

THE  
NEW ENGLAND  
INDIANS

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The  
Globe  
Pequot  
press

Chester, Connecticut

1978

amount for purple. (When strung, cylindrical wampum averaged five to the inch, or three hundred and sixty for six feet or a fathom.)

**GLASS BEADS** ~ The bulk of the glass trade beads were turned out at the island of Murano as Venetian glass and the Amsterdam glassworks. It was all imported during the Historic period. There is no archaeological evidence that the Jamestown glassworks produced any sort of bead.

A brief word about their manufacture. A thick pear-shaped bubble was first blown from molten glass. If any colored stripes were to be added, strings of varicolored glass were fused to the surface of the bubble. This hot hollow glob was then pulled out to a long thin tube with a center hole. When cool, beads of various sizes could be filed and broken free. Since most required smooth, rounded edges, the beads were tumbled in a hot iron drum filled with fine sand and ashes or clay. This mixture not only prevented the beads from fusing together, but also smoothed off any sharp edges by abrasion. After cooling and washing, they were ready for the American trade.

**CLASSIFICATION** of glass beads is an ongoing task. The Indian Glass Bead Repository at the Fort Stanwix Museum, Rome, New York is presently spearheading the investigation. Peter Pratt, Archaeologist of the museum, has written an excellent comparison guide. His time sequence, along with a few New England discoveries, have been generalized in the following sampler. As local examples are added to the Repository's lists, the reader should have more precise information.

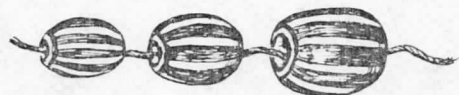
1570 ~ 1625 ~



OVAL ~  $\frac{1}{8}$  TH INCH IN DIAMETER AND  $\frac{3}{8}$  THS OR LESS IN LENGTH. MOSTLY WHITE PORCELAIN-LIKE, WITH FEWER BLACK AND SOME STRIPED. SOME HAD FLATTENED ENDS.



OVAL ~ MONOCHROMIC OR MULTISTRIPED.



OVAL ~ MULTISTRIPED OF MANY LARGER SIZES.

1625 ~ 1660 ~ IN ADDITION TO THE ABOVE, SOME LONG TUBULAR BEADS WERE INTRODUCED.



TUBULAR ~ AN EARLY GLASS IMITATIONS OF SHELL WAMPUM.



TUBULAR ~ MONOCHROMIC RED OR BLUE.

1660 ~ 1677 ~



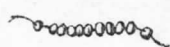
OVAL ~ FLATTENED ENDS. MONOCHROMIC IN WHITE, BLACK, GREEN OR RED.



TUBULAR - MANY MORE WERE INTRODUCED DURING THIS PERIOD, AVERAGING  $\frac{1}{16}$  TH TO  $\frac{3}{16}$  THS INCH IN DIAMETER AND  $\frac{1}{2}$  INCH IN LENGTH. MONOCHROMIC WHITE AND BLACK TO IMITATE WAMPUM, SOME WITH RED AND WHITE STRIPES. OCCASIONALLY ALL RED OR YELLOW.



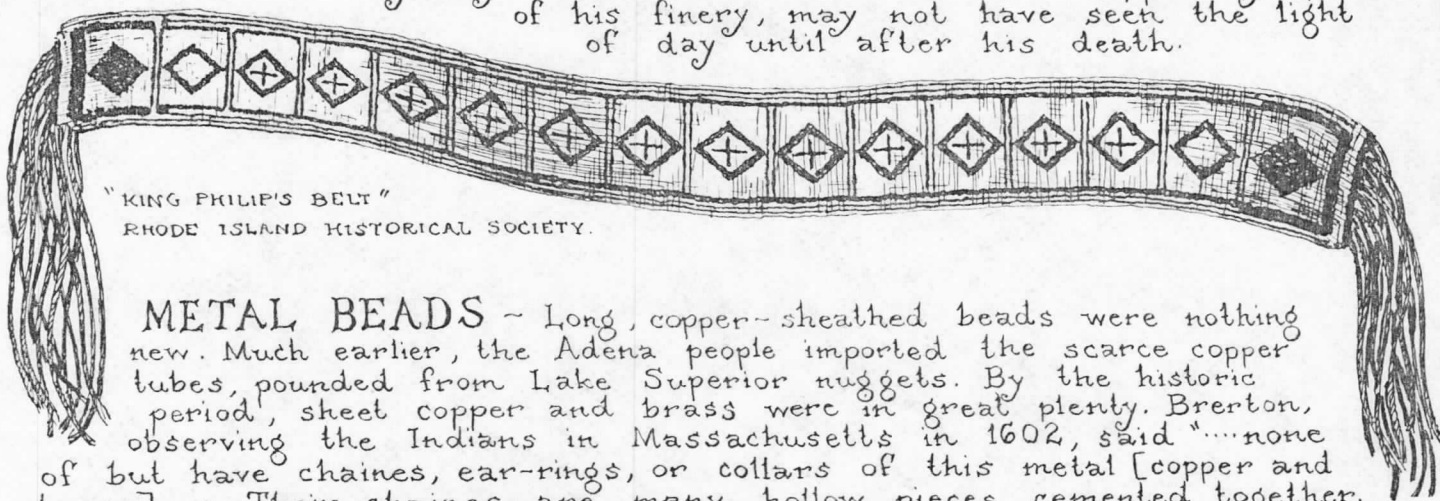
TUBULAR ~ LIKE SMALLER TUBULARS.



OVALS ~ SMALL WITH FLATTENED ENDS. PREDOMINATELY WHITE OR BLUE. KNOWN AS SEED OR EMBROIDERY BEADS.

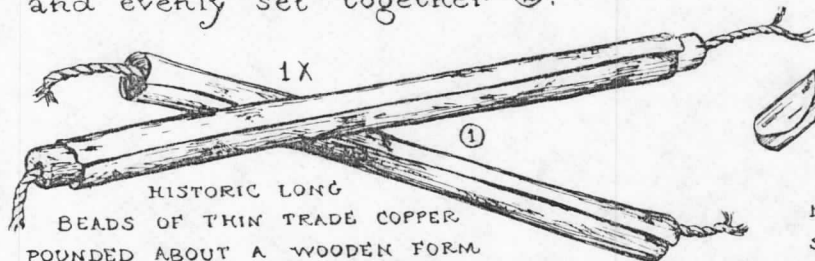
The earliest oval trade beads with flattened ends were gradually reduced in size until the tiny seed beads flooded the market. Perhaps the larger varieties added too much weight when sewn to clothing. They came too late for most of the Algonquin people. King Philip's War was past history by 1676 - the year that the rebellious Wampanoag sachem was killed. Leaderless, most of the New England tribesmen still surviving had fled to Canada and New York state.

The conclusion is obvious. Any article of New England clothing with these small beads may well be an imposter. Some of our local collections may have relics masquerading as New Englanders, when actually they were a product of western Indian beadwork so popular in the nineteenth century. King Philip's "royalties" presents yet another mystery. This fine seed bead belt, supposedly part of his finery, may not have seen the light of day until after his death.

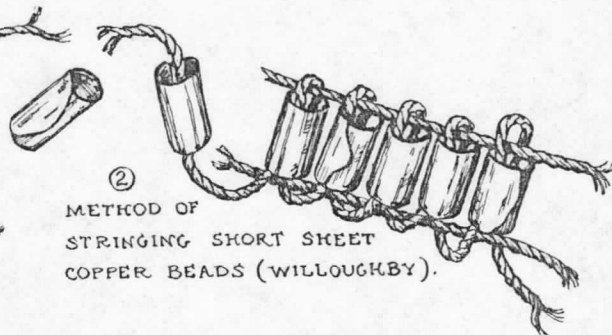


"KING PHILIP'S BELT"  
RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

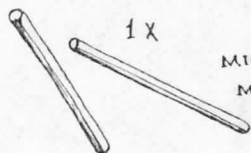
**METAL BEADS** ~ Long, copper-sheathed beads were nothing new. Much earlier, the Adena people imported the scarce copper tubes, pounded from Lake Superior nuggets. By the historic period, sheet copper and brass were in great plenty. Brerton, observing the Indians in Massachusetts in 1602, said "...none of but have chaines, ear-rings, or collars of this metal [copper and brass].... Their chaines are many hollow pieces cemented together, each piece of the bigness of one of our reeds, a finger in length, ten or twelve of them together on a string, which they wear about their necks ①: their collars they wear about their bodies like bandeliers a handful broad, all hollow pieces, like the other, but somewhat shorter, four hundred pieces in a collar, very fine and evenly set together ②."



HISTORIC LONG  
BEADS OF THIN TRADE COPPER  
POUNDED ABOUT A WOODEN FORM  
THAT WAS THEN REMOVED, OR LEFT ABOUT AN  
ELDER WOOD BASE WITH ITS PITH REMOVED.



②  
METHOD OF  
STRINGING SHORT SHEET  
COPPER BEADS (WILLOUGHBY).



MINIATURE CYLINDRICAL  
METAL BEADS, PERHAPS  
FORME AROUND A  
WIRE.

A copper necklace, given to Massasoit by the Pilgrims, was to be used by any of the messengers sent by the sachem to the Plymouth Colony.