

The purpose of this research project is to investigate a 19th Century rocket launcher I saw for the first time a couple of years ago at the Ft Ward museum (photo attached). It has intrigued me ever since as I had not seen one before and thought I was fairly familiar with the indirect fire weapons of our Civil War.

I contacted the museum director and was allowed full hands-on access to the object and provided what documentation was available as a result of its accession in 1972. There are maybe 5 or 6 known to exist (3 or 4 in museums and maybe two in private collections).

A cursory library and web check revealed that while there is information available on the object, it is scattered and not comprehensive. I believe it would be beneficial to produce a single comprehensive source, to include photographs and technical drawings, usable by researchers (the museum is interested in the final product) and American Civil War re-enactors. This item appears to be a significant, but relatively unknown innovation, taking the concept well forward of older versions, filled a gap in field artillery, but was hobbled by manufacturing techniques of the day.

