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N. G. Seaman

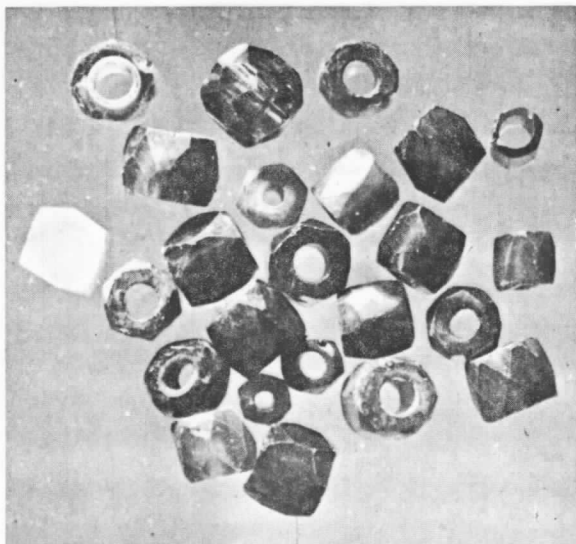
INDIAN RELICS
OF THE
PACIFIC NORTHWEST,



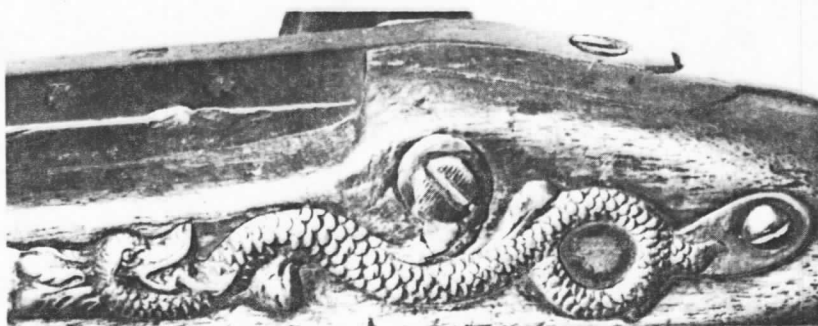
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Faceted beads . . . These generally range from a quarter-inch to three-quarters inch. Many of the larger ones are a rich, dark blue and have been found on Russian sites in Alaska—hence they are often referred to as Russian beads.



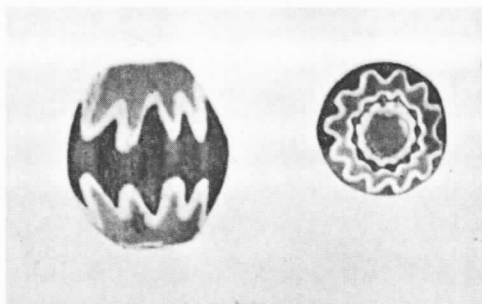
Serpent sideplate on a Northwest gun. The Indians would not buy this gun without the serpent.

Trade Beads

A large part of the so-called Indian or trade beads were of the small size and no different from those found in present-day stores. We do find, however, many kinds of larger beads from a half inch to an inch in length. Some of these are perhaps no longer made. The finest among them are the ones called Venetian or Inlaid Venetian; they are rare and beautiful.

The beads most interesting, historically, are the Oriental or Chinese; the minute you see one of these, you immediately know it by its color and shape. They were brought to the Northwest by the early ships trading off the coast. These traders, whether from our east coast or from Europe, went first to China, where their cargo was sold. In China, they purchased what seemed suitable for the Indian trade, including, naturally, beads which were the one principal article used. After getting what furs they could from the Indians, they went back to China, disposed of their pelts, and took on a load of tea, silk, and other items for their home country. If they were fortunate, this changing cargo made the voyage highly profitable.

Evidence indicates that the beads were made in Italy and shipped to China, the source of supply for the trading ships. The Russian beads are so-called because the Russians also bought and used them for trade. They have been found all along the Northwest Coast, but they occur most frequently on old village sites in Alaska.



Chevron beads similar to this were made of polychrome glass arranged in layers. The outer layer was either blue or green and the ends—usually red and white—formed a star pattern of about twelve points.



Polychrome beads like these date back to about 1800. Many have been found on gravesites at Upper and Lower Memaloose islands. The inlaid type were made by hand and no two were exactly alike.