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THE CRAB ORCHARD SITE
TAZEWELL COUNTY, VIRGINIA

Based on
A Report Prepared for the
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Cover: Photograph of painting by Ellen Byrne, Lowry, Virginia

Table XV
Pottery Summary by Surface Treatment - Steatite Temper
Midden and Unstratified Materials

Catalog No.	Cord Marked		Plain		Net Impressed		Complicated Stamped		Incised		Total Sherds
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
285	4	40.0	1	10.0	2	20.0	2	20.0	1	10.0	10

EUROPEAN ITEMS

Objects of glass, iron, glazed earthenware, and similar debris observed in the topsoil could be attributed to the 200-plus years of cultivation and the custom of spreading waste on fields. A few such objects were seen in the soil over the village, but none was found in buried context. West of site Tz 1 on the western end of the central ridge (site Tz 19), a frontier cabin had stood, and European-American goods were more plentiful. These included nails, window glass and other domestic debris, all dating early in the 19th century, too late to have derived from the Fort Witten settlement of the 1770's. For the palisaded village area itself, no structural or industrial waste found could be linked with early settlers, and especially not with Fort Witten.

With the possible exception of the copper beads found with Burial 68, which may or may not be of European copper, the only objects which might relate to possible European trade with the aboriginal occupants of the village were two glass beads picked up from the piled-up topsoil. The two beads are described and dated as follows:

1. A spherical glass bead found by Wayne Crouse of Dry Fork (Tazewell County) is pale blue, with a symmetric pattern of ten white stripes radiating from one end to the other. The bead is $\frac{1}{4}$ " in diameter and length. It is similar to a type assigned the number 11b70 by Kidd (1970), but somewhat smaller. It is apparently the same as a bead illustrated by Fenstermaker (1974). He illustrates it as his number 83 from the Keller Site, which he dates to the period 1550-1575. If this attribution is valid, then the bead could date from the occupation of the Crab Orchard Site village, or any time after.

2. A second glass bead found by Jeff Lewis of Tazewell is a flattened globular bead, $\frac{1}{4}$ " long, and $\frac{5}{16}$ " in diameter. Its exterior is pale blue covering an opaque white glass metal. It seems identical to Kidd's (1970) Type

IVa18. Since no date is given for this bead, its attribution is open to question.

Since no glass beads or other definitely-European trade goods were found in graves or other buried deposits in the area dug, it would not be sound to assume that the beads were on the site only because of the prehistoric Indian occupation. The beads could equally well have been lost by a passing Indian later in the 17th or 18th centuries, or they could have been lost by a member of the Fort Witten settlement, which included women and children. For comparison, glass beads and rolled sheet copper occurred in some quantity (43 out of 309 graves, for a total of 14%) at the Trigg Site at Radford (MacCord, 1975; Buchanan, n.d. B). The cultural debris from the Trigg Site has many parallels with that from the Crab Orchard Site and possibly represents the same tribal group, a generation or so later.

While the likelihood for finding European trade goods in the Crab Orchard Site is fair, it can be safely asserted that they will be scarce. If the radiocarbon date of 1570 is approximately correct, there would at that early date have been very little European trade goods available to the coastal Indians to forward into the hinterland. The Trigg Site terminal date seems to have been around 1620 AD, at which time many forms of easily-portable ornamental objects would have passed along the extant trade-paths from the coast. Because of the possibility of finding small amounts of such goods at the Crab Orchard Site, future researchers there should be especially watchful for such evidence.

DATING THE SITE

While the village site can be placed geographically in the heart of the Appalachian Mountains, and culturally in the Late Woodland Period with such similar cultures as Fort Ancient, its temporal position, both in terms of relative dating and of absolute (calendrical) dating needs to be defined or estimated.

The absence of European trade goods in buried, undisturbed contexts is good evidence that the site was not occupied after 1600 AD. Because of this the site seems to be somewhat earlier than the Trigg Site at Radford, which otherwise shows near-identity in cultural remains. Its mixed ceramic component also differentiates the site from the Brown Johnson Site in Bland County, where the pottery was 100% of the limestone tempered variety, some of which was entirely leached out by soil acids. This site was dated to about 1505 AD. Similarly, the Sullins Site near Abingdon yielded 100% limestone tempered pottery, and this palisaded village site was dated to 1425 AD. The Crab Orchard Site probably postdates both of these two sites, because of the admixture of varying pottery tempering traditions. This should bracket the site between roughly AD 1500 and 1600. The same mix of pottery types, engrafted on the basic culture of circular houses, circular palisade, and east-oriented flexed burials in individual graves outside of houses, should manifest itself in other sites in the region, and this situation is found.