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## CMH Forum

### Small Spanish Howitzer at auction \*PIC\*

**By:** John Morris

**Date:** 2/25/2018, 5:30 am

I like to check old cannon fables when possible, especially those involving Spanish cannons which interest me more than some others. Here's the current James D. Julia Auctioneers' description of one they will sell in March:

**"RARE SPANISH 3-POUNDER BRONZE CANNON CAPTURED BY AMERICANS AT VERA CRUZ DURING THE MEXICAN WAR.**

SN 697. Cal. 3&#8243; bore. This 3-pounder Howitzer has great provenance, once being in the US Cartridge Collection, previously cataloged in the 1899 catalog of the A. E. Brooks Collection. This gun was on display at the St. Louis World Exposition in 1904, along with other captured cannon from the Battle of Vera Cruz. Like other 3-pounder late-18th and early-19th century 3-pounder Spanish Howitzers, overall length is 30&#8243; with a 3&#8243; bore. The associated carriage dates from the 19th century and has Brooks inventory number "2229" stamped. There is also a metal plate with a previous number "2153" which is possibly the previous collection number of A. Gerald Hull Collection of Saratoga, New York. Gun is in beautiful condition with smooth bronze and Snd on one trunnion "No 169". **PROVENANCE:** Augustus Gerald Hull Collection,( 1858-1893); A. E. Brooks, Hartford, Connecticut, 1893; US Cartridge Collection, 1902; sold in auction by Robbins H. Ritter, East Hartford, Connecticut, 1942; Butterfield & Butterfield Auction. **CONDITION:** Very good overall including accompanying carriage. Tube has light mustard patina with numerous small dings and dents expected after 200 years. 52863-3 JS (6,000-8,000) – Lot 134". I've posted here previously about these small Spanish Weapons so I won't repeat any of that now-if you are interested, the forum search engine can locate those posts.

Since the catalogs of two earlier collections it was in are online, I looked. The Julia description adds a few things to the descriptions in the earlier catalogs. Julia is the first to describe it (accurately) as a Spanish howitzer. The earlier descriptions left its nationality out and didn't mention anything about capture, instead implying (my reading anyway) that it was used by US forces at Vera Cruz in the Mexican War. The Brooks (1899) and the USCC (1903) catalogs contain identical text (see image of page from 1903 USCC catalog below.)

I couldn't find a reference mentioning this cannon as part of the 1904 St. Louis Exposition, but I didn't spend much time looking, but since it was property of the US Cartridge Company at that time, if they had an exhibit in St. Louis, the claim is at least believable, but if not I'd seriously doubt it was there.

I've found no reason to believe the earlier catalogs' statements that this small howitzer was at the Battle of Vera Cruz and employed by either side. I've been through the deck logs of all the ships that made entries regarding captured cannon cargo at Vera Cruz in 1847, and nothing this small was mentioned. As I recall the smallest guns taken aboard were much larger than the small howitzer under discussion. Some ships described each captured cannon in great detail including all markings, and some only gave material (mostly bronze), caliber, and length. Most of these pieces are now on outdoor display at the US Naval Academy, Annapolis, MD. The U.S. Army also hauled away many cannons from

Fort San Juan de Ulloa, but from what I've found, those were also large pieces. (To be continued)

COLLECTION OF FIRE-ARMS

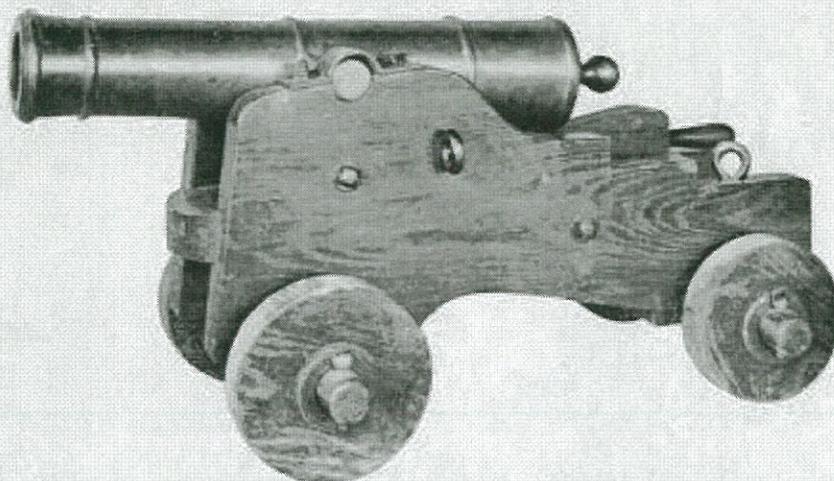


EXHIBIT K. BRASS HOWITZER.

Length 30 inches, bore 3 inches. It is authentically stated that this howitzer was in service in the Mexican War and did good work at the battle of Vera Cruz, March 23 to 26, 1847. From A. Gerald Hull's collection, Saratoga, N. Y.

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