

Toepel, Kathryn A. *The Flanagan Site: 6,000 years of occupation in the upper Willamette Valley, Oregon*, 1985. University of Oregon Ph.D. Thesis. Oregon Collection, Knight Library. (reviewed by Alexis Steinberg)

In this thesis, Toepel attempts to answer questions about prehistoric occupation of the Willamette River Valley using analysis from the Flanagan archaeological site. The site is located within the Long Tom sub-basin of the Upper Willamette Valley (just north of Eugene) and provides evidence of a 6,000-year-old seasonal human occupation. “The archaeological record from the Flanagan site provides a long-term perspective on the hunter-gatherer adaptations in the Willamette Valley which culminated in the ethnographically-known culture of the Kalapuya Indians” (v of abstract, Toepel).

The Kalapuya Indians are considered a set of groups of Native Americans that, at the time of contact with European-Americans, occupied the Willamette Basin as well as portions of the Umpqua Basin just south of the Calapooya Mountains. Molala and Chinook (non-Kalapuya groups) also occupied southern and eastern parts of the valley. The apparent distribution of these groups is patterned in such a way as to suggest that each group occupied specific basins and valleys of tributaries that make up the larger Willamette River Valley. Toepel emphasizes the *interior* lifeways of the Willamette Valley groups as compared with their Northwest Native American contemporaries that occupied coastal areas. More specifically, Toepel distinguishes Kalapuya Indians of the Willamette Valley from other northwest groups based on archaeological evidence from the Flanagan site. There is no evidence that, prehistorically, the lower falls on the Willamette River allowed for substantial upstream migration of certain fish (including salmon). Because of this, the Kalapuya are thought to have relied on hunting and gathering (versus fishing) as their primary means of subsistence. Such subsistence practices sharply distinguished the Kalapuya cultural groups from other northwest prehistoric groups and mark specific adaptations to the Willamette River Valley.

In analyzing Kalapuya adaptations, Toepel identifies three cultural phases from the Flanagan site related to projectile point typology. Chronological changes in this typology are traced to technological as well as paleoenvironmental changes. In other words, adaptive living strategies of prehistoric people in the Willamette Valley directly correlate with environmental changes that occurred between the Hypsithermal and Late Postglacial climatic periods. Major changes in human use of the Flanagan site, as seen archaeologically, correlate with this environmental shift, where proportions and types vegetation in the valley changed.

Toepel's general argument is that archaeological investigation of the Flanagan site provide evidence that the prehistoric occupation and lifeways of the Kalapuya Indians in the Willamette River Valley is different than that of more general Northwest Native Americans and that there is clear evidence of the response of native peoples to changes in the landscape.

Critique

Toepel's thesis provides an extensive analysis of the Flanagan archaeological site and is an excellent resource for investigating the regional cultural sequence of the Willamette Basin. Toepel nicely outlines chronological phases of human occupation and provides specific evidence of tool use and subsistence practices for each phase. She also includes extensive floral, faunal and geological histories of the area in relationship to their respective human use. The overall content of this source is excellent. It is valuable to anyone that has prior experience with archaeological analysis. In this way, the thesis is also limiting because it is difficult to interpret without a general archaeological framework. This source is also very specific and makes use of only one archaeological site. This does not allow for broad generalizations about the prehistoric human occupation of the Willamette Valley. Overall, the source is credible, specific, and provides extensive evidence. However, it does not allow for a general understanding of Native American use of the Willamette River Valley.

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