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THE CULTURAL PRODUCTION OF TOURISM AT LAKE TAHOE: EXPLORING HOW CULTURAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION IS IMPACTED BY TOURISM

CATHERINE E. MAGEE

ABSTRACT

This article explores the connection between tourism and cultural heritage preservation by examining the formation processes of hybrid tourist/cultural heritage landscapes. As heritage conservation professionals, we use scientific investigations and research to better understand material culture and how to best preserve it, but education and scientific illumination are just two end results of our work. Our work, the real end result of what most of us do, is for tourists, enticing people to visit our museums, national parks, archaeological sites, and historic buildings both in reality and virtually. We are involved in the cultural production of tourism and tourist sites, although we may not conceptualize our work in this way.

This article explains and explores this connection between tourism and cultural heritage preservation. Specifically, it examines the impact tourism had and has on the cultural heritage of the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California by investigating the cultural landscapes of Lake Tahoe, United States.

1. INTRODUCTION

Our work as heritage professionals is part of an extensive community of people dedicated to the preservation of tangible and intangible heritage. We help ensure the preservation of cultural heritage, and conservators have a unique and intimate relationship with the objects we conserve, regardless of whether the object is a building, landscape, or sculpture. This extensive and comprehensive understanding of objects enables conservators to uncover little known aspects of an object's manufacture and use that can reveal connections between cultures. These discoveries, so extensively documented, become part of an object's cultural interpretation. Conservators recognize this unique relationship and responsibility because it is likely their interactions with the object will shape the object's long-term preservation and contribute to the scientific, academic, and cultural understanding of the object. We as conservators see our work in cultural heritage institutions as contributing to these intellectual pursuits, often with the catalyst for our work being museum exhibits or the preservation of buildings, sites, and monuments. The public then visits these venues, where conservators have aided in the public's interaction with and potential interpretation of that cultural heritage.

The concept proposed in this article is to consider who the end users of our work are, and how the end users or consumers of our work inform the preservation decisions we make. Many conservation professionals see the scientific and academic study of objects as the primary products of their work. But much of our work ends up being presented to the public, and its educational components are high on the list of end products of our work. In the end, the visiting public, or tourists, are the largest consumers of our work. We as heritage professionals, however, do not necessarily recognize or think of our work within the broader context of tourism. Indeed many of the preservation decisions conservators and heritage preservation professionals make are impacted by tourism and play a part in the cultural production of tourism. Additionally, in the ever increasing incorporation of our work within the concept of sustainability, it is critically important to recognize that our work is an integral part of the tourism network.

2. TOURISM AND SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is most often identified with ecological principles and the impact humans have on the environment. Yet sustainability is an encompassing concept dealing with sociocultural, economic, and environmental concerns. It is the combination of all of these aspects that create a truly sustainable approach. Tourism impacts sustainability in each aspect and is an inherently consumptive process as practiced today.

Although the act of tourism dates back millennia, the academic study of it and its definitions is a relatively new field. Once the stance of defending tourism as an activity that deserves serious academic attention was established, tourism was soon examined as an activity that has global sociocultural, economic, and environmental impacts (Hall and Page 1999; Hall and Page 2009). Tourism has both positive and negative impacts and is widely promoted as a development tool and economic panacea, bringing much needed international currency to depressed local economies. Yet tourism can be a force for endangering and altering traditional local cultural practices and values, bringing outside influences and practices to communities worldwide. Tourism can be a force for good, promoting global peace and cross-cultural understanding; yet it can also be a force aiding in the subjugation of indigenous people, who often earn low wages in tourist sites. Tourism can be promoted as sustainable, yet eco-tourism can still deplete precious local resources such as water and divert it to tourists and away from locals, and it can be the mechanism or impetus that introduces invasive species into an ecosystem.

Tourism is a major formative and reciprocal process, impacting the places and people visited as well as impacting the tourists themselves (Urry 1990). Tourism's sphere of influence is global; it infiltrates all aspects of culture—socially, environmentally, visually, ethnically, ethically, and aesthetically. Tourism shapes culture and creates its own culture. This co-production of people, places, and things is reflected in our everyday lives because tourism is pervasive. In our postmodern world, tourism is conducted daily, and by simply engaging in our daily routine we too can become tourists in reality or virtually (MacCannell 1976; Urry 1990). The academic literature is replete with definitions of tourists and tourism, subdividing tourism into groups and types that are too numerous to list here. Tourism is studied across disciplines including: geography, anthropology, sociology, psychology, hospitality, and marketing. Broad tourism categories that are most applicable for heritage professionals include heritage tourism, cultural heritage tourism, eco-tourism, sustainable tourism, adventure tourism, and mass tourism; but a case could be made for many more tourism categories. This is because our work in heritage preservation is cross-disciplinary and has multiple permutations that overlap with other tourism categories such as dark tourism. This is exemplified by the recent work of conservators working with genocide victims to help to create an environment for cultural healing through preserving items that include human remains, aiding in establishing museums, and installing exhibits. This work is done in places dealing with the aftermath of cultural genocide and is a powerful example of how our work encompasses the broader aspects of cultural sustainability while being part of tourism. These places may now be primarily visited by genocide survivors, but also serve as places of cultural memory and can be visited or used by others. Our work as heritage professionals is manifested in many ways, and all these potentially have ties to the multiple expressions of tourism.

3. TOURIST/CULTURAL HERITAGE LANDSCAPES

As briefly described above, there are many rich avenues to explore the links between tourism and cultural heritage preservation. Heritage—built and natural, tangible and intangible—is typically segregated for effective management, ease of categorization, and implementation of preservation strategies. Yet this is an artificial division in how people perceive and actually interact with cultural heritage. The term “cultural landscape” is an answer to this, and it was first recognized by the United States National Park Service in 1981. The

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization officially sanctioned the cultural landscape in 1992 as a designation of cultural heritage that “represent combined works of nature and of man” (Alanen and Melnick 2000, 8). I would add to this definition an additional layer of meaning, that of an ethnographic landscape as defined by Hardesty. He explores how ethnographic landscapes have different meanings imparted to them by the different culture groups interacting with them (Hardesty 2000). Combining these two definitions creates my definition of a cultural heritage landscape, and this is the designation I prefer over cultural landscapes. My current research analyzes cultural heritage landscapes, large and small, to explore how tourism impacts cultural heritage preservation, resulting in what I have termed the hybrid tourist/cultural heritage landscape.

The formation of these hybrid tourist/cultural heritage landscapes occur globally and will be explored via the landscapes of Lake Tahoe, United States (see figs. 1, 2) as these are the focus of my current research.



Fig. 1. Map of the Great Basin (Courtesy of Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Basin)

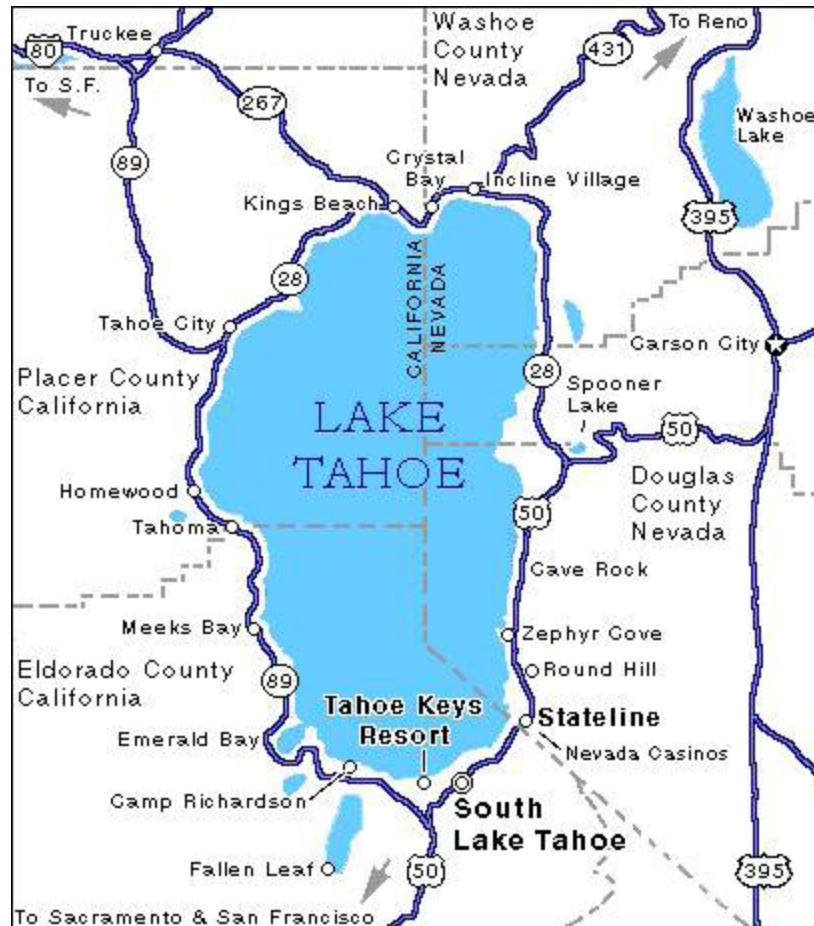


Fig. 2. Map of Lake Tahoe (Courtesy of A Great Place to Stay.Net,
<http://agptpics.homestead.com/TAHOELOCATIONMAP.html>)

Like other cultural heritage landscapes, they have been shaped by man and nature, have different meanings to the people interacting with them, and have undergone and will undergo continual changes due to tourism. Tourism has and continues to shape the cultural heritage landscapes at Lake Tahoe. I am specifically examining how the original culture group at Lake Tahoe, the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California, was impacted by tourism, and how this is expressed in the cultural heritage landscapes of Lake Tahoe today, creating hybrid tourist/cultural heritage landscapes.

Visitors to Lake Tahoe may not initially or easily recognize the impact the Washoe people had and have on their experience of the Lake Tahoe landscapes; the influence is discernable, but not always in obvious ways. Euro-American settlement of Lake Tahoe and tourism had strong and irreversible impacts on the Washoe people culturally, economically, socially, and environmentally. The landscapes at Lake Tahoe today represent this reciprocity of influences. My goal is to highlight how tourism in particular played a role in shaping the Washoe people's cultural heritage traditions and interaction with Lake Tahoe landscapes, and in turn how the Washoe people shaped tourism and tourists' landscapes at Lake Tahoe. This interaction over time resulted in the hybrid tourist/cultural heritage landscapes that are valued and protected at Lake Tahoe today. In this article, I will examine two case studies to highlight different landscape formation processes. These case studies exemplify multiple aspects of what constitutes hybrid tourist/cultural heritage landscapes.

3.1 AN OVERVIEW OF SETTLEMENT AND TOURISM AT LAKE TAHOE

In order to understand the changing Lake Tahoe landscapes, one needs to have a sense of the patterns and processes of settlement and tourism; therefore a brief history of the Washoe people and Euro-American settlement of the Lake Tahoe Basin will be outlined. Although the Lake Tahoe Basin's entire shoreline has been affected by Washoe and Euro-American settlement and tourism, specific places, people, and activities will be highlighted as they represent the overall patterns or point to particularly significant events. The discussion particularly emphasizes the sociocultural impacts of settlement and tourism development at Lake Tahoe, highlighting the impact of tourism on the Washoe people who become a tourist product and producer of tourism.

For thousands of years, Lake Tahoe was known only to the Native Americans of the Sierra Nevada, and primarily the Washoe people. Their name for Lake Tahoe is *Da ow a ga*, and it is the center of their physical and spiritual homeland (The Washoe Cultural Office 2009). Lake Tahoe was bypassed by the earliest European and American explorers owing to the difficulty of the terrain and the formidable barrier of the Great Basin. It was first mapped by John C. Frémont in February of 1844, who without the aid of a Washoe guide, it is said, would have likely perished in the Sierran winter (James 1915; The Washoe Cultural Office 2009). Lake Tahoe was overlooked by the rush of miners seeking to strike it rich in California in 1849 and seen as an obstacle to the reverse-migrating California miners lured by the promise of new riches in the Nevada Territory's 1859 Comstock Lode. When entrepreneurs serving the masses of miners who were headed for Virginia City turned their attention to Lake Tahoe, they realized that a full service hotel along its shores could be more than just a way station on a wagon road (Scott 1957). This sparked early tourism, Euro-American development was established, and the mechanisms altering Lake Tahoe landscapes were set in motion (James 1915; Scott 1957; Downs 1966; Nevers 1976; Goin et al. 1992; Obermayr 2005; Makley 2011).

3.1.1 The Washoe People

The Washoe people, *Wa She Shu*, have always been at Lake Tahoe. Their creation legend places Tahoe at its center, where they as a people began (Downs 1966). The Washoe people's creation myths, spiritual beliefs, mythologies, and their social, economic, and cultural well-being all radiate from Lake Tahoe (Downs 1966; Nevers 1976; Hinkle and Hinkle 1987; Makley 2011). Thousands of years of use of Lake Tahoe as their seasonal meeting, hunting, and gathering place left little physical evidence on the landscape except for depressions in large rock platforms, known as bedrock mortars, that were used for grinding foraged nuts, seeds, and dried fish (Rucks 1995; Obermayr 2005). The Washoe's physical presence on the landscape was minimal, although today their physical impact on the landscape is being further explored by examining how they managed ecosystems (Taylor and Beaty 2005). To this day, Lake Tahoe is infused with meaning specific to the Washoe. According to Downs, many Washoe place names result from the legends of the twin weasels *Damalali* and *Pewetseli* and their encounters with other miraculous creatures including Water Babies, who are linked to shaman. The most sacred place in all the Washoe lands is on the eastern shore of Lake Tahoe: Cave Rock, or *De'ekwadapush*. This is the Washoe's religious center, where shaman would receive spiritual guidance through meditation and rituals (Downs 1966; Nevers 1976; Makley and Makley 2010).

Not only does Lake Tahoe nurture the Washoe spiritually, but in the past it sustained them physically as well; the Lake Tahoe Basin was part of their seasonal hunting and gathering grounds (fig. 3).

Lake Tahoe was too cold and snow covered for year-round habitation, so the Washoe people would move up into the Lake Tahoe Basin beginning in spring, with entire family groups settling annually in their ancestral camps near the shores. The Washoe were a small group of people dispersed across the Sierra front and western Great Basin during most of the year because their lands were a difficult environment for subsistence. The annual gatherings at Lake Tahoe were not just to gather food for the winter, but also

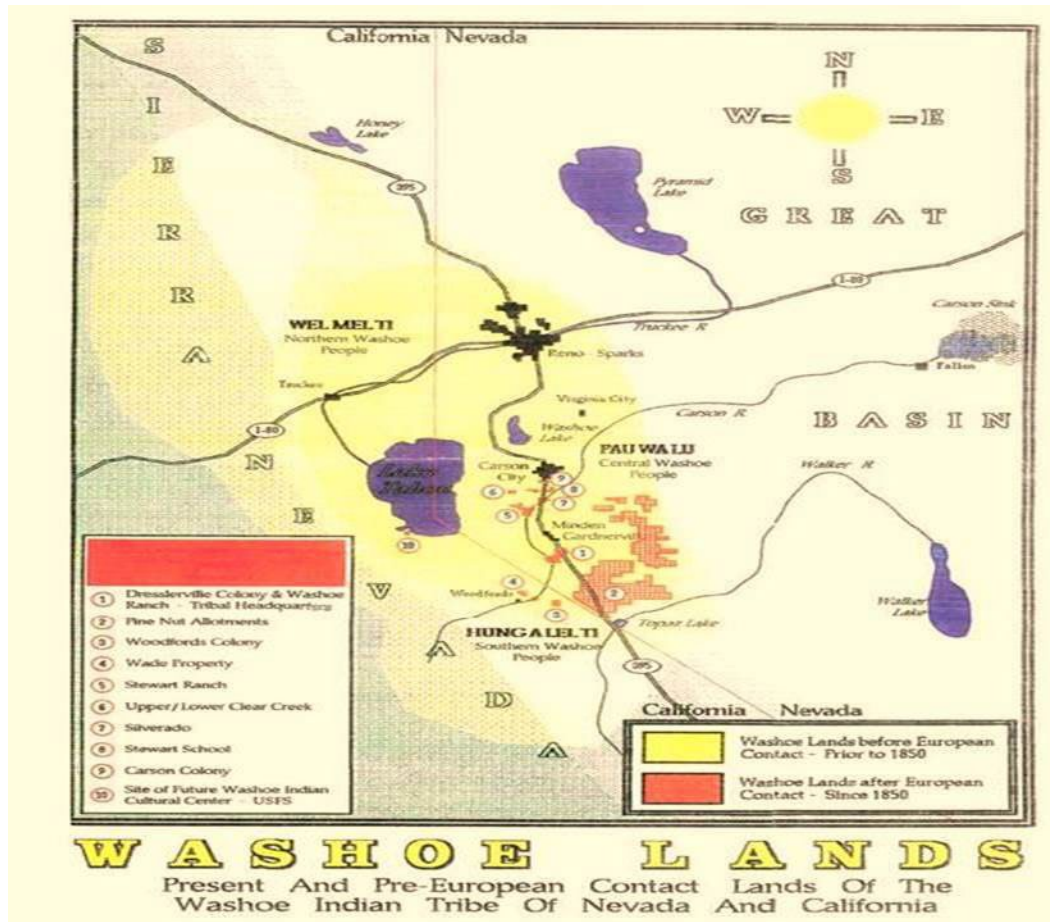


Fig. 3. Map of Washoe lands, present and pre-European Contact Lands of the Washoe Tribe of California and Nevada (Courtesy of the Washoe Tribe of California and Nevada)

a time to reaffirm social bonds and reconnect extended families. Thus, Lake Tahoe landscapes were at the center of social networks for the Washoe. As fall and winter descended, so did the Washoe people, returning to valleys and smaller family units (Downs 1966; Nevers 1976; D'Azevedo 1993a). When Euro-Americans began to settle in the Lake Tahoe Basin in the 1850s, they seriously disrupted Washoe cultural traditions socially, economically, and environmentally.

Euro-Americans and the Washoe people collided at Lake Tahoe beginning with the “discovery” of Lake Tahoe by Frémont in 1844. Over time, Euro-Americans gained control with the result that the Washoe people were marginalized and discriminated against as they lost control over their lands. Their traditional lands were taken by, given, and sold to Euro-American settlers resulting in the Washoe people becoming a landless tribe by 1863 (Nevers 1976). Not until the Federal Government created a reservation for the Washoe people in the Carson Valley and in Reno, Nevada, in 1917, did the Washoe regain some rights in the eyes of the Federal Government authorities. The Washoe’s cultural practices were attacked and demeaned by Euro-Americans, reflecting the racist attitudes of the time (Nevers 1976; Makley and Makley 2010). By the turn of the 20th century, the Washoe thought they were becoming extinct as their small numbers continued to dwindle and their traditional cultural practices were attacked and suppressed (Nevers 1976; D'Azevedo 1993a; The Washoe Cultural Office 2009). Never fully removed from their lands and cultural practices, the Washoe fought and are still fighting to regain the use of traditional lands. They recently won a legal battle to close Cave Rock to rock climbers, who the Washoe tribe viewed as desecrating their most

sacred of places (Taliman 2002; Makley and Makley 2010). The Washoe tribe now manages one of the oldest tourist resorts on Lake Tahoe, Meeks Bay Resort. They have regained access to the lakeshore and adjacent meadows, enabling the cultivation of traditional plants and the maintenance and teaching of Washoe cultural practices (Taliman 2002; Makley and Makley 2010).

3.1.2 Euro-Americans

Early Euro-American settlement in the Lake Tahoe Basin was first sparked by discovery of gold in the nearby Sierra foothills of California in 1848 and the Comstock silver strike in Virginia City, in the Nevada territory, in 1859 (fig. 4).

Lake Tahoe is between several emigrant trails and wagon roads built to the south and north of the Lake Basin, but few fortune seekers focused on Lake Tahoe itself (Obermayr 2005). The Lake Tahoe Basin was sparsely settled by Euro-American squatters in the 1850s, before the discovery of silver in the adjacent Virginia Range. At first the squatters settled in areas that were provided for their use, near meadows with the native hay to feed cattle as in Lake Valley south of Lake Tahoe or in Glenbrook on the eastern shore (Scott 1957; Strong 1984; Hinkle and Hinkle 1987). The Washoe people took note of the squatters, as they had of the fur trappers and early immigrants, but “(f)or the most part Washo[e] life seems to have gone unchanged” (Downs 1966, 74). At this point the Washoe, their cultural practices, and their access



Fig. 4. Map of major mines of the California Gold Rush (1–7) and Comstock Lode (8) (Courtesy of The American Experience, Public Broadcasting Company, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/goldrush/map/>)

to their lands had been little impacted by Euro-American settlement. This changed as thousands of miners reversed their migration from the California gold fields and flowed east along the wagon roads, lured by the 1859 Comstock silver strike in Virginia City (Scott 1957; Hinkle and Hinkle 1987). As traffic increased so did wagon road construction. With the new influx of people, transportation systems improved and expanded, and entrepreneurs expanded roadside hostelrys and built new lakeside accommodations (Hinkle and Hinkle 1987; Obermayr 2005).

The Tahoe Basin was quickly seen as a resource to be exploited by Euro-Americans for their mining industries. Cattle ranches were established, the lake was commercially fished, and water, a precious commodity in the arid adjacent lands, was employed for drinking, agriculture, and the industrial saw mills of the timber industry. The original growth forests in the Tahoe Basin were cut down as the forests closer to Virginia City were destroyed. The Tahoe Basin was almost completely denuded of its forests by 1900. Yet during this time, in what we would consider an industrial wasteland and ecological disaster area, tourism was thriving due to Lake Tahoe's undeniable beauty as well as the foresight of timber barons, who were looking for their next exploitation of Lake Tahoe through tourism.

As Euro-Americans settled in Lake Tahoe, the Washoe attempted to retain their cultural practices, although access to their land and the lakeshore became increasingly difficult as properties were built and fenced (Nevers 1976). By the mid-1880s the lakeshore was ringed with lumber operations and dotted with hotels, inns, and camps as well as summer homes (James 1915; Scott 1957; Pisani 1977; Strong 1999). The Washoe adapted and integrated to some extent into late 19th and early 20th Euro-American dominated society (Downs 1966; D'Azevedo 1993a). One way the Washoe people retained their presence in their ancestral lands was by becoming part of the tourist landscapes at Lake Tahoe. The Washoe worked with the Euro-American settlers at Lake Tahoe as employees, including as domestics in the tourist industry at hotels and in summer homes (Nevers 1976). Employing expert knowledge of the lands and using their skill and expertise in hunting and fishing, some Washoe became hunting and fishing guides. Traditional basketry was altered by Washoe artists to be sold to tourists, and tourism was in full swing by the turn of the 20th century.

In summary, Washoe lands were overtaken by Euro-American settlement, and their culture was nearly eradicated economically, ecologically, and socially. Access to their lands was continually limited and restricted, the productivity of their hunting and gathering grounds plummeted, and their cultural traditions were impaired. The Washoe were marginalized, but they never fully disappeared from Lake Tahoe landscapes. They were impacted by Euro-Americans, but worked to retain their cultural traditions, if not in the same form as pre-Euro-American settlement. One way the Washoe retained their presence at Lake Tahoe was by becoming part of the tourist landscape. Tourism can shape the culture and material cultural traditions of a people. That co-produced material culture can then be so strongly identified with a people and place that it infuses the place with associated meanings, enabling the formation of multiple types of hybrid tourist/cultural heritage landscapes.

3.2 CAVE ROCK, DE'EK WADAPUSH

The first example of a hybrid tourist/cultural heritage landscape examined is Cave Rock on the Eastern shore (fig. 5).

The Washoe name *De'ek wadapush* means rock standing gray, and Cave Rock can be seen from almost any point on Lake Tahoe shoreline. It is *the* most sacred site in all the Washoe lands, and the Washoe still believe that the proper use of Cave Rock is necessary to maintain the health and welfare of the Washoe and non-Washoe alike (Makley and Makley 2010, 2). As discussed earlier, Cave Rock has been a site of spiritual and ritual pilgrimage for centuries for Washoe shaman. This form of tourism, the sacred pilgrimage, is seen in multiple cultures. It imbues a place with significance and has the potential to physically impact a site. Cave Rock has seen damage, but this is associated with tourism and visitation



Fig. 5. Cave Rock from the South (Courtesy of Renalto)

beginning with Euro-American settlement of the Lake Tahoe Basin in the 1850s. This damage included blasting highway tunnels through the revered rock, mostly eradicating the sacred caves the Washoe Shaman used. Before becoming part of the historic Lincoln Highway (today US 50), the first “rock” transcontinental highway built in the United States, Cave Rock was part of the Bonanza Wagon Road that enabled travelers to reach the Virginia City silver mines more easily from the California gold fields. Originally the wagon road was a wooden trestle-supported bridge cantilevered over the lake side of Cave Rock (fig. 6). This structure was augmented with rock revetments to accommodate automobile traffic on the Pioneer Branch of the Lincoln Highway (Franzwa 2004).

The first tunnel blasted through the rock occurred in 1931. A second tunnel was bored through the rock in 1957 to accommodate the increased traffic flow on a now four-lane Highway 50 (Obermayr 2005; Makley and Makley 2010). All construction was undertaken without consideration of the significance of Cave Rock to the Washoe people.

Cave Rock also became a worldwide Mecca and a preeminent site for sport rock climbers beginning in the 1980s (Makley and Makley 2010). Not only did the sport climbers physically defile the rock face with their anchors hammered into the rock, the names of many of the climbing routes are culturally offensive to most people outside the rock climbing culture. One route includes a profanity in the name, “Shut the ___ up and Climb” (Makley and Makley 2010, 5). Additional desecration came with tourists building fires, writing graffiti, littering, and using the remaining cave as a toilet. The Washoe would not use their defiled sacred rock until fairly recently, following their successful 2003 lawsuit that banned rock climbing. Strict enforcement of this only came in 2008 (Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit 2008; Makley and Makley 2010). The Washoe were also instrumental in having Cave Rock



Fig. 6. Cave Rock from the south prior to tunnels ca. 1910 (Courtesy of the North Lake Tahoe Historical Society)

considered for designation as a Traditional Cultural Property on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). It was found eligible for inclusion in 1996 but is not yet listed. This partial victory is bittersweet. To accomplish even this, the Washoe needed a sympathetic head of the US Forest Service and had to demonstrate additional layers of significance beyond being a sacred and religious site for their people (Makley and Makley 2010). The proposed NRHP designation for Cave Rock is based on its paleoenvironmental and archeological resources, its role as a long-term historic transportation corridor, and its importance for telling the story of the Washoe People at Lake Tahoe (National Trust for Historic Preservation 2013).

Cave Rock has both been altered and imbued through time with original cultural associations and use, as well as subsequent and continued use by tourists, creating one type of hybrid tourist/cultural heritage landscape. The previous discussion highlights how a landscape feature can be shaped by cultures and by tourism. With this concept explained, I would like to explore another example of the formative and reciprocal processes tourism has on cultural heritage preservation.

3.3 DAT SO LA LEE

Tourism not only impacted the sociocultural and environmental aspects of the Washoe, but also impacted the Washoe economically and directly influenced their material culture traditions. The evolution of Washoe basketry from utilitarian objects to sculpture has had a continued and profound influence on the basketry tradition. This evolution is tied to Lake Tahoe, Carson Valley, the tourist industry, and the Washoe artists whose mutual influence from 1895 to 1935 created the artistic traditions on which Washoe basketry is judged today (Cohodas 1979). To highlight the reciprocal relationship between tourism and the



Fig. 7. Dat So La Lee with two of her *degikup* (Courtesy of the North Lake Tahoe Historical Society)

Washoe's cultural heritage, I will discuss an iconic type of Washoe material culture, the *degikup* basket, and its most famous creator, Dat So La Lee (fig. 7).

Dat So La Lee is a world-renowned artist and is widely considered one of, if not the, greatest American Indian basket makers (Cohodas 1979; Kort and Sonneborn 2002). Dat So La Lee's baskets are famed worldwide, bringing in near-million dollar prices from collectors and museums.

Her work has been exhibited globally and she has been the focus of numerous scholarly and popular publications. She was instrumental in promoting the artistry of Washoe basketry, and her influence paved the way for contemporary and future acclaimed Washoe artists. She is also a product of tourism; she is a tourist creation and a creator of tourism. She represents the reciprocal nature of tourism and the socioeconomic impacts tourism can and does have on cultural traditions.

3.2.1 Dat So La Lee and Her Patrons

Multiple stories about how Dat So La Lee became a famed artist are mostly inaccurate and have conflicting details and impossible timelines. It is nearly impossible to tease out accurate facts about her transformation from Dabuda to Louisa Keyser to Dat So La Lee. The reason for this is her patronage by Abraham and Amy Cohn. They are the reason we know so much about Dat So La Lee and her baskets, because they kept detailed records of her baskets in ledgers, but they are also the primary reason for the inaccuracies (Cohodas 1992).

Dat So La Lee was born Dabuda sometime in the early or mid-1800s in the southern Washoe lands. Her first husband Assu died, and she eventually moved to Carson City, Nevada, where she married her third husband, a half-Washoe man named Charlie Keyser, taking the name Louisa Keyser (Cohodas 2005). She became a domestic servant for the Cohn family and this is where her tourist creation myth began. It is said that Abe Cohn's wife, Amy, first noted Louisa Keyser's remarkable basket weaving skill, bringing it to the attention of her husband who ran a local emporium. Another version notes that Louisa Keyser approached Abe Cohn to sell basket-covered bottles. In either case, the Cohns recognized her remarkable talents and made a deal with Louisa Keyser that gave them exclusive rights to sell her baskets in return for free room and board for life for her and her family. The Cohns built a house for her and her family, adjacent to theirs, in Carson City, Nevada. From then on, 1895–1925, Louisa Keyser's baskets were sold exclusively at the Cohn's Emporium in Carson City, Nevada, and during the summer at the Cohn's tourist shop, the Biscose, on the shores of Lake Tahoe in Tahoe City, California. For the remainder of her life, Louisa Keyser's work was solely focused on making baskets for the Cohns and their curio shops.

The Cohns possibly renamed Louisa Keyser around 1899. They promoted her new name, Dat So La Lee, whose meaning was derived from the Washoe language for "wide-hips," as part of their marketing strategy for her (Bibby 2010; Nevada Women's History Project 2014). Dat So La Lee was the name used by the Cohns in all their promotional material, yet Dat So La Lee's baskets, so carefully catalogued by the Cohns, are each labeled with LK (Louisa Keyser) followed by the number in chronological order. Her professional name, whatever the origin, was used as a marketing strategy to sell an image as well as distinguish her from her contemporaries. The other contemporary Washoe weavers, many of whom the Cohns represented, had Anglo sounding names. Using a name ostensibly derived from the Washoe language gave Dat So La Lee more credibility as a Washoe weaver. This tied her image to Native Americans and particularly to the Washoe people. The association with "Indians" had positive and negative aspects. On one hand it lent authenticity to her work as being made by a real Native American. On the other hand, the conflicting and contradictory attitudes the Euro-Americans had toward Native Americans ascribed negative connotations to a Native American name. Cohodas points to the fact that the Carson City Newspaper articles at that time only featured two Washoe tribal members with any regularity. One was a political leader and mostly favorably represented. The other was Dat So La Lee, who was represented as childish, churlish, dirty, fat, uneducated, and naïve in some articles (Cohodas 1992). In others, Dat So La Lee was represented as an unsurpassed artist whose baskets were of such high quality as to be sold for exponentially more than those of her contemporaries (Cohodas 1992). This dichotomous representation is in keeping with the attitude Euro-Americans had about Native Americans, the "noble versus savage Indian." An additional layer of ascribed identity is the Victorian aesthetic and attitudes of the time. Amy Cohn was Dat So La Lee's main image promoter and brought Dat So La Lee to lectures and meetings. Yet many newspaper articles about Dat So La Lee reference her in conjunction with Abe Cohn (Cohodas 1992). These reports, of a childish and argumentative Dat So La Lee, place her in the caricaturized role of a Victorian wife according to Cohodas (2005). This relationship is highlighted by a newspaper article from the Carson City News noting a fight between Abe Cohn and Dat So La Lee about a corset, and how she was mad that it did

not make her look like more svelte Western women (Carson City News 1911). Beyond her ascribed identity being reaffirmed, however, the article also shows a woman who clearly had a say in her life. She was not simply being exploited by the Cohns, she was an active if not equal participant in her image creation.

Dat So La Lee's artistry is singularly responsible for the *degikup* (pronounced "day-gee-coop") basketry type, elevating it from a handicraft into a work of art. This basketry type remains iconic of Washoe basketry today and of Dat So La Lee. The *degikup* was also part of the Cohns promoted mythology for Dat So La Lee. Although it may be based on a traditional Washoe basketry type, its altered shape and designs are inventions of Dat So La Lee (Cohodas 1982). Additionally the fanciful names of her designs were co-produced by the Cohns and Dat So La Lee, as some of the stories of the designs claim she saw them in visions or dreams (Cohodas 1979). Amy Cohn is noted for fabricating a traditional history, function, and meaning for the *degikup* that were created by Dat So La Lee (Cohodas 1992). Through their marketing and promotion, the Cohns influenced scholarship about Washoe basketry at the time and this has continued to color scholarship today. Otis Mason's 1904 publication *American Indian Basketry*, based on a report he made to the Secretary of the Smithsonian in his capacity as the head of the Department of Anthropology, US National Museum, referenced the help he received from Amy Cohn about the Washoe and their basketry technology and naming. The book features baskets from Amy Cohn's collection as well as photographs of Dat So La Lee and her baskets (Mason 1988; Cohodas 1992).

The *degikup* does potentially have early Washoe cultural associations, described as a small, nearly spherical "traditional mortuary and ceremonial vessel," yet no known *degikup* predate those made by Dat So La Lee (Cohodas 1982). The traditional use of the *degikup* as a mortuary item customarily buried with its weavers could account for its lack of representation in the Washoe material culture. But scholars led by Cohodas surmise "...the *degikup* was the product not of a long indigenous development for ritual function, but instead of an aesthetic choice by an innovative artist at a specific point in time" (Cohodas 1979, 6). The point in time when Dat So La Lee wove was when Washoe cultural traditions were under assault from Euro-American settlement of the Washoe homelands. The Washoe's hunting and gathering way of life was impaired and in danger of becoming extinct along with the people (D'Azevedo 1993b). Many Washoe adapted to Euro-American settlement as a means of survival (Downs 1966). The first and foremost innovative artist was Dat So La Lee, whose mastery, skill, and innovation in weaving led her to re-create and continually evolve the *degikup* basketry form. In reality she created a new basketry form that was no longer associated with food collection or other cultural traditions, but with artistry. She transformed the *degikup* into sculpture (Cohodas 1979).

Dat So La Lee's reputation as the preeminent Washoe basketry artist eclipses other contemporary Washoe weavers due to her skill and to her promotion by the Cohns. Not only were her baskets marketed, so was Dat So La Lee. Dat So La Lee was promoted in photographs, in tourist postcards, Emporium pamphlets, in guidebooks, and as an actual tourist attraction. She traveled with the Cohns to arts and craft fairs nationally, and during the summer she worked and lived in Cohn's Lake Tahoe curio shop in Tahoe City, California (Cohodas 1979, 1992). She wove baskets in the front window and on the front steps of both Cohn's shops as a display or enticement for people to enter. The Tahoe City curio shop, the Biscose, was conveniently located adjacent to the luxurious Tahoe Tavern Hotel and the train depot that brought visitors from the transcontinental railroad to Lake Tahoe.

Dat So La Lee and her baskets are as much iconic figures of Lake Tahoe and Tahoe City today as they were when she was alive. Dat So La Lee is still being promoted and reimagined as a tourist draw. A recent exhibition at the *North Lake Tahoe Historical Society* of her miniature baskets from the Amy Cohn collection drew thousands of visitors (Bibby 2010). Her image continues to be used in tourist promotions including placemats featuring historic women associated with Lake Tahoe juxtaposed

with contemporary tourist images of Tahoe City. Dat So La Lee is often described, and some sources inaccurately translate her name, as “Queen of Washoe Indian Basket Makers” (Gigli 1974; Karen Atkinson Studio 2014).

4. CONCLUSION

The previous discussion highlighted a Washoe woman who is both produced via tourism and is a producer of tourism at Lake Tahoe. During her lifetime, Dat So La Lee produced an appreciation for Washoe cultural traditions, and she produced a new type of Washoe material culture, the *degikup* and its associated designs. Today she remains an important part of the preservation of Washoe cultural traditions through her artistic acclaim, promotion of the Washoe basket making tradition, and transformation of it from a utilitarian craft into an artistic tradition iconic of the Washoe people today. Dat So La Lee and the Washoe material culture she created remain an actively preserved and promoted part of the Lake Tahoe cultural heritage landscape, and they represent a different aspect of the hybrid tourist/cultural heritage landscape from Cave Rock. Cave Rock has been physically altered by the processes of tourism, yet it represents a place imbued with multiple cultural associations. Its contested use through time is interwoven with its original spiritual and religious associations for the Washoe people. Cave Rock remains a tourist site and is being actively preserved because it has multiple cultural associations, including tourism. Both examples of Washoe cultural heritage represent different expressions of the hybrid/tourist cultural heritage landscapes that are actively preserved at Lake Tahoe today. By becoming aware of hybrid tourist/cultural heritage landscapes and learning to examine their formation, we conservators can become better, more informed stewards of the heritage we work to preserve.

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FURTHER READING

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