

5. Cultural Capital

Character, History and Traditions

Humans first migrated into the Cobb Area over 10,000 years ago (some studies say nearly twice that long). During that whole time, and until very recently, the land was occupied by a thriving culture of indigenous people well-integrated with the natural landscape and living well on the abundant local resources³⁶. Once Europeans arrived in Cobb, the new human inhabitants built a culture based on extracting as much short- to medium-term value as possible from the land. Initially established as individual land stakes around prime stands of old growth timber³⁷, these pioneer outposts thrived on a spirit of fierce individuality and self-reliance that remains a strong strand of the local character.



Blackberry Cobbler Festival 2019

Over the next 100 years, as the Northern California region grew, folks from as far away as the San Francisco Bay Area learned of the sweet and restorative qualities of the Cobb Mountain woodlands, and a whole collection of “resort” settlements sprang up, many located around the abundant natural springs sprinkled through the area³⁸. This spirit of restoration and renewal remains an essential element of the human community and guides our relationship with each other

and the land. The building of culture and traditions takes time to develop and mature and how these cultural qualities will manifest in the next cycle of Cobb Mountain’s history remains to be seen. But they are certain to guide whatever emerges.

“ I moved up here basically because I like the eclectic culture of the mountain. I like the fact that we have all sorts of different people with different stripes. I actually enjoy that interaction. My guess is that lots of the people that live here live here for that reason. I still enjoy that aspect of it.

- local shopkeeper

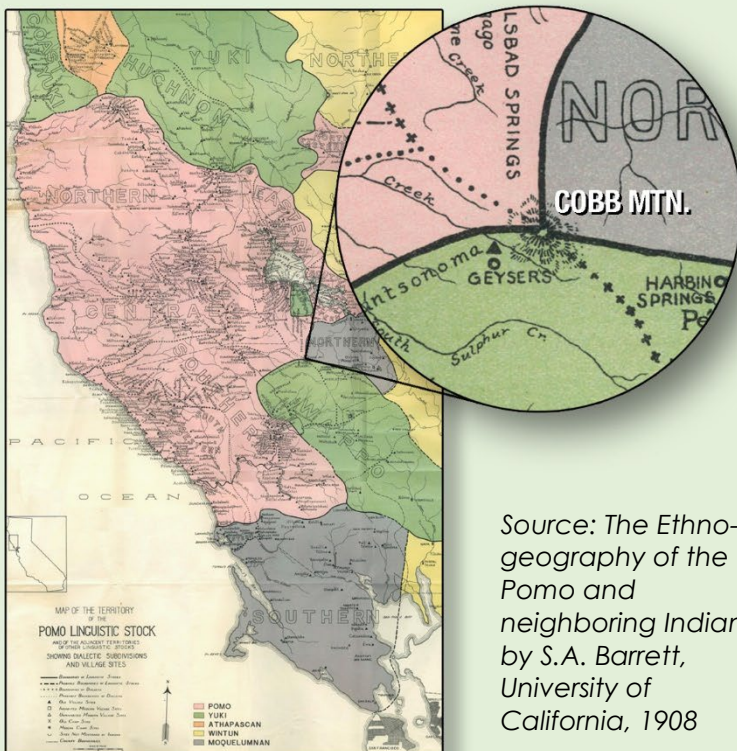
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Connections with Other Community Capitals

The local culture has a definite influence on the other forms of community capital. Politically, as with many communities in the West, a spirit of individualism can be a barrier to building collective action for the common welfare. In the Cobb Mountain community, this is also reinforced by the large percentage of property-owners and home-owners who do not live in the community year-round, but have other homes and communities which claim their primary allegiance. The local community culture is also a key economic resource, and local sentiment to support local businesses is strong. The strength of local artists, who may be seen as “cultural entrepreneurs”, adds to local economic vitality. Additionally, the presence of families who have been here for many generations provide a living link to the past and also a storehouse of wisdom about how to steward the natural environment.

CULTURAL CAPITAL DATA

1. First Peoples: In pre-settlement times, Cobb Mountain marked the boundary of three significant indigenous groups, the Pomo, the Lake Miwok and the Wappo, plus two significant subgroups among the Pomo and the Wappo. Today (2021) the First Peoples remain a significant center of local culture in Lake County. Two of our five County Supervisors are tribal members and the Twin Pine Casino, managed by the Middletown Rancheria of Pomo Indians in nearby Middletown, provides a significant “center of gravity” for the community and economy of south Lake County, which includes Cobb Mountain.

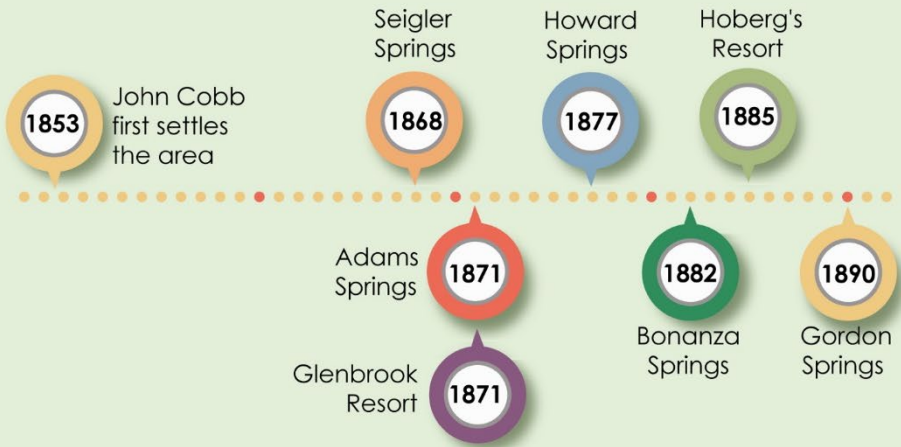


Source: *The Ethnogeography of the Pomo and neighboring Indians*, by S.A. Barrett, University of California, 1908

2. The “Little Red Schoolhouse” - built in 1871, was the last remaining one-room schoolhouse in the state when it stopped operating in 1971. Today, it is the Cobb Community Center, managed by the Cobb Mt. Lions Club.



3. Resort History - For over 100 years much of the culture and character of the Cobb Mountain area was strongly influenced by the many summer resort communities nestled along the wooded roadways.



ADDITIONAL CULTURAL CAPITAL DATA WE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE

1. Complete history of the area's resorts and early settlers
2. More complete understanding of the Native people's life in the area



Analysis:

Today's community culture of Cobb Mountain draws on several strands. The community is fortunate to have several families here that go back four, five or six generations and keep a culture of strong land stewardship alive, as well as a sense of continuity through the history of the past hundred years. Another strong strand of the culture is carried by many local residents who first came here as summer visitors, either at one of the many resorts or at modest summer homes and who experienced the local mountain environment in a mode of enjoyment and exploration, with happy memories of community swimming pools, forest trails and evening social activities. Especially following the Valley Fire, the community has demonstrated a powerful strand of cooperative enterprise, shown in the work of the Cobb Area Council and in the many informal ways neighbors have been collaborating to recover, rebuild and strengthen local fire safety.

Many of the local neighborhoods with strong summer-resident populations have their own strong sense of community and culture related to the summer season. A third strand of the local culture emerged in the 1970's when some of the old resort properties were acquired by a variety of non-mainstream spiritual communities which also values the quality of retreat from the bustle of urban life as well as the deep restorative qualities of the natural world. A fourth strong element of the local culture is that the community has become home to a variety of local artists of all types, including musicians, painters, sculptors, potters and many others.

Goals:

- Highlight and strengthen the community's sense of its history
- Support specific activities that express the community's history and culture
- Celebrate and strengthen cooperative enterprises

Cultural Capital Strategies:

- Create a Cobb Mountain History Center to curate objects and oral histories
- Continue to develop the annual Blackberry COBBLER Festival and include, as an element in it, ways to highlight and celebrate elements of the Cobb Mountain culture and history
- Explore ways to partner with tribal members to acknowledge and honor the First Peoples of the Cobb Mountain Area

