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## REPORT OF INVESTIGATIONS

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No. 9

### THE ZIMMERMAN SITE

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A Report on Excavations  
at the  
Grand Village of Kaskaskia  
La Salle County, Illinois

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# CHAPTER IX

## THE EUROPEAN TRADE GOODS

European trade goods were found in 35 localities that included six burials, the fill of at least 30 pits, and a number of instances in a general occupation area. Trade goods were found in all four types of storage pits. A list of trade goods is provided in Table 12. Most of the features containing trade goods were in or near Grid A; only five were in Grid B, two in C, and two in D.

The beginning of the penetration of trade goods into the Illinois Country probably began about 1665 when small amounts may have filtered in from Chequamegon Bay on the southern shore of Lake Superior. By 1674 there were two French traders among the Kaskaskia on the Illinois and in the same year several Kaskaskia were actively engaged in bringing French goods

from Green Bay to the Illinois Valley (Temple, 1958). But despite these activities European goods probably did not become very plentiful in the Illinois Country until LaSalle's establishment of Fort Crevecoeur in 1680 or even until Fort St. Louis was established in 1683 and the Grand Village of the Kaskaskia began to be re-occupied. From that date onward the Indians on the Illinois River were undoubtedly never without a source of supplies, however meager it may occasionally have been.

The most readily datable of the trade goods are the glass beads (Fig. 20D,E). Arthur Woodward (Letter to Dr. John C. McGregor, October 21, 1947) stated, in reference to the material from the Zimmerman site, that . . . "The seed beads may

TABLE 12  
THE FREQUENCY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EUROPEAN TRADE GOODS

Item	Number of Occurrences	Feature Association
Seed beads, blue glass . . . . .	71	A-6, 10, 22, 27, 40. Burial 2, C-3g.
Seed beads, red glass . . . . .	1	A-10
Large beads, blue glass . . . . .	3	Burials 2, 22. Survey pit 3.
Glass tube bead . . . . .	1	Burial 2
Glass bottle top . . . . .	2	Surface
Glass bottle base . . . . .	1	Surface
Kaolin pipe bowl (?), fragments . . . . .	1	A-27
Double-wire brass coil ornaments . . . . .	16	Burials 2, 3, 6-9, 14.
Double-wire brass fragments . . . . .	12	A-6, 10, 16, 20, 32. Ba-3. B-5. C-3g.
Brass wire ornament . . . . .	1	A-36
Copper or brass janglers or tinkling cones . . . . .	7	A-4, 16, 20. B-3, 6. C-8?
Copper or brass rolled tubular beads . . . . .	3	Wray no. 10
Sheet copper or brass fragments . . . . .	24	A-4, 6, 10, 12, 16, 20, 22, 32, 36, 38, 40.
Iron clasp knife blade . . . . .	1	Ba-3. B-1. C-3g
Iron knife fragments . . . . .	5	Surface, Grid A
Iron knife blade tip . . . . .	1	A-4, 10, 36. C-3?, 4
Iron nails . . . . .	6	Wray no. 2
Iron ax heads . . . . .	3	A-10, 34. C-8?
Iron awl (?) . . . . .	1	Wray no. 5, 9.
Unidentifiable iron fragments . . . . .	22	Wray no. ?
		A-4, 6, 10, 16, 18, 19, 22, 25, 27, 34, 38.
		Ba-4. C-3g

Note: Some of the trade goods can no longer be found and a precise tally is no longer possible.  
Based on Keller, 1949:48; Bauxar, 1953:42; MacNeish, 1945; Orr, 1947; the Wray Collection; and notes in the Illinois State Museum.

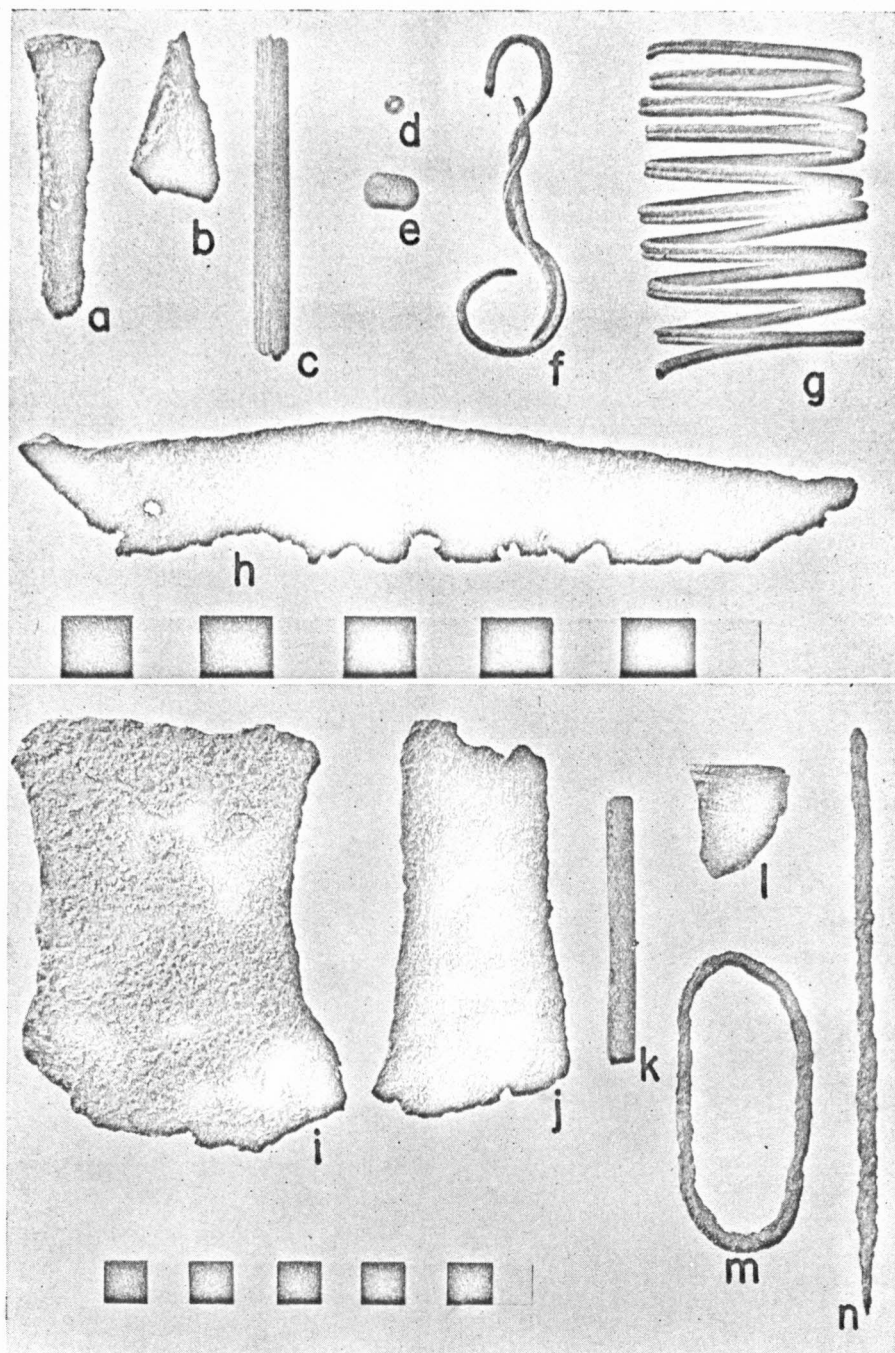


Fig. 20—European trade goods: a, nail with square cross section; b, brass or copper tinkling cone from pit A-20; c, extruded blue glass tube (bead?); d, blue glass seed bead; e, large blue glass bead; f, ornament made from brass or copper wire with a B-shaped cross section; g, brass or copper wire coiled hair ornaments with a B-shaped cross section; h, French iron clasp knife (without a touch mark); i, j, iron ax heads; k, brass or copper rolled sheet tube (bead?); l, glass bottle top; m, iron ring; n, iron awl.

occur in the 17th century. They were not so plentiful in certain regions, but in areas where the beads were used for decorating garments they occur . . . well toward the early part of the 17th century. There were various sizes of seed beads. Those of the French type, so called, were used a great deal in England during the time of the Stuarts, and there was a revival in the Americas during the early part of the 19th century of the very finest of these beads." The larger, light blue beads, which have flattened ends (Fig. 20E), have had a less definite history.

Of the beads found at Zimmerman the large and small blue glass beads were specifically singled out by Tonti in a list of trade goods drawn up in 1693 (Pease and Werner 1934:281). By 1702 there were other types of beads that were being carried into the Illinois Country (Thwaites 1896-1901:66:29-31) so that it is undoubtedly significant that some of the diagnostic beads such as the Bristol bead and the dark blue faceted bead found at Starved Rock are not found at Zimmerman (Hagen n.d.).

The other distinctive artifacts are the iron knife blades (Fig. 20H), one of which

was found in the excavation with a lug suggesting the clasp knife of the French type (Keller, 1949:90), and the brass "double-wire" ornaments. The double-wire was made by folding over the sides of a long strip of sheet brass towards the center, thereby giving it a B-shaped cross-section (Fig. 20G). This wire type, which seems to be uncommon in archaeological sites, was usually found made into spring coil ornaments, and in three burials these ornaments were located in the ear region. DuPratz (Quimby, 1957:139) in the early eighteenth century described coil ornaments as being used as earrings by the Natchez. The same wire seems to have been used in the ornament (Fig. 20F) and constitutes the fragments that have been found.

Unfortunately, the trade material can only serve as a very general time indicator, but the fact that only a relatively few categories are represented and the quantity is not great definitely supports a late seventeenth century date. Hence, the date as well as the character of European trade goods at the Zimmerman site confirm its identification as the Grand Village of the Kaskaskia.