

The Morris Collection

Catalog no.

Description

C150

Twin Salute Cannon Mounted on Wheeled Iron Carriage with Single Percussion Lock Firing Both Simultaneously

Markings: Barrels: Coat of Arms featuring angel and harp above pond between decorative swirls (believed to be Coat of Arms of Ireland). Below this on breech is monogram, apparently "V R". On reinforce, "1848" appears in a wreath.

Measurements: Barrel length: $14\frac{1}{2}$ in. overall
Bore dia: $5/8$ in.
Length overall: 18 in.
Carriage meas: $9\frac{1}{2}$ x 15 in.
Wheel Dia: $5\frac{7}{8}$ in.

Certainly one of the most unique items in the collection, this twin-barreled salute cannon on a four-wheeled cart is designed to fire both barrels simultaneously as a percussion lock ignites a central powder magazine, which in turn fires into vents of both cannon, discharging them. The small magazine is provided with a rotating cover for loading. The hammer is tripped by a lever at the rear of the carriage. There are adjustment knobs for both elevation of the barrels, and divergence. The reason for enabling the firer to adjust divergence is unknown, but leads to speculation about the piece being a trap gun or net throwing cannon of some sort, since there is no apparent reason to make such an adjustment on a salute cannon.

The piece was probably built in England for a wealthy Irish nobleman. The piece is constructed to the highest standards of craftsmanship. The barrels and flame-catchers over the vents are made of brass rather than bronze, or bronze with some zinc content, as judged from the appearance of brighter "galvanized" flakes in the metal. The piece was in use in England or Great Britain, since pieces of distinctively English cigarette package cards were found in the bores. No piece like this has been observed by the writer anywhere, so it is possible that this was custom made, or was some type of inventor's model.