

## Chapter VIII

### EUROPEAN TRADE ARTICLES

TRADE GOODS MAY HAVE FOUND THEIR WAY INTO eastern Tennessee at a very early date. In 1673 when Needham and Arthur arrived at the town of the Tomahitans, some ten days' travel west of the Appalachians,<sup>1</sup> they discovered that the Indians living in the eastern Tennessee valley already had guns and brass kettles which they had obtained in trade from the Spaniards. There is little question that the Indians in this area did receive many items of British colonial trade through Indian middlemen in direct contact with the traders of Carolina and Virginia. Mooney commented:

Regular trade routes crossed the continent from east to west and from north to south, and when the subject has been fully investigated it will be found that this inter-tribal commerce was as constant and well recognized a part of Indian life as is our own railroad traffic today.<sup>2</sup>

Thus it is impossible to say with any certainty just how early some of the trade articles found on Hiwassee Island might have reached there. It is likely that most of these objects do not date earlier than the late 17th or the beginning of the 18th century when the Carolina traders first began trading with the Cherokee. While we do not believe that the Cherokee inhabited the island at that early date, the friendly relationships between the Cherokee and the Yuchi on the lower Hiwassee River, and possibly the Creeks on Hiwassee Island, might have facilitated trade with these groups.

Early 18th century trade articles, according to Logan,<sup>3</sup> included guns, pistols, bullets, hatchets, axes, hoes, knives, swords, beads, cloth and clothing, for which definite rates of exchange in skins were established by 1717. Bracelets, anklets, scissors, hawk bells, mirrors, ribbons, stockings, salt, gunpowder and brass kettles were also in such great demand that often no price was set for them, and a trader depended upon his individual initiative in driving a bargain.

Articles of European trade were not very abundant on Hiwassee Island, but they are important

in the identification of the burials with which many of them were found. In Chapter II we discussed the fact that the Cherokee settlement of Chocoma Jolly was apparently not much earlier than 1780, and that the Creeks were reputed to have lived there previously. The question is not so simple as merely a choice between Creeks and Cherokee, because most of the burials with which trade goods were associated were not typical of the Dallas culture, nor were they like the burials from the known Cherokee sites of Chote and Ocoee. The burials in question were bundle reburials which are not typical of any Tennessee culture. There were sixteen bundle reburials consisting of forty-seven individuals. In addition, there were seven native flesh burials accompanied by trade articles of the same type found with the reburials. This suggests that both types of burials date at about the same period.

The most important clue to this period is a certain type of glass paste bead inlaid with white stripes. Arthur Woodward,<sup>4</sup> who examined the states:

Specimens of this type are common to late 17th and early 18th century sites, particularly in Virginia, New York, Pennsylvania, Alabama, Georgia and Tennessee. Varieties occur in many colors as are indicated in those which appear in this strand. Imitations of these beads were made in the early 19th century but are smaller, and the paste inlay is more on the order of paint than actual inlay in the glass rod.

Glenn Black,<sup>5</sup> who also examined the beads, stated his belief that this type of bead was first traded as early as 1700. We quote at length the general statement concerning the beads which Black has made:

Generally speaking, all of the beads in this collection show a remarkable homogeneity as to type, origin and time involvements. They are all representative of the large quantities of beads made in Venice for the primitive customer throughout the world. Trade bead patterns were

<sup>1</sup> Letter of Abraham Wood, in Williams, 1928, pp. 24-28.

<sup>2</sup> Mooney, 1900, p. 235.

<sup>3</sup> Logan, 1839, p. 254.

<sup>4</sup> Woodward, Arthur, 1941, Personal communication.

<sup>5</sup> Black, Glenn, 1940, Personal communication.

established, and those styles which found favor in America or Asia very often became "best sellers" in America. As long as a bead type was popular, that style was not varied. This fact accounts for the long span of years over which some of these beads spread. It is a fact too, which preclude the possibility of certainty of assignment [of a date] to any site producing glass beads. Some of these beads can still be obtained and the styles were carried in stock until well up into the century.

On the basis of type associations, and using as a guide two sites in this region [Fort St. Joseph and Miami Post] as standards, I feel rather secure in saying that your beads probably represent trade by the British or French, or during a period ending about 1760. Just when it is more difficult to say, but I have a feeling that the sites in question began about 1710-1720. I am sure that all of your bead producing sites are to be dated as far as the time interval of 1720-1760 is concerned. They, naturally, may not be strictly contemporaneous nor homogeneous; your associations will have to take care of that.

These two opinions, by persons who have made extensive studies of trade beads, would seem to indicate that the trade beads from Hiwassee Island were obtained during the early decades of the 18th century, and that the burials with which they were associated should be considered as having been interred prior to Jolly's occupation.

Although trade articles were found with both natural flesh and bundle reburials from the substructure mound, Unit 37, all such burials were interred subsequent to the mound's construction.

Unassociated trade articles from this mound were confined to the few inches of present humus which had accumulated above the final building level.

Thus, it is a legitimate conclusion to state that the construction of the mound was completed prior to trade contacts of the early 18th century.

Further corroboration of this conclusion may be obtained from the fact that there were also eight prehistoric Dallas burials that had been interred prior to the construction of the mound. We have classified these as prehistoric, since there were no trade articles with them, and seven of them were accompanied by typical Dallas artifacts. It is only reasonable to suppose that if trade contacts had existed, trade articles would have been present.

Four of these burials were in pits which cut through Level A, the last building level; the other four had been interred in the side slope of Phase A.

We cannot assume, however, that the Dallas community ceased to exist prior to trade contacts. There were seven natural flesh burials, one of

which was in the substructure mound, that were accompanied by trade goods. We have no evidence to indicate that these were other than Dallas burials, except for the fact that four were in extended positions, in contrast to the typical Dallas position which was partly flexed. On the other hand, Dallas burials do occasionally lie in a fully extended position. Only three of the natural flesh burials were in a flexed position, but the fact that there were any at all weakens the theory that all of the burials having trade goods were later than the Dallas community. We conclude, therefore, that the Dallas community persisted until the early 18th century. It further seems likely that Indians from other areas had joined the late community because the custom of bundle reburial is so completely alien to the Dallas culture as we know it in eastern Tennessee. These reburials must have been approximately contemporaneous with the natural flesh burials having trade goods; this is based on the similarity of the accompanying articles of trade.

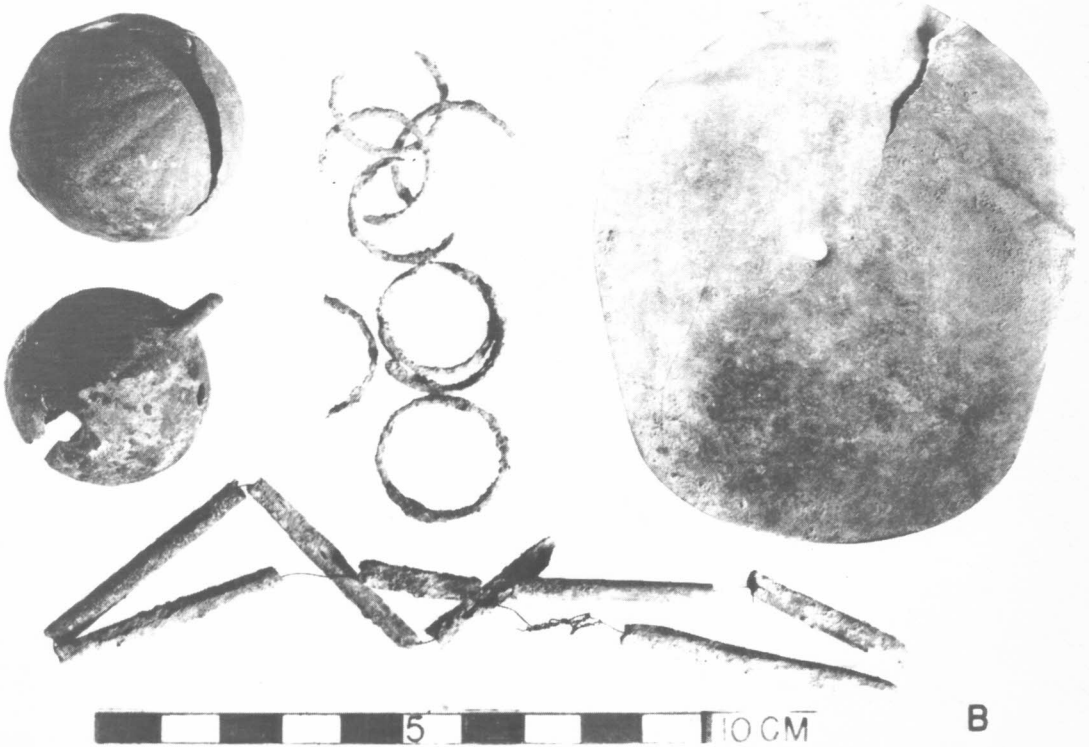
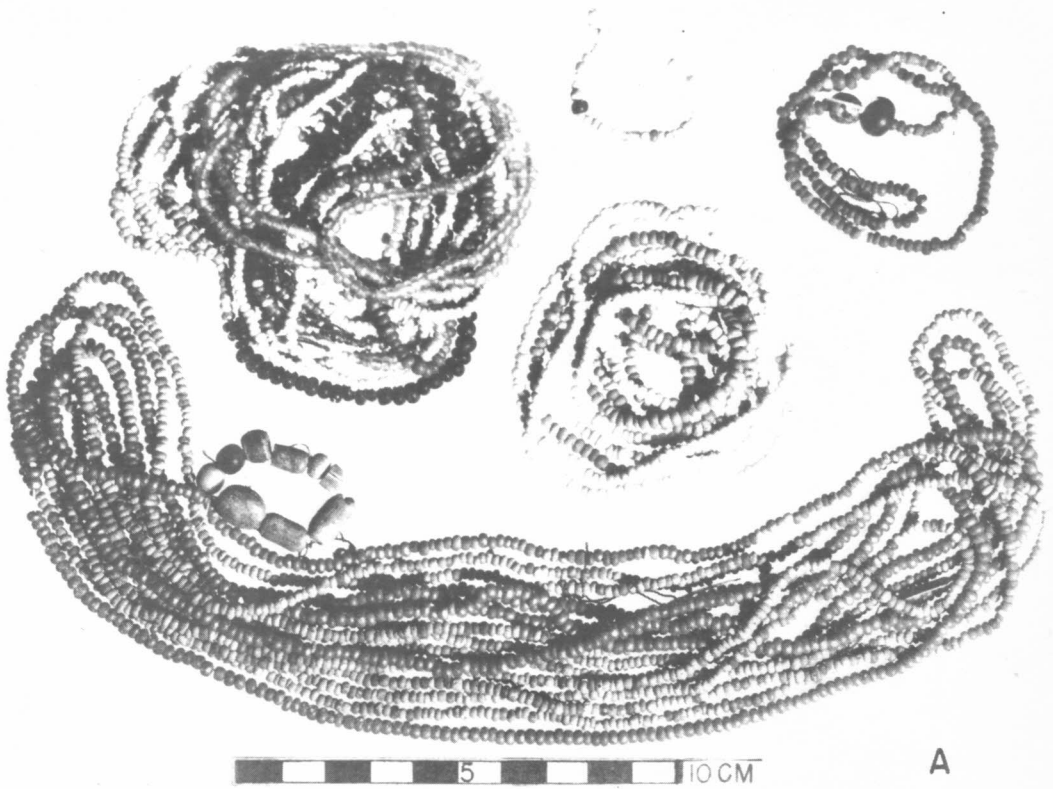
The various types of European objects are shown in Plates 85-88. Among the beads the most numerous are the so-called "seed beads" which occur in blue, green, white, red, yellow and black, with opaque, translucent and iridescent variations in most of the colors. The most frequent shade is blue, a type sometimes called the "Jamestown" bead.

There are several variations in the larger spheroid beads. These occur in several shades of blue, terra cotta red, iridescent black, white and white inlaid with colored stripes. The red beads in this group are sometimes referred to as "Hudson's Bay" beads or "Cornaline de Alleppo."

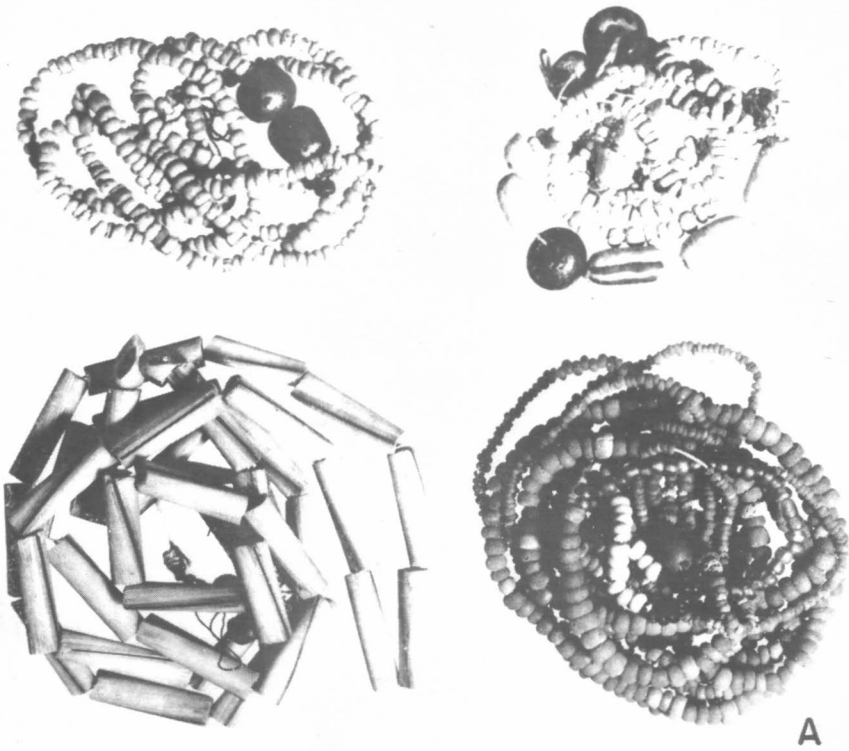
Elliptical beads are relatively rare and occur in blue, white and white inlaid with colored stripes. There is one string of tubular inlaid beads.

A very popular item of the early trade period was the brass bell, variously designated as "Morris," "Hawk" or "Turkey" bell. Five of the six examples found on the island are shown in Plates 86B, 87B and 88A. All except one were made of pressed sheet brass. The other is a heavy, cast bell marked with the letters "WG" at one side of the slot; this is shown in Plate 87B.

Sheet brass ornaments were apparently made from brass kettles, the gauge of the metal in most of these objects being comparable to that contained in the large portion of a kettle found at the site of Chote on the Little Tennessee River. The commonest objects were conical jinglers as illustrated

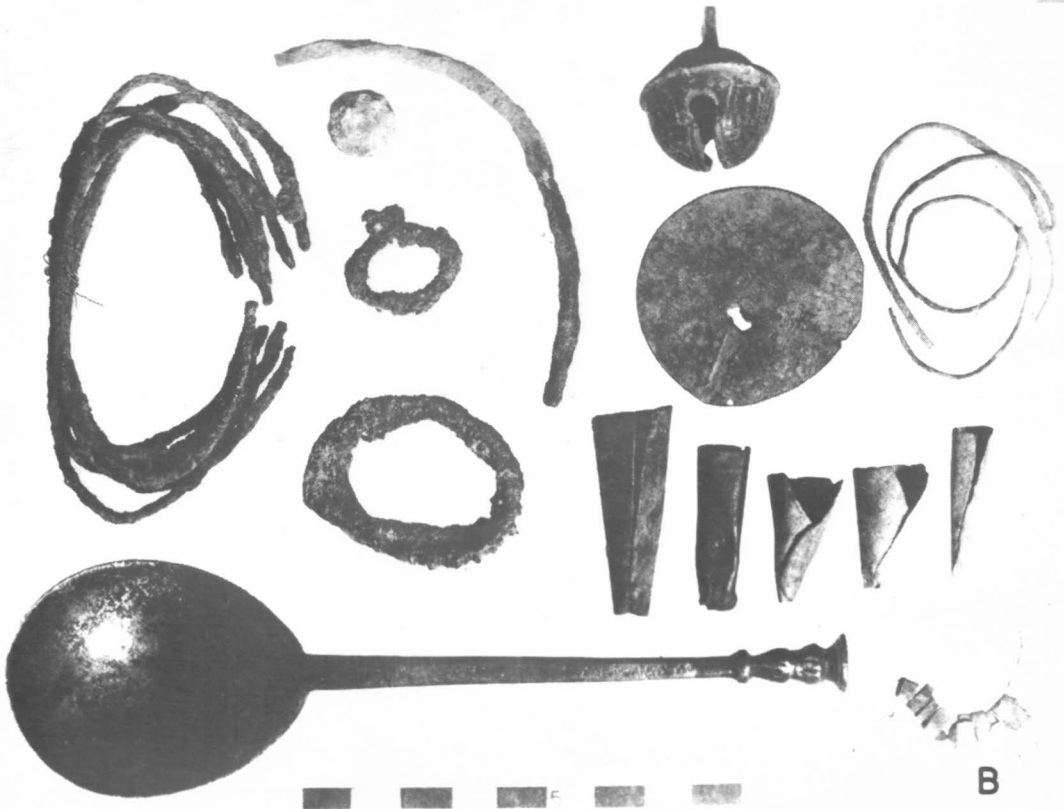


A. trade beads with partly flexed burials. B. European metal objects with partly flexed burials



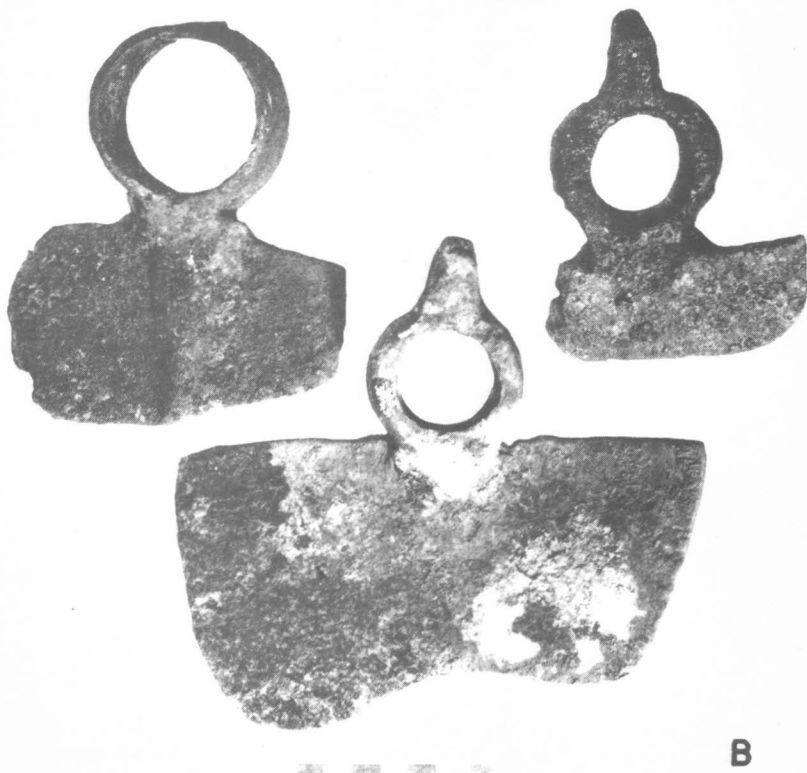
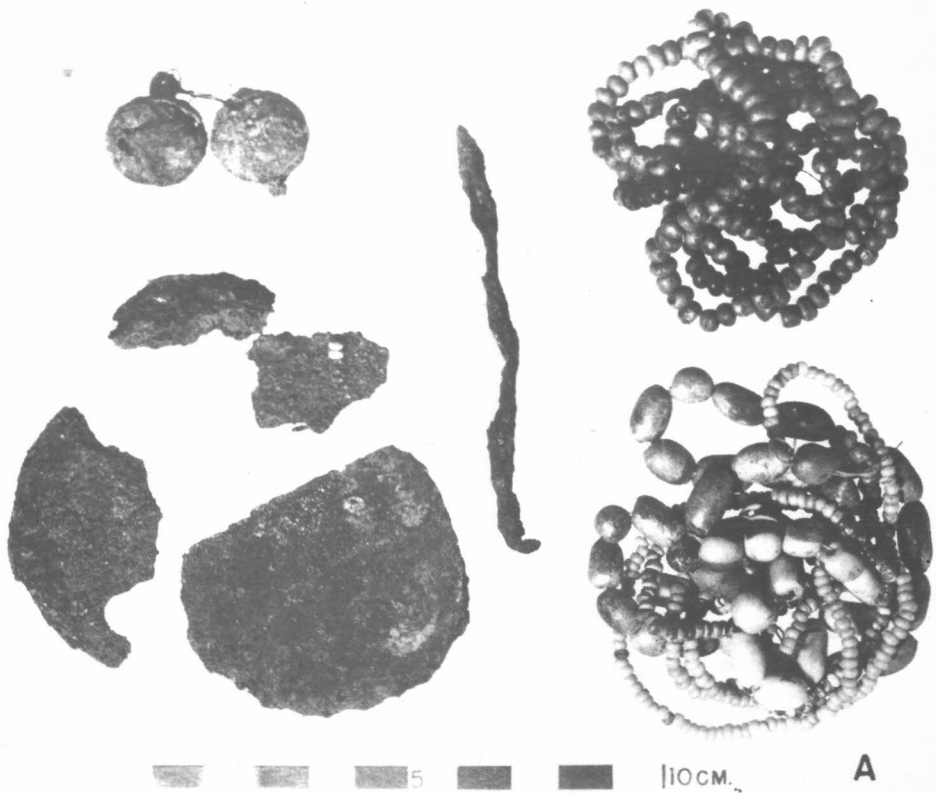
A

5 10CM



B

A. trade beads with bundle burials. B. European metal objects with bundle burials.



A, European trade beads and metal objects with extended burials. B, iron hoes