

## **Memo**

**To:** Ray Carroll, Supervisor District 4, Pima County

**From:** J. Felipe Garcia, Executive Vice President, Visit Tucson

**cc:** Brent DeRaad, President & C.E.O., Visit Tucson

**Date:** April 2, 2015

**Re:** Literacy Tourism

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### **Literacy Tourism**

Literacy tourism is tourism associated with “places celebrated for literary depictions and/or connections with literary figures”.<sup>1</sup> One of the most recognized places of literacy tourism is England, where thousands of individuals travel every year to visit locations associated with the work of William Shakespeare. But not only does classic literature presents opportunities for tourism. The work of J.K. Rowling's on Harry Potter, gave the idea to place a sign reading “Platform 9 ¾” at one of the walls in London's King's Cross train station.

Even though literacy tourism could have started in England, it is not exclusive to such country. In Japan people follow the work of Yukio Mishima; in France it is Julia Child, Andre Gide, Victor Hugo; in Argentina the work of Jose Luis Borges draws tourism to the country, and in Chile the same is true for Pablo Neruda.

The U.S. is no stranger to literacy tourism. The work of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Ernest Hemingway and many others attract visitation to places such as the Key West, New York and San Francisco.

There is very little research in the area of literacy tourism, but it is evident that it has practical and economical benefits. This is evident in the many maps, tour guides and gift shops around the world that have been created to attract those individuals looking to engage with those places or stories that inspired the authors and creators of literary work.

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<sup>1</sup> Squire, S.J., 1996. Literacy tourism and Sustainable Tourism: Promoting 'Anne of Green Gables' in Prince Edward Island. Journal of Sustainable Tourism.

Literacy tourism is considered by many as part of cultural tourism. According to H.C. Anderson and M. Robinson "it involves tourists and visitors identifying with, discovering, and creating signifiers of cultural values with those people who have become part of the cultural mythologies of places".<sup>2</sup> But also literacy tourism could be defined as part of heritage tourism as defined by the National Trust for Historic Preservation "Viewing the work of a great master artist in his home and studio is a heritage tourism experience, while viewing those very same pieces of art in a traveling exhibition is a cultural tourism experience. The content is the same while the context is different".

The classification of literacy tourism as part of cultural or heritage tourism could be important for the development of research and better understanding the reasoning behind this kind of tourism. On practice we see the value of literacy tourism as a way to influence individuals to visit certain places.

The following are some examples of authors in the U.S., that the places where they resided, got inspiration to write, or mentioned on their work, have become literacy tourism destinations.

### **Jack Kerouac**

Recognizing the value of highlighting the work of Jack Kerouac, the City of San Francisco on January 25, 1988 officially named a street after him.

Paul Iorio, freelancer of the Huffington Post, published on June 13, 2012 a story with his own Jack Kerouac Tour of San Francisco. His suggested tour includes visits to the Jack Kerouac Alley, Vesuvio Café (bar frequented by Kerouac) and a house where the author stayed in many occasions. The Beat Museum of San Francisco also has a regularly scheduled walking tour which includes places related to Kerouac.

In Lowell, Massachusetts, an annual Kerouac celebration takes place thanks to the work of a committee and a group called the Jack Kerouac subterranean Information Society. A walking tour has also been created.

### **Norman Rockwell**

The value of locations related to the work and life of Norman Rockwell also provide the basis for tourism related projects. The most iconic of this is the Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. Even though the actual building was built for the purpose of displaying the work of Rockwell, its value of place is due to the fact that the surroundings of the community and residents was the inspiration for many of the images drawn by the artist.

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<sup>2</sup> Andersen, H.-C. and Robinson, M. eds, 2002. *Literature and Tourism – Reading and Writing Tourism Texts*. London: Continuum.

## **Ernest Hemingway**

With no doubt Ernest Hemingway could be the inspiration of many tourism related projects not only in the U.S. but in other locations such as Valencia, Spain. Key West, Florida is home of many events highlighting the works and life of Hemingway, and which attracts many tourists. Every summer, this city engages on a series of celebrations during the Hemingway Days.

A former residence of Ernest Hemingway, his house on the Florida Keys, is now a museum visited by thousands of individuals. The home and its garden are also used as a wedding location, drawing numerous visitors who impact local tourism using hotels and consuming at restaurants in the Florida Keys.

The birthplace home of Ernest Hemingway in Chicago, Illinois has also become a museum and a popular destination on the Oak Park area. Guided tours are also offered by the museum to the two homes located 10 miles from each other.

During a period of his life, Ernest Hemingway resided in the city of Valencia, Spain. The office of tourism of Valencia has also engaged in promoting tourists to visit the city and follow the footsteps of Hemingway. From eating paella at La Epica restaurant, to visiting the Alianza de Intelectuales Café at the Hotel Vincci Palace.

## **William Burroughs**

A house where William Burroughs used to live, and still owned and operated by his estate, receives close to 200 visitors a year who show unexpectedly knocking the door. According to the caretaker of the house, he might be eating dinner and a fan of Burroughs will show up knocking on the door.

A group of enthusiast has also created a tour of William Burroughs Greenwich Village, showcasing locations such as Ace Books, San Remo Café, and St. Mark's Church. This group has taken the tour to Google Maps.

## **William Faulkner**

According to Southern Living magazine, every year about 25,000 people from all over the world visit Oxford, Mississippi, the model for William Faulkner's world. In Oxford you can visit the home of Faulkner as well as the 29 acres of land where it stands. Conde Nast magazine has also devoted space on its publication to highlight a tour of locations in Oxford related to Faulkner. This publication promotes visiting locations ranging From City Hall to the Lafayette County Courthouse.

## **The Tucson Brand**

Two years ago the Visit Tucson team took over the task of developing the brand experience that entice visitors to come to our destination. Through research and data analysis we found out that tourists are attracted to Tucson because we are liberating, free-spirited, personal, genuine and comfortable.

We find out that visitors appreciate that "Tucson isn't chic, polished or plastic. Tucson is a bit of the beaten path and attracts the free-spirited and genuine".

These brand elements of Tucson fit perfect in the area of cultural and literacy tourism. We inspire a sense of freedom among all who visit: Freedom of thought and expression, freedom to discover and explore and freedom to be yourself.