

TRADE GOODS FROM THE TRIGG SITE, RADFORD, VIRGINIA

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The Trigg Site (44 My 3) was located on the right (south) bank of the New River in the City of Radford, Virginia (Figure 1). New River originates in North Carolina, flows north across southwestern Virginia and northwestward through West Virginia, joining the Ohio River at Point Pleasant. The site is on the flood plain, 150 feet from the river, and has suffered some damage from recurring floods. Complete excavation of the site took place during the fall of 1974 and spring of 1975. The site has now been destroyed by a construction project.

The site proved to be that of an oval, palisaded village, measuring 260 feet by 290 feet, and containing about 2.7 acres. Within the palisade, circular house sites, hearths, storage pits, and many human burials were found. Of the 308 burials, 42 (13.7%) contained copper or glass artifacts of European origin. Glass beads of 19 types totalling 348 individual beads were recovered, mostly as grave goods, with a few from refuse-filled storage pits.

Most of the glass beads were found in the neck regions of the burials, usually in alignments indicating that they had been strung as necklaces. Many of the strands were made up of a mixture of a few glass beads interspersed with beads made of marine shells, or with copper beads or pendants. In one instance, four large beads were with an adult male, two beads at each ear, apparently used as ear-bobs. One group found in the abdominal area of a child had probably adorned a pouch, sash, or apron. Another child had five beads near the right wrist, perhaps representing a bracelet or sleeve decoration.

Bead preservation was generally good, although many show a coating of corrosion products. The beads have been classified according to the Canadian classification established by Kidd and Kidd (1970). The following table lists the types, the number of each type found, and a brief description of each type.

Table 1: A List of the Bead Types Found (after Kidd and Kidd 1970)

CLASS II

NO.	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	SHAPE	SIZE	FIGURE
17	IIB56	Blue with 3 white stripes	Round	8 mm.	5
2	IIB57	Opaque blue with 4 white stripes	Round	9 mm.	5
40	IIA10	Opaque light gray	Oval	7 mm.	3
30	IIA13	White opaque	Round	5 mm.	
1	IIA14	White opaque	Round	5 mm.	2
8	IIA15	White opaque	Oval	7 mm.	
1	IIA23	Clear mint green	Round	9 mm.	

FIGURE 2.

Beads from Burial #23

Left to right:

star chevron IVK4;

white opaque IIA14;

opaque dark shadow

blue with flat

side and groove

IIA48;

4 seed beads with

6 red stripes

IVB13.

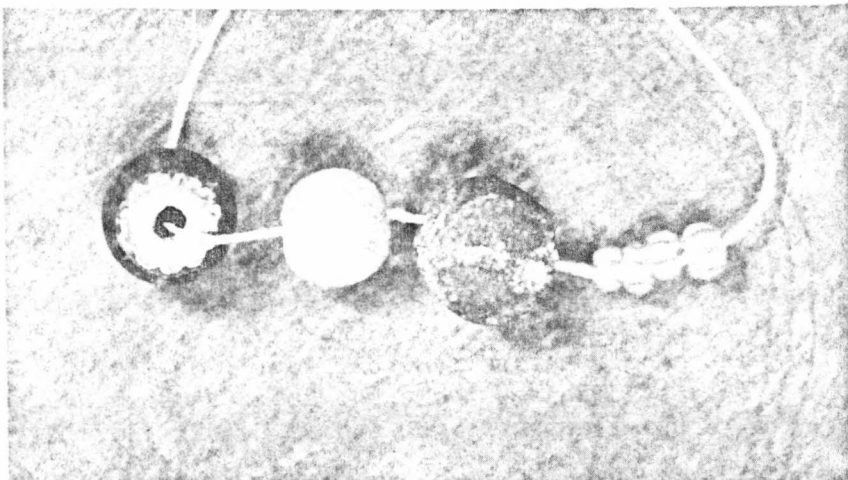


FIGURE 3.

Beads from Burial #238

Large blue bead is

type IIA44.

Others are opaque

light gray type

IIA10. There were

40 of the latter

type found in

this burial.

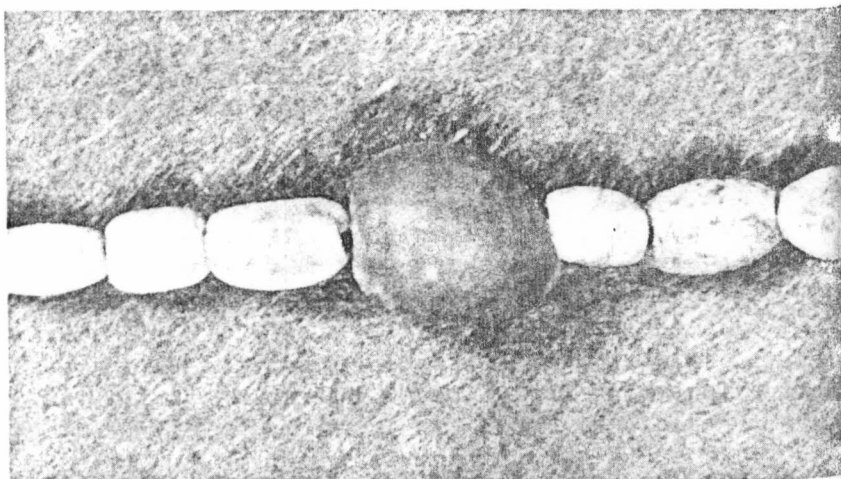


FIGURE 4.

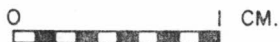
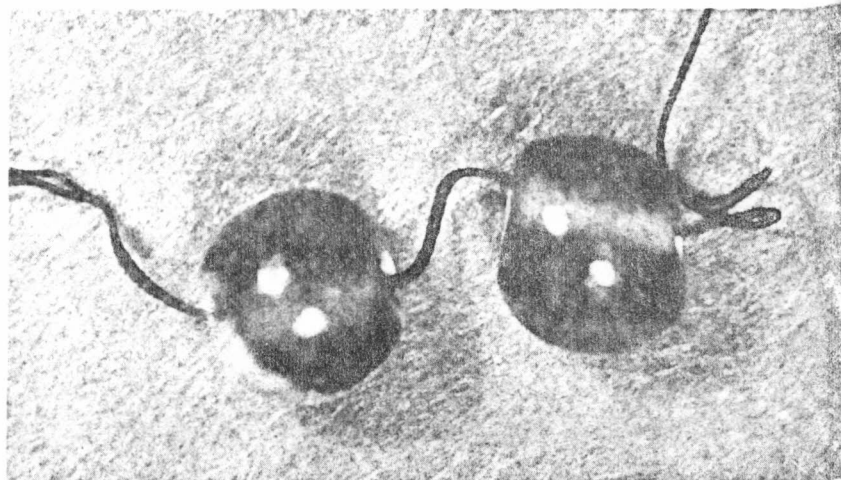
Beads from Burial #227

are type IIA33. The

reflection of the

lights caused the

dots on the beads.



NO.	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	SHAPE	SIZE	FIGURE
2	IIA33	Clear light aqua blue	Round	7 mm.	4
1	IIA39	Clear aqua blue	Round	5 mm.	
1	IIA40	Opaque robin's egg blue	Round	4 mm.	
1	IIA43	Clear bright blue	Round	6 mm.	
4	IIA44	Clear cerulean blue	Round	7 mm.	
2	IIA46	Clear purple blue	Round	6 mm.	
1	IIA48	Opaque dark shadow blue	Flattened on one side with groove	7 mm.	2

CLASS IV

1	IC10	3 layers-opaque navy blue,			
	(Variant)	opaque white, opaque navy blue	Round	13.3 mm.	6
228	IVA11	3 layers-clear light gray,			
		opaque white, clear light gray	Circular	1.5 mm.	
				2 mm.	
2	IVA12	3 layers-clear light gray opaque	Circular	2 mm.	
		light blue, clear light gray			
4	IVB13	2 layers-clear light gray, opaque	Circular	2 mm.	2
		white, 6 red stripes			
2	IVK4	Clear bright navy, white opaque	Star	6 mm.	2,5
		red opaque, white opaque, glass	chevron	8 mm.	
		4 layers			

In an effort to define the distribution of the various types and to arrive at a date for the Trigg Site, a thorough search was made of the relevant literature for Virginia and other states of the mid-Atlantic area. Many of the Trigg Site beads seem thus far to be quite rare in Virginia. The following paragraphs summarize the data found in our search.

Bead Type IIA13, an opaque white, oval bead was found in the fort area of Flowerdew Hundred, on James River, just west of Jamestown. The fort dates from the period 1618-1630.

Type IIA33 a light aqua blue, spherical bead was also found at the Flowerdew Hundred fort and at the Littleton house site on Kingsmill Plantation near Williamsburg. This was the home of the Pettus family in the fourth quarter of the 17th century.

Type IVB13 is a two layered "seed" bead, with a light gray center and an outside opaque white layer, with six dull stripes. About 15,000 of this type were found at the Mt. Airy Site in Richmond County, Virginia, where several ossuaries were exposed in gravel diggings. These finds are dated (McCary 1950) to before 1650 and attributed to the historic Rappahannock Indians.

Type IVK4 is a star chevron bead with four layers. The center is opaque white, covered by an opaque red layer, then by another opaque white layer, and finally by an outer layer of bright navy blue. McCary reports this type from the Mt. Airy Site. Identical beads were found in Maryland in an ossuary



FIGURE 5. (above)

Beads from burial #18
are of three types:
center bead is a
star chevron IVK4;
those on either side
type IIB57; the
remaining beads
are IIB56.

FIGURE 6. (right)

Bead from burial #39
is type IV10
(variant).

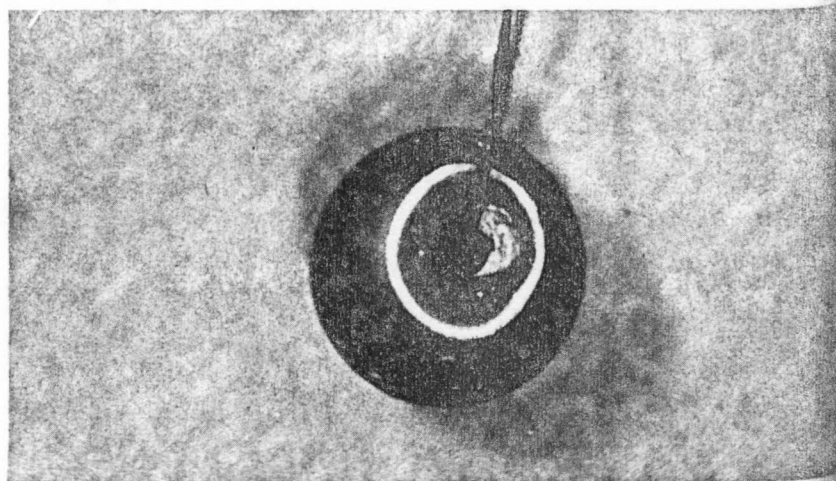
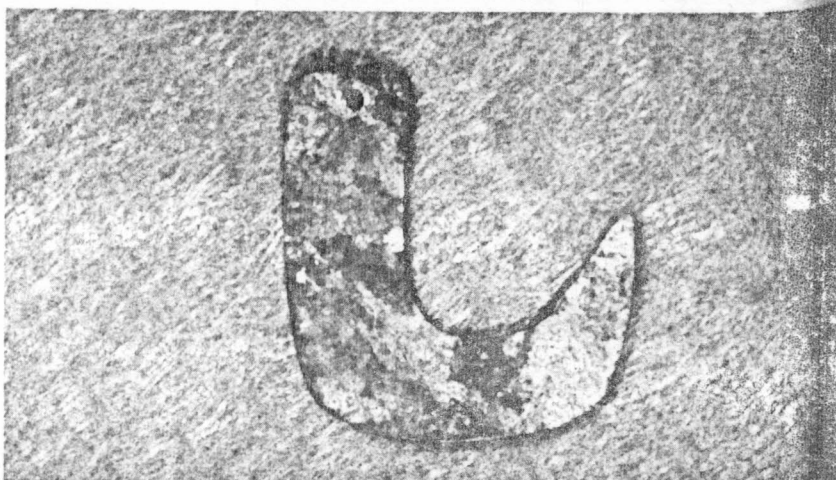


FIGURE 7. (right)

Effigy claw of sheet
copper found with
burial #247.



0 1 CM.

on Piscataway Creek (Ferguson and Stewart 1940) along with specimens of bead Type IIB56, an opaque robin's egg blue with three opaque white stripes. This ossuary was dated to around 1680. Star chevron beads (Type IVK4) were found in quantity at several sites at Washington Borough, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. The Ibaugh Site (Witthoft, Kinsey and Holzinger 1959; Kinsey 1960) yielded this as a minor bead type. The Ibaugh Site has been dated to 1600 to 1625. The Schultz-Blue Rock Site, dated to 1575-1595 (Heisey and Witmer 1962) yielded a higher percentage of this type. In New York state, several sites yielded this bead type. Among these are the Kleis Site, dated by White (1967) to about 1625-1640; and the Dutch Hollow Site, dated by Ritchie (1954) to about 1590-1615. In the Seneca sequence discussed by Wray and Schoff (1953) the star chevron bead type was placed at around 1590-1616.

Type IVA10 (variant) is a rather large bead with an opaque white layer sandwiched between an inner and outer layer of opaque navy blue. Only one of this type was found at the Trigg Site. A somewhat lighter colored bead of the same size is reported from the Goodnow Mound in Florida (Griffin and Smith 1948), and is dated to the 17th century.

The copper trade items are mainly tubular beads made from rolled thin sheets (Figure 8). Found mostly in graves these items seem to have been used in necklaces, as ear-bobs, pendants, and as hair ornaments. Some were found on the same strings with shell or glass beads. The tubular beads range in length from 4.9 mm. to 83.5 mm., with an average of 29.0 mm. Widths ranged from 2.1 mm. to 11.7 mm., with the average at 4.1 mm. Some of the rolled beads are quite small (2.8 by 2.4 mm.) and may be classed as "seed" beads.

Four thin, machine-rolled discs with central perforations were recovered (Figure 8). One was a small, flat disc, 12.9 mm. in diameter. Two others were slightly cone-shaped, with diameters of 15.9 mm. and 16.7 mm. The fourth was of special interest - a large, slightly oval disc, 131.4 mm. by 124.4 mm., with a central perforation 17 mm. in diameter (Figure 9). This latter disc was found on the rib cage of an adult male, buried in an extended position. That this was a high-status burial is demonstrated by the copper and the other objects interred with him. The other grave goods included many marginella beads, 40 tubular copper beads, and a large busycon shell trumpet.

Three triangle pendants of copper found had tiny perforations at the smaller end. The pendants were from 36.5 mm. to 38.0 mm. long and from 12.5 mm. to 15.6 mm. wide. One narrow, leaf-shaped strip of copper occurred in a storage pit. This object was 54.8 mm. long and only 5.8 mm. wide, with slightly pointed ends. The use or purpose of this item is unknown.

The back half of a large hawk bell, made from a copper alloy was found in a child's grave, at the top of the head, as if it had been worn in the hair. The bell back has a rivetted loop for attachment instead of the usual cast eye. The diameter of the open end of the bell is 27.2 mm., and two moldmarks or incised lines encircle the open end. This specimen is similar to one found at the West Ferry Site in Rhode Island (Simmons 1970:82).

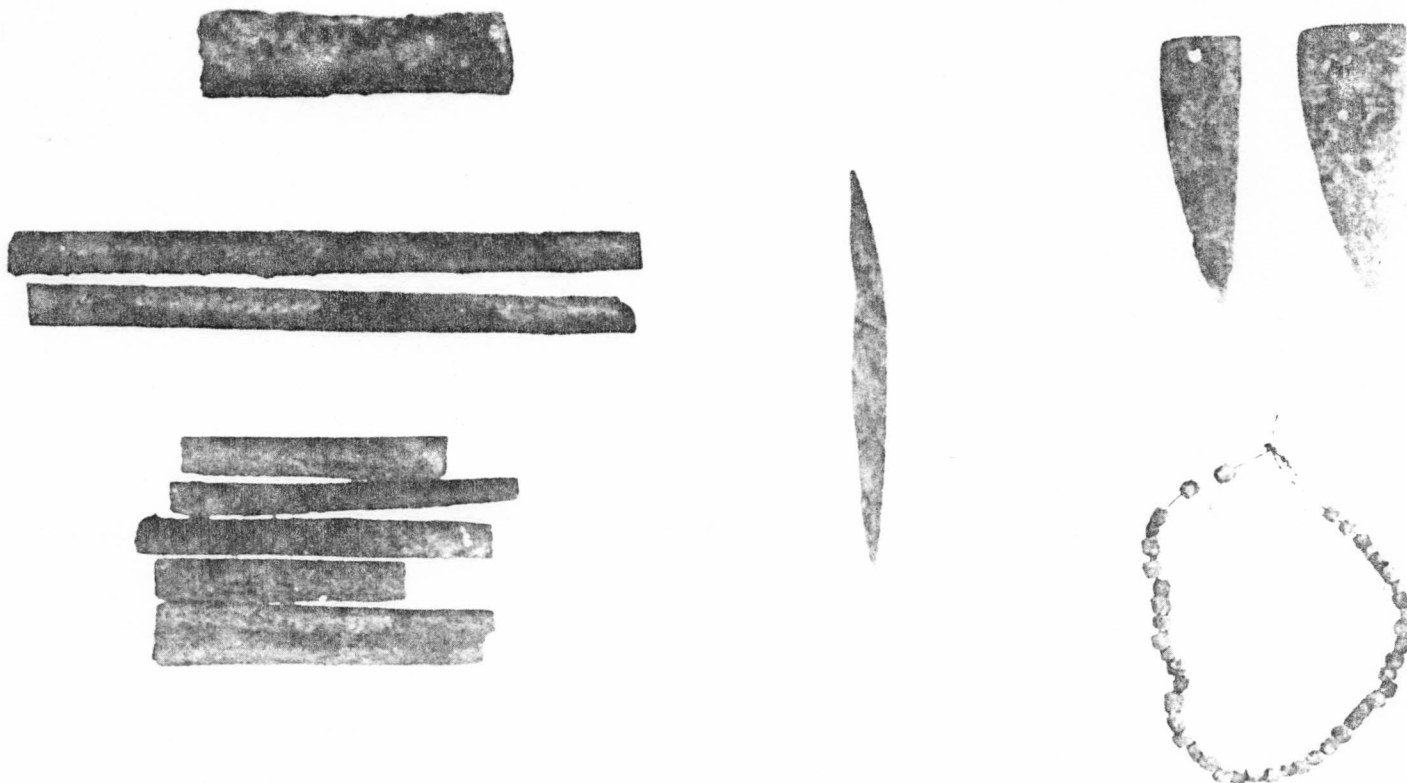
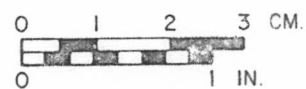


FIGURE 8. Copper Artifacts

Left, rolled beads.
Center, copper leaf (?).
Right, pendants, and
small "seed" beads.



FIGURE 9. Copper disc
from
Burial #194.



One small effigy claw of sheet copper was found. It has a small hole in one end (Figure 7). It resembles similar effigy claws from the Trigg Site made from ground slate and also some made from cannel coal found on numerous Fort Ancient sites in West Virginia and along the Ohio River.

Numerous copper cones or tinklers were found. These vary in size from 18.8 mm. to 45.0 mm. in length. These were made by wrapping a rectangular sheet of copper around itself to form a cone.

CONCLUSIONS

Judging from the number of trade beads and other artifacts found, an extensive trade in copper and glass was taking place during part of the time the Trigg Site was occupied. The numerous finds of marine shell beads and ornaments at the Trigg Site and at many other sites nearby demonstrate that an extensive trade network extended from the coast to the interior and was well established, even in prehistoric times. As the coastal Indians received copper, glass and iron objects from the early settlers, they began immediately to include these in the trade moving inland from the coast. Iron objects, while valuable to the Indians, were also heavy and usually of a utilitarian nature. On the other hand, the copper and glass items were relatively light, and being ornamental, they would be compatible with the shell beads and ornaments already being traded. It seems logical that the iron objects would remain near the source, while the ornamental objects would move quickly into the hinterland. The trade items would thus have reached the Trigg Site through indirect trade and not through direct contact with Europeans. Since only about 14% of the graves at the Trigg Site had European trade items, we postulate that these items arrived in the area only during the last 3-5 years of the site's occupancy.

While the beads do not pinpoint the date of the site, our comparisons with similar sites in other areas support a 17th century dating. The relative scarcity of trade items, the complete lack of iron and larger copper objects, and the absence of tubular glass beads known to be of late 17th century date, lead us to believe that the site was occupied during the first quarter of the 17th century, probably contemporary with the settling of Jamestown in 1607. Jamestown would have been a convenient source of such items and since there were pre-existing trade networks linking the areas, arrival of European trade items at the Trigg Site probably occurred within ten years after Jamestown was settled. Until the complex of beads found at the Trigg Site can be more specifically dated, it appears that this generalization is the best estimate we can make.

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