

The Morris Collection (continued)

Catalog No.

Description

C85

U.S. Twelve-pounder bronze mountain howitzer, model of 1835. Markings: Muzzle: "GTB" "1" Breechface: "233" Left trunnion: "1861" Right trunnion: "AMES CO. FOUNDER CHICOPEE, MASS." As usual, the bronze barrel only remains, as original mountain howitzer carriages are extremely rare. With only two known to exist today. However, an original pack saddle with two ammunition chests are in the collection (C165).

The registry number "1" indicates that this was the very first piece of this type delivered by Ames on a 12-piece contract in 1861. It was inspected by George Thatcher Balch. This piece is listed by number in reference D, pp. 296.

Twelve-pounder mountain howitzers were used in famous engagements in the Mexican War and to some extent in the Civil War, especially in mountainous terrain and in the West. They saw much use in the Indian Wars. They were greatly feared by the Indians, who called them "gun that shoots twice" apparently in recognition of the second report produced by the howitzer's exploding shell. The piece was designed to fire only anti-personnel ammunition, consisting of either explosive shell, spherical case shot, or canister. The piece is chambered, as are most muzzleloading howitzers. See references C,D.