

CIVIL WAR CANNON

Napoleon 12-Pounder, Model 1857

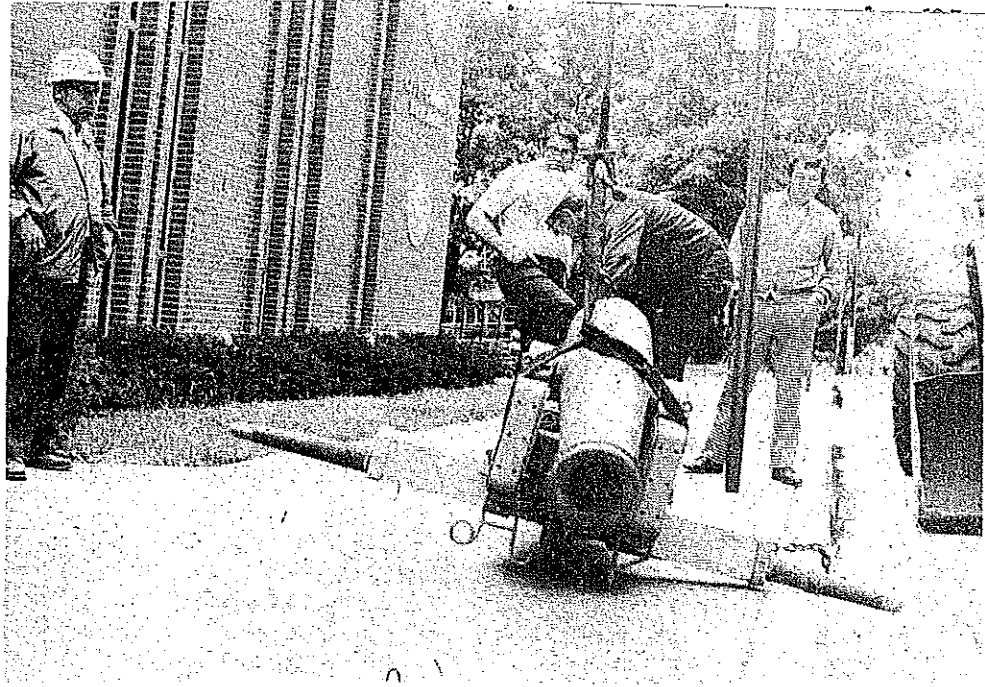
Placed at City Park (which is now Winter Sports Park)

Moved to Veterans Park

Moved to City-County Building

Now in storage

Petoskey
News-Review
Tuesday,
February 22,
1977



A BRONZE CANNON similar to those used during the Napoleonic Wars was moved from the Veterans Memorial Park to the foyer of the City-County Building yesterday. The main reason for the transfer is to preserve the wooden undercarriage which supports the close to 1,200 pound barrel. (NEWS photo by Dennis Chase)

Restored Civil War Cannon Moved to City-County Bld.

By DENNIS CHASE

The mysterious bronze cannon that stood on a cement pedestal in the Veterans Memorial Park for years was moved Wednesday to the City-County Building.

Researchers have thus far been unable to uncap how the cannon ended in Petoskey and who was responsible for getting it here.

Reg Sharkey has been one of the researchers who has been trying to track down the un-found information.

"My educated guess is that a retired Col. Toll brought the cannon here through his influence," he said. "He was a very prominent man who lived on the corner of Lindell and Lockwood-ave. He donated the property where the

old Lockwood Hospital was."

The cannon was about the 25th or 26th cast by the Revere Copper Co., however, the companies records were damaged in a fire years back and they were unable to help local historians with information.

Harriet Kilborn, county clerk, has checked back through city and village council meeting minutes to see if any mention was made as to the cannon being accepted as a gift. She also has filed through newspapers starting with 1875, but so far no luck.

Bruce Catton, a Civil War historian, has found nothing in records kept in the nation's capital.

Sharkey said the cannon is similar to those used during the

Napoleonic Wars. The barrel weighs close to 1,200 pounds and the wooden undercarriage is an additional 500 pounds or so.

City workers had to dismantle the barrel in order to get it past the doorway in the City-County Building—its new home.

The prime reason the cannon shifted sites is to preserve the wooden undercarriage.

"About 10 years ago it would have cost \$1,500 to rebuild the undercarriage," said Sharkey. "And that cannon has quite a lot of value."

Helmuth Schulz has done much work to restore the two wheels, especially the spokes and rims, that were badly in need of repair.

Although it is the city that

owns the cannon, Sharkey said, the veterans were first approached about doing something so the cannon would not deteriorate into junk.

When they gave their approval to move the cannon to a sheltered area or to have a shelter built over the existing pedestal, various organizations were contacted about the idea. But, it was not until Mayor Barb Waters suggested the foyer of the City-County Building that action was taken.

After the city and county agreed, details were worked out for it to be moved.

A bronze plaque dedicated to war veterans will hopefully be attached to the cannon later, said Sharkey, explaining what history is known.

CANNON ROARED AT HANGING OF GARFIELD'S KILLER

Civil War Weapon Arrived in Petoskey, 1882

Petoskey News-Review
Tuesday, February 22, 1977

Editor's note: In March of 1975, Reg Sharkey asked Mrs. Idena Clark at Petoskey Friendship Center for help in learning the history of Petoskey's wheel-mounted Civil War cannon. Mrs. Elnora Lee was asked to do the task, and the result follows:

After months of researching, the 1 ½ inch fine printed paragraph, in a newspaper column equal to today's tea table, tells of the arrival in Petoskey of our No. 27 Civil War Cannon. Much more space was given to the building of the Arlington Hotel, the Rosenthal block, the F.R. & I. Railroad depot and the hanging of Charles J. Guiteau. The first regular train run to Mackinaw City was a week later.

The Petoskey businessmen joined together and ordered a 1,200 pound cannon from Boston. It arrived June 26, 1882 by freight train and was unloaded the next morning. It was in time for the grand 4th of July celebration, when it was to "*wake and call us early*" with a 100 gun reveille at sun-rise—a custom to prevail on the 4th for some years.

It could speak out when the weather was too inclement for parades or speeches, as on July 4, 1884, when "*the cannon boomed hour after hour from the high bluff and echoed in the fog over the bay.*"

But the first time our "No. 27" spoke in Petoskey was to herald justice on June 30, 1882 when Charles J. Guiteau was hanged in Washington D. C. The year before he had shot President Garfield. The country was glad that justice had been meted out. Now Petoskey had a loud voice to join in that proclamation.

The next year, August 11, 1883, The Lombard Post No. 170 of the Grand Army of the Republic {GAR} was organized in Petoskey with 58 members. Several state officials were in town for the event. The "*big gun*" spoke again when J.W. Chilson fired the salute at 1 p.m. Mr. J.S. Coffman was one of the gun's owners.

We can well believe that it has been fired on many occasions, but it could not have been popular with the newspaper of the era, as there is so little mentioned of it through the years.

Tradition reveals that paths lead one up the valley to old City Park, which became the City Zoo and later, Winter Sports Park. The north hill, about half a block west of the north end of Bay View Ave. was known as Flag Pole Hill in the Park. Here was a flag pole and "No. 27" looking over the top of the

hill out onto the bay, as if guarding the city of attack by sea.

John Deschermeier visited the zoo and cannon many times as a lad, and recalls that the cannon was still there in 1928. After that, it was stored with its other tube until the Veterans Park was created in 1842. There in wartime and until 1876, it reminded motorists, that America had given her men to defend our precious country.

The local Bicentennial Commission desired in 1875 that the deteriorating oak wheels should be preserved. The wheels were removed and worked on for some months by Helmuth Schulz. Just before July 4, 1876 the cannon and wheels were mounted in the foyer of the City-County Building on Division at Lake Sts, and its days of fighting the elements were ended.

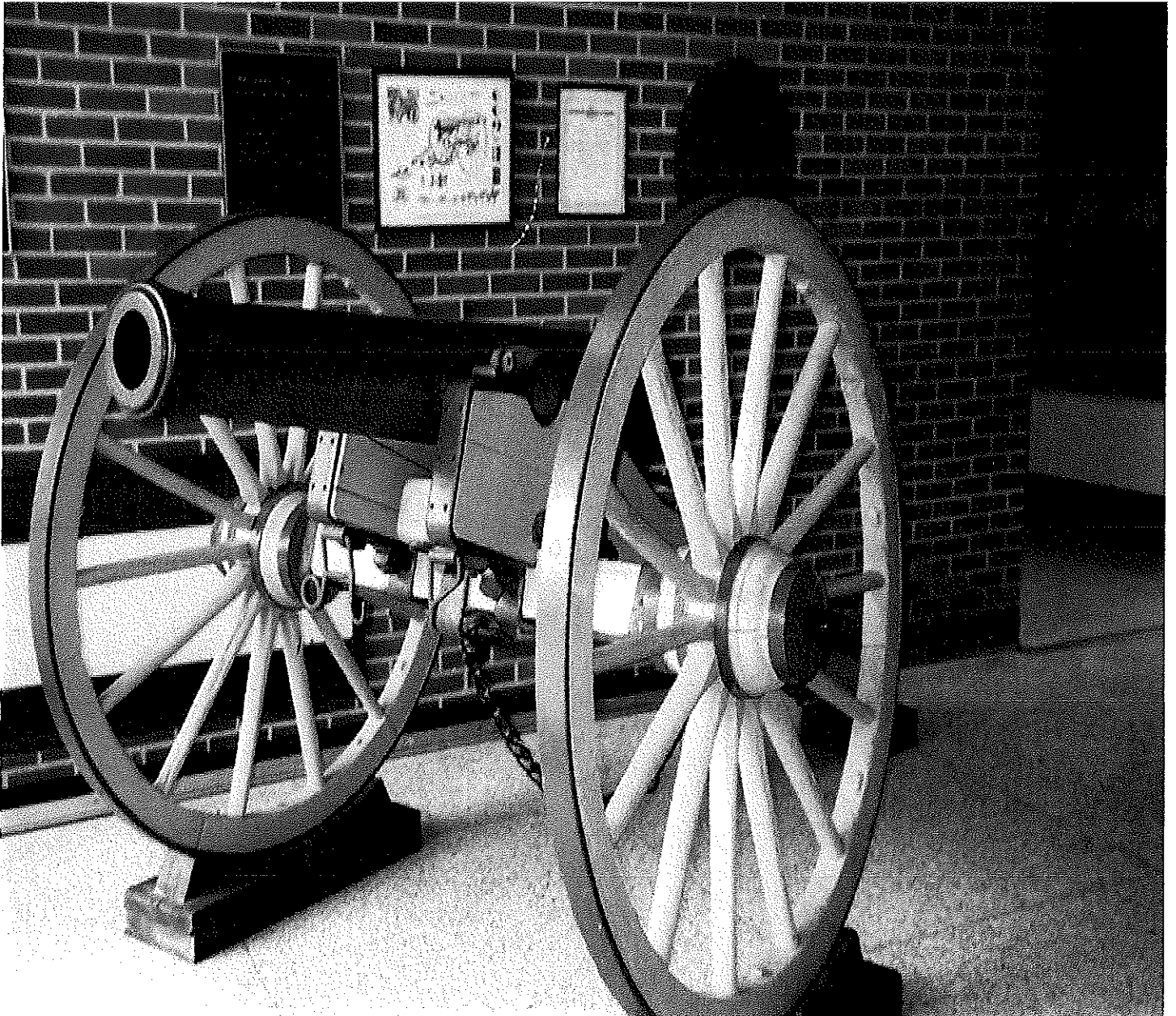
This cannon - No. 27 - was likely the 27th one made for the first order of 30 cannons that James Ripley, Brigadier General, Chief of Ordinance asked, Nov. 14, 1861, the Revere Copper Company of Boston, Mass. to manufacture. The tone of the orders show the urgent need for artillery by the North in the first years of the Civil War. From the Revere Company about 343 were ordered within two years, plus orders to other companies. Chief Ripley begged for an output of five cannons per week.

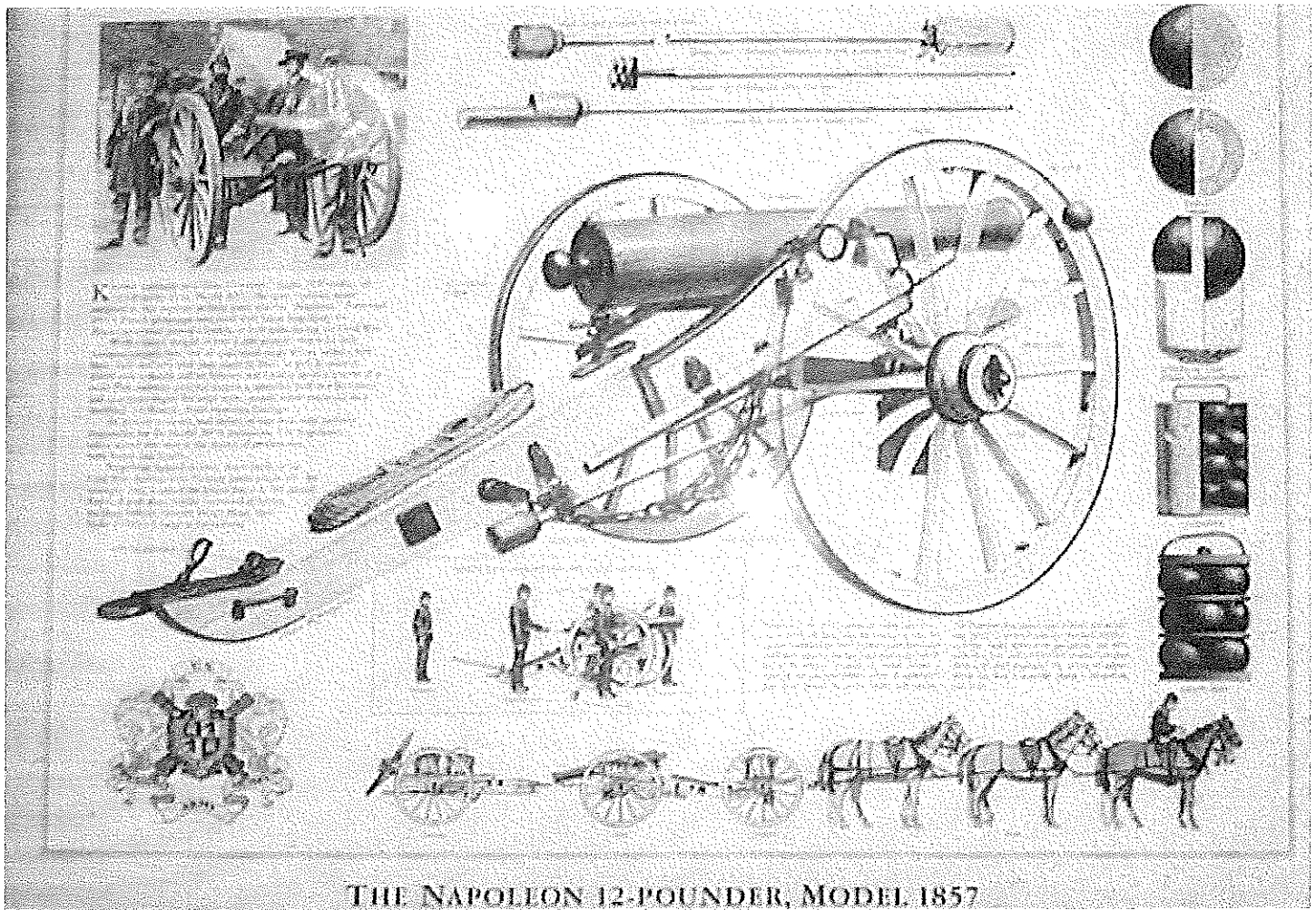
The cannon's war history has not surfaced, as from which battlefield it spoke out for victory and unity or under which general it served. But as it was shipped from Boston and was of the first order, it likely stayed in the north eastern part of the country. We will comprehend its unutterable history by general written accounts of bravery, courage and endurance in those terrible years of Civil War that ended with a united country; a war that lifted veterans speaking of each others as "*Comrades*" and striving to meet at annual encampments. pride and certainty of home and country was their reward for the suffering and privation that this cannon has witnessed.

{Researched and compiled by Mrs. Leonard {Elnora} Lee, with appreciation to Peggy Blount at museum library for missing clues}

ROBERT FINCH
Camp No. 14
SUVCW

**Civil War Cannon
The Napoleon 12-Pounder, Model 1857
Petoskey City-County Building
Petoskey, Michigan**





THE NAPOLEON 12-POUNDER, MODEL 1857

**12 Pound Bronze Napoleon
Formally located at the Petoskey City-County Building Petoskey, Michigan**

The 1,191 lbs. Revere Cooper Co. 12 pound bronze Napoleon cannon, Modal 1857, Registry # 27, inspected by Thomas J. Rodman in 1862, has been disassembled & is being stored.

The cannon was at one time on display at the City/County Building in Petoskey but do to remodeling and some restoration needs it has been put in storage. It is the intent of the County to put the cannon on indoor display at the yet to be built County Museum. The tube is in very good condition & all of the hardware is intact. Depending on the desired out come, restoration on the carriage could vary. There were some makings on the left trunnion I could not read & I was unable to turn the tube over to read the right trunnion or confirm the US stamp on the top of the cannon. I was able to feel the top of the cannon and I believe the US stamp is in place. 6/18/2012

Information taken from large chart on wall, near the Napoleon 12-Pounder Cannon, in lobby of Petoskey City-County Building.

Known variously as the "Gun Howitzer" "Light 12-Pounder Gun, Model 1857" the most common name assigned to this popular artillery piece was the "Napoleon" patterned after a French prototype associated with Louis Napoleon. The American version proved a favorite of both sides during the Civil War. With a barrel weight of over 1200 lbs. This 4.62 inch diameter smooth bore had an impressive range of just under a mile. Shot shell and spherical cases could be fired as well as

canister, which took a deadly toll on Infantry and Cavalry up to 1/4 of a mile. This diversity gave this weapon a capability both as a field piece and to a lesser degree for siege work, usually employed on a modified "24 Pounder Field Howitzer Carriage."

It's relative accuracy and variety of uses were only partially responsible for the 1857 reputation. The Napoleon's safety record also won it the support of artillery men both North and South. Napoleons figured in every battle of the Civil War. Serving with General James Longstreet for example they stunned the Union forces at the second battle of Bull Run under the command of Union Artillery officer, General Henry Hunt that broke Picket's charge at Gettysburg.

Research Material:

Mrs. Elnora Lee

The Napoleon 12-Pounder, Model 1857

Petoskey City-County Building

Petoskey, Michigan

This is a copy of the Research Material that Mrs. Elnora Lee used in writing her story "Our Cannon on Wheels" completed on February 14, 1977.

The Northern Independent newspaper printed in Harbor Springs, at the Petoskey Museum. Petoskey Item, June 20, 1882. Petoskey has always had a hankering for Big Guns and now we are to have one all of the time. The businessmen have all joined together and ordered a 1200 pound cannon which is expected in time for the 4th.

Northern Independent – July 4, 1882: The cannon was fired a number of times Friday P.M. as a farewell requiem to Charles J. Guiteau. (From other accounts: he was the assassin who shot Pres. Garfield July 2, 1881, but Garfield, though wounded, lived until Sept. 19, 1881. Guiteau was hanged June 30, 1882.)

Northern Independent - July 5, 1881: President Garfield was shot twice at railroad station in Washington, D.C. on Saturday A.M. The bullets were removed on Sunday. He was enough better by Monday that he requested the 4th celebrations to go on. Chester Arthur was vice-president.

Northern Independent- June 27, 1882: Petoskey plans for a grand 4th of July celebration when "the big gun will wake and call us early".

Petoskey City Record – June 29, 1882 (Thursday): Local and Personal – The "big gun" arrived from Boston Monday, and was unloaded from the cars Tuesday morning. It weighs about 1200 pounds, and will be shot the first time tomorrow while Guiteau is dangling in eternity. Marcus Covell, brother- in- law, of Chas. Carmichael, will probably take charge of the firing. He is an old hand at the business, having served in that capacity in the regular army and long in the military service, and is also a graduate gunner.

Northern Independent – July 8, 1884: The rain which began during the night, could not dampen the ardor nor wet the powder of the cannoniers...hour after hour the booming gun rang out upon the air and echoed from the banks of fog that over hung the water. (from a 1 1/2 col. Article on Petoskey's July 4th activities)

Plaque Relates History Of Civil War Cannon at City-County Building

By KENDALL P. STANLEY

A Civil War cannon, a fixture in the foyer of the City-County Building in Petoskey since 1975, recently was affixed with a plaque telling its history through its move to Petoskey in 1882.

Preparation of the plaque was a several-year project of Elnora Lee, who was asked in 1975 to find the history of the cannon as part of the bicentennial effort. After checking old newspapers and conducting research, she completed the history in 1977, after the city's bicentennial commission had been dissolved.

It wasn't until this year she was able to convince city officials to provide a plaque relating the history of the cannon.

Helmuth "Bud" Schulz of Petoskey also worked on the cannon project, rebuilding the wheels and adding other woodwork.

The cannon was the 27th made by the Revere Copper Co. for the Civil War.

In 1882, the cannon was shipped from Boston, ordered by a Petoskey businessman.

It was fired on June 30, 1882, when President Garfield's killer was hanged, and on July 4th in a 100-gun reveille.

The armament stood on Arlington Hill until 1929, when it was moved to the Veteran's Park on West Mitchell Street until 1975.



PETOSKEY resident Elnora Lee points to a plaque on cannon in the City-County Building describing the history which she researched. At left is Bud Schulz, who repaired much of the woodwork on the cannon. (NEWS photo Kendall P. Stanley)