

QUARTERLY BULLETIN  
ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY of VIRGINIA

THE RAPPAHANNOCK INDIANS

by

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with the Indians in any other place. The Indians had to come unarmed.

A description of one of these marts would be most interesting and informative, but unfortunately none has come to light.

In 1680 the Assembly passed an act providing free and open trade for all persons at all times and places with our friendly Indians. This policy was to prevail in the future.

In 1691 the General Assembly passed an act repealing all former laws restraining trade with the Indians and provided that henceforth "there be a free and open trade for all persons at all times and at all places with all Indians whatsoever. This act was re-enacted in the revision in 1705 and again in the edition of 1733.

#### A Burial Site, Richmond County, Virginia

In January 1947 some workmen uncovered human bones on the old Mount Airy estate in Richmond County in a rather extensive gravel pit on the southwest side of route 204 where it intersects with route 621, approximately three quarters of a mile from Cat Point Creek (formerly called Rappahannock Creek).

The home of the manager of the estate stands several hundred yards north of the gravel pit. Near the house rises a large spring which undoubtedly supplied an Indian site because pieces of pottery, arrowheads and other artifacts have been found in the adjoining cultivated fields.

As previously stated Colonel Moore Fauntleroy settled at Naylor's Hole about 1650 and purchased in 1651 a large tract of land from the Rappahannock Indians. This land tract extended no doubt on both sides of Rappahannock Creek. Naylor's Hole is on the right side of the creek and there is a land patent in 1663 which refers to Fauntleroy's land on the left side of the creek as well as to several other plantations on that side. It is also recorded in the early land records at the courthouse in Tappahannock that Fauntleroy (the son of Moore Fauntleroy) sold to William Tayloe 2400 acres of land lying along the south side of Rappahannock Creek. Whereas the boundaries of these early patents are indefinite this would seem to be a part of the tract of land which has remained in the hands of the Tayloe family down to the present time, and on which the Indian burial site is located. We also know that after 1653 the Rappahannock Indians were concentrated on the northeast branch of Totuskey Creek. Therefore it appears that the Indians would not have used this burial site after 1650, or certainly not many years after.

The gravel pit was visited on at least ten occasions by several members of the Archeological

Society of Virginia. Very little excavation could be done because that part of the gravel pit where the burials were found was about sixteen feet deep and within fifteen feet of the highway. The workmen who were obtaining sand from the gravel pit had disturbed the burials and had left many of them exposed along the wall or face of the pit. Occasional rains had also played a part. Many human bones already bleached by the sun had fallen from the face of the pit and lay scattered below. The bones in situ were from three to four feet below the top of the gravel pit and formed lines of blackened earth from six to eight inches wide. It was comparatively easy to remove the soft sand from above the bones and observe them in their original position and remove them.

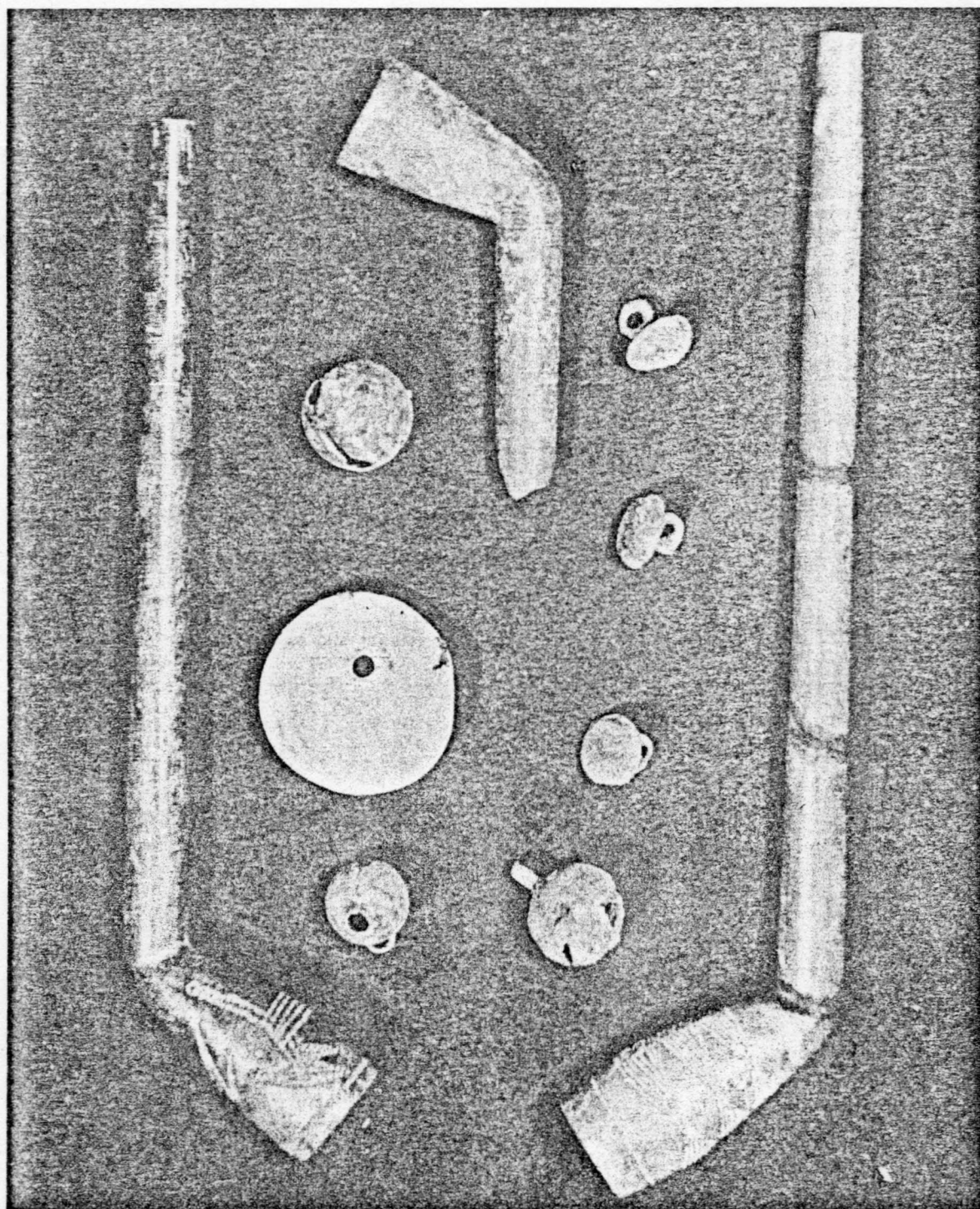
It was impossible to tell how many burials had been disturbed by the workmen. In our conversation they spoke of observing at least ten skulls. But it is very probable that they hauled away at least three or four times that number. During our own investigation we picked up from the floor and from the face of the gravel pit parts of approximately thirty skeletons.

The line of dark earth containing the burials was not continuous. There were three sections of this line separated by ten or twelve feet of sterile soil which would seem to indicate three separate ossuaries. In only one case could we approximate the shape and size of the ossuary. At one point where the floor of the gravel pit was only about four feet deep, several burials which had not been greatly disturbed and the dark earth remaining suggested an ossuary with sloping sides and at least ten feet wide.

As well as we could determine the bones were disarticulated before burial. Two burials, somewhat apart from the others, had more related bones in position than the other burials. But for the most part the bones were greatly intermingled as if they had been bundled in on top of each other.

A few pieces of bark were recovered which had been preserved by their proximity to copper implements placed among the bones. This might suggest that the bones were wrapped in bark for burial. It bears out the statement of Captain John Smith that "for the ordinary burials the corpse was lapped in skins and mats with their jewels." (20)

The state of preservation of the bones varied. Those found at the northwest side of the ossuary or ossuaries were rather badly decomposed, whereas those closer to the southeast side were better preserved. A difference in drainage conditions might have existed in past years. Some of the skulls had been crushed and flattened by the pressure of the earth. Very few pelvic bone parts were found. Practically all the bones of the children had disappeared. We were able to recover only a few complete or undisturbed burials.





*Read opposite page first →*  
Both deer are going in the same direction or counter clockwise to the smoker. The teeth in the roulette which formed the design for this pipe were almost twice as wide apart as those of the roulette used in pipe No. 1.

#### Pipe No. 3.

Stem (top side) 46 mm. (broken).

Bowl (facing smoker) 27 mm. long.

Bowl (at rim) 20 mm. in diameter.

The bowl of this pipe expands gradually and the widest part is at the rim. There is no bulging above the center of the bowl as in pipe No. 1 and in pipe No. 2. Stem (at broken point) 10 mm. in diameter. Stem opening (at broken point) 4 mm. in diameter.

The finish of this pipe and the paste is comparable to the other two. The color is brown with small black spots on the outside of the bowl and at the base of the stem. At the point where the stem is broken two thirds of the thickness of the stem is blackened, i.e., from the inside toward the outside, by use. The inside of the bowl appears to still retain a small amount of "cake." The design on the bowl consists of two rouletted parallel lines running around the bowl near the rim with chevrons below. The implement used to make the design contained fine but irregular teeth.

It might be of interest to call attention to the fact that these pipes resemble the pipe shown in De Bry's engraving in Thomas Hariot's "A Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia." Some authorities believe that this type served as a model for the early English pipes.

Several potsherds were found on the floor of the gravel pit just below the burials, but very likely they were intrusive because potsherds have been picked up occasionally on the field above the site. The potsherds recovered in the gravel pit are so small that no decorations on the surface can be determined. One very small rimsherd, 9 mm. thick, presents a plain and straight rim. All the sherds are reddish grey in color and are tempered with a soft variety of crushed stone.

Another object recovered which was not in association with the ossuaries was a deer antler of medium size. It was found in the soil about fourteen inches directly above some burials.

European Trade Goods. Trade goods form an interesting and important part of the material found at the burial site. Outstanding in this group are the glass beads. The most numerous is the small seed bead. The colors include red, blue, black, purple and white. Among the seed beads there is one variety of special interest. Communications with several large museums indicate that this type is relatively rare. This bead varies from 2 to 3 mm. in diameter. It has a core of translucent glass covered with an opaque white paste exterior on which are six longitudinal red

lines equally spaced around the perimeter. Over 15,000 of these beads were recovered.

Mr. Arthur Woodward, curator of the Los Angeles County Museum, who is recognized as one of the best informed students of trade goods, kindly examined specimens of this variety of seed beads and wrote that "beads of this particular manufacture, i.e. opaque paste exterior with translucent glass interior, ornamented with opaque lines of varying colors, constitute a type of bead for the seventeenth century not carried over into later periods." (22)

The remaining beads of the seed bead type, about 400 in number, are monochrome and translucent with the exception of the black beads. The dominant color is blue.

There are approximately 15 tubular beads of dark blue glass. They vary from 2 to 2.5 mm. in diameter and from 4 to 8 mm. in length. These are thought to have come from the north to Virginia and were perhaps made in imitation of the real shell wampum.

There is another type of monochrome bead, dark blue in color, which is slightly larger than the seed bead. They number about 450 and range slightly over or under 5 mm. Mr. B. E. Steele of Williamsburg, Virginia, has several beads of this type which he found on Jamestown Island some years ago.

Thirteen "Star" or "Chevron" beads were found lying under the skull in one burial. They vary from 6 to 9 mm. in length and all are approximately 7 mm. in diameter. None of these beads has been ground down or faceted. Orchard pictures these beads and gives a good description of their manufacture in his "Beads and Beadwork of the American Indians," 1929, pp. 83-85.

Many of the beads have acquired considerable iridescence and a few have disintegrated to some extent and present very rough surfaces.

Approximately thirty brass or copper hawk bells were found. (We have to approximate the quantity of some of the grave goods because it was learned from conversation with the workmen at the gravel pit that they had recovered a few objects, especially bells, rings and bracelets.) The bells are of three sizes, 14, 17, and 19 mm. in diameter respectively. All have two holes at the bottom connected by a narrow slit. Brass or copper bells were evidently a very popular item of trade because they are mentioned rather frequently in early trade literature.

At least ten or twelve brass or copper buttons were recovered. They are 12 mm. in diameter and have a ring on the back for suspension. A flower-like design is formed on the face by indented lines.

(22). Personal communication, January 16, 1950.

The burials were accompanied by grave goods. Only in a few cases could the burial goods be definitely associated with the skeletal remains of a particular individual. There was one outstanding exception. This burial slightly apart from the others might have been that of a rather important personage because lying scattered on top of the bundle of bones were nine copper rings, a cluster of iron and copper bracelets, a round metal case containing two looking-glasses, two beautiful clay pipes, over eight thousand tiny discoidal shell beads and approximately one hundred seed beads of black and of blue glass.

One burial was accompanied by a large amount of ochre some of which, about the size of marbles, was recovered. The ochre was so abundant that the soil around the burial was completely red.

A very small amount of charred bone fragments - not enough to make a handful - was present among the burials. There was nothing to indicate that any attempt at cremation had been made at the time of the burials. Therefore, it seems that these burnt fragments had been prepared elsewhere and that they may have served as a token cremation or a burial ceremony.

#### Cultural Material

The grave goods can be placed in two categories, (1) articles made by the Indians, and (2) European trade objects. Among the articles made by the Indians are twenty-odd thousand shell beads of several types the majority of which are very small disc beads. These range in diameter from 2 to 4 mm. and from 1 to 2 mm. thick. The perforations average about 1 mm. Quantities of them were found thickly scattered among the bones of some of the burials which would seem to indicate that they had been used extensively as bead work on some articles of clothing placed in the burials. A number of these beads were found in situ in long rows separated occasionally by larger shell beads of different types showing an effort to obtain a certain decorative effect. The "Virginia Purse" which is now preserved in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, England, is decorated with beads of this type. Roanoke, which is a general term, is sometimes used to refer to this type of shell bead, or shell money in the eyes of the Indians.

There are at least seven hundred tubular beads which vary in size from 3 to 7 mm. in length and from 2 to 6 mm. in diameter. The holes for the smallest beads of this type average 1 mm. in diameter, and for the largest 3 mm. in diameter. In some cases the perforations are perfectly round and uniform and in others they taper toward the center. Many of these could perhaps be classified as the wampum type but on an average they are slightly larger than the standard wampum. According to Woodward genuine wampum must conform to the following measurements, that is, "1/8 to 3/16 in. in diameter and 1/8 to 7/16 in. in length." (21)

Approximately seventy-five of the shell beads are more spherical in shape than cylindrical. They range from 6 to 10 mm. in diameter. Perforations are 2 mm. in diameter and perfectly round and true.

Three well preserved shell gorgets or ornaments were taken from the burials. One is 33 mm. in diameter and has a small hole off center for suspension. The entire outer surface is covered with finely drawn intersecting lines and the inner surface is smooth and polished. The other two were found in the same burial and associated with the upper part of the femur of an adult. They are approximately the same size as the one mentioned above and are embellished with evenly spaced dot decorations.

Three beautifully made clay pipes were recovered, two of which, i.e., the complete pipes, were associated with the same burial. They are obtuse-angle pipes and are fine examples of the Virginia Algonquian pipe maker's art. Holmes pictures pipes of this type in his "Aboriginal Pottery of the Eastern United States," Twentieth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, 1898-99, p.158. Speck pictures some examples in his "Powhatan Tribes of Virginia," 1928, pp. 420-23.

The description and dimensions of the pipes are as follows:

##### Pipe No. 1.

Stem (top side) 162 mm. long.  
Bowl (facing smoker) 41 mm. long.  
Bowl (at rim) 17 mm. in diameter.  
Bowl (at bulge) 21 mm. in diameter.  
Stem (smoking end) 7 mm. in diameter.  
Stem opening 5 mm. in diameter.

The finish of this pipe is smooth and polished. The paste is very fine and well baked. The color is greyish brown. The inside and outside of the bowl are slightly blackened by use. A very neat rectilinear design formed by rouletted lines and small punctations embellishes most of the bowl.

##### Pipe No. 2.

Stem (top side) 140 mm. long.  
Bowl (facing smoker) 40 mm. long.  
Bowl (at rim) 18 mm. in diameter.  
Bowl (at bulge) 20 mm. in diameter.  
Stem (smoking end) 7 mm. in diameter.  
Stem opening 5 mm. in diameter.

The finish of this pipe and the paste is comparable to pipe No. 1. It is black and brown in color but black predominates and provides evidence of much smoking. Two deer are beautifully outlined on the bowl by rouletted lines. One deer is on the front of the bowl (facing smoker) and the other is on the back.

(21). Cadzow, Donald A., "Archeological Studies of the Susquehannock Indians of Pennsylvania," 1936, Vol. 3, p. 130.

Approximately eight bracelets of brass or copper and six bracelets of iron wire were taken from the burials. Two of the copper or brass bracelets are decorated with irregularly spaced notches along the edges. Most of the bracelets were found in a cluster associated with one burial.

Rings of copper or brass were fairly numerous. About eighteen or twenty came from the burial site. In the burial mentioned above with which the cluster of bracelets was associated, nine rings were also found, most of which were placed along the femur. The ends of only two of the rings are united by solder. These are heavier and thicker than the others and have a diameter (interior) of 20 mm. The action of copper salts of one of the rings has preserved a twisted piece of cord of two strands.

One of the most interesting objects recovered is a round iron case which measures 37 mm. in diameter, i.e. across the top, and 13 mm. in thickness. It is divided into two equal parts and formerly opened on a hinge to which was attached a ring for suspension. Each part or section contains a glass mirror. The metal part is badly corroded. Glass mirrors are also mentioned frequently enough in the early records to indicate that they were important trade objects.

Among other trade objects recovered were an elaborate brass pin ornament, one bob or pendent object made of very fine spiralled copper wire, one iron nail and several small unidentified objects.

## Conclusions

The burial site belongs to the period between 1608 and circa 1650. European trade objects indicate the first date and land patents tend to fix the latter date. One type of bead recovered constitutes a type bead for the 17th. century.

Trade goods were fairly plentiful and are representative of the articles of trade used in the 17th. century. Smith mentions several times the importance of copper, beads, bells "and such like trash" in dealing and in trading with the Indians. (23) Lederer wrote in 1672 that "you must carry...small looking-glasses, pictures, beads and bracelets of glass, knives, sizars, and all manner of gaudy toys and knack for children." (24)

All the burials were apparently disarticulated. Only a small quantity of burnt bone fragments was found. Burials were frequently superimposed. Ochre was found with one burial.

European trade objects and Indian made objects were associated with the burials. Both kinds were found in sufficient quantity, especially the disc beads or shell money, to indicate that the Rappahannock Indians were not considered poor by the other Indians.

The pipes recovered represent a type characteristic of the Tidewater region and might indicate that the Rappahannock Indians were skilful pipe makers.

(23). Smith, Capt. John, Arber ed., pp. 6, 65, 153, 361.

(24). Lederer, John, "The Discoveries of John Lederer," etc., London, 1672, reprinted for George P. Humphrey, Rochester, N. Y., 1902, p. 29.