revised: 10/28/2024