



THE ARTILLERYMAN

MAGAZINE

Vol. 40, No. 3
Summer 2019 \$8.00



GALLANT PELHAM

SHOOT

THE ARMAMENT OF BLACKBEARD'S QUEEN ANNE'S REVENGE • SMITHGALL FOUNDATION ARTILLERY COLLECTION
MAJOR HARDAWAY AT CHANCELLORSVILLE • 42ND OHIO CIVIL WAR SHOW • THE LOST GUNS OF JENKINS' FERRY REVISITED

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Publisher: Jack W. Melton Jr.
Founding Publisher: C. Peter Jorgensen
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Hours 9-5 EST, Monday-Thursday

The Artilleryman Magazine (ISSN: 088404747) Copyright © 2019, All Rights Reserved, by Historical Publications LLC is published quarterly by Historical Publications LLC, 520 Folly Road, Suite 25 PMB 379, Charleston, SC 29412. Quarterly. Business and Editorial Offices: 520 Folly Road, Suite 25 PMB 379, Charleston, SC 29412, Accounting and Circulation Offices: Historical Publications LLC, 520 Folly Road, Suite 25 PMB 379, Charleston, SC 29412. Call 800-777-1862 to subscribe. Application to mail at Periodicals postage prices at Charleston, SC, and additional mailing offices (if applicable).

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Historical Publications LLC, 520 Folly Road, Suite 25 PMB 379, Charleston, SC 29412.

Contributions of editorial material and photographs are welcomed at the above address.

Subscription rates: \$34.95 for a one-year U.S.A. subscription and \$64.95 for a two-year in U.S.A. International subscriptions no longer accepted. U.S. bank checks or credit cards accepted.

On the cover: This Confederate cannon is a 6.4-inch double banded Brooke rifle, dated 1863, and is mounted on a center pintel barbette carriage. It is located at Fort Pulaski in Savannah, Ga. For additional information on this gun visit: <https://markerhunter.wordpress.com/2012/03/16/fort-pulaski-brooke>.

(Jack Melton)

The Smithgall Foundation

Artillery Collection

ARTICLE AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY ERICKA HOFFMANN



Charlie Smithgall stands next to his US 4.5-inch siege rifle, serial #51, which was manufactured at Fort Pitt Foundry in 1863. This large, cast iron cannon weighs 3,545 pounds and fired a 3.5-pound service charge.

Charlie Smithgall began selling newspapers in the 1950s when he was 12 years old. His mother insisted that he save the money he made, so Smithgall eventually banked enough money to buy his first artillery piece when he was in high school. That reproduction mortar was the start of what has since become one of the largest private collections of Civil War-era artillery pieces.

Smithgall joined the North-South Skirmish Association (N-SSA) at age 15 in 1961. At an N-SSA skirmish (competitive shooting competition) at Fort Lee in 1963, cannon crews fired at a 1938 Plymouth sedan during an artillery demonstration. The gun crews' marksmanship made an impression on Smithgall, and he was inspired to study historic artillery publications, including John Gibbon's 1860 *Artillerist's Manual*.

After graduating from pharmacy school in 1968, Smithgall purchased his first cannon, a three-quarter scale, reproduction 6-pounder gun. With the help of fellow N-SSA member Dickie Dodd, he competed with it in the 1969 N-SSA Spring National, taking second place. At the 1969 Fall National, he improved his marksmanship and won first place. This cannon is still part of his collection. The 139th National Skirmish in May 2019 was Smithgall's one-hundredth N-SSA National artillery competition; his grandson Christopher is now involved in the N-SSA artillery competitions.

In the early 1970s, Paulson Brothers Ordnance Corporation developed a method of fabricating and installing rifled cannon liners for both new reproductions and original pieces in which the rifling had been shot out. They built their first Parrott rifle liner for Smithgall's 10-pounder Parrott South Bend Replica. While shooting this Parrott, Smithgall concluded that the projectiles were too short, and not as accurate as they should be. So he studied an original 10-pounder Parrott projectile and started making longer, more accurate aluminum

projectiles patterned after the original. Smithgall commented, "If you do what they did during the Civil War—within the limits of safety practices—you're going to do well; because back then, they did all of the research and development."

Smithgall appreciates his luck in being able to buy a lot of original artillery pieces. People seek him out to sell an artifact or if they see one for sale; his purchases have intertwined with family milestones over the years. Smithgall bought a Model 1900 Navy Colt Gatling gun (serial #11) the night that his wife-to-be, Debbie, met his mother. This did not dissuade Debbie from marrying Smithgall; he bought his first original artillery piece, a 12-pounder Dahlgren boat howitzer (serial #88), on their wedding day in August 1972. The accommodating seller delivered the Dahlgren to his house the morning of their wedding. Smithgall jokes that Debbie, "can offer PhD level courses in revenge spending."

In 1975, while expecting the birth of their daughter Allison, Smithgall purchased a Model 1857, light 12-pounder Napoleon manufactured in 1864 by Ames Manufacturing Company for the state of New Jersey. Now mounted on a carriage with original irons that Smithgall purchased elsewhere the next day, it is one of his favorite artillery pieces to shoot. It can be seen in action at his annual Gatling gun shoot the first Sunday in November.

"This is not just a static collection," says Smithgall. "These artillery pieces are able to be fired, so people can experience that." In October 2018, Smithgall won first place in the howitzer competition at the N-SSA 138th National with his original Ames 12-pounder field howitzer, scoring an impressive 50-3V at 100 yards. He also particularly enjoys shooting his two 20-pounder Parrott rifles: an Army model with a Paulson liner and an incredibly accurate Navy model with its original bore.

In addition to the guns, Smithgall's collection contains original projectiles,

limber chests, implements, sights, tools, a traveling forge, ammunition boxes, and saddles, anything used to make the guns work. This includes a reproduction hand sling cart, used to transport cannon and mortar barrels weighing up to 6,800 pounds between carriages or emplacements by slinging them under the cart's axle using a chain or heavy rope. Smithgall related that he has put this sling cart into action, "We used it at one National to move a 10-inch siege mortar. It works great."

When asked how he came to amass such a large collection, Smithgall grinned and replied, "It's like eating potato chips, you always want another one." But his obvious respect and deep appreciation for the engineering, functionality, and historic significance of these guns conveys the real motivation behind his collection. A tour of "the Barn" with him reveals his knowledge and fascination for the history of each piece and the details of the innovations, mechanics, powder loads, and the tools involved in using and firing them.

Smithgall explained, "My goal is to have representatives of each model on carriages, so that people can study them. You have to mount the guns on carriages to fully understand them. I try to show the progression of different guns and a complete collection of the different models if I can." Smithgall also mentioned that "more pieces will be added when available, to fill voids in the collection." Next, he is looking to acquire a small ("baby") 12-pounder Dahlgren, a rifled Dahlgren boat howitzer, a 100-pounder Parrott rifle, and/or an 8-inch Rodman.

For the preservation and exhibition of Smithgall's collection, including live firing when appropriate, he has formed the Smithgall Foundation, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) charitable organization devoted to educating interested parties about historic artillery. The 17,068 square feet, climate controlled, secure facility was completed in spring 2018.

There are many pieces in the collection that are extraordinary due to their rarity, historical significance, or design innovation.

Dahlgren IX-inch Shell Gun

Serial #117, Tredegar Foundry, 1857. Weight: 9,119 pounds. Powder charge: 16 pounds.

This large, iron cannon has the interesting provenance of being one of 26 IX-inch guns in the battery aboard the USS *Hartford*, which was commanded by Rear Admiral David Glasgow Farragut. Both man and ship are famous for the August 5, 1864, Battle of Mobile Bay when Farragut purportedly shouted one of the most famous quotes in naval folklore, "Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead!" After service on board the *Hartford*, this Dahlgren was at Bannerman Island until purchased by a hotel proprietor in Hagerstown, Md., where it sat in front of the hotel for years. A fellow collector bought it from the hotel, owned it for several years, and then called Smithgall to see if he wanted to buy it. It is



Smithgall's impressive pair of 32-pounder field howitzers sits in front of a backdrop of original artillery implements. (Left) Ames Manufacturing Company, serial #3, manufactured in 1851, weight: 1,930 pounds. (Right) Cyrus Alger & Company, serial #1, manufactured in 1848, weight: 1,883 pounds.

now one of the showpieces of his collection. Smithgall has fired this Dahlgren, much to the amazement of the crew and onlookers. The percussiveness of even a reduced powder charge (with no projectile) knocked items off the shelves of nearby buildings and blew open the roof vents and cabinet doors in a camper over 50 yards away.



This Dahlgren IX-inch Shell Gun, serial #117, manufactured at Tredegar Foundry in 1857, weighs 9,119 pounds and fired a service charge of 16 pounds. It was one of 26 IX-inch guns in the battery aboard the USS *Hartford*, commanded by Rear Admiral David Glasgow Farragut. It is the only surviving *Hartford* gun made at Tredegar, as the rest were manufactured at Cyrus Alger & Co.

32-pounder Field Howitzers:

Serial #3, Ames Manufacturing Company, 1851.

Serial #1, Cyrus Alger & Company, 1848.

In the first row of artillery pieces in the Barn sit two bronze 32-pounder field howitzers, each with two handles on top of the barrels. These large howitzers fired a powder charge of 3.5 pounds to launch projectiles—especially canister—primarily in the defense of fortifications. Smithgall purchased one of these rare howitzers from the Paulson Brothers (#3 Ames) and acquired the other (#1 Alger) in a trade.

24-pounder Field Howitzer

Serial #27, Cyrus Alger & Company, 1863.

This 24-pounder field howitzer sits next to the pair of 32-pounder field howitzers. That placement is intentional and has historic significance. On May 21, 1864, Company L, 1st Connecticut Heavy Artillery under Captain Pride, placed two 32-pounders and one 24-pounder field howitzer,



This 24-pounder field howitzer, serial #27, manufactured in 1863 by Cyrus Alger & Company, weighs 1,310 pounds, and fired a service charge of 2.5 pounds.

like the ones in Smithgall's collection, in Fort Dutton, an advanced redoubt near Richmond. In a rare occasion of 32-pounder howitzers being used in battle, on June 2, 1864, canister fire

from those three howitzers repelled the assault of the 22nd South Carolina Infantry. The canister fire killed Colonel Olin M. Dantzler, and 16 of his men, so demoralizing the unit that a lieutenant and 22 enlisted men surrendered rather than attempt to retreat under the canister fire.¹

Parrott Rifle Series

Smithgall has a particular affinity for Parrott rifles, and has acquired representative pieces of many sizes and models. One early 1861 model 2.9-inch, 10-pounder Parrott marked "CAV" (patent applied for) was never side-sighted, and instead used a breech sight. Another 2.9-inch, 10-pounder Parrott (serial #5, 1861), made for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, possibly saw action in the Battle of Second Manassas, serving with Thompson's Independent Battery C, Pennsylvania Light Artillery.² There is a 3-inch bore, later Model 1863 Parrott, made when the U.S. military tried to standardize

10-pounder rifle ammunition for both the 3-inch ordnance rifle and the Parrott. Smithgall's collection also has three larger Parrott rifles, including two 20-pounders (Army, serial #3, 1861 and Navy, serial #325, 1865), that typically fired a two-pound service charge; and a 30-pounder (serial #338, 1864), which fired a 3.25-pound charge; all three were made at West Point Foundry.

3-inch Ordnance Rifle Series

The predecessor of the reliable 3-inch ordnance rifle was invented by John Griffen Jr., superintendent of Safe Harbor Iron Works in Safe Harbor, Penn., not far from Smithgall's Barn. This series includes representatives of each major model variation. It starts with the 1855 type Griffen gun (a 6-pounder smoothbore) and progresses through the different models of 3-inch ordnance rifles. One rifle (serial #219, 1862) served with

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This 2.9-inch, 10-pounder Parrott, serial #5, made for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania was possibly in action at the Battle of Second Manassas, serving with Thompson's Independent Battery C, Pennsylvania Light Artillery.



Smithgall's collection of 3-inch ordnance rifles progresses through the different models representing each major variation, including experimental models and later breechloaders. The first gun in this series is the 1855 Model Griffen gun, a 6-pounder smoothbore cannon, the predecessor to the 3-inch ordnance rifle, and was made at Phoenix Iron Company, Phoenixville, Pennsylvania in 1861.

Hall's 2nd Maine Battery at Gettysburg. Another (serial #260, 1862) is side-sighted, rather than having the usual breech sight. Serial numbers 735 and 815 (both 1864) are examples of the Reeves patent of December 1862, which represent significant improvements in the rifle's manufacturing process. Another, a cast steel variant,

was manufactured by Singer, Nimick, & Company in Pittsburgh in 1862. An experimental 3.2-inch model with a Krupp type breech (serial #3) is one of only five manufactured to develop the 3.2-inch breechloading rifle. That development resulted in the 3.2-inch Model 1895 breechloader, made at Watervliet Arsenal in New York and



The breech of an experimental 3.2-inch model ordnance rifle with a Krupp type breech is serial #3 of only five manufactured to develop the 3.2-inch breechloading rifle.

used in the Spanish-American War. It was also the first cannon model to be fitted with a telescopic sight. Smithgall's example is the most recent original cannon in the collection and has an original sight mounted on it.

U.S. 4.5-inch Siege Rifle

Serial #51, Fort Pitt Foundry, 1863.

This cast iron cannon fired a 3.5-pound service charge and looks like a super-sized ordnance rifle. At the time Smithgall acquired this rifle, he subscribed to the catalog of Butterfield & Butterfield auction house. He was keeping an eye out for a siege rifle, and when the auction house listed this gun, he bid on it and won.

13-inch Model 1861 Seacoast Mortar

Serial #1051, Fort Pitt Foundry, 1862. Barrel weight: 17,197 pounds. Carriage weight: 4,140 pounds.

Smithgall's most recent addition to his collection served on the USS *John Griffith* (1861), a mortar schooner purchased and used by the U.S. Navy. The *John Griffith* was assigned to the



This 13-inch Model 1861 seacoast mortar was manufactured at Fort Pitt Foundry in 1862. This mortar served on the USS *John Griffith* (1861), one of the mortar schooners purchased and used by the U.S. Navy. It weighs 17,197 pounds (without the carriage) and has a maximum range of 2.6 miles. Smithgall stands next to the newest addition to his collection for scale.

Mississippi River and saw action in the attacks on Fort Jackson and Fort Saint Phillip and the siege of Vicksburg. She then served off South Carolina and Georgia as part of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron.³

Tredegar 2.25-inch Confederate Mountain Rifle

Serial #1552, Tredegar Foundry, 1862, original carriage and limber.

The 2.25-inch mountain rifle in Smithgall's collection is one of only four surviving examples of this model, and the only one with its original carriage and limber/limber chest. At the end of the Civil War, when the troops mustered out in Richmond, the youngest soldier from a Pennsylvania unit was given the job of taking the supply wagon back to Pennsylvania while everyone else rode the train. The young soldier, named Coleman, saw this mountain rifle and asked a Union officer if he could have it. The officer agreed, so Coleman hooked the mountain rifle and limber to the back of the supply wagon for the trip home. In 1972, while performing cannon demonstrations at a Lancaster County

museum, Smithgall met Coleman's son, who told him, "I have a cannon in my basement, do you want to look at it?" Smithgall visited him, and immediately knew what the mountain rifle was and how rare it is; he called Ed Olmstead to verify the serial number. Smithgall made an agreement with Mr. Coleman that he would take possession of the cannon and limber upon the owner's passing.



This 2.25-inch Confederate mountain rifle, serial #1552, was manufactured at Tredegar Foundry in 1862.



This 2.25-inch Confederate mountain rifle is one of only four surviving examples of this model, and the only one with its original carriage and limber/limber chest.

Confederate 24-pounder Mortar

Manufactured at Tredegar Foundry.

This style of mortar was made at Tredegar Foundry and Selma Naval Gun Foundry and Ordnance Works for siege work; only a few originals survive. Smithgall's example of this plain, iron mortar sits on a reproduction ladder-style carriage with all original ironwork. Part of its original wooden carriage is displayed next to the mortar.



This Confederate 24-pounder mortar, manufactured at Tredegar Foundry, is mounted on a reproduction of its ladder-style carriage with all original ironwork. Smithgall still has part of its original wooden carriage.



The first row of artillery pieces in the Barn includes a variety of howitzer models, ranging from the smaller Dahlgren boat howitzers and M1841 mountain howitzers to the large 32-pounder field howitzers.



Smithgall's new 17,068 square feet, climate controlled, secure facility housing his collection was completed in spring 2018.



Smithgall's grandson Christopher has become involved in shooting in the N-SSA artillery competitions. Here, he fires a bronze 12-pounder mountain howitzer.



This 20-pounder Navy Parrott Rifle, serial #325, was manufactured in 1865 at West Point Foundry, weighs 1,710 pounds, and still has its original rifled bore.



Smithgall purchased this 12-pounder Dahlgren light boat howitzer, on the morning of his wedding.



The row of Parrott rifles includes representative pieces of many sizes and models. In the foreground is Smithgall's 30-pounder Parrott rifle, manufactured at West Point Foundry in 1864.



Tours of the Smithgall Foundation's collection are available to artillery enthusiasts or for research purposes by appointment at telephone number 717-471-4000.



This gun is one of six 12-pounder, Model 1857 light Napoleons manufactured by Ames Manufacturing Company in 1864 for the state of New Jersey. It is mounted on a reproduction carriage with original irons, and is one of Smithgall's favorite artillery pieces to shoot.



Smithgall has used this reproduction hand sling cart to move his 10-inch siege mortar. The heavy item to be moved is slung under the axle of the cart, suspended by a chain or heavy rope.



This bronze 12-pounder Model 1841, serial #56, is rifled with the James system of rifling. It was manufactured in 1854 by Ames Manufacturing Company. It weighs 1,773 pounds and fired a service charge of 2.5 pounds.



Lyle line throwing guns were used to throw lines between ships, and were required on all ships that handled passengers.



Charlie Smithgall deftly aims his Ames 12-pounder field howitzer, serial #89, manufactured in 1848. He and the 3rd U.S. Artillery crew won first place in the howitzer class at the N-SSA 138th National Skirmish with this smoothbore gun, scoring an impressive 50-3V at 100 yards.



The winning howitzer target of the N-SSA 138th National Skirmish, shot at a distance of 100 yards by Smithgall and the 3rd U.S. Artillery with his original Ames 12-pounder.

Two Wiard Rifles:

2.6-inch (6-pounder) Wiard rifle, serial #56.

3.67-inch (12-pounder) Wiard rifle, serial #61.

Both were manufactured in 1862 at O'Donnell Foundry in New York City.

Smithgall bought both of his Wiard rifles from private collectors. To see any foundry markings on the 6-pounder, he had to scrape off several layers of paint, and has since properly conserved the barrel. When he acquired these rifles, no one knew how to reproduce their unique, innovative carriage, so Charlie collaborated with the Paulson brothers to study a copy of Wiard's original patent drawing Smithgall had. They were then able to scale up the drawings and make reproduction Wiard carriages.

Colt Model 1900 Army Gatling Gun

Serial #1108.

This original open-barreled Army Gatling gun is mounted on an original carriage. When Smithgall was 16 years old, a friend of his purchased it. The teenaged Smithgall was with him when he bought the gun, and subsequently had the opportunity to fire it. Decades later, his friend sold it to Smithgall.

Mountain Howitzer Mule Saddles

Model 1841 mountain howitzers were transported on pack mules using specially made saddles. Smithgall's collection includes two of these saddles. One is mounted with an original mountain howitzer barrel; the other carries an original ammunition box to show how they were transported. Smithgall bought these at an auction from a sutler who had purchased them from Bannerman.

Tours of the Smithgall Foundation's collection are available to artillery enthusiasts or for research



This 3.67-inch (12-pounder) Wiard rifle, serial #61 was manufactured in 1862 at O'Donnell Foundry in New York, N.Y. When mounted on the innovative Wiard carriages, these guns could be elevated up to an angle of 35 degrees, allowing them to fire with a trajectory more like mortars.



2.6-inch (6-pounder) Wiard rifle.

purposes by appointment at telephone number 717-471-4000. Smithgall plans to host an open house of his collection the weekend of November 22-24, 2019.

Notes / Sources:

1. *Official Records*, Ser. 1, vol. 36, pt. 2; and James C. Hazlett, Edwin Olmstead, M. Hume Parks, *Field Artillery Weapons of the Civil War*, ©1983, Associated University Presses, Inc.

2. Samuel P. Bates, *History of Pennsylvania Volunteers, 1861-65*, Harrisburg, B. Singerly, state printer, 1869-71.
3. *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships* (DANFS).

I had heard about Charlie's collection for years, but descriptions couldn't prepare me for my initial visit. When you step into the Barn, you are first greeted by the massive Dahlgren shell



This Model 1900 Navy Colt Gatling gun, serial #11, manufactured in 1901, has a fully encased bronze facing. Both the gun and the assault carriage are original, with original ammunition boxes.

gun. Then you look past that to the howitzers, Parrotts, Gatlings, and Wards that are immediately in sight, as you try to decide what to look at next. Having a profound interest in historic artillery, my reaction was outright amazement. Three visits to the Smithgall farm and countless hours spent studying and photographing this extraordinary collection have only amplified the excitement of experiencing such a volume and variety of beautifully curated original artillery pieces and tools. I convey my sincere gratitude to Charlie and Debbie Smithgall for their time, hospitality, numerous questions answered, my education, and for making this my new normal.

Ericka Hoffmann is the National Photography Officer and member of the North-South Skirmish Association. She crews with her team, Dulany Troop, 6th Virginia Cavalry, in artillery competitions with their 2.25-inch Tredegar mountain rifle, M1841 mountain howitzer, 3-inch ordnance rifle, and mortar. During the work week, she is a Senior Proposal Manager and writer in Fairfax, Virginia.



Original open-barreled Colt Model 1900 Army Gatling gun, serial #1108, is mounted on an original carriage. When manufactured, it was chambered in .30-40 Krag, but was converted to .30-06 in 1907 at the Rock Island Armory.



Model 1841 mountain howitzers were transported on pack mules, using specially made saddles. One saddle is displayed mounted with an original mountain howitzer barrel; the other is mounted with an original ammunition box to show how they were used.



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