



Chapter entitled:

BEFORE LEWIS AND CLARK: NATIVE AMERICANS AT WALLULA GAP

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In order to understand the past better, archaeologists divide it into phases. For the Columbia Plateau, phases are generally defined by characteristic artifacts and occasionally by features like the housepit. From the artifacts and features they find on the surface and during excavation, archaeologists hypothesize about the activities people were engaged in and then try to understand why things changed over time. The relationship of the artifacts to each other and to the features

is critical to developing the hypotheses; that is part of the reason why looting is so destructive. It is illegal in both Oregon and Washington to excavate archaeological sites without a permit.

Many phase chronologies have been developed for the Columbia Plateau, but they aren't entirely consistent with one another. As a general rule, there has been a gradual shift from a nomadic existence exploiting a broad spectrum of resources to semi-sedentism centered on major rivers but still utilizing many other resources. Archaeologists hypothesize that changes in the way people lived in the past relate to changes in the environment (especially climate), people's relationships with their neighbors (i.e. the introduction of new ideas), and adaptations to the place in which people live over time.

Very little archaeological work was undertaken in the Wallula area prior to the construction of the McNary Dam. By that time the site referred to as Wallula was already badly looted. Some earlier large-scale archaeological excavations had been undertaken along the Columbia River downstream of Wallula, others were undertaken along the lower Snake River. Therefore, an understanding of the human past at Wallula is based on what people in the surrounding area were doing. This information is further influenced by an understanding of the culture of the people who lived in this area when Euroamericans first invaded it. It is important to remember that the Walúlapam (Walla Walla Tribe) believe their ancestors have been in the Wallula area since time immemorial.

The human history of Wallula is tied to its geology. At the end of the Pleistocene Epoch, beginning about 15,000 years ago and ending about 12,700 years ago, a series of major floods down the Snake and Columbia rivers washed away any evidence of human presence and activity. The earliest period for which there is archaeological evidence on the Columbia Plateau is called Clovis, based on a type of fluted spear point first found in Clovis, New Mexico. This period is

estimated to date from between 11,500 and 11,000 years ago. On the Plateau, only one site with subsurface materials has been documented by archaeologists; therefore, the lifestyles of the people living at this time are poorly understood. It appears that they had a well developed social/religious system that involved sophisticated ceremonies. The people apparently hunted large animals, perhaps including mammoths, with spears. The relationship between the people who used Clovis spear points on the Plateau and those who followed is not clear.

The people who lived in the Wallula area between about 11,000 and 8,000 years ago lived in small, mobile groups. Population density was low. Temporary shelters, including windbreaks and huts, were constructed as necessary. People foraged, gathering a wide variety of plant and animal resources, including fish (salmon, suckers, minnows), river mussels, deer, elk, antelope, birds, rabbits, and hares. Small grinding stones, including thin cobbles whose edges have been ground flat, suggest the use of plant resources. Analyses have not determined precisely what people were grinding. People lived in small, tipi-like surface dwellings. Hunting technology switched from the spear to the atlatl, basically a wooden device that enables a person to throw a dart much farther. At this time, dart points were lance-shaped and stemmed. Flaked tools most commonly were made from chert. Fishing technology included nets, as indicated by net weights (essentially a small cobble with two or more flakes removed to provide a point to which to tie the nets) and harpoons, which were both composite and single-piece. Hides were probably prepared with the end and side-scrapers. Bone needles suggest the sewing together of leather items and/or basketry. Antler wedges may indicate woodworking. Some individuals were cremated with offerings.

Between approximately 8,000 and 5,300 years ago, people continued to live a mobile, foraging lifestyle, but broadened their subsistence base. They hunted deer, elk, sheep, rabbits,

beaver, waterfowl, muskrats, marmots, salmon, other fish, and turtles. They gathered river mussels. Grinding technology had changed from the small hand milling stone and edge-ground cobble to a hopper mortar consisting of: a base of relatively flat rock, a bottomless basket, and a cylindrical pestle. This technology suggests that people were processing tough roots. Tools during this period are generally simple and expedient; the composite harpoons and bone needles are not found. Dart points shift from the willow-leaf shaped form to a large, side-notched point similar to those seen in the Great Basin. Atlatl weights were also found.

From about 5300 to 4000 years ago, people became more sedentary. Small villages of one to three semi-subterranean housepits appear. There is evidence of the seasonal re-occupation of villages, a trait that will continue. Logically, there appears to be an increased emphasis on the exploitation of local resources, especially riverine resources; archaeologists find the most diverse assemblage of faunal remains during this period. Overall, there is an increase in the use of roots and salmon, and there are fewer projectile points, and the flaked stone tools are of poor quality. Hopper mortars continue to dominate the ground stone tools. Dart points are both side and corner notched. There is little archaeological evidence of this period in the Wallula area.

Beginning about 4000 years ago, people began to store food to get them through the winter. Storage pits and processing ovens are now found within villages. Sites dating to this period indicate that people had base camps and collecting locations to exploit one particular resource, for example fish, game, roots, or mussels. Bone tools are well made and include large needles, leisters (see Figure X), beads, and gaming pieces.

About 2500 years ago, there is evidence that people began to utilize the uplands more intensively, especially for harvesting roots. For the first time, archaeologists find antler digging stick handles. Earth ovens indicate camas was cooked, probably a preparatory step for storage.

Both hopper mortar bases and deer, elk, sheep, and bison bones are found in upland sites. Dogs may also have been part of the diet. Villages increase in size, consisting of 100 houses in some places. Salmon remains a critical element of the food supply. There is some evidence of inter-group strife and social inequality. The bow and arrow is adopted during this period, although atlatls continued to be used for quite some time. The materials from which flaked stone tools were made increase in quality and diversity, possibly indicating increased trade. Artifacts and artistic styles show a strong coastal influence.

The settlement and subsistence patterns of this period resemble those of the ethnographic period. Populations increased and people used new areas of the Plateau. Longhouses, a new house form which is basically a semi-subterranean housepit split in half and elongated, are seen after 1,500 years ago. Net weights, a common artifact, changed in size and style over time, perhaps indicating changes in and/or new varieties of nets. Other typical artifacts include harpoons and barbed bone arrowheads, other fishing implements, cordage, matting, basketry, needles, bows, and arrows. Arrowheads become smaller and are often corner- or basal-notched. There is a heavy reliance on fishing, the storage of salmon and camas.

Around the year 1720, the horse reached the Wallula area, changing some aspects of the culture. Mobility increased; most notably expeditions were mounted to the Great Plains to hunt bison. Archaeologists refer to a “Plains overlay” of culture. Basically, some elements of the material culture of Plains tribes were adopted by Plateau cultures. However, the underlying culture continued to rely on a seasonal round centered on salmon fishing, root gathering, and deer and elk hunting.

Introduced European diseases decimated the Walúlapam’s and other Plateau tribes’ population. The people persisted through that and other efforts at ethnic cleansing. On June 9,

1855, the Walúlapam, together with the Weyíiletpuu (Cayuse) and the Imatalamláma (Umatilla) signed a treaty and became the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. These people continue to exercise their traditions and protect places, like Wallula Gap, that have always been important to them.

Pre-inundation excavations at pre-contact villages focused on sites downstream from Wallula Gap. These excavations took place in the 1950s primarily under the leadership of Joel Shiner and Douglas Osborne as part of the Smithsonian Institution's River Basin Survey project. Shiner's work followed Osborne's; Shiner incorporates Osborne's findings in his understanding of the Plateau culture area. Shiner's work was good for the time, but it was before radiocarbon dating and before volcanic ash layers could be tied to specific eruptions. Therefore, their attempts to understand change over time are based exclusively on relative dating techniques, usually involving projectile (spear, dart, arrow) point styles. Complete analysis of the artifacts Shiner and Osborne recovered has never been published. These assemblages have the potential to answer many more questions about the Plateau's past.

Shiner found cultural material at several sites beneath a thick (more than one foot) layer of volcanic ash now known to be from the eruption of Mount Mazama about 7000 years ago that created Crater Lake. At one site, he found burned bone (rabbits, deer, salmon, and fish), flakes (53% basalt, 31% cryptocrystalline silica [CCS], 10% quartzite, and 6% obsidian), fire-cracked rock, hammerstones, choppers, leaf-shaped projectile points, flakes used for cutting or scraping, and decorated bone beads. Features included hearths and mussel shell lenses. No evidence of shelter was found, but the number of artifacts suggested occupation over quite some period of time. Shiner hypothesized that shelters consisted of brush or mat and were not supported by large posts.

Another site was occupied soon after the Mazama ash fell. Here, Shiner found a bowl-shaped housepit. He suspected that the superstructure was light, perhaps mat covered poles with soil banked against the lower edges. Matting fragments were observed on house floors. Artifacts at this site included specialized fishing equipment such as the net weight (notched, grooved, and perforated). Not surprisingly, there was also an increase in numbers of fish bones, including salmon, sucker, and trout. Choppers were more carefully made. Bone beads, bone awls, a bone projectile point (side-notched), and an antler tine pressure flaker were recovered. Projectile points at first were of the same style, but obsidian was used as a material. Scrapers and knives were the same but there were more long basalt knives. It appears that hopper mortar bases were observed but not recognized as such.

Later occupations involved saucer-shaped housepits that apparently had superstructures similar to their bowl-shaped predecessors. The houses became slightly smaller over time. The pits were used repeatedly; Shiner found floors superimposed upon one another. They were recognizable by a thin, dark, charcoal stain. Large concentrations of fire-cracked rock were observed, once within an old housepit, and interpreted as earth ovens. Projectile points changed in size and shape over time. Choppers became more specialized, and the basalt knives were no longer used.

The late prehistoric period is well reflected in the one site Shiner excavated that was not a winter village—the Wallula site. Near the mouth of the Walla Walla river, on a gravel bar was what appeared to be a fishing site—“in some places the soil was black, almost greasy, with charcoal, and salmon vertebrae were present in vast numbers” (Shiner 1961:202). Shiner concluded that fishing was the main activity at the site, but the number of deer and elk bones and

projectile points also hint at hunting. Pestles and bowls suggested to Shiner that seeds and berries might have been ground.

Arrowheads were numerous, small, stemmed or barbed, and made of petrified wood, basalt, agate, jasper, obsidian, and bone. Net weights had two or four notches or were grooved. Hammerstones and choppers (or a combination of the two) were common. Mortar bases, anvils, pestles, and stone bowl fragments were observed. Woodworking tools included stone and antler wedges, ground stone mauls, and flaked stone drills. One schist pipe bowl fragment was recovered. Bone awls and needles were of various shapes, usually made out of deer bones. An antler gaming piece, smooth on one side and decorated with small drilled pits on the other—suggest a leisure time activity. The presence of seashells here and at other sites indicates trade with coastal people. No evidence of any kind of shelter could be found, and this site, unlike the villages Shiner and Osborne excavated, was subject to seasonal flooding.

Reading archaeology reports, it is often easier to visualize artifacts than to see the people who were using them. Below is a brief scene of life in the Wallula Gap area, approximately 2000 years ago.

The boy awoke, earlier than usual, to an explosion. His sister giggled as he jerked upright at this familiar yet always surprising noise a rock makes as it blasts apart. While he slept his mother, grandmother, and sister have stirred the fire in the center of the dwelling, fetched fresh water, and heated river-rounded stones found along the beach. With wooden tongs his mother grabbed another red-hot stone from the fire, rinsed the ash off, and dropped it into the tightly woven basket with the morning's stew. This rock, however, apparently lacking cracks or other imperfections, held together, transmitting its heat to the breakfast.

The boy yawned and stretched. The fire warmed his feet. His bear skin blanket was becoming too warm. But the tule mat lying over a mattress of last year's grass and the shredded inner bark of the cottonwood tree fit his shape perfectly. And though he was hungry, he could not muster much excitement about breakfast: dried fish stew with the tiniest amount of camas flour to thicken it up, exactly the same thing they had eaten for two weeks, since they finished their fresh venison.

Dinner, however, would be different. Today, the women would go up on the bluff to the spot where the sun shone on the rocky soil throughout the winter, and where the celery first poked up through the rock soil. While hunting rabbits, he had noticed the tiniest green shoots a week earlier and raced back to the village with the news. His grandmother rolled her eyes at his desire for her to go gather up the plants immediately. No one in the village had eaten fresh vegetables since last fall, but as he well knew, there was a time to gather, and until that time came, everyone would wait.

The elders had decided it was time to start getting ready for the Celery Feast. The boy smiled. He jumped up and reached for his cedar root basket from which to eat his breakfast stew. He caught his mother's eye and turned to straighten his bed.

The tipi-like conical semi-subterranean dwelling in which he, his sister, his parents, and grandparents spent the winter was about 15 feet in diameter. The village consisted of several dwellings aligned parallel to the shoreline above the floodplain. Nearer to the shore were small, round, mud-covered sweat houses. Storage buildings and pits were interspersed amongst the dwellings. Many years ago, the grandparents had found a free spot in the village and had begun to build their house. Using two Indian hemp ropes, they formed a cross, driving stakes at each end of each rope. They then placed additional stakes, forming a circle. Using their kápin

(digging sticks), the women of the village began to excavate the circle to a depth of approximately 12 inches. They put the sand in baskets and piled it around the outside of the circle.

Having completed the hole, three lodgepole pine poles (which had washed down the Walla Walla River) were lashed together, with stinging nettle twine. These poles were approximately 18 feet long. They were raised, the bases braced against the sides of the newly dug housepit, and spread to create a tripod. Additional poles of willow, were then placed with their butt ends in the hole and tips leaning against the tripod frame until there were about 12 poles.

On top of this wooden frame the grandparents placed tule mats. The tules had been collected in late summer, after the summer steelhead run, from the mouth of Juniper Canyon. The goal was to gather strong, straight plants of approximately the same diameter. The women brought them back to the village to dry. The grandmother used two willow twigs, each approximately four feet long, as guides to trim the tules to the same length. A long, thin, greasewood needle or punch pierced the tules, a few at a time. She bound the tules together with dog bane twine she had spun or rolled on her leg. Binding the skinny ends of the tules together, she created a mat to fit the conical shape of the structure. (When a straight mat was desired, the grandmother alternated skinny and fat ends.)

When the mats were 10 to 20 feet long, the grandfather tied them to the wooden poles, beginning at the bottom. About four tiers of mats were required to reach the top of the house. He piled four mats on top of each other on the bottom tier, three on the next tier up, then two, and only one at the top, carefully overlapping each tier approximately two inches to encourage the rain to run off. The grandparents leaned additional willow poles against the outside of the

house to secure the mats in the strong winds, leaving a large gap at the top to allow the smoke to escape and to let the light in.

The door, facing east toward the river, was an arch left open in the tules. Another tule mat (this one straight rather than conical) was placed with the tules parallel to the ground. In nice weather, this door could be rolled up and secured.

The grandmother piled bark, grass, and the soil removed from the inside of the house around the outside of its base. In very cold weather, she hung elk skins on the inside walls. She placed her fire roughly in the center, with her family members' beds encircling it. Some personal items were hung from the poles; others were stored at the heads of the beds. When the family left the village to gather berries and hunt, they removed the superstructure, storing the posts until they returned, taking the tule mats with them. When they returned to the village, laden with winter stores, the grandmother and her daughter swept out the accumulated sand and reassembled the house.

This place, Wallula, made a good winter village for a variety of reasons. A little way up the Walla Walla River tribal members could gather river mussels at the rapids and find an ideal place for a weir; they could catch the sturgeon in the deep water of Nch'i-Wána (the Columbia River), gather driftwood commonly deposited in accessible eddies, and most likely find a spot near the confluence that did not freeze solid. Of course, it never occurred to the boy that he would winter anywhere else—his family had always been here. His people were known as the Walúlapam, the people of Wallula.

After breakfast, the women of the village gathered with their Indian hemp flat bags (decorated with lighter colored grasses) in which to place the celery shoots and set off to the southwest. They were pleased with what they saw. The winter had been cold and wet. The

plants coming back up were plentiful and strong. The girl, having watched her mother, grandmother, aunts, and cousins gather foods since she was in her cradleboard, needed no training for this task. Her grandmother was proud that she filled her bag as quickly as some of the older girls.

Within a few hours, everyone's bag was full, and they returned to the village to prepare for the feast. It was a fine day, so the women sat in the arbor to peel the shoots. The arbor, with its flat tule mat roof and three brushy sides, served as both a sun and wind block. Each woman and girl had several sharp CCS flakes with which to peel any skin too thick to chew. Having slept poorly the night before on account of excitement about her first celery gathering, the girl had clumsy fingers. A sharp flake dug deeply into her palm. She quickly went to the edge of the village and gathered some yarrow leaves with which to staunch the flow of blood. She crushed them between two rocks, secured the leaves with a piece of leather, and returned to the arbor to continue work.

Unbeknownst to the boy or his sister, the men had placed bundles of cedar splints along the shoreline for use as torches and had spent much of the night in their canoes, successfully jacklighting whitefish and suckers. The fish would be added to the celery shoots making a great feast with which to say a thankful farewell to winter and turn their minds to spring.

When all the food was ready, the people gathered to eat. As even the wind had died down, they were able to lay tule mats outside. The women sat on the south side, the men on the north side. The singers gathered at the west end with their drums and sang songs of thanks, winter, and spring. Then the young women brought out basket after basket of roots, whitefish, suckers, and all of those things individual families had saved through the long winter for this day—dried

gooseberries, service berries, raspberries, huckleberries, currants, chokecherries, and even a little bit of dried deer.

When all the food was arrayed on the mats between the men and women, and everyone could hardly stand to wait any longer, one more prayer was said, one more song was sung, everyone drank a bit of chúush (water), and the feasting began.

Talk turned to the spring and summer to come. Soon the men would go up the Walla Walla River a short distance to rebuild the weir. Years ago, their ancestors had placed willow posts at intervals across the river. Every few years they rebuilt the curtains of small willow branches to attach to the posts. These curtains would be lowered, blocking the fish, which could then be collected in a 15 to 18 foot long net (which had wooden floats and notched cobble weights) pulled by two people, or by a single person with a dip net.

The dip net, used most commonly when water roiled and visibility was poor, required an ability to feel the fish. One of the boy's uncles was particularly skilled. His dip net had a long vine maple handle and a hemp net. The tip of the handle was bent around to form a hoop from which to hang the net. The uncle stood on a platform at the edge of the rapids and swung his net in the water, downstream with the current. When he felt a fish, he pulled up the net, deposited the fish on shore, and returned the net to the river, almost in a single movement. The boy often worked with him, clubbing the fish with a polished, cylindrical rock. He caught approximately 100 fish per day.

Stories abounded of fishing for spring chinook from canoes. The boy listened carefully, trying to learn all the tricks his uncles would play on him in an effort to make him lose his balance and take an unplanned swim. He would continue to practice with his harpoon—last year he had broken many wooden practice points as he missed the salmon and hit the rocks below

them. The adults' harpoon tips were made of deer antler, the foreshaft of part of a deer ulna. Attached to the main cedar shaft with Indian hemp twine, the foreshaft when released absorbed the initial impact of the fish moving away from the spear, prevented the main shaft from breaking, and allowed the large salmon to tire before being hauled ashore.

Since the spring Chinook run would begin soon, the women talked of reconstructing the salmon drying/smoking sheds and racks that had been dismantled for winter. The spring Chinook run would begin soon. They discussed who would be staying at Wallula for the summer and who would go to the mountains, following spring as it moved up in elevation. The grandmother's thoughts turned to root feast, which would be coming along in a couple of months.

She recalled the work she had done to prepare her granddaughter for her first root digging. She had worked on a cupin since last summer when she gathered huckleberries in the mountains. She had gone to the same area from which her grandmother had gathered the wood for her cupin. Singing a song of thanks, along the way she had stopped at a creek to inspect the cobbles. She grabbed one, assessing the fit in her hand and the material. She frowned at a hairline fracture in the rock, threw it back, and continued her singing walk along the creek. Ah, there it is, she thought as she stooped down and picked up an oval, gray, river-rounded basalt cobble larger than her hand. She turned a circle, looking for another rock that could be used as a hammerstone, and saw a fist-sized quartzite cobble. She sat down on the ground in the shade. With four blows, she had made a hand axe. Two flakes had been removed from one side of the larger cobble and two from the other, creating a sharp, pointed surface. The other end of the cobble retained its smooth, river-rounded surface and fit comfortably in her hand.

Upon reaching a group of oceanspray, she eyed it critically. She was looking for a limb about the diameter of a deer's lower leg that would reach from her feet to her chest, with just the right curve, something akin to the bend of the steelhead's back as it jumped along the rapids below Wallula. She talked softly to the oceanspray, giving thanks and seeking assistance; she received the help she sought. She could see the finished cupin. She opened one of the pouches she wore around her neck and removed a sharp flake. She cut off several small branches so she could reach her limb. Four swings of the hand axe and it was hers. With her strong hands she removed the leaves, branches, and some of the bark. She returned to camp.

The previous fall after the salmon run, back at Wallula, she directed her husband not to come home without a bull elk with cupin handle antlers. He and a small group headed into the mountains along a well-worn trail. They began by travelling up the Walla Walla River, then turned south and traveled overland toward the Umatilla River, which they reached the second day. Next, they walked up 'Iskúlpá Creek. They passed deer and cow elk. On the third morning they built sweat, believing they could find an elk that day. That afternoon, he watched a young bull trying to control his harem, the man chuckling at the little guy who thought he was so big. He knew this bull would never satisfy the grandmother, and more importantly, would not provide his granddaughter with a cupin handle to last her into adulthood. He heard his nephew's meadowlark whistle and shook his head. It was so wrong, it never ceased to surprise him that every animal in the forest did not run from the sound. He answered with a perfect raven call and moved toward the rest of the party.

At the edge of a meadow he saw them: two big branch antler bulls grazing within 200 yards of each other. They were not yet in the rut, not yet worried about harems. It was a nice day, and the grass was greening up from the recent rain. He saw his nephew and sons. All knew it would

be his shot. He breathed deeply and said a silent prayer to the elk as he assessed the animals. He chose the smaller of the two, out of respect for the larger, and removed his bow from his shoulder. He had made this bow from juniper and backed it with elk sinew. He had painted it green using ocher with red (from another kind of ocher) and yellow stripes (using the inner bark of Oregon grape). He reached to his right side where his otter pelt quiver rode by his waist. He chose the syringa shaft with the obsidian point he had obtained along with a variety of other items for a sheephorn bow on his last trip to Celilo Falls. He recognized the arrow by its goose feather fletching. In the blink of an eye the elk turned to look toward him, took a dozen steps, and fell. The grandfather and his companions approached the animal and thanked it for its sacrifice.

The youngest of the party cut the animal open with a sharp CCS knife with an antler haft. He field dressed the elk. The others helped to skin, butcher, and package the meat and other parts of the animal in grass mats and baskets. The men, confident of their success, had brought little food. Having completed preliminary preparations, they shared the liver, heart, and kidneys. They smoked and slept. The next day, they placed the baskets on their backs and began the trip back toward Wallula. On the way home, they killed two deer and processed them in the same way as the elk. Over the course of a year, approximately 20-30 deer or 6-10 elk would be needed to feed one family.

For 15 minutes the grandmother noted every flaw in the antler the grandfather presented, but he could see in her eyes that she was pleased. Back at the village at Wallula, she spent a few hours sawing through the antler with one sharp basalt flake after another, coupled with sand to act as an added abrasive, to remove the femur-length tine to use as the cupin handle. She gave the remainder of the antler to her daughter to make into pressure flakers, wedges, and knife

handles. Having removed the tine, she began the process of drilling the hole for the actual cupin. On nice days she sat outside, out of the wind, with her basalt drill. Around her were people repairing dip nets, sharpening knives, pecking and grinding a stone bowl, or making shell, stone, and bone beads. She looked at the Two Sisters and told the story of how they came to be there. As she told the story, she closed her eyes and could see her grandmother telling the same story in the same spot in the same way, also with her eyes closed. She knew her grandmother had been seeing her grandmother, and that her relatives had been telling this story in this spot since the day those girls turned to stone. Everyone quietly listened to the story as if it were the first time they had heard it.

Having completed a hole of the appropriate size, she returned to the stick itself. She had long since used some of her CCS flakes to remove all the bark and cambium layer, removing about one-half inch all the way around. She had used a piece of scoria to sand the wood into a smooth surface. She had reduced the overall length to approximately her granddaughter's waist. One end came to a dull point. This end she had put in a fire whose coals were past red-hot and used the heat of the fire to strengthen the wood. Now was the time to fit the stick and handle together. She fit the handle over the stick, but had to remove a little more of the wood from the digging stick. Perfect now. She grabbed a cobble and tapped the antler, wedging it into place on the digging stick. She heated some spruce pitch on a flat rock near the fire and used a stick to spread it all around the hand/stick junction.

At the Celery Feast, the women's conversation turned with eager anticipation to late summer, when the myriad trails that passed through Wallula would bring old friends, family, and interesting strangers to the village. There would be races, gambling, singing, dancing, trading, and romance.

After dinner, once the young women had cleaned up and distributed the leftovers (with the best going to the elders), it was time for more singing and dancing. The girl, exhausted by her long day, was soon curled up on a corner of the tule, sleeping. Her brother intended to dance all night, but replete with the rich foods he'd been dreaming of for months, he could not keep his eyes open. The grandmother covered them with an elk skin and returned to her husband to celebrate another year in which the land surrounding Wallula had met the needs of its people.

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