

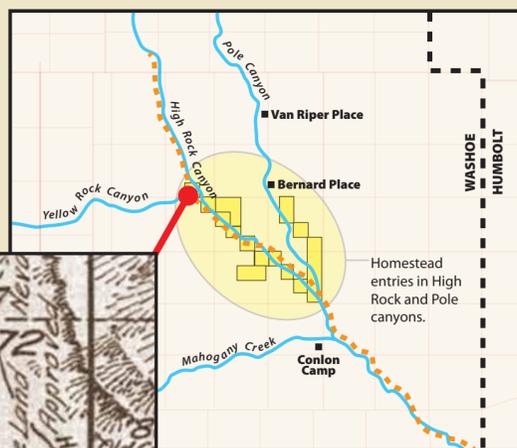
A HIGH ROCK GARAGE

This small, isolated building is only a stone's throw from the Applegate Trail, one of the busiest emigrant roads in the American West. During the 1840s and 1850s, thousands of settlers passed by here on their journey to Oregon and California.

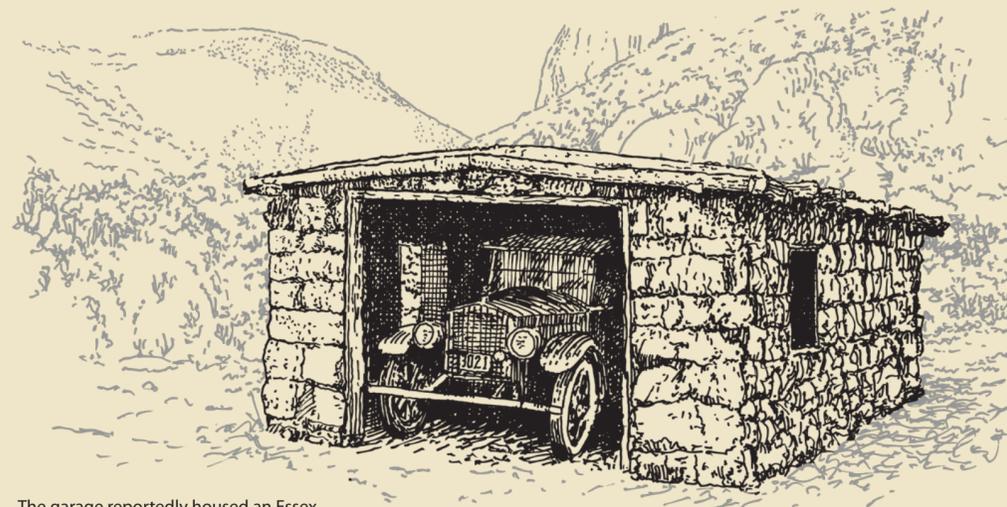
The Fox Homestead "garage" is from a different era. It was built around 1916. The Automobile Age had arrived, and even homesteading—the mainstay of frontier settlement—had changed.

HOMESTEADING THE HIGH DESERT

By the early 1900s, homesteaders had claimed the best land throughout the West. New legislation, such as the Enlarged Homestead Act of 1909, encouraged settlement in less desirable and more arid locations. In late 1915, a number of homesteaders—including Thomas Fox—filed on some prime bottom-land in High Rock and Pole canyons. The settlers built homes and outbuildings, fenced off fields, harvested naturally growing hay, and began grazing livestock. The Fox Homestead, at the mouth of Yellow Rock Canyon, included a small house along with the garage.



"Fox's House" shown on a 1922 General Land Office map.



The garage reportedly housed an Essex automobile belonging to Mr. Fox.



The garage in 2006. Note the large crack developing at the corner of the building.

STABILIZING AND RESTORING THE FOX HOMESTEAD GARAGE

The simple stone garage stood for almost a century, while a partial foundation was all that remained of the house. By 2006, the garage was about to collapse. The BLM began a project to stabilize and restore the structure. Over the next two years, the walls were repaired and repointed, sagging beams were replaced, and a new dirt roof added.

The project was a combined effort by the BLM, private contractors, and volunteers, including AMEC Engineering and Infrastructure, Friends of Black Rock High Rock, the High Rock Trekkers, and Black Rock City, LLC. In 2008, the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office awarded the project its annual commendation for historic preservation.

COMPLICATIONS

It often took only a few dry years for a farm to fail in this area, but the High Rock homesteaders had an additional problem. Their land was already owned by the Pacific Live Stock Company. The homesteaders had found an error in the original government survey of the area, and they hoped the uncertainty would invalidate the cattle company's title to the land they wanted.

The Pacific Live Stock Company had other ideas. They immediately went to court to have the settlers removed, which took four years and a new land survey. The company won the case. Several of the homesteaders even had to pay fines along with losing their claims.



Replacing a broken keystone.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

The Fox Homestead Garage and all prehistoric and historic sites, structures, and artifacts on BLM managed public lands are protected by the Archaeological Resource Protection Act of 1979. Damaging or defacing the building, or removing artifacts from the site, is a crime.

Remember, what you see here is the evidence of our history. Leave it undisturbed so others can enjoy and learn about homesteading in High Rock Canyon.

