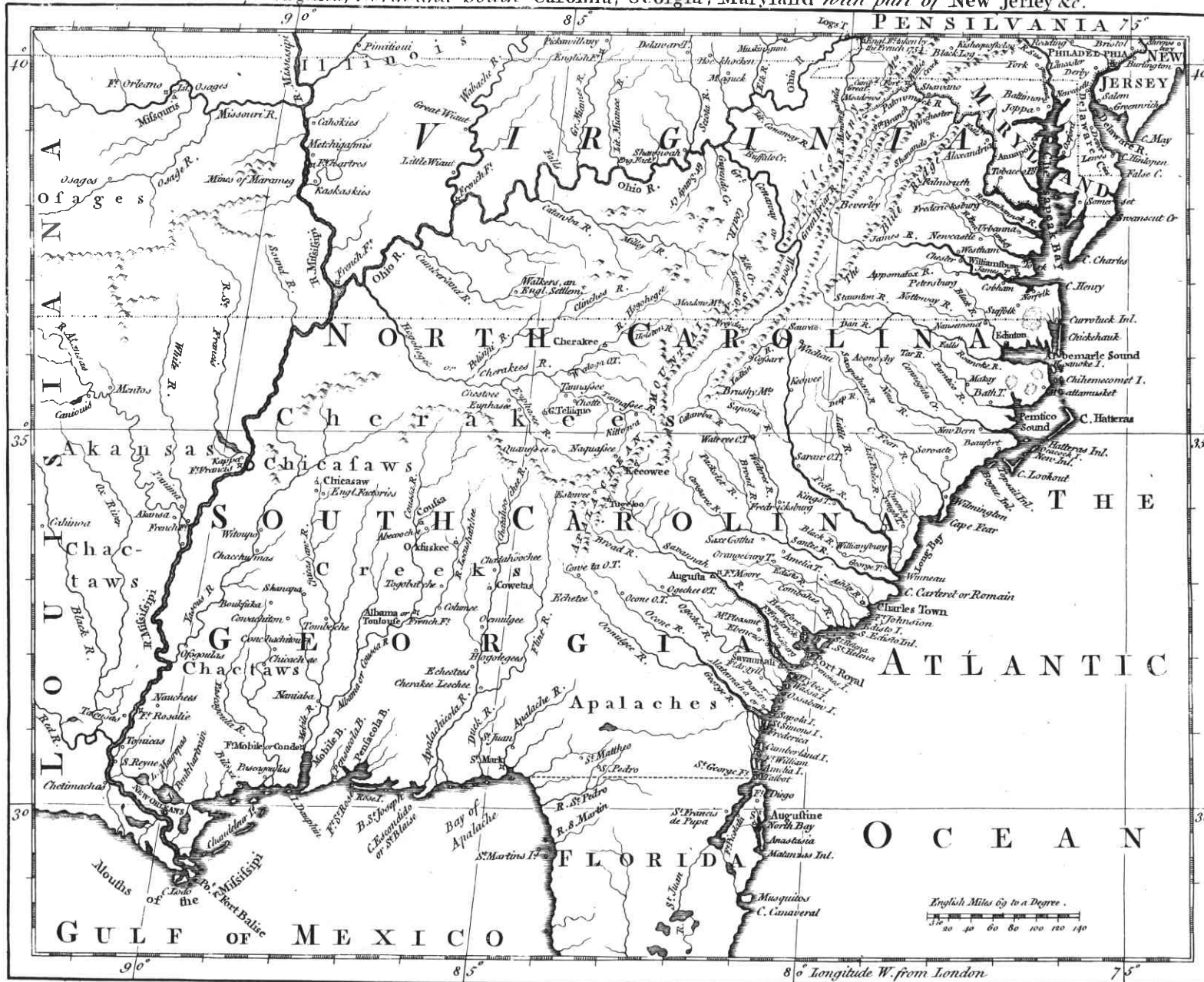


A MAP of Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Maryland with part of New Jersey &c.



Printed for R. Baldwin in Water Nooter Row 1755.

Figure 1: Southeastern North America in the middle third of the Eighteenth Century. During this period, the western extent of the English colonies was largely wishful thinking, as the French controlled the interior west of the Apalaches until 1763. Map by R. Baldwin, 1755.

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18th Century English Trade Guns in the South, or The Carolina Gun, It's Time and Place in History

Lee Burke

These guns were gorgeous! Long barreled and slender, they were light to the heft, came easily to the shoulder, and followed the imaginary target smoothly. Gold colored brass adorned and protected the stock, with a little engraving here and there, but most importantly, the long looping serpent lay along the side of the gun, striking forward against all enemies. A young man's heart would surge with yearning for such a gun; the old warrior might not suppress a little smile of satisfaction as he took one in his hands and ran his fingers over the smooth metal of the yellow serpent.

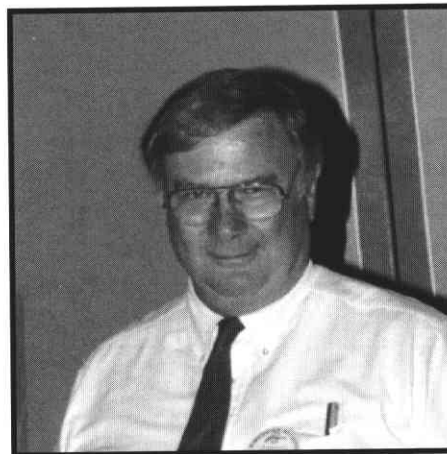
Fanciful as this scene may be, something like it occurred many times, as English traders unpacked their merchandise in Indian towns from Georgia to Texas during the 1700s. These traders, operating originally out of Charles Town, in the Carolina colony¹, brought with them a supermarket of English-made goods carefully selected to satisfy the needs and wants of their customers. There was fine cloth, thread, ribbons, prints and calicos, labor saving devices such as copper kettles, steel knives and axes, needles, awls, and buttons, and guns – especially guns!

These were *trade guns*, that is, guns manufactured specifically for the Indian trade, according to standards calculated to satisfy the wishes and requirements of the intended Indian consumers. Our imagined English traders were most likely offering “Carolina” guns, an old name for guns made for the Carolina market, but that's getting ahead of the story.

Guns were of great importance to the Indians for reasons both economical and political. Guns improved the efficiency of gathering deer hides, a valuable commodity in the business world of the times and therefore a major source of income for southern Indians. Guns were also vital in maintaining any balance of power with neighboring tribes, so having a gun gave *status* to the warrior, a valuable consideration in any society.

HISTORICAL SETTING

During the first two-thirds of the 18th Century, Spain, France, and England were maneuvering to control that part of the south which lies east of the Mississippi River (Figure 1). The Spanish at St. Augustine claimed Florida; France controlled the Mississippi valley, with their southern headquarters at Mobile, while the English at Charles Town dominated the Atlantic coast north of Florida. West



of the Mississippi, in San Antonio, Spanish officials were irritated by French encroachments into east Texas, but there would be no power struggle here until the last third of the century.

Occupying the warm, wooded interior were the Indians², playing constantly shifting roles; allies or enemies, partners or exploiters, but always eager consumers of the new merchandise available from the European traders. Like most people, the Indian was quick to accept better and easier ways to do things. Guns replaced bow and arrow, steel knives replaced chipped flint, copper kettles replaced clay pots, and cloth replaced smoked buckskin (which dries *stiff* after it gets wet!). The Indian willingly adopted a strong dependence on trade goods, which made life so much more comfortable, but he would not be able to avoid subjugation when his economic and political power eventually dwindled away.

English colonists arriving at Charles Town landing in 1670 were encroaching on old Spanish claims, but this was of little concern to them; their reliance was placed on possession, not on treaty. By the turn of the century, the entrepreneurs among them had opened trade with the Cherokees in the mountains to the west, rounded the southern end of the mountains to the Creeks, and had taken over that trade from the Spanish almost without opposition. Others penetrated on westward to the Chickasaws, establishing trading connections deep within French-claimed territory. A substantial part of the trade from the entire south soon flowed through Charles Town, and Charles Town would remain the primary hub of commerce, shipping and wealth for all the south country during the 18th Century.

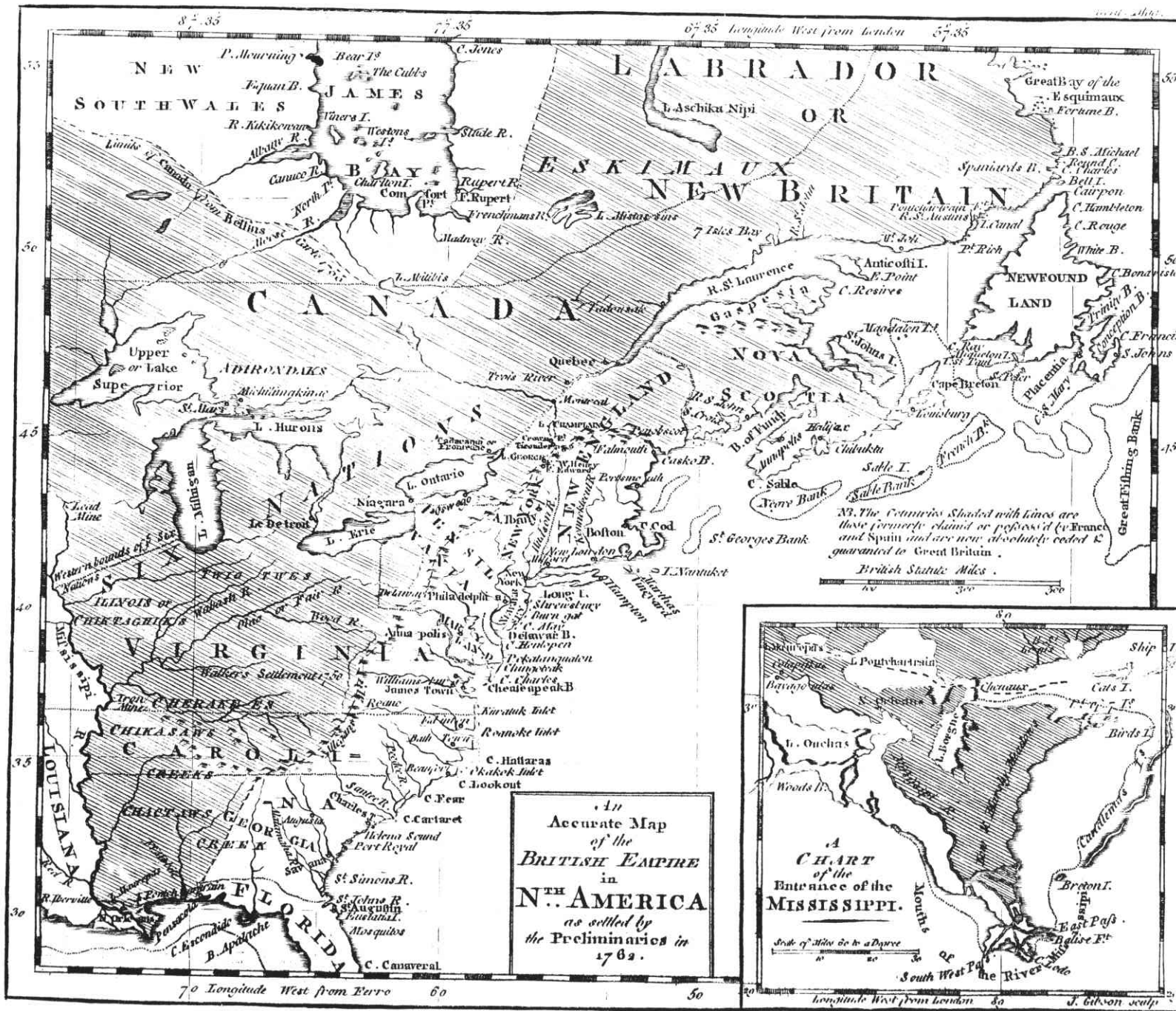


Figure 2: English domain was greatly expanded with the departure of France at the conclusion of the French and Indian War. Spain, siding with France, lost Havana to the English fleet, and ceded Florida to get it back. Florida remained a Loyalist colony until 1783. Map from *Gentlemen's Magazine*, 1762.

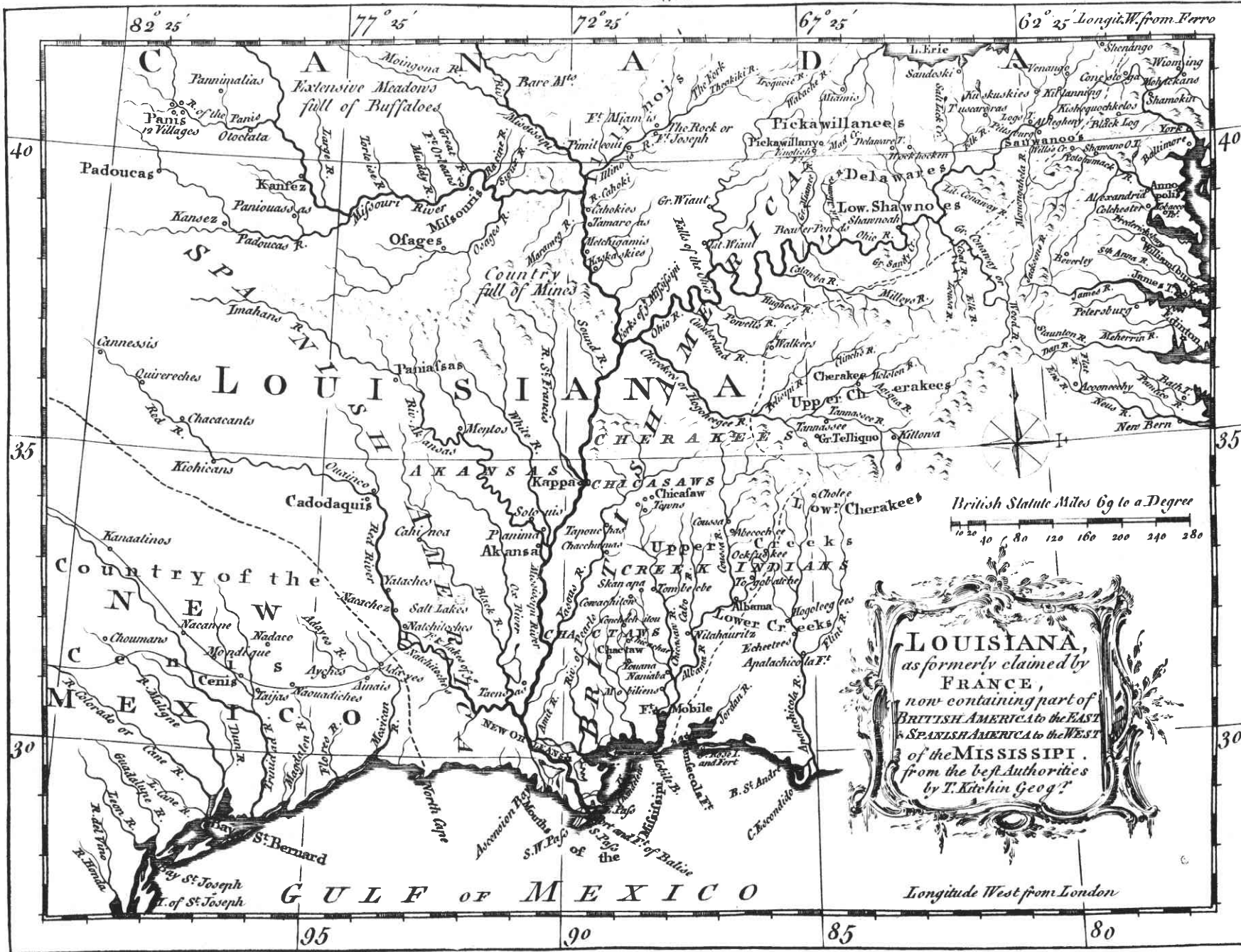


Figure 3: The new southern frontier, 1763. The Mississippi River was no barrier to enterprising English traders. Within a few years English goods and guns were in the hands of tribes living far up the rivers flowing in from the west. Map from London Magazine, 1765.

At the end of the French and Indian War, concluded by the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1763, the French presence in North America was officially ended. All former French territory east of the Mississippi River (Figure 2) was transferred to the English crown. Spain was to take over French claims to the west. By the stroke of a pen, the new southern frontier involved only the English and the Spanish, with the Mississippi River as their common boundary (Figure 3). The river would be no barrier at all to enterprising traders, so it would be only a few years before English goods and English guns were in the hands of tribes living far up the rivers flowing into the Mississippi from the west.

Two factors tilted the competitive scales to favor the Carolina traders: first, the English system permitted free enterprise; second, their merchandise was of reasonable quality and fairly priced. English guns were well made, considering that in the Indian's work-a-day world, a gun was a consumable, utilitarian tool, not something that was going to last a long time³. English woven goods (cloth, blankets, all kinds of fabrics – the main stay of the Indian trade) were not only of excellent quality but could be supplied in colors and styles to exactly satisfy the tastes of the Indian consumers. Thus motivated by a healthy dose of self interest, and with a good line of merchandise, the Carolina traders pushed westward, spearheading a campaign which would eventually Anglicize the continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific⁴.

Tangible traces of this campaign still exist in the ground around old campfires, fort sites, blacksmith shops and Indian villages. These traces are the bits and pieces of guns, kettles, knives, and other trade goods which, when recovered in a way that permits comprehensive interpretation, enable us to reconstruct much that is not available in the written record.

CAROLINA GUNS

English guns made for the southern Indian trade may appropriately be called "Carolina guns", as this name was used in British Rules of Proof, and in at least one instance in colonial documents in America.

In the records of wills and estate inventories for York County, Virginia, covering the period from 1732 to 1740, there is an inventory of the contents of a store run by one Thomas Hancock. Included among the shooting supplies were "40 Carolina guns", valued at 22 pounds 10 shillings for the lot (Gill, 1974, p.14). It is apparent that at least one of the appraisers, possibly having had some experience in the English gun trade, was familiar with the term "Carolina gun", and used it to describe a stand of arms which would have otherwise been called simply "trading guns". There can be no doubt that these guns

were trading guns, considering the large number in stock and their low value, which calculates out to 11 shillings 4 pence each. (In my very preliminary investigations of the colonial records of the Carolinas, trade guns were the only firearms stocked in any numbers by merchants.)

The British Gun Barrel Proof Act of 1855 still included "Carolina" guns in the small arms category: "Class 3: Single-barreled birding and fowling pieces of every description for firing shot and those known by the names of Danish, Dutch, Carolina, and Spanish" (Engelhardt, 1954, p. 161). Engelhardt learned from the Proof Master of the Birmingham Proof House that these guns had been named for their intended destination. Hanson's inquiries (1955, p. 2) have extended the use of "Carolina" in British proof rules back to 1815. More work is needed on this subject, both in the British records, and in American colonial documents.

It is now possible to recognize and identify a Carolina gun with considerable certainty, sometimes from only a few, very small fragments. This has become feasible only recently, and has been accomplished by interpreting information derived from the work of historians, archaeologists, and collectors⁵. Archaeologists recover gun material representative of the arms present at a given place and time; historians explain the origins and intentions of the people present at that place and time, from which we may infer the origin, style, and quality of their arms; collectors apply knowledge of the characteristics and evolution of manufacturing techniques and decorating styles used in different countries to correlate the archaeological material with guns of known origin which fall within the proposed time period. By careful interpretation of all the available information, obscure guns used centuries ago can be brought into focus and reestablished in our store of knowledge of the things of the past.

Most Carolina guns were used up, broken up, and if not lost entirely, left as scrap metal scattered around old fort sites and Indian towns. A few have been recovered from burials, needless to say in badly deteriorated condition. There are a few, however, which have been preserved as complete working guns, in various stages of originality and alteration. It would be instructive to examine one of the more nearly original examples at this time.

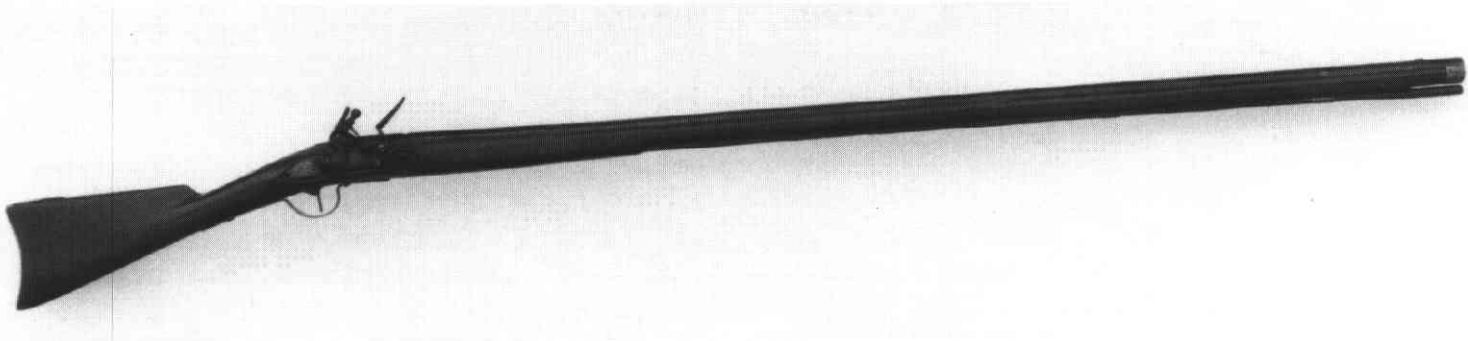


Figure 4: The TR gun overall.

A SURVIVING EXAMPLE OF THE CAROLINA GUN

One example of the Carolina gun, probably made by Thomas Richards of Birmingham, England, in the 1745-1784 period (Howard Blackmore, communication by letter, 19 September 1980) has survived as a complete working specimen which appears to be fairly original in it's composition (Figure 4). I have previously referred to this gun as the TR gun, due to the mark on the lock plate, and will continue to do so here⁶. All parts fit the stock with a snug match of metal to wood, and although some changes, mostly small, were suffered through time, there is no evidence of gross replacement or mechanical alteration. It is quite possible that the butt of the stock has been shaved, and several external lock parts appear to be replacements.

Basically this gun is a light weight, full stocked, smooth bore, flintlock, measuring 61 inches overall, with a 46½ inch barrel of .628 inch bore (or about 19 gauge). Present weight, unloaded, with wood ramrod in place, is 5 pounds 5 ounces.

The wood of the stock has been identified as beech (R.B. Miller, U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Products Laboratory, letter communication, September 3, 1975). The top line of the comb is high and straight (Figure 5), and blends smoothly into the wrist, without a groove or "bannister rail" effect. The lower edge of the butt stock is straight, with a slight belly near the toe. Shape and character of the side plate flat matches the flat into which the lock is inlet. There is no decorative carving of any kind on the stock of this gun.



Figure 5 A,B: Details of the lock-side and serpent-side of the TR gun.

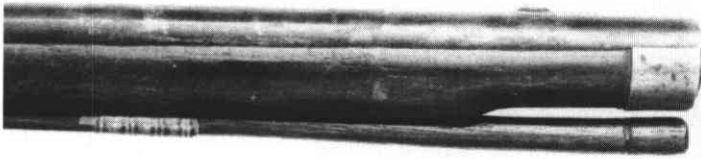


Figure 6: The muzzle of the TR gun, showing the corrugated brass ramrod thimble.

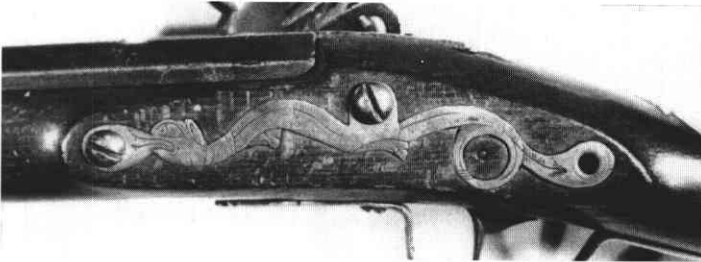


Figure 7: TR gun side plate area...

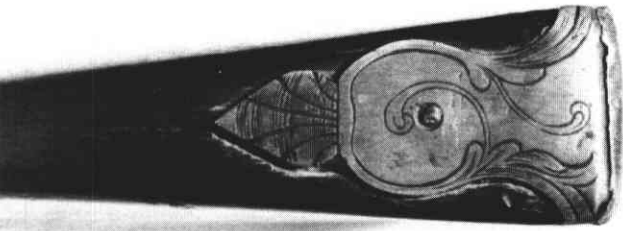


Figure 8: ...the engraved tang of the butt plate, and...

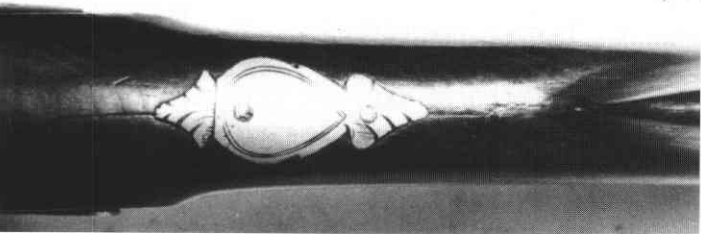


Figure 9: ...the gun thumbplate.

The fore stock is quite slender, and extends to the muzzle. On the underside of the fore end near the muzzle, about 2½ inches have been reduced to facilitate gripping the ramrod (Figure 6). A band of thin brass ¼ inch wide is crimped around the forward end of the fore stock to lend some reinforcement to that point. As on most English-made Indian trade guns, the ramrod pipes are made of thin corrugated sheet brass. They are held in place by their flanges, which pass through slits into the barrel channel of the stock, where they are spread out and kept in place by the barrel. There is no tail pipe.

With the exception of the paper-thin corrugated brass ramrod thimbles and the fore end band, all stock furniture is of flat cast brass which varies in thickness between ¼ and ⅓ inch. Inner surfaces of the castings have a rough sandy texture from the mould; outer surfaces were filed or burnished smooth.

The sideplate (Figure 7) is in the form of a loop-tailed serpent 5¾ inches in length overall, with details of mouth, eye, scales, etc. accomplished by engraving on the smooth metal. The butt plate tang, which is 2¾ inches in length (Figure 8) and the 2¼ inch thumb plate (Figure 9) are also decorated with engraving and attached to the stock with small square iron pins. The side plate, butt plate tang, and thumb plate are inlet into the stock, flush with the surface of the wood⁷.

The trigger guard (Figure 10) was cast as a long strip of proper outline, filed to a slightly convex outer curve and bent to shape. The forward finial was filed to resemble a pineapple. Length, from tip to tip as mounted on the gun, is 8¾ inches. The trigger guard is mounted on the surface of the stock, held by a screw in the back and a long bolt in the front. This long bolt passes up through the stock to screw into a threaded hole in the barrel tang. This "up bolt" between trigger guard and barrel tang was common to all Carolina guns (personal observation of guns and found hardware), and continued in use on all Northwest guns made before about 1830 (Hanson, 1955, p. 40).

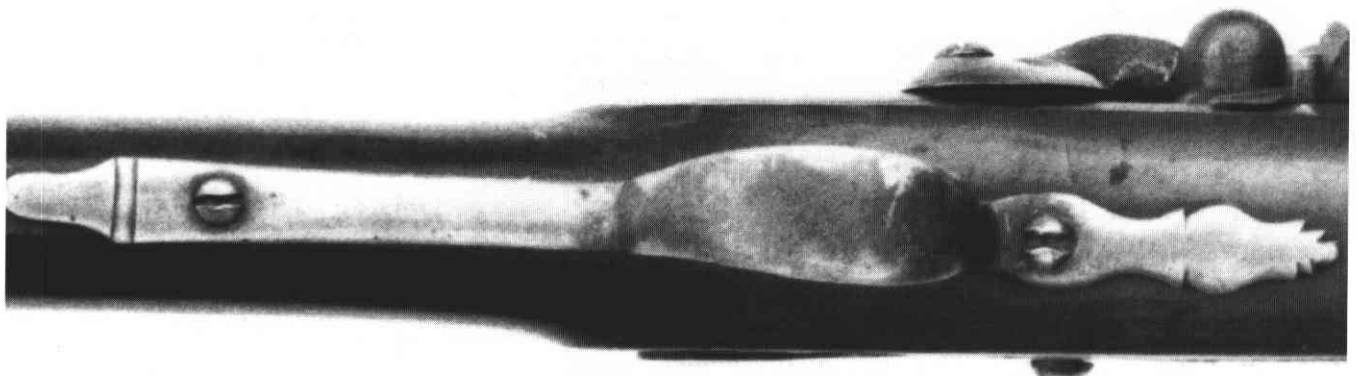


Figure 10: The trigger guard of the TR gun. Note the pineapple shape of the forward finial.

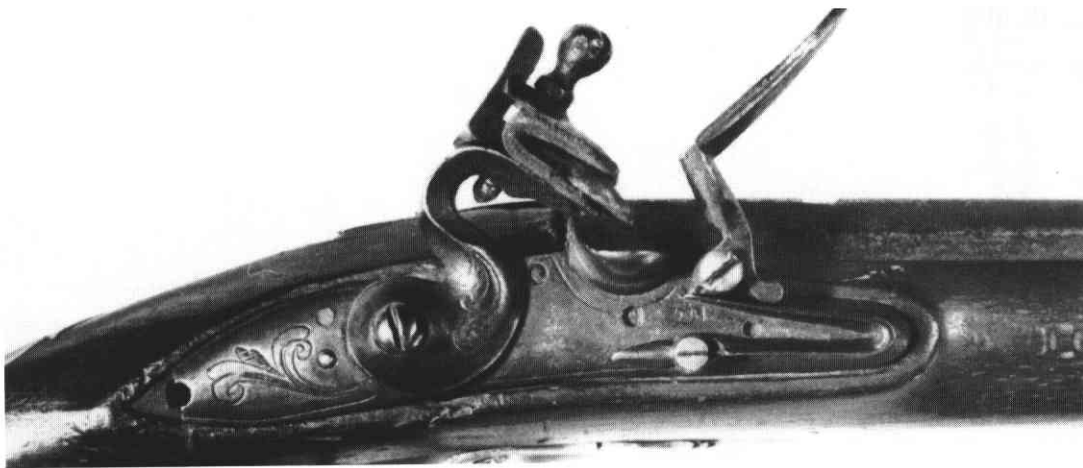


Figure 11: TR gun lock. The tip of the plate has been broken off, and the frizzen and frizzen screw are replacements.

The simple iron trigger turns on an iron pin driven through the stock, one end of which is exposed within the tail loop of the side plate (Figure 7). There is no trigger plate; a small rectangular sliver of brass has been driven into the front of the trigger slot to limit forward motion by the trigger.

The barrel, essentially identical to a Northwest gun barrel, is round over most of its length, with a $7\frac{1}{4}$ inch fully octagonal section at the breech. A pair of narrow shallow grooves about $\frac{1}{6}$ inch apart mark the juncture of octagon and round. A second pair of grooves are present $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches forward of the first pair. These grooves only partially encircle the barrel, extending around to the vicinity of the lower edge of the side flats. The three flats on the underside of the barrel are blended into the round by a simple tapering of the octagon corners over a 2 inch distance forward from the first pair of grooves. The barrel and fore stock are secured by four transverse pins which penetrate the stock and pass through lugs fitted into transverse dovetail slots on the underside of the barrel. A small, low, blade-type front sight of brass is set in a shallow dovetail slot $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches behind the muzzle. An empty dovetail slot in the top flat 2 inches forward from the

breech (shown in Figure 5) probably held a rear sight at one time. The barrel is very slightly swamped from the front sight to the muzzle.

Before the rear tip of the lock plate was broken away, the lock plate measured $6\frac{1}{8}$ inches in overall length (Figure 11). The face of the plate, the body of the cock, and the underside of the pan are "rounded" or convex. The cock is a simple gooseneck, with a slotted upper jaw which straddles the rectangular comb. Neither the tumbler nor the frizzen are bridled. The pan is detachable, not an integrally forged part of the plate. A few engraved fronds decorate the body of the cock and the tail of the lock plate. On the outer surface of the lock plate just below the frizzen screw is a mark $\frac{1}{2}$ inch long, composed of the letters TR standing in slight relief in a sunken rectangle (Figure 12). In the wood of the stock immediately behind the trigger guard there is a mark which could have been struck with the same punch, although it is very difficult to be certain of the letters; the R can be read in the right light, but the T is indistinct at best. On the inside surface of the lock plate, near the forward lock bolt hole, is another sunken mark about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch long in which the crudely formed letters IR stand in relief.

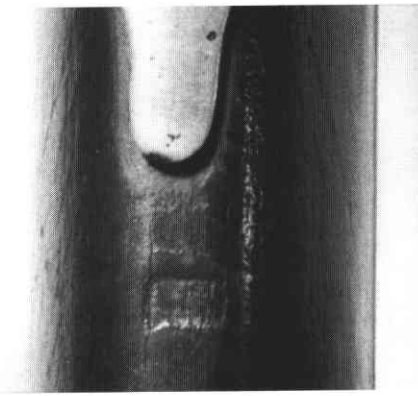


Figure 12: The TR mark under the frizzen on the lock plate of the TR gun, the mark struck in the stock of the TR gun, just to the rear of the trigger guard (this is a standard location for acceptance marks applied during the assembly of guns in English shops), and the IR mark on the inside of the lock plate of the TR gun.

There are no conventional proof marks on the barrel. On the left side flat of the barrel, $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches from the breech is a mark resembling a caltrop (Figure 13) or a 5-rayed asterisk, on which the upper limb or "head" appears to be more a rust blemish than part of a mark. This mark is isolated: that is to say, there are no nearby vice marks or other blemishes with which it could or should be associated, and as it is slightly more than $\frac{3}{16}$ inch wide, it is considerably larger than the vice marks which are present elsewhere on the barrel. This mark appears to have been struck intentionally, but there is some uncertainty about it. It is the combination of the TR mark and the caltrop which points to Thomas Richards as the maker.

APPARENT ALTERATIONS

The marked concave curvature of the butt plate, and the narrow width of the butt stock are departures from the norm, for most whole Carolina butt plates are rather broad and flat, as was the style of the period (see Figure 14 for a comparison of broad and narrow butt plates). It is only reasonable to consider that the butt of the stock has been shaved on both sides and hollowed for a more concave fit to the shoulder. Other narrow, concave butt plates are known (one was present in the

McEwen collection, on display at the Alabama Department of Archives and History in Montgomery on 22 March 1982) but they too may be owner alterations, not original construction. I believe the TR gun would be more typically "Carolina" if it had a broad, flat butt like that on the Bumford gun in Figure 14.

Furniture groups on "evolved" Carolina guns, such as the Bumford just mentioned, may or may not be reliable representatives of original furniture sets, but these groups are instructive as to furniture which happened to be available to a gunsmith somewhere, at a given point in time. (See Benninghoff, 1991, for the introductory discussion of "evolved" guns.) The Bumford is a restocked piece which utilized the barrel, butt plate, and trigger guard of a Carolina gun. Unfortunately, no side plate was carried forward, and the thumb plate was abandoned as well (assuming these were present in the first place). While the butt plate has the standard engraved bulb-and-bud tang, the trigger guard has a 3-swell forward finial (Figure 15), and the barrel is round in the breech (instead of octagonal) behind the standard 2 sets of rings. It is quite possible that this assemblage did originate together, and represents a Carolina gun variation the astute collector should be ready to recognize.

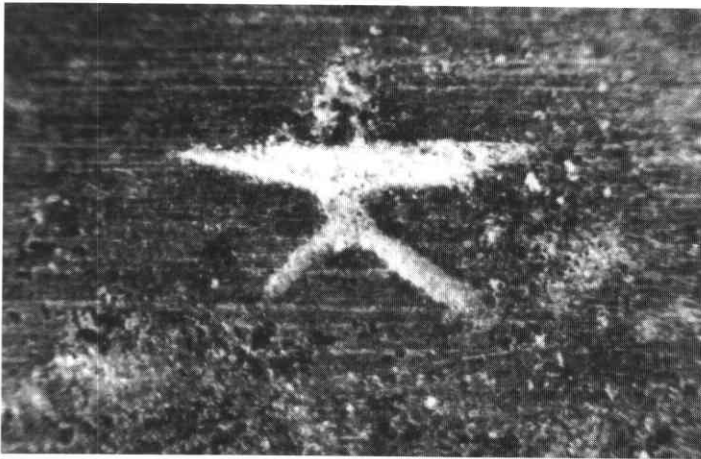


Figure 13: A mark in the form of a caltrop on the left flat of the barrel of the TR gun.



Figure 14: A comparison of the narrow butt plate on the TR gun, with a standard broad butt plate found on a restocked Bumford gun.

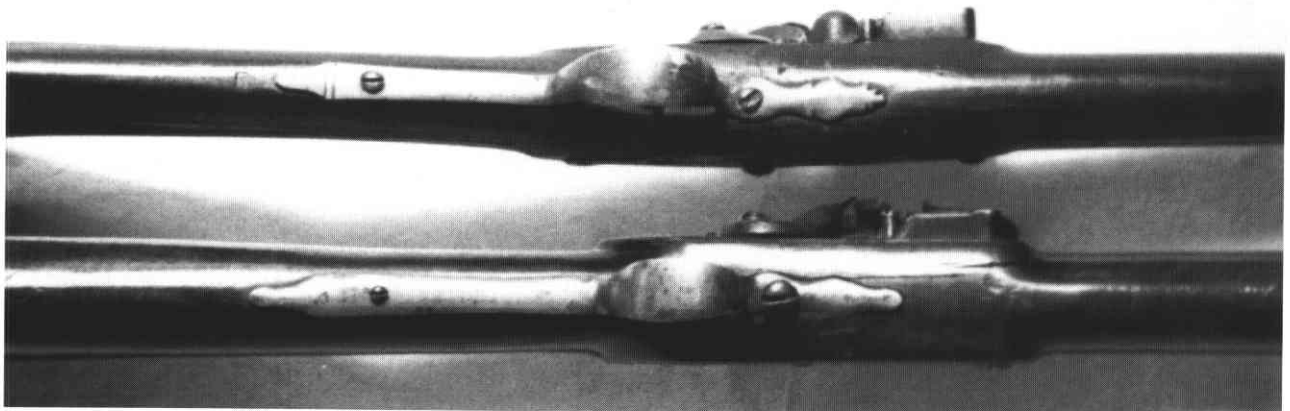


Figure 15: A comparison of the pineapple trigger guard on the TR gun, with the 3-swell trigger guard on the restocked Bumford.

CAROLINA GUN FURNITURE ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

Carolina Gun furniture has been found on many sites in the south, and also on a few in the north. The map in Figure 16 shows those sites which have come to my attention either through published reports or by direct knowledge of recovered material. References for the sites are given in the caption which accompanies the figure. There are interesting stories to be told about each of these sites, both north and south, but neither time nor space will allow all of them to be included here. There are a few points of special value which should be made, however, so a little space will be given to them before plunging into discussions of the two major sites.

Sites having an abundance of Carolina gun material are all in the south, and, fortunately, those same sites have been the main source of firm archaeological information which can be tied to detailed historical records.

Even where present, Carolina gun furniture is sparse on northern sites. Fort Ligonier, in western Pennsylvania, was a British military post during the French and Indian War. A single fragment of a Carolina gun butt plate was recovered here by archaeological methods which provide a firm context of 1758 to 1766 (Grimm, 1970). This is the only firm historical context available concerning Carolina gun furniture on a northern site.

At Fort Michilimackinac, where you could expect the recovery methods to satisfy the most rigorous archaeological standards, the Carolina gun is conspicuous by its complete absence (Maxwell & Binford, 1961; Mathay, 1966; Stone, 1974; Hamilton, 1976, 1980; Heldman, 1977, 1978). All the English trade gun material found on this site, which was British occupied from 1761 until it was dismantled and abandoned in 1781, appears to be related to the Northwest gun.

Fort Frederica and Spanish Fort are the sites most important to this study of Carolina guns. Both sites have good historical documentation which permits an accurate reconstruction of the timing of gun traffic, and both sites have yielded a relative abundance of Carolina gun furniture which can be tied archaeologically into the historical context. The Fort Frederica assemblage represents guns in circulation from 1735 to 1745. The Spanish Fort material dates from 1772 to about 1785, with a very diminished representation to about 1800.

FORT FREDERICA

Fort Frederica, founded in 1736 by Sir James Oglethorpe in the new colony of Georgia, was the southern headquarters for the British military establishment on the Atlantic coast. From the Spanish point of view, the Fort and the fortified town which surrounded it were both

an affront and a threat. Direct hostilities were not long in coming, for in 1739 Spain and England were formally engaged in a conflict that would be known as "The War of Jenkin's Ear" (Veath, 1968, p. 62). Oglethorpe had anticipated such an eventuality with extensive military preparations, and with an effective treaty with his nearby Indian neighbors.⁸

Two provisions of this treaty are pertinent to the interpretation of Indian affairs at Fort Frederica. The first provision stipulated that English traders would take their goods to the Indian towns, and that the trade would be conducted *in* those towns at fixed rates and prices. In the second provision, the Indians agreed not to come into the limits of the English settlements without leave from the English authorities. The effect of these two provisions was that under ordinary circumstances, there was very little, if any, casual Indian traffic at Fort Frederica. It was not a trading center, not even part of the trade distribution system, and was difficult to approach except by sea.

In the years 1740 through 1744, however, Oglethorpe's Indian allies were called repeatedly to Fort Frederica. They came either to support an English assault on St. Augustine, or to repel expected Spanish counter attacks (Corry, p. 77-79, p. 124-127). Estimates considered to be accurate place the number of Oglethorpe's warriors at a maximum of about one thousand (Corry, p. 123). Most were Creeks and Cherokees, with a few from the distant Chickasaws; all had long been primary customers of the Carolina traders. Hostilities tapered off in 1745, and Indian congregations at the Fort became a thing of the past. Settlers in the vicinity began to leave in large numbers in 1747, and after the regiment assigned to the Fort was disbanded in 1748, the whole place fell into ruins rather quickly (Reese, p.69).

Historical records document the building of a forge at Fort Frederica in 1736, but no mention was ever made of its location or the blacksmith shop containing it. This was fortunate in some respects, for when Dr. Joel Shiner's archaeological work happened to find it in 1958 (Manucy, p. 43), this jewel of firearms history was undisturbed. Among the litter on the floor of the shop were upwards of 600 gun parts (Manucy, p. 50) of which about half were thought to be military (Shiner, 1958, p. 30). Of the non-military material, some 50 to 60 pieces (my estimate) are fragments of brass furniture from Carolina guns. The only explanation for such a huge accumulation of gun material at this time, is that the smithy was inundated with gun repairs during the War of Jenkin's Ear, including repairs to the guns brought in by the Indian allies.

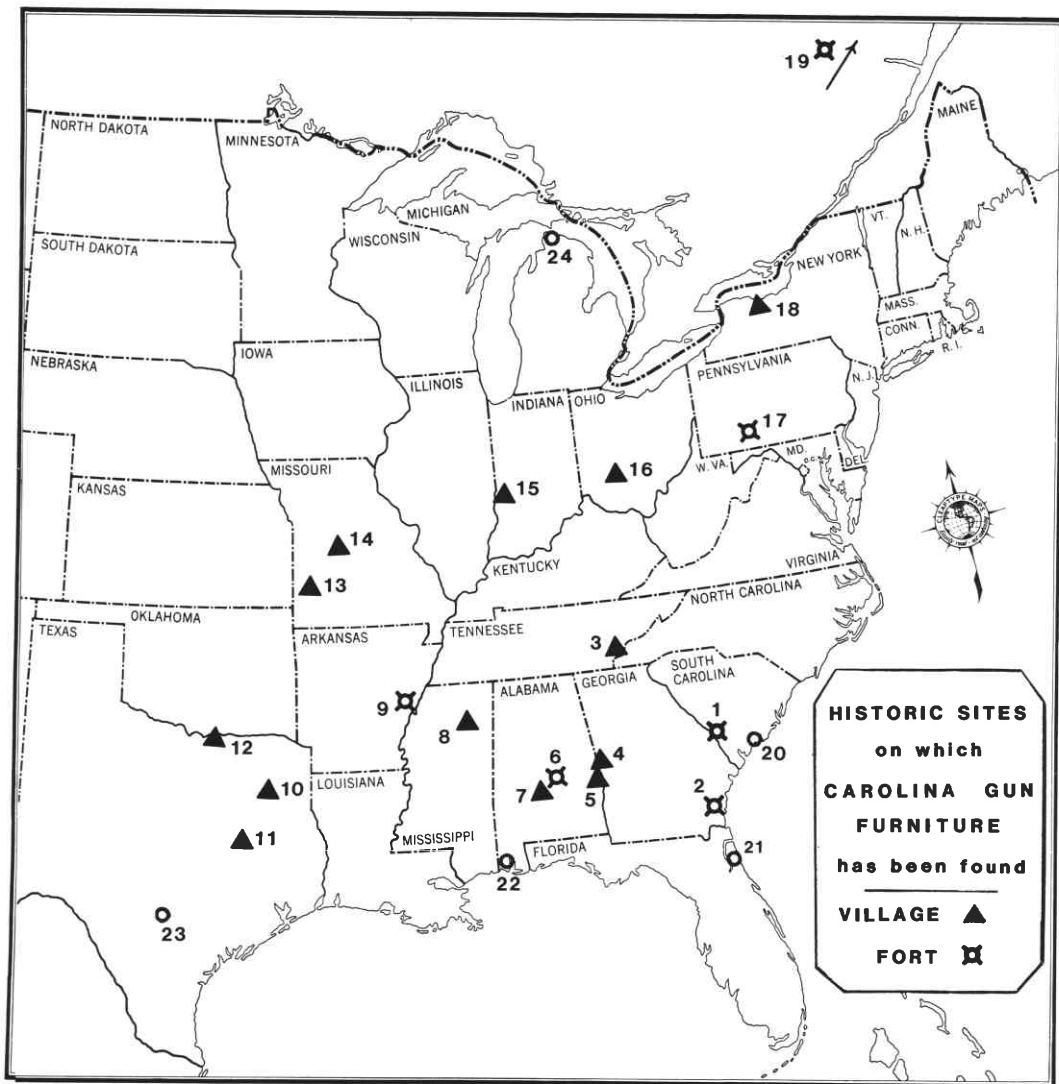


Figure 16: Historic sites on which Carolina gun furniture has been found. All sites shown were actively occupied during some part of the 18th century. Following each site name are the number of pieces of Carolina gun furniture from that site which have been documented in reports or examined by the author. SP = side plate, BP = butt plate, TG = trigger guard, TP = thumb plate. *Plus* means material is known which has neither been published nor examined by the author.

1. Fort Moore1 TG.
 2. Fort Frederica18 SP, 7 BP, 12 TG, 2 TP, plus.
 3. Chota, Cherokee town2 SP, 1 TP.
 4. Burnt Village1 SP.
 5. Yuchi town, burial gun1 SP, 1 TG, 1 TP.
 6. Fort Toulouse1 BP, 1 TG, 1 TP.
 7. Montgomery area (Creek towns)2 SP, 3 BP, 2 TG.
 8. Tupelo area (Chickasaw towns)1 TG, 1 TP.
 9. Arkansas Post.....1 SP, plus.
 10. Gilbert site.....1 SP. (Jelks, 1966)
 11. Vinson site.....plus (SPs & BPs).
 12. Spanish Fort.....13 SP, 4 BP, 9 TG, 2 TP, plus.
 13. Big Osage town (23VE1)3 SP. (Hamilton, 1960)
 14. Little Osage town (23SA3)1 SP, 1 BP. (Hamilton, 1960)
 - 15 & 16. Wabash – Ohio area.....1 SP, 3 BP.
 17. Fort Ligonier1 BP. (Grimm, 1970)
 18. Seneca burial gun1 SP, 1 TG, 1 TP.
 19. Fort Ponchartrain.....3 SP. (Bouchard, 1978)
- Other places of interest:**
20. Charles Town
 21. St. Augustine
 22. Mobile
 23. San Antonio
 24. Fort Michilimakinac

If this logic can be accepted, then the Carolina gun furniture at Fort Frederica came from guns *in Indian hands* in the 1740-1745 period, which should include some guns actually obtained in the late 1730's. If a maximum gun life of 5 years is a reasonable cutoff, the Fort Frederica accumulation then represents the style of Carolina guns being traded in the 10 year period from 1735 to 1745.

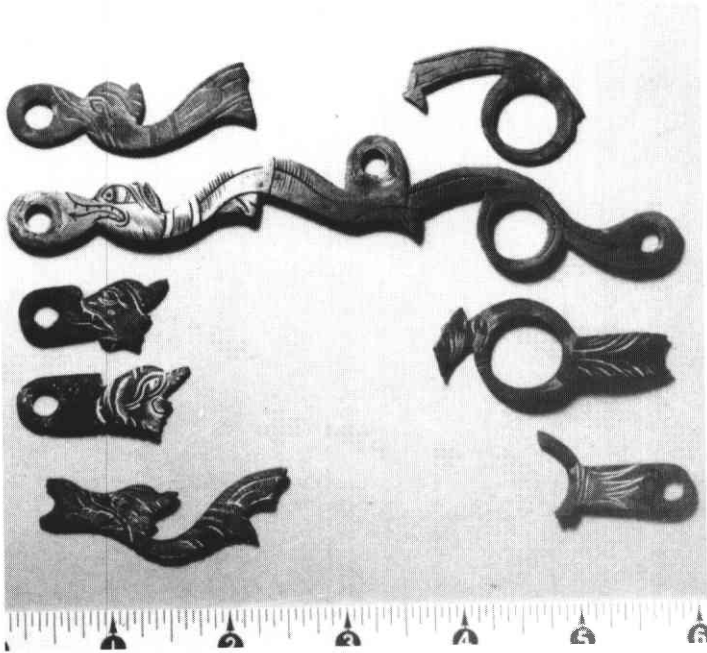


Figure 17: The side plate from the TR gun compared with fragments from Fort Frederica.

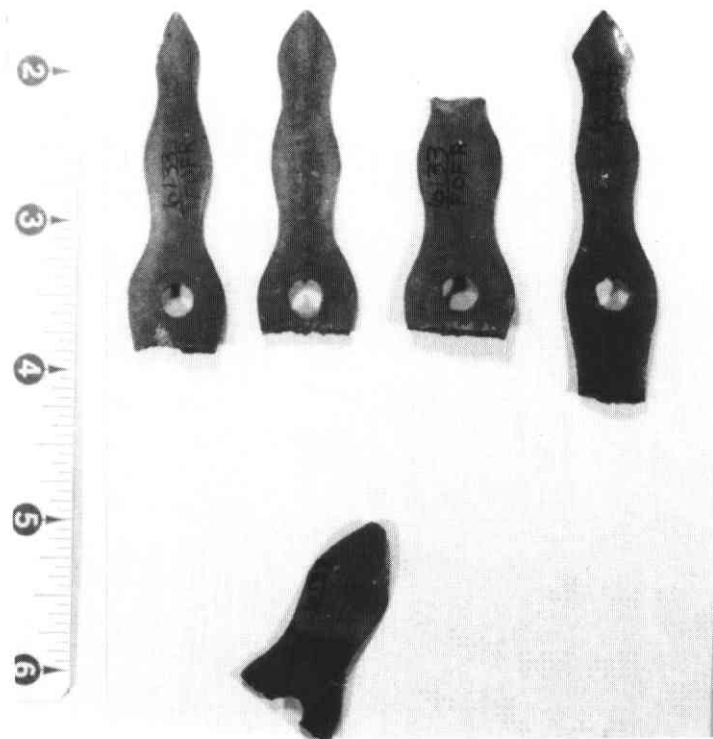


Figure 18: Trigger guard forward finials of the 3-swell pattern from Fort Frederica. Bottom specimen is broken and a variant of the upper ones.

A large part of the material recovered at Fort Frederica is housed at the National Park Service's Southeast Archaeological Center (SEAC) in Tallahassee; Carolina gun furniture selected from this material is shown in Figures 17 through 22.⁹

There was some variety in the engraved serpent side plates, as seen in Figure 17. Trigger guard forward finials (Figure 18) came in at least two different styles. The butt plate tangs appear to be of a single pattern. The assemblage in Figure 19, is an arbitrary group picked to show relative sizes of the parts. Compare this group to the similar group picked from a Spanish Fort collection.

SPANISH FORT

While Fort Frederica provides a clear picture of the Carolina guns in circulation in the late 1730s and early 1740s, Spanish Fort is of a later period, where English guns did not appear until the 1770s.

A group of Wichita Indians called Taovayas, who were village farmers, arrived at the Spanish Fort site about 1757 (Harper, 1953a, p. 271) and started an Indian settlement which grew into a cluster of stockade-enclosed villages occupying both banks of the Red River just north of the present Texas town of Spanish Fort.¹⁰ These people were very close trading partners with the New Orleans French, but were generally hostile toward the Spanish. As middle men, the Toavayas traded extensively with the more nomadic plains tribes to the west (Thomas, 1940, p. 162), which brought them great wealth and prosperity.

France, anticipating an unpleasant outcome in the French and Indian War, had placed western Louisiana in Spanish care in 1762. Spanish authority was rather slow in taking over this new responsibility, so an illicit French trade continued until 1769. As their French connections disintegrated, the Toavayas were faced with severe economic recession under the repressive policies of the Spanish system. With English traders now in free communication on the Mississippi River, it was inevitable that the

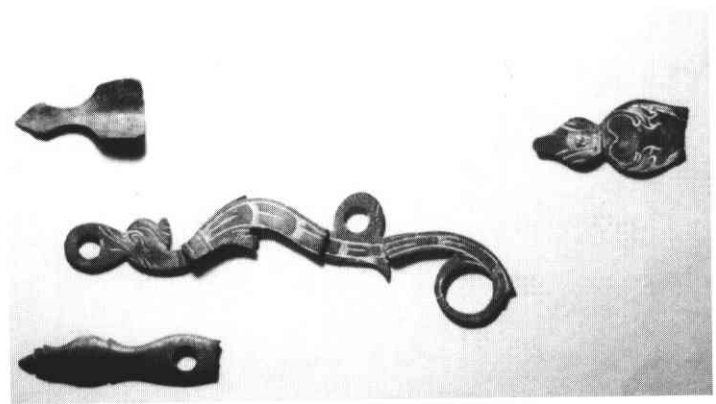


Figure 19: Fragments from Fort Frederica from the furniture of a Carolina gun.

entrepreneurial Taovayas would make an early connection, and the Spanish establishment was appropriately fearful of it happening (Bolton, 1914, I, p. 73). In 1772, it was learned without doubt that the Taovayas had received their first English guns (Bolton, I, p. 301); in July of that year, Athanase De Mezieres reported "I beg your Lordship to note that the tribes of (North Texas) are fully instructed by the Indian *Joseph* . . . and lately he went from the Taouaias [Taovayas], where he lives, to the Missuris, whence he returned with ammunition and arms, which I recognized to be of foreign make . . . Through him [Joseph] they know that the English live on this continent; that they are very favorable to the Indians; that nothing pleases them so much as their friendship; that they sell their goods much more reasonably than we do ours . . ." He goes on obviously disturbed, and for good reason: the English traders had broken through, using middlemen to extend their influence.

In 1777, Englishmen arrived in person at the Spanish Fort villages, with ready goods to trade (Bolton, I, p. 115; II, p. 207-208), and trade they did. In September of 1778, the Commandant-General at San Antonio wrote to his superiors: "for no Indian of the North [Red River area] is there any jewel more precious than firearms, which they already have in such abundance that they trade them to the citizens of San Antonio de Bejar for any trifle whatsoever." (Bolton, II, p. 223).

With this new trading connection, the Taovayas enjoyed a fair prosperity for a few brief years. In the early 1780s, the strength of the English establishment began to sag due to the stress of the American Revolution. As this connection began to break down, the trade with the plains tribes dried up again. This time there was no recourse. Thereafter, Taovayas fortunes declined rapidly, and although they tried repeatedly to reestablish themselves as a trading center of importance, none of their schemes worked out. In 1811, the Spanish Fort villages were abandoned (Harper, 1953c).

Long occupancy and exceptional wealth left a rich residue of artifacts spread over the surface of the ground at the Spanish Fort sites, much of which is now preserved in a few well maintained private collections. Gun furniture is prominently present in all the collections I have seen, in proportions of about 85% French, 15% English, with maybe 1 or 2% Spanish. Of the English furniture, most is Carolina style, with some of the Northwest pattern, in a ratio of about 5 to 1.



Figure 20: The side plate from the TR gun with fragments from Spanish Fort.



Figure 21: Parts from Spanish Fort, from a Carolina gun. The sideplate is an "assembly".

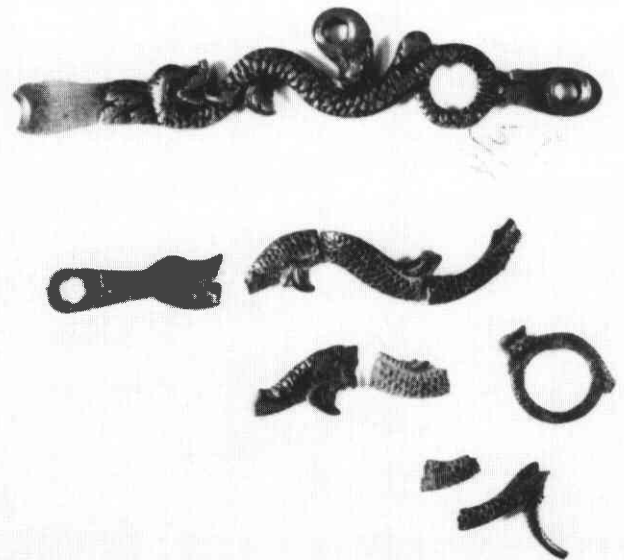


Figure 22: A complete Northwest gun side plate, compared with similar fragments from Spanish Fort. Details on this pattern of side plate were accomplished in the casting process.

The archaeological work done at the Spanish Fort villages conclusively ties the surface material into the period of occupancy by the Taovayas (Bell et al, 1967). With the beginning of English gun traffic at Spanish Fort closely constrained by the 1772 date, the abundant Carolina gun furniture present on this site must equal or post-date that year. Trade with the English climaxed before the end of the 1780s, and tapered to nothing before the end of the century. The English gun material is probably most representative of the period 1772 to about 1785, with a diminishing portrayal of material in use to 1800. My assumption is that as their fortunes dwindled, the Taovayas acquired much less new merchandise and took better care of what they already had. Otherwise the time brackets would suggest that Northwest material should out-number Carolina material.

Figures 20 and 21 illustrate some of the Carolina gun furniture in the one small Spanish Fort collection which was picked up in the 1960s and early 1970s. Figure 22 shows Northwest gun material from this same collection. The most striking thing about the Carolina material from Spanish Fort is its extreme similarity to the Carolina material from Fort Frederica. This similarity is shared with all the other historic sites shown on the map in Figure 16, and with the furniture on the working guns discussed earlier.

CONCLUSIONS

Furniture from English-made guns has been recovered from 18th century historic sites in substantial quantities, to the end that the predominant type of gun traded by the English can be reconstructed. The resulting gun is a light weight, full stocked smooth bore flintlock, fitted with all-brass furniture. This furniture is made of flat cast brass, which was filed or burnished smooth and bent to the shape necessary to function and fit the stock. Butt plates and thumb plates were decorated with engraving of a rather coarse sort, and attached to the stock with small square iron pins or nails. Trigger guards were fashioned from a long flat casting of the correct outline which was subsequently bent to form a bow with tangs to the front and rear. Trigger guards were attached by screws, the forward one passing completely through the stock to engage a threaded hole in the barrel tang. Side plates were made in the form of a loop-tailed serpent to which details were added by engraving.

Although most of the thousands of these guns were used into oblivion, a few have been preserved as complete working guns, in various stages of originality and alteration, all reflecting to some degree, the remarkable uniformity of the original design.

This gun's broad geographic range and persistent style indicate that it was manufactured by a number of different gun makers, according to an established pattern, over an extended period of time. The earliest *delimited* occurrence of these guns is in the 1735 to 1745 period at Fort Frederica, Georgia. The latest is at the Spanish Fort villages in Texas and Oklahoma, from 1772 to about 1785, possibly extending a bit later.

Use of the name "Carolina gun" can be demonstrated from the 1732-1740 period to 1815, with a carry-over to 1855. In the 1732-1740 citation, the expression "Carolina guns" was used to describe trade guns in stock in a store in Virginia. The 1815 citation is from British rules of proof written for this same type of gun. Given the British propensity to retain "the old ways", it's likely that the name was in use among English gun makers long before 1815.

If a gun was being made in Birmingham and London for the Carolina market in such numbers that it was recognized to the point of being entitled "Carolina gun", the only guns qualified for that title by age, location, and abundance are the guns which have been under consideration here.

Indeed, the combined efforts of historians, archaeologists, and collectors have reestablished the Carolina gun in our store of knowledge of the things of the past. In the Carolina gun, we now know the name and character of the 18th century English trade gun in the south.

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NOTES

1. Charles Town was not in "South Carolina" until 1729, when the colony was divided into North and South. Charles Town became Charleston in 1783.

2. Indian tribes which played a major and persistent role in southern affairs of the 18th century were the Creeks, the Cherokees, the Chickasaws, and the Choctaws. The Yamacraws and Yamassees had maintained their identity in eastern Georgia during the earlier part of the century, but joined the Creeks after a short, disastrous war with the Carolinians. A similar fate fell upon the Natchez, who were dispersed following a brash attack on French journeymen. Most of all the small coastal tribes retired into the interior and merged into the major tribes. Of the four major tribes, the Choctaws almost always sided with the French. The other three tribes were usually allied with the English, but on some occasions were their violent enemies.

3. In 1789, a chief of the Creeks had this to say about the relative merits of the guns being supplied (Caughey, 1938, p. 217); he wanted guns "...not such as have been usually furnished us [by the Spanish] which besides being too small in the bore, burst after a few discharges, but English Trading Guns which are good and will last more than two years in constant use..."

4. This historical summary has drawn heavily on two cornerstone works which deal with Indian affairs in the colonial south: Verner W. Crane's *The Southern Frontier, 1670-1732* (1928), and John P. Corry's *Indian Affairs in Georgia, 1732-1756* (1936). Also of marked

importance were *John Stuart and the Southern Colonial Frontiers 1754-1775* by John R. Alden (1944), *Old Frontiers* by John P. Brown (1938), and *Athanas De Mezieres and the Louisiana-Texas Frontier, 1768-1780* by Herbert E. Bolton, Editor, (1914).

5. Students of the Indian gun owe special thanks to two individuals whose efforts mark the beginning of serious analysis of the subject. Charles E. Hanson, Jr. began the quest with his monograph *The Northwest Gun* in 1955. Although the subject of his study was not prevalent until late in the 18th century, his criteria for identifying the earliest types of Northwest guns established the guides and provided the insight which has led to the recognition of the Carolina gun, which in reality was simply a predecessor of the Northwest gun.

In 1968, T.M. Hamilton gave us *Early Indian Trade Guns: 1625-1775*, which presented, in one report, the gun material from many historic sites of the colonial period together with his interpretation of their origins and contexts.

The work now in your hands would not have been possible now without these two trade gun pioneers.

6. A comparison of certain parts of this gun with the remains of a similar piece found at Yuchi Town, Alabama appeared in Hamilton's *Colonial Frontier Guns* on pages 68 through 72 (Burke, 1980).

7. The style of butt plate found on Carolina guns was also used on English blunderbusses made in the decades on either side of 1700. Suydam (1975, p. 5) illustrates a fine example fitted on a James Walker blunderbuss made circa 1690-1710. Hamilton (1980, p. 91) mentions others thought to be somewhat earlier.

8. The original treaty made with the Creeks in 1733, and the reconfirmation of 1739 are given in *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, Volume 4, Number 1, (March, 1920), P. 3-16.

9. I was privileged to examine the Fort Frederica material in the fall of 1977. Richard D. Faust and the SEAC staff were most cordial and helpful during my visit.

10. The town is named for the site. The site was called Spanish Fort because early settlers mistook the then-visible remains of the Indian-built village stockades for old Spanish fortifications. The villages are now cotton fields, with the only discernable trace of the former inhabitants being a occasional artifact turned up by the plow.

11. Furniture from a distinctive Ketland fowling piece is also present on this site, but that's a story which must wait for another time.

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