

Drowned Memories: The Submerged Places of the Winnemem Wintu

Bradley L. Garrett, Department of Geography, Royal Holloway,
University of London, Egham, Surrey TW20-0EX, UK
E-mail: b.garrett@rhul.ac.uk

ABSTRACT

This article is a brief overview of an instance where landscape inundation has disconnected culture from place. The Winnemem Wintu, a Native American tribe in Northern California, had most of their ancestral landscape along the McCloud River submerged by the construction of Shasta Dam just after World War II. The tribe's remaining traditional cultural properties are under continual threat of loss and/or destruction, leaving the tribe's ability to practice traditional ceremonies crippled by legal battles and fights against the continual assertion of United States hegemonic power over tribal cultural identity. As part of archaeological research on these submerged places, the tribe's spiritual leader, Caleen Sisk-Franco, and Tribal Headman, Mark Franco, spoke with the author about these threats and how their culture must adapt to meet them.

Résumé: Cet article est une brève vue d'ensemble d'un exemple dans lequel l'inondation du territoire a interrompu la culture du lieu. Les Winnemem Wintu, sont une tribu amérindienne du nord de la Californie, dont la plupart de ses territoires ancestraux le long de la rivière McCloud, ont été immergés lors de la construction du barrage Shasta peu après la deuxième guerre mondiale. Ainsi ces propriétés traditionnelles et culturelles de la tribu sont soumises aux perpétuelles menaces de l'oubli et/ou de la destruction, étant également paralysées par les conflits et les poursuites juridiques contre l'hégémonie du gouvernement des Etats-Unis à propos de l'identité culturelle tribale qui rendent difficile la pratique des cérémonies traditionnelles. Partie intégrante de la recherche archéologique sur ces territoires immergés, le leader spirituel de la tribu, Caleen Sisk-Franco, et le chef de tribu, Mark Franco, parlent de ces menaces avec l'auteur et de la manière dont leur culture doit s'adapter pour y faire face.

Resumen: El presente artículo presenta brevemente un caso en que la inundación del paisaje ha desconectado la cultura del lugar. La Winnemem Wintu, una tribu Americana nativa del norte de California, vio cómo la

mayor parte de su paisaje ancestral a lo largo río McCloud quedó sumergida por la construcción de la presa de Shasta justo después de la Segunda Guerra Mundial. El resto de propiedades culturales de la tribu sufre continuas amenazas de pérdida y destrucción, mermando la capacidad de la tribu para practicar sus ceremonias tradicionales debido a que tienen que enzarzarse en batallas y luchas jurídicas contra la continua afirmación del poder hegemónico de los Estados Unidos sobre la identidad cultural tribal. Dentro de las investigaciones arqueológicas de estos lugares sumergidos, el líder espiritual de la tribu, Caleen Sisk-Franco y el jefe tribal Mark Franco, hablaron con el autor sobre estas amenazas y de cómo su cultura debe aprender a adaptarse a ellas.

KEYWORDS

Winnemem Wintu, Underwater archaeology, Submerged cultural resources, Dams, Cultural geography, Cultural tradition, Landscape, Place, California

*Now what we need is a great big dam,
to throw a lot o' water out across that land,
People could work and stuff would grow,
And you could wave goodbye to the old skid row.*

- Woody Guthrie (1998)

Great nations, like great men, keep their word

- United States Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black (1937–1971)

Introduction

This paper addresses three important issues regarding my work with a small Native American community in Northern California. The first is a personal transition in my conception of the importance of cultural spaces made during time spent with the tribe and the wider ramifications this holds for practicing anthropologically informed archaeology, especially in the contexts of federal land management and cultural resource management in the United States today. The second issue is more specifically connected to the case of the Winnemem Wintu. Using ethnographic interviews and reflexive methodology to illuminate the current debates surrounding the tribe's emotional and cultural attachments to traditional places, I unpack some of the current struggles and discoveries. These issues, I find, are deeply intertwined with the tribe's current issues with federal

land management practices and their work to gain federal recognition. Finally, I will argue that archaeologists trained in underwater recording techniques could advance the discipline as a whole immensely by helping tribes to rediscover submerged places.

I will begin this story in August 2007, some 2 years after my first meetings with tribal leaders. I am sitting in a beautiful forest eating grapes and melon at an annual ceremony in a place called Coonrod. The spiritual leader of the Winnemem Wintu, Caleen Sisk-Franco, is telling me about the ceremony I have been invited to. She tells me that I am not to cross the stream that I can hear running quietly behind me, only the fire tenders can do that until the ancestors tell her it is time for the rest of us to cross. She tells me to listen to the land and to the people. They both have stories. Some stories tell of recent events, such as their fight for federal recognition from the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs or of cows knocking over the sacred fire alter at Coonrod under grazing permits from the U.S. Forest Service.

One is about the war dance against Shasta dam that took place in 2004. That is one story with a long history. It goes back to the 1930s and 1940s when the dam was constructed and is connected to a story even earlier about the beginning of the tribe's forced removal from their ancestral homeland. I begin to notice that every one of these stories has a common thread—they all involve the federal government that, at the moment, employs me.

During the course of research for my Masters thesis on the physical effects of freshwater submergence on archaeological remains, I was fortunate enough to be chosen as a Student Conservation Association (SCA) Intern for the United States Bureau of Land Management. By day, I was trained in federal archaeological method on the sage-brush steppes of Northeastern California; by night I was doing research in my hotel room on dam construction and landscape inundation.

In 1938, construction of Shasta Dam and the state's largest artificial lake began at the confluence of the Pit, McCloud, and Sacramento Rivers. This construction eventually submerged hundreds of cultural sites, including an entire gold rush era mining town called Kennett. As I dug through literature on the topic, I began to notice that cultural disconnection from landscape due to dam construction was a major theme in the Western United States and one that relatively few people had written about. One case study in particular stood out in multiple readings: the Winnemem Wintu, a tribe that had lost much of their traditional cultural properties under Shasta Lake near Redding, California, a reservoir maintained by the United States Bureau of Reclamation.

In 2004, the Winnemem Wintu protested a new plan to raise the level of Shasta Lake through a traditional war dance, the *Hu'p Chonas*. The last time this dance was conducted was in 1887, when the Winnemem danced against a fishery built along the McCloud River. A year after that dance,

the fishery was swept away by a flood. I read that the dance was a performance of protest by the Winnemem, a call to the world to come to their aid against the continued loss of Winnemem sacred sites. In an interview with a local paper, Caleen Sisk-Franco, the spiritual leader of the tribe, responded to a reporters question about the dance by saying:

The war dance itself is a message, a message to the world that we can't stand to put up with this again. We've already lost too many sacred sites to the lake. To lose more is like cutting the legs off all the tribal members (Ritscher 2004).

On the banks of Shasta Lake, at least 17 sites of cultural significance are still under threat by Bureau of Reclamation's plan to raise the level of the dam. Many of the Winnemem Wintu people are afraid that the inundation of these 17 sites will finally completely sever the tribe's cultural connections to place and irrevocably alter their ability to conduct traditional ceremonies (Murphy 2004). Mr. Mulcahy, a Winnemem elder, stated on the day of the war dance that 'if [these sites] go under the water, it will be like somebody just came in and bulldozed the church down' (Murphy 2004). The war dance conducted by the Winnemem, led by Caleen Sisk-Franco and Mark Franco (the tribal Headman), lasted for 4 days, filled with dance, ritual, and fasting conducted around an ever burning flame (Figures 1 and 2).

The actions of the tribe challenged two preconceptions I had harboured based on my largely empirical education. First, I had assumed that the era of major dam construction had ended in the United States and that it would be my job as an archaeologist to read the cultural material left behind and create meaningful stories. If that material happened to be underwater, I certainly



Figure 1. Winnemem dancers prepare for the war dance



Figure 2. The infinite fire

had no problem recording them there. Second, I found myself confronted by the notion that people still found these landscapes important whether or not they were submerged. My ignorance was an amusement to tribal members when I initially emailed them, and they enthusiastically invited me to spend time with them to begin my ‘real life re-education’.

What the tribe taught me, is still teaching me today, has been beautifully summarized in the words of Rebecca Solnit who once wrote that ‘when you give your self to places, they give you yourself back; the more one comes to know them, the more one seeds with them the invisible crop of memories and associations that will be waiting for you when you come back’ (Solnit 2000:13). That is, if you *can* come back to them.

A History Under Water

Major impacts of dam construction in the Western United States occurred during the Great Depression, leading to the beginning of the Big Dam Era¹ which thrived in the modern period (1910–1980) (Anderson et al. 2007). This period in United States history was spawned by the desire of President Franklin D. Roosevelt to alleviate the social pressures of a weak U.S. economy, a historic policy decision which holds particular resonance in the current economic climate.

As a result of the inundation process, collective memory of the numerous submerged landscapes in the arid American West has begun to fade. Historic towns such as the one in Montana depicted in the film *Northfork*

(Polish 2003) and ancient Native American landscapes such as Kettle falls on the Columbia River all disappeared beneath the floodwaters of large dams. A recent exhibit in Los Angeles by the Center for Land Use Interpretation (CLUI) that undertook research on submerged towns contends that 'no nationwide survey of the cultural resources these sacrificed towns represent seems to exist' (CLUI 2005). Characteristic of CRM work undertaken since the dramatic increase of land development in the United States, archaeological reports on submerged landscapes largely populate mountains of grey literature in federal land offices. Although the archaeological work did take place in many cases, it was salvage archaeology and it is clear (due to no fault of the archaeologists who were simply doing their jobs as they saw them) that the production of grey literature not accessible or useful in many cases buried tribal history just as much as the dam did.

With only the *Antiquities Act* of 1906 to protect the cultural resources during this period, the government passed the *Historic Sites Act* of 1935 to try to conserve and protect national heritage during the course of large scale development. Unfortunately, despite efforts to the contrary with the passage of the *Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act* of 1960, the *National Historic Preservation Act* of 1966, and finally, the *National Environmental Policy Act* of 1970 relatively little land in the United States was ever preserved for cultural use, defining the character of cultural resource management in the United States as one of mitigation rather than preservation. Thousands of archaeological sites were quickly 'recorded' using 'scientific' methods and relegated to the watery depths of massive reservoirs. The Winnemem Wintu are one of the peoples who lost much during these years, which brings me back to Coonrod.

I arrive at Coonrod on a beautiful fall day to find a flurry of activity in the normally quiet forest. I am finally able meet the people I have been talking to over the phone and through email for my research and am invited to sit with them for a discussion. As Mark Franco, the Headman of the Winnemem leaned back in his fold-out camping chair next to the soft sound of the river, he looked at me with piercing eyes and began to tell the story of the tribe, a story that I find echoed in the depths of the historical literature on Native American relations with the US government.

Traditional Wintu society was organized into nine different bands that in total numbered over 20,000 people at the time of Euro-American contact, 1848 (Fullwood 2002). Indian extermination policies were encouraged by the United States Government at this time, which paid out over \$924,259 between 1850 and 1859 for the mercenary killing of Indian people (Norton 1979). Murder and disease killed over 90% of the Winnemem Wintu people—from 14,000 people in the 1850s to an estimated 395 by the 1930s (Franco and Sisk-Franco 2002:4). During this time, the Winnemem were included in the Cottonwood Treaty of 1851 signed at Reading Ranch, a

treaty that “ceded a vast amount of tribal territory to the United States in return for 25 Square Mile reservation on the Sacramento river” (Pritzker 2000:152). Although the treaty was never ratified by the government, the tribe was removed from their land. The Winnemem were moved to allotment lands on the river as promised. They were later removed from these places yet again in 1937 prior to the construction of Shasta Dam.

Mark looks at me to drive the point home. Now here’s the clincher. Despite the federal government including the Winnemem Wintu under the Dawes Act of 1887 (Forbes 1969:90), despite negotiating with the tribe on a formal basis multiple times, and despite the Winnemem Wintu receiving federal benefits as a recognized California tribe until 1985, federal recognition has never been granted by the U.S. government.

Today, less than 2000 people claim Wintu ancestry. Of these, the Winnemem Wintu have 125 active tribal members. But as both written and oral histories tell, the Winnemem Wintu have lived on this river for over 1000 years, utilising the area for living, subsistence, and ritual (Cummings 2004).

Traditional Winnemem territory was situated north of the proposed dam, in an area which early ethnographers described as ‘particularly favourable to aboriginal habitation’ (Du Bois 1935:6), an area now underwater. The Winnemem were forced to relocate to privately bought land near Redding, California, the village called *Kerikmet* (Franco and Sisk-Franco 2002:4). The Winnemem have lived here for the last 40 years, keeping their traditions alive and occasionally being forced to stand up as custodians for land that they no longer dwell on, land largely owned by government agencies today.

When I ask Mark specifically about the places that are now sometimes underwater, he tells me that:

The significance of it to us now is still there, even though we are not able to access it all the time and that’s the thing that is so hard to get people to understand because people that go to regular churches or have their own life-way don’t recognize that this is our church. Each of these places out here is part of our church, and it’s important to us. It would be just like if you came in and said that church on the corner down there that you go to, ever since you were a little kid, is going to be taken down. Now how is that going to make you feel? Well, yeah, maybe you can go to the new one they’re building over here, but if you go to that rock that is down there on the water, and that is an important rock to you, and now you are no longer able to see it, you can’t go to another rock, because that rock has a meaning. This other [rock] has a completely different one. We have come to realize that the places never left; we just did, and now we are going back to them, regardless of where they might be (Franco 2009).

Archival research affirms Mark's words as I find that indigenous populations are often one of the most heavily impacted groups in the case of dam construction (WCD 2000:110–111), usually concluding in forced removal from places to be inundated. Tangible artefacts are an important component of the material composition of cultural landscape and 'archaeology, as a privileged form of expertise, occupies a role in the governance and regulation of identity' (Smith 2004:4) through interpretation of cultural material. Indigenous cultural identity in Native North America is intimately connected with landscape (see McLeod 2000), as scholars such as Barbara Bender (1993) and Keith Basso (1996) have long noted.

It has been a long held, yet largely unspoken policy of the United States to force assimilation by removing people from ancestral landscapes, leaving a 'gap' in self-identification, which can then be injected with a more American self-perception. It is not a far stretch to realize that dam construction sites, while providing resources for the 'greater good', are frequently located in places that remove Indigenous people from their traditional landscapes, continuing the process of assimilation that began with the initial Spanish incursions into North America in the 15th century. In the words of Garcia Canclini,

In many respects, dam-induced resettlement will not necessarily destroy "local cultures" as much as it appropriates them and restructures them in terms of values and goals often originating from far beyond the local context. Such a process involves the reduction of local culture, society and economy from all their varied expressions to a narrow set of institutions and activities that make them compatible with the purposes of the larger society (Oliver-Smith 2007).

Archaeologists who bravely delve into more spatial components of their work are increasingly beginning to recognize the impact estrangement from landscape has on cultural traditions. This may be due to an increase in discussion between archaeologists and local communities in the past 20 years as part of federal consultation processes. This may also be why local groups increasingly enlist archaeologists in their efforts at cultural rejuvenation, using federal legislation, such as the *Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act* of 1990 as a tool for activism. The Winnemem Wintu continue to challenge historic disenfranchisement by continuing cultural practices despite loss of access to memorial landscapes, a tactic that astounds and inspires me. The Winnemem people have chosen to protest the construction of Shasta Dam precisely by practicing the cultural traditions that the United States government tried to purge from their culture, using memory and geographical imagination as a political tool.

Late in 2008, standing behind the dam looking at the devastated ground in front of us as the water recedes during a drought period, Mark Franco tells me:

...on Mt. Shasta and all the way down, this to us was an Eden. The salmon came up, of course the salmon can't come up anymore because of the dam, the birds, the deer, the mussels, all of the medicine plants, everything was right here. So when they built the dam and kicked everybody out, all of that was lost. The culture really took a hit at the expense of water for everybody, power for everybody, for the betterment of the United States (Franco 2009).

Many groups, including the Bureau of Reclamation who should hold some responsibility for these seasonally inundated sites, fail to see that their actions and gestures reinforce a mythic perception of the Winnemem people being timelessly nomadic and landless. One example stems from simple nomenclature, when referring for instance to Shasta reservoir as a 'lake' giving it an illusion of permanence which clouds public understanding of this flooded landscape and makes the Winnemem appear to be asking to practice traditions in areas which have always been underwater.

The Politics of Cultural Resource Management and the Need for Reciprocity

To local communities, what academics and bureaucrats label as heritage, history, archaeology, anthropology, environmental policy and economics are all part of the same interwoven system in which people exist on a daily basis. For this reason, and contrary to much of the work done during the course of reservoir salvage archaeology, it would be entirely negligent to talk about how cultural material is affected by inundation without talking about how people are affected, a process that archaeology was happy to leave up to anthropologists until we realized they were too connected to be separated.

Much of the archaeological work in California, especially work connected to public works projects, was undertaken prior to the scientific romanticism in the United States that came with the processual turn in the 1960s. Archaeologists in this period saw their work as distinct from anthropology and distinctly devoted to material culture (or cultural material). Both the motivation to do the 'work' of recording these places as well as the theoretical foundations for methodology tended to be viewed through a single, modern lens, which colored everything in primarily functional terms. In the spirit of salvage archaeology, the role of the archaeologist in these contexts was (and is) to collect and record 'data' about what may never be seen or experienced again. As a result, inundation of cultural sites

has been studied in the past mainly in terms of physical impacts (Adovasio et al. 1980; Carrell et al. 1976; Foster et al. 1977; Fredrickson et al. 1977; Lenihan 1977; Lenihan et al. 1981a, b). Intentional inundation may be recognized by most archaeologists as having a significant impact on archaeological data and access to land, but until recently has not been widely addressed in terms of socio-cultural impacts, despite public interest in this topic in popular literature.

An equally problematic aspect of this work that carried over even into the processual era, was that archaeologists, now deemed ‘expert’ scientists, had dominion over cultural identity, taking agency from the tribes who wanted to be able to define their own identities. For discussion on this, see Binford (1962:217–225) and Willey et al. (2001:2) or for more recent discussions see Gosden (1999) and Smith (2004:3). There is also an excellent collection of essays from various perspectives on the issue in Gillespie and Nichols (2003).

New directions in cultural resource management (CRM) in the United States and cultural heritage management (CHM) elsewhere in the world suggest that loss of archaeological sites goes far beyond physical and mechanical impacts. Better definitions for the term CRM have been suggested by individuals such as Thomas F. King, who wants to see a CRM philosophy which embodies ‘the social institutions, beliefs and lifeways that give each (archaeological) system its unique identity’ (King 2002:6). In the United States, the topic is inexorably intertwined with the politics of cultural resource management, in which cultural sites are deemed ‘resources’ and weighed (in terms of utilitarian and monetary value) against contending ‘resources’ such as water, minerals and grazing areas aided and abetted by the sort of work that I had done as an intern, and later employee, for the BLM.

Objective understandings of history, if they can be achieved, are necessarily informed by our own subjectivity. The history of a nation, the history of a people, is always written from a particular angle. Even a photograph is taken from a particular gaze. Heritage does not create itself, it is created by aiming that gaze in a particular direction. While that gaze, that motivation may be hidden, it always exists. Current debates surrounding history, heritage and culture have shifted from the objective, observable, understandable “truth” to the subjective, embodied, embedded understanding of who we are and what we represent. But this embodied experience is slippery, intangible and many times unquantifiable. It is a difficult proposition for those charged with the task of “managing” heritage. The desire to embed intangible experience into truthful accounts has caused this dichotomy to slowly collapse as we seek a view that “simultaneously embraces multivocality and seeks an objective understanding of the world” (Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2006:148–162). Doing more

informed archaeology does not necessarily exclude a journey toward scientific rationalism, but informs that journey with important cultural supplements.

This approach requires that we widen perspective and extend open invitation to multiple meanings without dictating that we accept every interpretation offered. This approach also suggests that we focus far less on artefacts and sites and begin to contemplate broad cultural meaning, significance and attachment. Broader context is “based on landscapes or ecosystems rather than artificially defined impact zones derived from narrow project based criteria and artificially bounded cultural resources” (Downer and Roberts 1993:12). Relatively recent moves in federal legislation, such as the addition of traditional cultural property significance assessments (Parker and King 1992), increased discussion of landscape archaeology (Ashmore and Knapp 1999; Stoffle et al. 1997; Yamin and Metheny 1996; Ucko and Leyton 1999) and references to experiences of place by cultural geographers (Cresswell 2004; Duncan and Ley 1993; Massey 1994; Pred 1984) seem to reinforce desires to conduct “wide angle work”.

Likewise, many groups throughout the world, recognizing the way archaeology has been used to shape political and nationalistic agendas (Trigger 1995) are now calling for what T.J. Ferguson has called reciprocal archaeology (Ferguson 1996:137–144). Reciprocal archaeology is a culturally informed praxis which reinforces community agency and encourages contemporary connections and cultural continuity. Reciprocal archaeology addresses the contemporary needs of local groups whose interest in places many times intersects with the interests of archaeologists. To many tribal groups such as the Winnemem Wintu, archaeological sites and the material within them are living, breathing entities and act as teachers to impart sacred knowledge handed down from the past (Basso 1996). These concepts are, and always should have been, central to archaeology’s pursuit of heritage significance and historical storytelling. Informed reciprocal archaeology will recognize that “not all traditional cultural places have archaeological attributes” yet these places may be, or have been, of significance to a multiplicity of cultural groups with deeply affective relationships to these places. Perhaps the best way to reach toward this goal is from a multiplicity of angles to give voice to the myriad stakeholders in the complex, ongoing struggle for land and resources that is taking place in the United States of America today.

These arguments may sound perfectly reasonable, but implementing more informed archaeological methodology, especially when constrained by factors such as time (the dominant factor in private industry) and programmatic requirements (a primary factor in the federal sector) remains a difficult juggling act. Perhaps the best lessons we can learn are from

anthropologists who have experimented with new ways of telling stories about landscapes of the past in the present (Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2006).

As I sat under the afternoon sun at Coonrod in 2007, chipping obsidian and watching people making and repairing headdresses and other regalia, hearing the stories of their losses and of the adaptation of Winnemem cultural traditions, I was inspired to become more emotionally engaged with my work. The process encouraged me to strive to achieve a more informed, inclusive archaeological praxis. The stories of Winnemem Wintu enhanced my perception so that I could finally see that archaeology is as much about the present as it is about the past (Holtorf 2005). This psychological shift has made my work immensely challenging but also increasingly rewarding. And while this sort of mentality has helped to talk about places, I still find it difficult to integrate deeply political issues into my work such as the case the Winnemem people are making for federal recognition, though I know they are at the heart of my work.

Swimming into Place

‘Place is the first of all beings, since everything that exists is in a place and cannot exist without a place.’

- Archytas, as cited by Simplicius

Landscape, as defined by Tim Ingold is an ongoing story, rather than a collection of stories or a single record of the past (Ingold 1993). A cultural landscape, therefore, might be defined by a collection of perceptions pieced together into a form that is recognizable though still mobile. Casey has pointed out that ‘traditional thinking about landscape emphasises binary distinction between the material/real construction of space and the imagined/mental construction of place. In order to ‘see’ landscape outside of current spatial and temporal frameworks, ‘space’ and ‘place’ must be amalgamated’ (Casey 1996). Perhaps this amalgam is what we then perceive as what archaeologists call the cultural landscape, including the fluidity and movement of place as well as the pauses (not necessarily boundaries) of space (Tuan 2000).

Archaeologists discussing ancient landscapes tend to seek quantifiable spatial data (for whatever reason) that separate space, place and landscape and create culturally apocryphal boundaries. Ingold asserts that ‘no feature of the landscape is, of itself, a boundary. It can only become a boundary, or the indicator of a boundary, in relation to the activities of the people

(or animals) for whom it is recognized or experienced as such' (Ingold 1993:156).

Perceptions of landscape are therefore multifarious. These can range from personal to national or international perspectives on what landscapes 'mean' or why they are important. Even within the same temporal frame, landscapes 'at any given moment...are multi-vocal' (Bender 1992). Associations with landscape are established by political will, cultural characteristics and by personal affiliation. These perspectives many times are appreciated by archaeologists, but not embraced due to the difficulty of identifying multiple perspectives, especially in prehistory. Barbara Bender points out that it is sometimes 'hard for the archaeologist to understand how people might have conceptualized their relationship to the land' (Bender 1992:744). This is even more apparent in submerged contexts, where relationships with inundated land are hard to define, even in when they continue into the present.

By recognizing the technical limitations and benefits of doing archaeology underwater, we can better understand the landscape in which we work (Goggin 1960), be it in an ocean or behind a dam. Underwater archaeology, using methodology constructed in the sea to record (primarily) shipwrecks, has the ability to blend the perceived boundaries between submerged landscapes and terrestrial landscapes. The possibilities of this sort of work are, I would argue, one of the greatest things underwater archaeology has to offer. Joe Flatman (2003) has pointed out that the maritime archaeologist has the unusual ability to 'fly' around a site, 'sampling evidence in a form more open to multivariate interpretation' giving the maritime archaeologist a real time bird's eye view that GIS specialists work hard to create in virtual space (Fisher and Unwin 2002).

Often, submerged cultural sites are seen as being a closed book, a historic period now overlooked and forgotten. But increasingly, local communities wish to re-experience these 'lost' places. Memories of submerged landscapes intrigue people as they stand on the banks of newly created 'lakes' and remember what once was. Archaeologists have the ability to not only bridge the gap between the experienced terrestrial landscape and the perceived underwater landscape, but also to bring people's history (not just artifacts) to the surface for revisitation, redefining how people perceive and associate with 'lost' places and how we think of the 'maritime' or 'underwater' landscape.

When I ask Mark Franco about these 'lost' sites, as we stand in the middle of thousands of oak stumps cut down before the floodwater came into the reservoir, he assures me that it was not only sacred space lost, it was the space of everyday practice, no less sacred;

So this is midden area and this is, like I say, was part of the village complex. All of these trees were there and you see all of these other oaks, all of this would be the acorn supply, the food supply. And so just like when the cavalry came through the plains and killed all the buffalo, California Indians, they killed all their trees. The impact of this dam to the ground, even if they were to take this dam down like they are doing on the Klamath, this is just such a hateful thing for the earth to have to go through (Franco 2009).

Despite the devastated look of the seasonally submerged area, Mark, and other tribal members, continue to go to these places to walk in them, a practice shared primarily only by pot hunters whom they occasionally find digging up their ancestral villages.

Revisitation

Back at Coonrod, I asked tribal members about what the Winnemem landscape used to look like before the dam was constructed and the tribe relocated. I am told that as a consequence of the historical land grab initiated against the tribe (a story heard all too often in Native North America), there is some understandable confusion over the extent of traditional Winnemem landscapes. This is obviously compounded by the fact that a majority of the tribe's traditional cultural places now lie under Shasta Reservoir. The land the tribe occupies today is only a small remainder of the area that the Winnemem Wintu once tended. Today, the tribe continues to utilize the few remaining accessible traditional cultural places, many of which are held by various private and federal government organizations including the United States Forest Service and the Bureau of Reclamation.

Archaeological survey (salvage archaeology) on the vacated Winnemem lands was undertaken by C.E. Smith and W.D. Weymouth, two archaeologists from the University of California Berkeley (Smith and Weymouth 1952). Archaeological survey maps of the area made prior to site inundation show that at least 37 sites of 'archaeological significance' are impounded under the floodwaters of Lake Shasta (Figure 3), including 183 human burials. This report, while beneficial in terms of archaeological record keeping, failed to include pertinent ethnographic information regarding site locations and significance. When I asked Caleen Sisk-Franco about whether she felt archaeologists had done an accurate job recording archaeological sites before the floodwaters, she responded by saying that:

I am not quite sure what they mean by 'archaeological' sites. We have sites that probably an archaeologist would stumble right on past because it doesn't have mortar holes, it doesn't have hand tools, it doesn't have a lithic scatter.

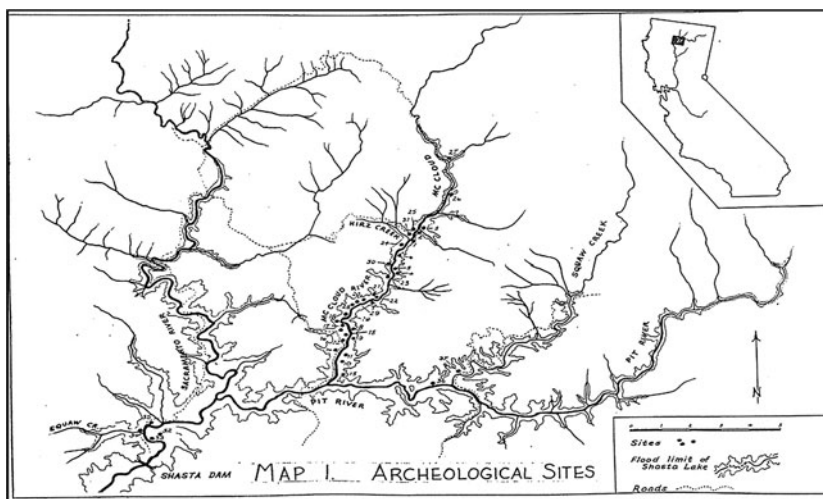


Figure 3. Pre-inundation survey map

It may just be a big rock. There were several of these sites which were fishing places, salmon fishing places which were submerged.²

It is likely, of course, that many more than 37 culturally significant sites were submerged, though many may not have had particularly significant 'archaeological' values. Smith and Weymouth, in their report, concluded that '...almost the entire habitable terrain once occupied by (the) Wintu tribe has been inundated' (Smith and Weymouth 1952:2).

According to Caleen, the United States Forest Service continues to tell the Winnemem that they can practice their ceremonies *without* these places (Sisk-Franco 2005). Caleen's response is that 'these sites are the heart of the tribe' and that they cannot practice without them. The spiritual leader goes on to talk about two important sites: puberty rock and sacred pools at the foot of the Two Sisters Mountain, both areas necessary for coming of age ceremonies. Caleen says that:

...even just destroying those two sites is like saying that I think the pope can do without his cross and chalice. We will just flood those things. You can still have your traditions, you just can't have those things.

Following the inundation of the majority of their traditional cultural property, the Winnemem quietly continued to fight for their rights, constantly defending their remaining lands from government control and development, including a ski lodge proposed by the United States Forest Service on the Winnemem's most sacred mountain, Mount Shasta (McLeod 2000).

Despite the hardships the tribe had endured, their complex relationship with the land, rather than terminating, began to mutate. The leaders of the tribe began obtaining permits from different federal agencies to access traditional territories when drought exposed ancient landscapes. Archaeologists working for the federal government, many now sensitive to the stories of the tribe, began granting special visitation rights to sacred areas. The Winnemem, despite their lack of federal recognition, began to negotiate with the government to modify their traditional ceremonies around the land that was left or now emerging, while continuing to educate children about the cultural spaces submerged under the lake.

After these seemingly progressive negotiations with the federal government, and a decade of cultural discovery and reidentification, early in 2001 the Winnemem were advised by a fellow Native American tribe that the United States Bureau of Reclamation was holding meetings to discuss raising the Shasta Dam another 6½ to 200 feet, yet again to quench the thirst of arid California farmlands and thirsty, ever-expanding suburbs. The Winnemem people, lacking the federal recognition that is needed to include them in the planning process, are excluded from the Environmental planning, despite a 1992 amendment to the *National Historic Preservation Act* (ACHP 1966) which requires federal agencies to consult with tribes on preservation related activities and guidelines under the 1972 *American Indian Religious Freedom Act* (PL 95–341, 42 USC & 1996) which confirms the right of Native American Tribes to access traditional lands for freedom of worship and traditional practice.

Though the meeting was proposed as an open public discussion, the Winnemem were not invited or even advised that it was taking place despite the fact that the raising of the dam would submerge another ‘20 sacred sites, including a burial ground of 17 additional Winnemem, a rock where Winnemem girls pray as part of a puberty ritual’ (Murphy 2004) and a site where 42 Native peoples were massacred 150 years ago (Ritscher 2004). When the Winnemem arrived at the meeting and voiced their concern, they were quickly dismissed, a government official telling them that the tribe would have their time to object in the final stages of the proposal. Caleen responded by stating ‘wouldn’t you want to save taxpayers a lot of money by identifying these cultural sites and traditional properties of an active tribe up front?’ The impact overview drafted by the Bureau of Reclamation in October 2005 for the proposed level increase does not even discuss cultural impacts of the construction.³

The Winnemem are willing to go to extreme measures to preserve their heritage. As University of New Mexico anthropologist Dr. Les Feld pointed out: ‘When those places get threatened or occupied or expropriated or somehow taken from them, that calls for preparation for conflict’ (Melley 2004). The result was the *Hu’p Chonas*, a war dance that had not been

publically practiced for 150 years. While it would be easy to mark the tribe as an oppressed people who lost much and suffered (as I already have in the article) the resurgence of the *Hu'p Chonas* is also a testament to the vitality of cultural traditions. Like the ghost dance of the Lakota, the difficulties that the tribe face actually serve to inspire them to resist neo colonialism by embracing cultural identity. The re-emergence of the *Hu'p Chonas* inspired tribal members to take their culture back from the realm of 'other' and meld it into a renewed cultural identity in more than one instance. The Winnemem continue to modify their cultural traditions to maintain their connection to traditional places and integrate their cultural traditions into a new social and cultural framework.

In July of 2006, 2 years after the war dance that brought them increased public attention, the Winnemem held a puberty ceremony that had not been observed for 80 years (Figure 4). The construction of Shasta Lake submerged a sacred rock (Figure 5) used for puberty ceremonies until the 1940s—instantly severing a long-held cultural tradition (Ross 2006a). Traditionally, a young woman entering puberty would be asked to grind herbs into this rock, which is now underwater in the spring, when the ceremony



Figure 4. Marine at puberty ceremony



Figure 5. Puberty rock out of water

was traditionally held. This ceremony had now been moved to the early summer to avoid the relatively wet spring seasons when snowmelt runoff submerges the rock. In an effort to re-establish this timeless tradition, the Winnemem returned to the sacred place of the ceremony, now a public campground run by the United States Forest Service. The Forest Service denied the Winnemem's request to a full closure of the branch of the river being used for the rights, but agreed to a voluntary closure during the week-long ceremony, which was respected by most boaters.

The ceremony was being held for Marine Sisk-Franco, daughter of the Head Man and Spiritual Leader of the Winnemem Wintu. Marine, the first to complete the ceremony since the 1920s, spent 4 days going through rituals leading to a final swim across the river from her bark hut sanctuary to the tribal encampment to take her place as a woman with the tribe. The ritual was interrupted by boaters who, according to reporter Kimberly Ross of the Redding Record Searchlight “yelled obscenities and made mocking gestures at the group... a woman in a bikini raised her beer can and exposed herself, all just before the high point in Marine's initiation” (Ross 2006b).

Despite these problems, Marine emerged from the water with a smile spread across her face, a smile that could only come from the connection that the tribe forged with their ancestors and the land they dwelled in deep below the reservoir Marine swam across.

Conclusions

On the 5th of July of 2006, now done with my summer-long BLM appointment and trying to figure out how to finish my thesis, I read a piece I had found in a local paper from the day before where Caleen was quoted as saying that it was ‘...ironic that it's the Fourth of July, 2006

(American Independence Day) and we're still begging around for our rights. We're still not there yet' (Ross 2006a). I decided to call Caleen to talk about new developments up north.

She tells me that once again, the federal government has failed to respect the tribe's religious rights by allowing boaters to dig around in exposed areas of the now drawn down reservoir at the height of the summer heat. As she tells me this, I think about the archaeological reports I have read on the area and realize that dozens of Winnemem elders still lie in watery graves under Lake Shasta, occasionally exposed and subjected to not only the erosional processes of the water, but to the deposition of modern cultural material onto sacred sites from passing boats and eager tourists shovels. Caleen knows that the sites that are already submerged are being damaged. Not only is erosion taking place on the bank of the lake, but recreational activity is taking a heavy toll. Caleen observes that 'when the water recedes, you can see the oil residue on the banks'. When I asked what she would like to see happen, Caleen simply stated that

I would like to see the government deal with the Winnemem Wintu fairly and justly. Give us our like land to live on, promised under the 1937 Act of Congress. These camp sites and boat ramps out there on the lake could have been our like land to live on.

Mark echoes this sentiment, telling me that if neither the Forest Service nor Bureau of Reclamation will step up to protect these places, they can just give the land back to the tribe with a contract for the Winnemem people to protect them. When I asked about the possible deconstruction of the dam in the future, Caleen was hopeful, but concerned about how the government would protect their sacred sites. She pointed out that last summer, during a fifty percent drawdown at the dam, people in 'houseboats were out there digging around'. I asked Caleen about those sites which are now submerged and those which still may be submerged and she responded:

We already did this one time and I think that our people have suffered for that. The traditions of the Winnemem people go right back to the losses incurred by losing our territory. Everything we ever knew is underwater.

Sometime later, I am online to look for more information to keep this article up to date during the review process and I encounter a video by the Sacred Land Film Project.⁴ The video is of Mark sitting in front of the United States Assembly on the 23rd of August 2007, asking once again for "Federal Recognition under Title I of the Federally Recognized Tribe List Act of 1994 (Public Law 103-454)" as Assembly Joint Resolution No. 39 (Huffman 2007). This time, unlike other times in the past, the Assembly

passes the resolution, granting recognition of the Winnemem Wintu's claim under state law. The larger job that now exists will be to get the Federal government to act on the state resolution, a seemingly insurmountable task, though maybe the goal seems more achievable today with President Obama in office.

As I review the documents associated with this historic moment, I find it even more difficult to comprehend the complicated history of this tribe. How will I ever understand what it feels like to have someone tell you that you are not who you think you are?

The Winnemem have fought a long battle for recognition, a battle which is far from over, despite the recent victory in California. The submergence of Winnemem sites along the McCloud River has severely altered their tribal identity. The Winnemem Wintu people visit their past with irony, and maybe with bitterness (though it seems I harbour more animosity than most of them!) but celebrate the present regardless. Their actions speak louder than any interpretations of their material history could and challenge us, as arbiters of the past, to bring histories to the present. While my experience with the Wintu and my research on the impacts of dam construction was difficult, confusing and frustrating, I find their celebration in the face of opposition enlightening and empowering.

Epilogue

Although complicated, there are a few important lessons we can take home from this work. Though this article tells a few of the stories of the Winnemem Wintu, it is an example of a national issue that should be of vital importance to archaeologists and anthropologists. Major submergence of sacred places, traditional cultural properties and landscapes of meaning has taken place on the Columbia River, at 'Lake' Powell in Arizona, even in Hetch Hetchy Valley in Yosemite National Park. And though these places are known to exist, and may have even had pre-submergence archaeological work take place at them, we have yet to unpack much of their past or present cultural significance. I would like to suggest that the Winnemem are representatives for a multitude of voices that demand recognition of their submerged histories and access to these places they are important to their cultural traditions, regardless of their location above or below the water line.

Archaeologists, especially those trained in underwater recording techniques, could begin to break new ground in maritime archaeology by diving sites chosen by local communities and bringing back photographs, videos and new stories about these places to encourage cultural rejuvenation in the present and to pass on to future generations of archaeologist *and* tribal members.

Listening to local communities and recording their stories sends us home with more than artefact bags and archaeological data. These memories and traditions bestow upon us a genealogy of place (Cresswell 2004) and a deeper sense of meaning. Plights such as those of the Winnemem Wintu remind us this topic is relevant, timely and important.⁵

Notes

1. The term “Big Dam Era” is somewhat liquid. While the term may imply that the era began with the construction of large scale dams, it is likely used more often historically to describe depression era public works projects—the most visible and lasting of which happen to be big dams. Over time the term has shifted as we have become more dependant as a nation on the water and power that dams provide, leading to some confusion over the dates of the ‘beginning’ and ‘end’ of the era. In the interest of privileging ‘why’ over ‘when’ in regard to United States History, I will allow the term to remain liquid, with a fuzzy ‘beginning’ sometime during the Great Depression and a possible ‘end’ in some distant and unknown future.
2. The references and quotes collected in this section from Caleen Sisk-Franco, unless otherwise noted, were gathered during an interview conducted by the author for the International Centre for Archaeology Underwater on the 8th of October 2006. Original transcripts of the interview can be found at the following address <http://www.archaeologyunderwater.com/Interview%20with%20CSF.htm>.
3. <http://www.epa.gov/fedrgstr/EPA-IMPACT/2005/October/Day-07/i20169.htm>.
4. <http://www.sacredland.org/index.php/home/news/blog-only/>.
5. Please visit the Winnemem Wintu’s website: <http://www.winnememwintu.us/> to read more Winnemem stories. You may also want to have a look at <http://sacramentofordemocracy.org> where you can send letters to politicians to petition for the United States federal government to act on AJR 39.

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