

# Area History

## 15,000 Years Ago...

Multiple floods of glacial Lake Missoula shape the geography of this region



Lewis & Clark State Park

## 1800s

### ■ 1805-1806:

Lewis & Clark Expedition first documents interactions with local Cayuse, Palouse, Walla Walla and Wanapum peoples



10 layers from the Missoula Floods  
Photo by Bob Carson

## For more than 10,000 Years...

The Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla tribes lived in the Columbia River region, moving in a large circle from the lowlands along the Columbia River to the highlands in the Blue Mountains to fish, hunt and gather food throughout the year.

### ■ 1818:

North West Company establishes the area's first fur trading post, Fort Nez Perce

### ■ 1821:

Fort Nez Perce becomes Fort Walla Walla under the Hudson's Bay Company

### ■ 1836:

Protestant missionaries Marcus and Narcissa Whitman arrive and establish the first European-American settlement in the Walla Walla Valley



Whitman Mission

### ■ 1853:

Congress creates the Washington Territory

### ■ 1855:

Treaty negotiated with the Cayuse, Nez Perce, Umatilla, Walla Walla, and Yakama peoples

### ■ 1858:

Permanent military Fort Walla Walla opens

### ■ 1859:

Washington Territorial Legislature grants charter to Whitman Seminary (which becomes Whitman College in 1883)



Sunset wheat  
U-B photo by Greg Lehman

### ■ 1860s:

Wheat cultivation begins in the valley

### ■ 1862:

The Idaho gold rush boom makes Walla Walla the largest community in the territory

### ■ 1870s:

Italian immigrants plant the valley's first wine grapes

### ■ 1875:

Walla Walla & Columbia River Railroad connect Walla Walla to the Columbia River

### ■ 1880s:

Local Chinese population grows as new immigrants arrive for railroad work

### ■ 1887:

Washington Territorial Prison (later Washington State Penitentiary) opens

### ■ 1889:

Washington becomes the 42nd state in the Union

### ■ 1892:

Walla Walla College opens in College Place

## 1900s

### ■ 1907:

Walla Walla Symphony, the oldest west of the Mississippi, performs its first concert

### ■ 1928:

Marcus Whitman Hotel opens

### ■ 1931:

Excessive snowmelt causes Mill Creek to flood city

### ■ 1942:

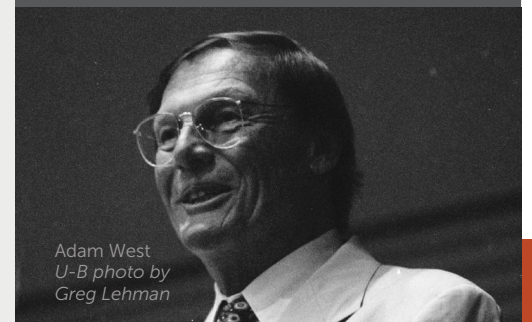
Walla Walla Army Air Base opens as a training center for B-17 and B-24 Liberator bomb crews

### ■ 1943:

Bracero program brings in Mexican workers to save the agricultural industry during World War II

### ■ 1960s:

Walla Walla native Adam West stars in the TV series "Batman"



Adam West  
U-B photo by Greg Lehman

### ■ 1974:

Leonetti Cellar plants grape vines – starting Walla Walla's modern winemaking presence

### ■ 1984:

Walla Walla Valley designated as an official American Viticultural Area (AVA)

## 2000s

### ■ 2010:

More than 100 wineries operate in the Walla Walla Valley

### ■ 2010:

Walla Walla Downtown Historic District added to National Register of Historic Places

### ■ 2024:

Walla Walla Valley AVA Celebrates 40th Anniversary