Willamette Valley Archaeology

Excavated Sites
in the Willamette Valley

Three Stage Chronology

- **Early Archaic** (8000 to 6000 years ago or 6000 to 4000 BC)
  - Stone tool assemblages dominated by willow-leaf-shaped projectile points called Cascade Points dating to nearly 8000 years ago by radiocarbon dating

- **Middle Archaic** (6000 to 1800 years ago or 4000 BC to AD 200)
  - Large number of sites dating from this period
  - Dominated by large points similar to Northern Side-Notched points of the Great Basin (atlatl and dart)
  - Stone mortars and pestles abundant indicating an increased use of vegetal resources (particularly camas)
  - First documented use of hazelnuts
  - First documented (and only known) house

- **Late Archaic** (1800 to 200 years ago or AD 200 – 1750)

- **Historic Period** (AD 1750 – 1850)
  - Toward the end of the period are found large-side notched points reminiscent of the Northern Side-Notch points of the Plateau and Great Basin

- Only two sites are well known – Hannavan Creek (WV floor) and Cascadia Cave (Cascade Foothills)
  - Faunal remains from Cascadia Cave suggest intensive hunting of deer, elk, rabbit, weasel, and grouse
  - Floral remains from Hannavan Creek indicate camas gathering and processing
9 Middle Archaic
(6000 to 1800 years ago)
- Beginnings of interregional contacts and trade (exotic items – marine shell, obsidian, etc.)
- Oldest known burials in the Willamette Valley – flexed burials (Longo site) – no burial goods
- Additional stone implements include knives, scrapers, gravers, drills, and perforators
- Cobble tools also become common and include choppers, mauls, and hammerstones
- Scanty evidence of fauna, but suggests that elk, deer, and various species of game were hunted.

10 Late Archaic
(1800 to 200 years ago)
- Largest number of sites known to date from this time period – midden sites or mound sites
- Thought to represent a time of considerable population growth
- Expansion of interregional contacts and trade (coastal exotics and wealth blades)
- Emergence of a distinguishable regional tradition (the Interior Valley Cultural Area)

11 Late Archaic
(1800 to 200 years ago)
- Stone tool assemblages dominated by many small triangular and stemmed narrow-necked points (bow and arrow)

12 Late Archaic
(1800 to 200 years ago)
- Pollen cores suggest an incredible increase in the burning of the Willamette Valley floor (to stimulate growth of certain plants – tarweed and camas)
- The beginning of subregional differences Fuller phase – Lower Valley
  Hurd phase – Upper Valley
  Rigdon phase – Cascade footlands

13 Fuller Phase
- Diagnostic antler and bone tools
- Evidence for fishing (grooved net weights – fish vertebrae)
- Grave goods more common – especially marine shell – all flexed burials
- Intensive coastal trade
- Individuals with cranial reshaping

14 Hurd Phase
- Introduction of Great Basin style projectile points (desert side-notch and cottonwood triangular points)
- Presence of marine shell (including abalone shell from the south)

15 Historic Period
(AD 1750 – 1850)
- Dramatic population declines and acculturation of survivors to Euro-American ways and abandonment of traditional lifeways
Sites dated to this period are characterized by the same small projectile point styles but also include introduced historic items such as metal tools, glass trade beads, copper beads, buttons.

16 Major Sites
   - **Early Archaic**
     Cascadia Cave and Hannavan Creek
   - **Middle and Late Archaic**
     Hurd Site
   - **Late Archaic/ Historic**
     Fuller and Fanning Mounds

17 Cascadia Cave (Newman 1966)
   - Hearth near the base of the deposits dates to 8000 BP

18 Hannavan Creek
   (Cheatham 1988)

21 Hurd Site (White 1975)

25 Fuller and Fanning Mounds
   (Laughlin 1943; Murdy and Wentz 1975; Woodward et al. 1975)

31 Cultural Traits, Cultural Areas, and the Willamette Valley

1 NW Coast
   - houses (north)
   - exotic marine shells (dentalium)
whale bone clubs
rank structure (grave goods)
salmon importance (north)
wealth concept
head reshaping

* Plateau
  - plateau style projectile points
  - linguistic ties (Penutians)
  - salmon importance (north)
  - slave trade
  - camas harvesting

* California
  - waisted obsidian wealth blades
  - acorn harvesting
  - wealth concept
  - round houses (archaeological record)

* Great Basin
  - great basin projectile point styles

* Willamette Valley (Interior Valley)
  - subsistence focus on camas

32 Mill Creek Archaeological Complex
  1996-1997 Excavations

33 Mill Creek Site Complex

35 35MA70
36 35MA63
37 35MA9
38 35MA12
39 35MA7
Mill Creek Site Complex

2002-2003 Excavations

35MA64

35MA65