

THE MARKER

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Since 1970

A Working Organization Dedicated to Marking the California Trail FALL 2011

The Story of Susan's Bluff and Susan

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It's 1849 on the Carson Trail. Emigrant wagon trains and 49ers are winding their way through the newly acquired Upper California territory (western Nevada) on their way to the goldfields, settlements and cities of California. One of the many routes through running through this area follows along the Carson River between the modern Fort Churchill Historic Site and the town of Dayton.

Although not as popular as the faster Twenty-Six Mile Desert cutoff, which ran roughly where U.S. Highway 50 goes today, the Carson River route provided valuable feed and water for the stock the pioneers still had. Along this route the wagon trains hugged the left bank of the Carson until they reached a steep bluff jutting out almost to the river. Although foot traffic could make it around the point of the bluff, wagons had to ford the river before they reached it. Trails West recently installed the last Carson Route marker, Marker CR-20, near this ford at the base of the cliff known as Susan's Bluff.



New Trails West Marker, CR-20 at Susan's Bluff.

Viewed from the direction the emigrants were approaching, the bluff hides behind other ridges until you are past it. However, looking back, it looms powerfully against the sky. This makes one wonder how something so imposing came to be known as "Susan's Bluff?" *continued on page 4*



Near the Carson River ford.



Looking back at Susan's bluff.