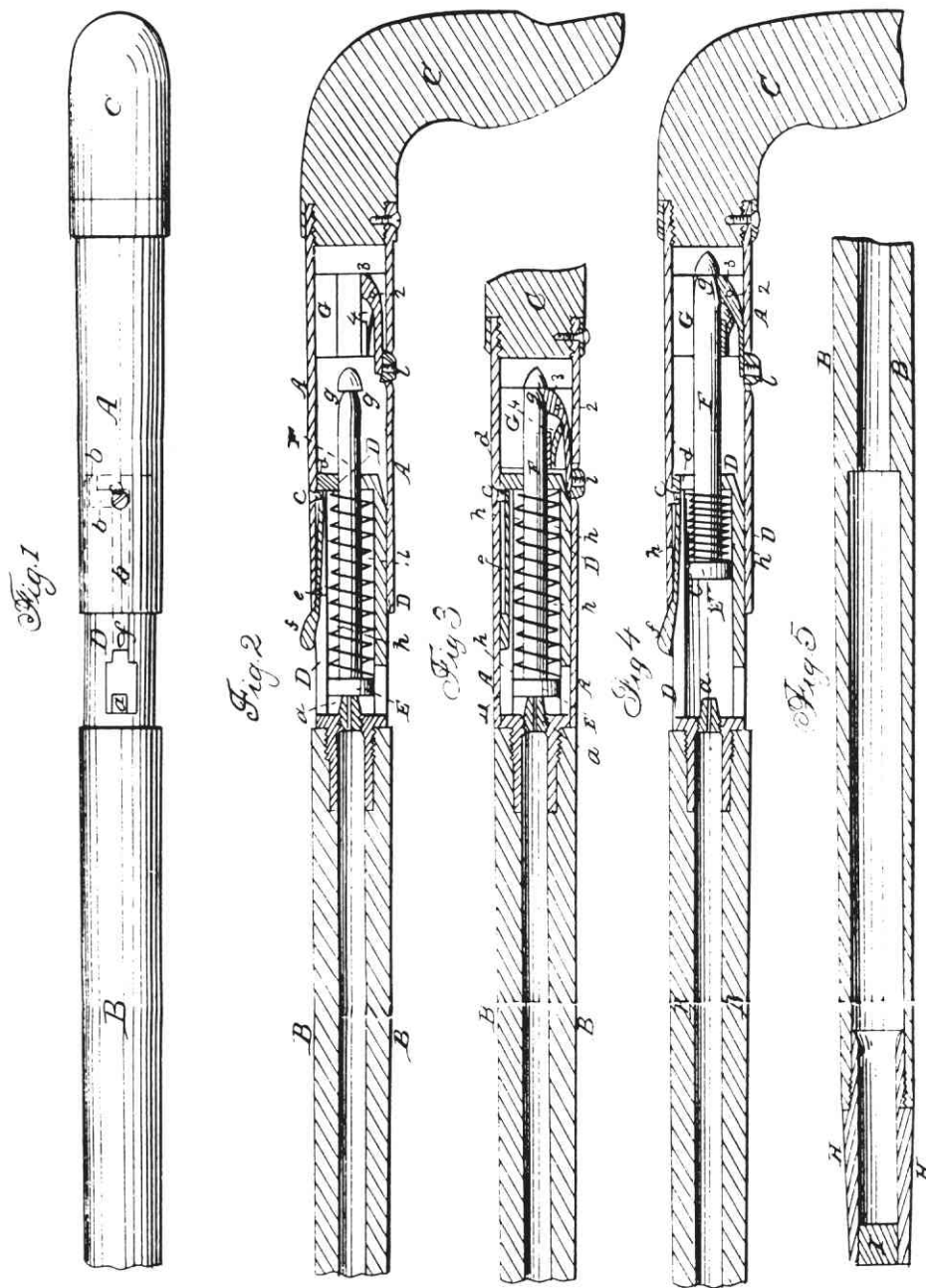


J. THOMAS.
Muzzle-Loading Fire-Arm.

No. 19,328.

Patented Feb. 9, 1858.



H. PETERS, PHOTO-LITHOGRAPHER WASHINGTON D. C.

Figure A

Remington Cane Guns

Paul Berg

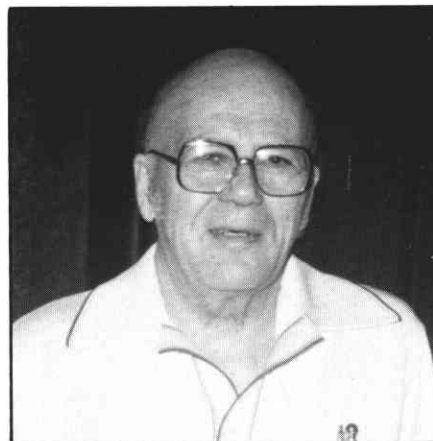
“Hand me down my walking cane,” goes an old spiritual. Could it have been a cane gun? A Remington cane gun?

Remington & Sons are believed to be the fourth American maker of cane guns. In 1824 Joseph Saxton made a sketch of a breech loading cane gun which was never patented. Examples of Saxton’s work are in the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia and parts indicate this gun was made. Dr. Roger Lambert is listed in the Patent Office records as having been granted a patent in 1832 for a cane gun. The patent drawing is known but the patent description does not exist and may have been lost in the Patent Office fire of 1836. About 1840 A.B. Fairbanks made a cane gun with underhammer ignition and examples of this are known.

Cane guns of many types were made in Europe, and, according to early references, their use was attributed to poachers; the disguise is effective. The cane was also a disguise for a sword, a dagger, a revolver and even a bottle of spirits.

Remington’s product was based on United States patent no. 19,328, awarded to John F. Thomas in 1858 and assigned jointly to him and Samuel Remington. Remington acquired Thomas’ patent rights July 20, 1859.

The patent drawing is shown in Figure A and the description claims a muzzle loading arrangement. An examination of the drawing would indicate that muzzle loading was anticipated. The actual construction of the cane that was first made is shown in Figure B, and the loading is at the breech end similar to some pistols made at the time, for instance, the Allen. The powder is poured into a chamber in the handle end and a ball perched on top. The barrel is then screwed to the handle. The cap is placed on the nipple after the handle has been pulled to cock position and held there by the rear sight. The front sight on this first model was attached to a ring as shown in Figure C. This figure also shows the



patentee’s name on the ferrule and the serial number for this model was placed on the ferrule. In a few cases the number has also appeared on the barrel and it has been found on the brass tube under the ferrule.

The cane gun was first advertised (Figure D), as being made of gutta percha or vulcanized rubber but later advertisements mention only gutta percha. Note that the drawing in this first advertisement is like the patent drawing and not like the actual construction in Figure B. Many specimens are found cracked because of the fragile nature of the gutta percha or hard rubber.

The steel barrel is rifled only the first 8¾” to 9” and around this rifled section a brass tube extends from the breech to the muzzle where it is threaded to accept the metal ferrule. The ferrule was necessary to take the abuse when used as a cane. The ferrule is recessed to take a plug; a cork was recommended. The brass tube was then covered with the gutta percha or rubber.

The cover had a tendency to warp, so sighting down the barrel on some of these old pieces reveals the bullet would have to turn a corner to get out the muzzle. Precautions should be taken when storing these pieces to keep them from reaching above normal temperatures.

The first model was offered with different

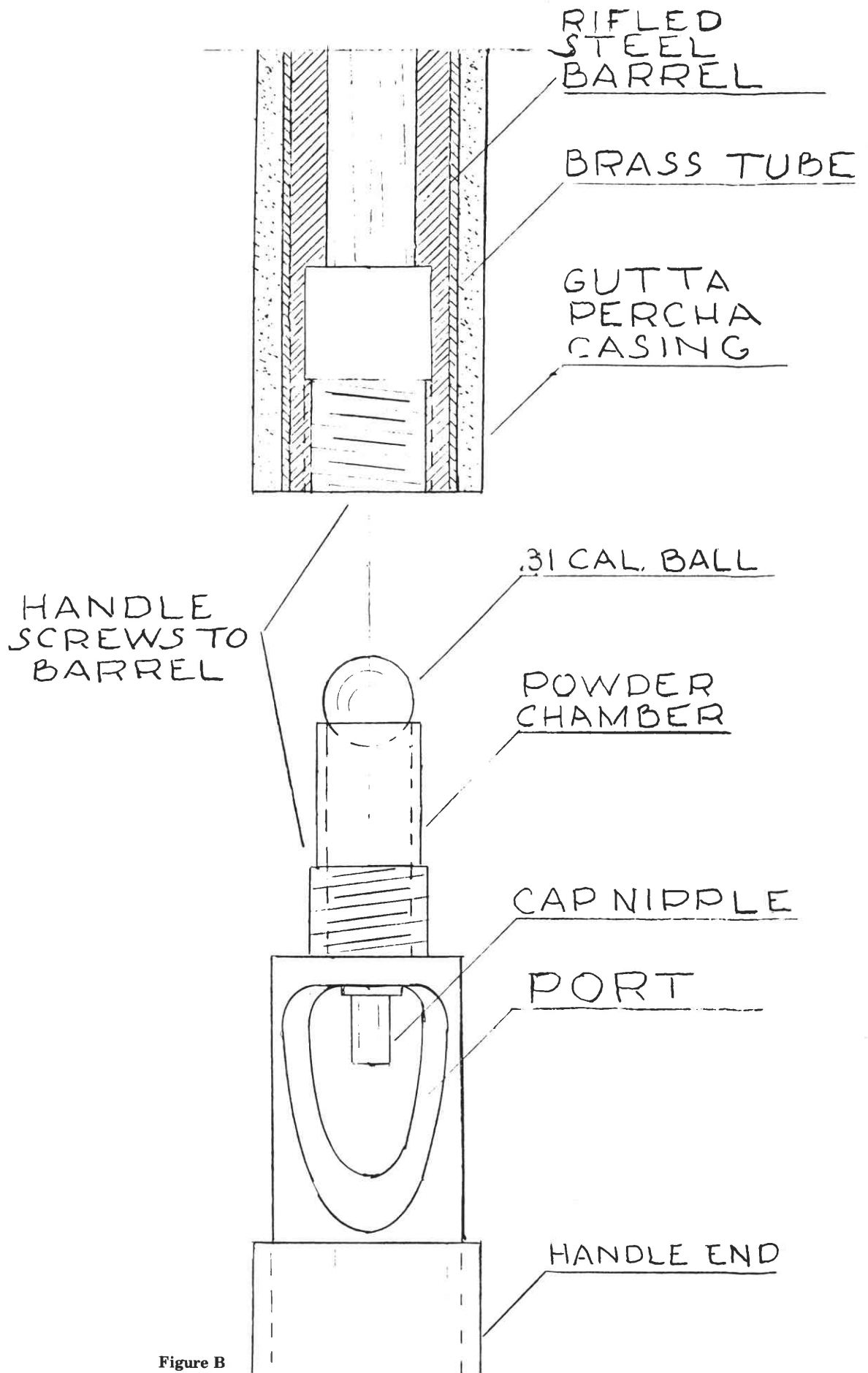


Figure B



Figure D

Courtesy New York Historical Society

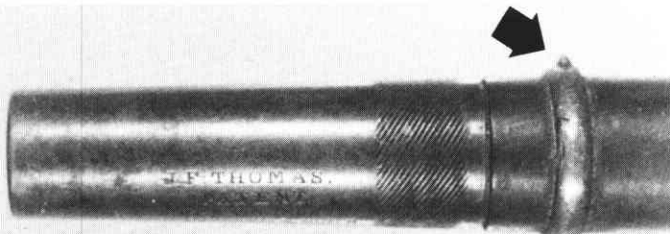


Figure C

handles (Figure D), but a dog's head turned up in this survey as could be expected by the patent drawing. In addition, an ivory-handled cane was discovered (Figure E), inscribed "From Members of the Elysian Club."

Of the 17 cane guns reported in percussion, the distribution by handle types was as follows: 4 - curved, 1 - ivory, 6 - clawed ball, 1 - right angle (pewter), 2 - bulbous, 1 - dog's head and 2 - handle missing. No relation was found between the type handle and the serial number.

Two specimens were reported converted from percussion to cartridge. This conversion was not offered by Remington, but the company *was* known to supply changes as evidenced by the revolvers. The conversion of the cane gun was not difficult and

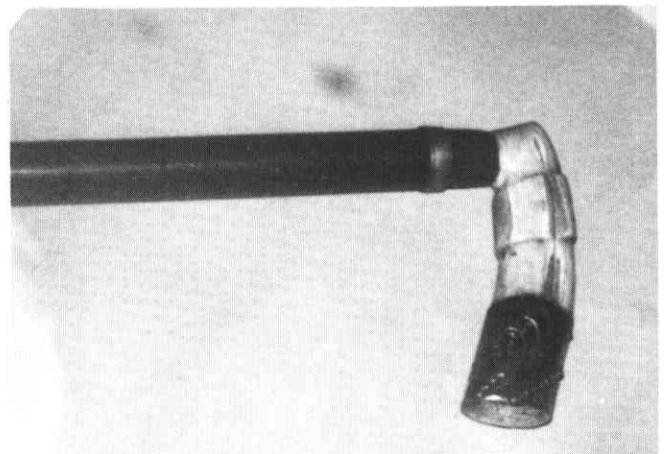


Figure E

within the capability of a local gunsmith. The importance of the conversion is the fact that the owner was interested enough to have the piece useful for cartridges.

The highest number reported was 278, which would not be a large production effort and surely would be completed before the outbreak of the Civil War, when Remington's full attention was given to war production. The percussion model can than be reasonably assumed to have been made between 1858 and 1861.

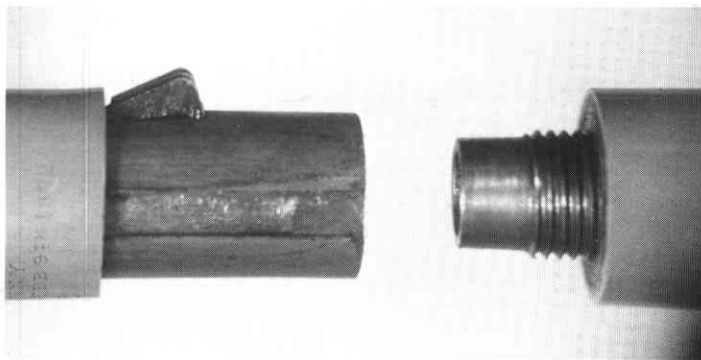


Figure F. The rear sight is shown raised, in the cocked position.



Figure G

About 1866 the cane gun was changed to cartridge, as metallic cartridges were then entering the market. This is shown by a cartridge specimen inscribed, "Rev. R.T. Middleditch, D.D. from M. Franklin, Bristead 1866." This second model used the same mechanism as the percussion with a few modifications: The end of the hammer had a nib or projection added to strike the rim fired cartridges. The end of the barrel now screwed into the handle (Figure F). The cartridge cane guns were offered in .22 and .32 cal. rim fire.

Serial numbering started over on this second model and this identification, plus the maker's name, now appeared on the handle just above the joint between the handle and the barrel. The patentee's name did not appear on the cartridge models. The highest number found on this model was 467; 22 were reported.

On Jan. 23, 1872, John F. Thomas applied for a disclaimer to the patent and an extension; the

hearing was set for Jan. 24, 1872. The wording of the request is shown in Thomas' handwriting on page 50. The rod turning was no longer possible because the nib to reach the cartridge must position at an opening. The extension was granted and the cane gun now bore the stamping "PAT. EXTENDED FEB. 9th, 1872" (Figure G).

The court's ruling to grant the extension does not seem to be based on a valid reason but perhaps the court was aware that the Civil War had interfered with production and for this reason was liberal.

The cane guns made under the patent extension were made the same as those before the extension. The serial numbering was a continuation, with 1748 the highest number of 25 reported.

The cartridge model handles were offered either curved (Fig. H-1) or dog's head (Fig. H-2), the .22 calibre being to the left and the .32 calibre being to the right. In Fig. H-1 note the two types of .32 calibre handles; the one to the right is found on those canes made before the patent extension and is more curved than the one in the middle, found on those made after the patent was extended. Though an ivory handle was offered none were reported and no illustration is known.

The distribution by calibres and handles found in the survey was as follows: 16 in .22 calibre — 9 curved, 7 dog's head and 3 missing. 24 in .32 calibre — 14 curved, 10 dog's head and 3 missing. A right angle handle in .32 calibre was reported but this was not offered in any Remington catalog.

The serial number marking on the cartridge models has been found in a number of places: immediately below the silver ring at the handle, just above the ferrule, on the brass tube threads for the ferrule; the most common place was on each side of the joint between the handle and the barrel and on the ferrule. The serial numbers on each side of the joint caught the wear of cocking the piece and sometimes are therefore missing or not very plain.

For some strange reason the number on the ferrule may not be the same as the barrel marking but in this survey the barrel marking was treated as the most significant.

A relationship was found between the serial number, handle type and calibre, with handle type and calibre grouping together. This would make sense from a production viewpoint.

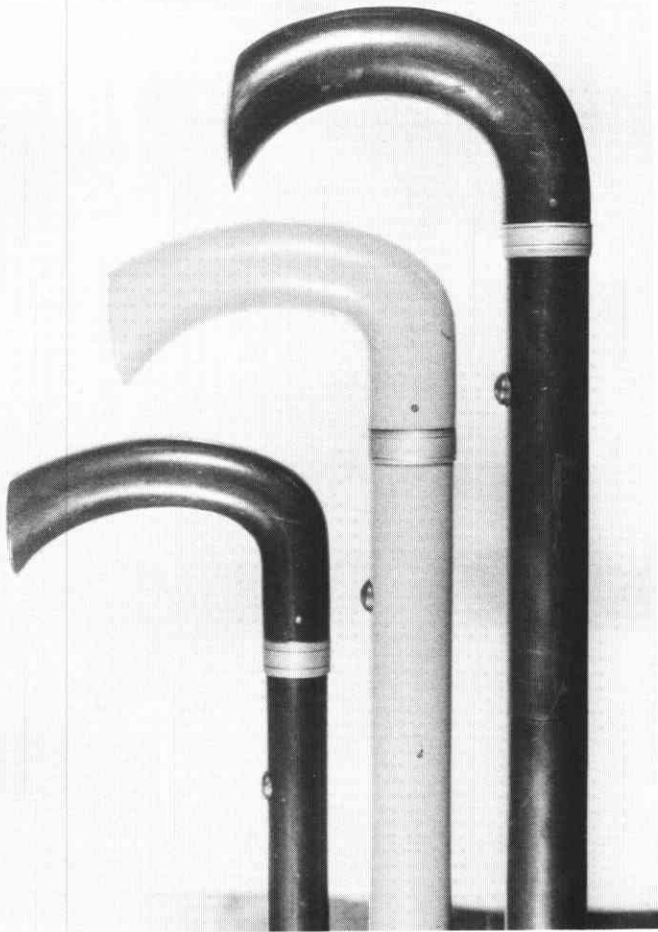


Figure H-1

The front sights on the cartridge models were of two types (Figure I). One is on a ring similar to the percussion model; on the other the sight pin is attached directly to the barrel.

In both percussion and cartridge models the length of the barrel varied by several inches. This could have been from special orders from people of different height, but no advertising indicated this was possible.

Another variation was a .22 calibre cane gun with a dog's head made from brass. This one bore the inscription "G.H. Plant, Lockport, N.Y. 1876." A .22 calibre cane gun was reported that came apart (see Figure J). The breakdown of the barrel to a 13¼" piece and a 17" piece assembled to 30¼", a help if hiding the piece was necessary.

One .32 calibre cane gun was inscribed "Capt. John G. Bourke," and another was inscribed "Presented to Frank Frost, President, by W.E.D. Class 1906-1907."



Figure H-2

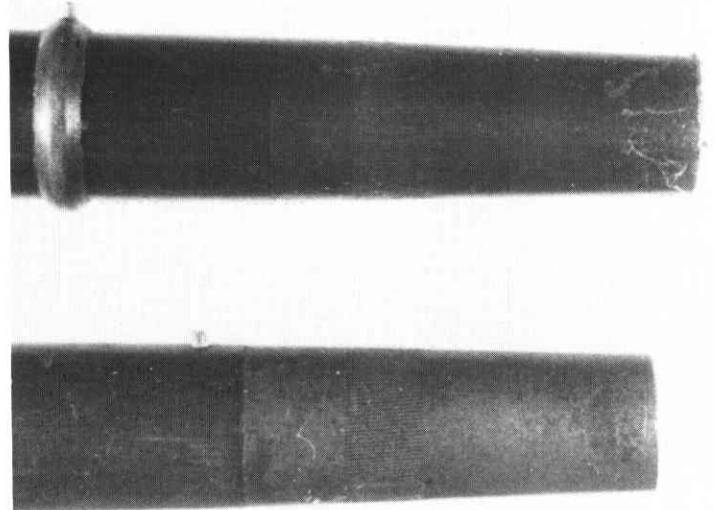


Figure I

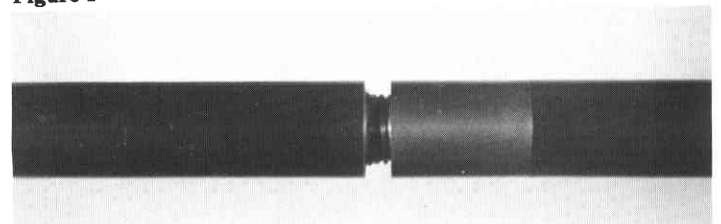
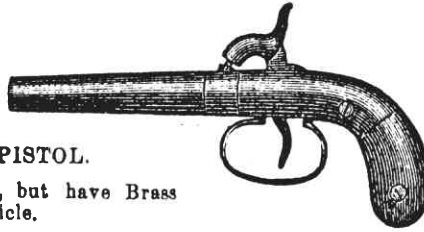


Figure J

AMERICAN SINGLE BARREL POWDER AND BALL PISTOL.

2 in. bbl.....	per pair, \$1 10
No. 2, 3 in. bbl.....	" 1 15
No. 3, 4 in. bbl.....	" 1 20



HERO PISTOL.

Same size and style as above, but have Brass Frames, and are a much better article.

2 in	per pair \$1 40
3 in.....	" 1 45
4 in.....	" 1 50

DOUBLE BARREL POWDER AND BALL PISTOL.

No. 4, 3 inch barrel, 100 round balls to the pound, blue iron barrels and mountings, varnished stock.....	per pair, \$2 50
Same as No. 4, but finer quality.....	" 3 00

REMINGTON'S RIFLE CANE.

Calibre or size of bore, 20 and 30-100ths of an inch diameter; using metallic cartridges; size, Nos. 22 and 32; weight, 16 and 24 oz. This arm is new in its construction and character, combining the advantages of a Walking Cane and Rifle. It is light and portable, and nearly as efficient in point of range, accuracy and penetration, as a Rifle of the same length. Every person who is out at night should have one for protection against dogs and rowdies.

Price, No. 22.....	price each, \$8 00
" " 32.....	" 8 00

MUZZLE-LOADING DERINGER PISTOLS.

Using cap, powder and balls, fine twist or steel barrel, two or three inch barrel, well rifled, 50 balls to lb., fine steel lock, walnut handle, well finished throughout. Price, with moulds and powder flasks, \$15 per pair.

BUSSEY'S PATENT GYRO PIGEON AND TRAP.

Humane and Economical.

An invention which so perfectly represents birds on the wing as to make the future use of live pigeons totally unnecessary. It affords splendid practice, recreation, and competitive shooting, at a much less cost than live birds, and introduces a new and exciting pastime to those who are fond of shooting. Full instructions with each Trap.

Spring Trap with one extra Spring and 100 Gyro Pigeons, put up in a strong and neat oak case, with handles	\$25 00
Extra Gyro Pigeons per 100	10 00
" Springs, each.....	2 00

4

Figure K

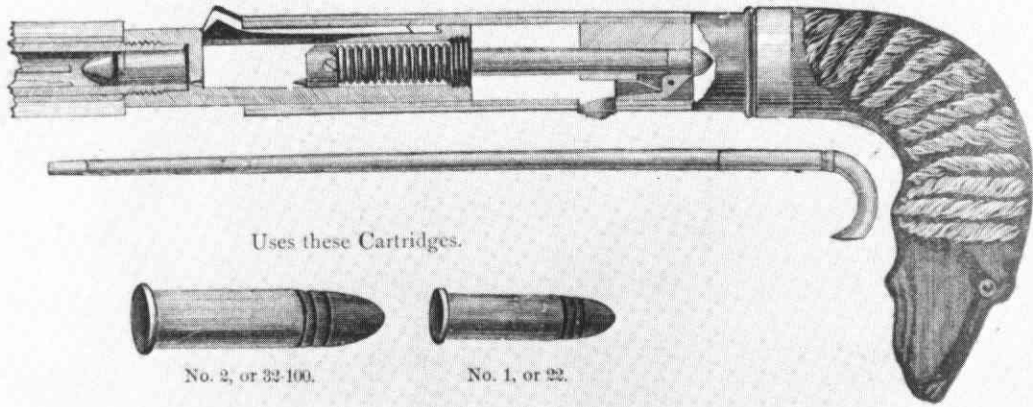
In 1876 the Centennial International Exposition opened in Philadelphia and E. Remington & Sons had an outstanding exhibit. A report on the exhibit stated there were Gentlemen's Rifle Canes offered with either plain or decorated handles. It would be interesting to know how the handles were

decorated. The cane guns were reported in different colors: black, brown and coral. The Remington cartridge cane gun has been found advertised in several old catalogs:

1. Edward K. Tryon, Jr. & Co., catalog 1873, price \$8.00 (Figure K).

The Remington Rifle Cane.

No. 1 Cane weighs 16 oz. No. 2, 24 oz.



Price List.

Rifle Canes.....	\$10 00 each.
" Ivory Head.....	15 00 "
Cartridges No. 1.....	6 00 pr m.
" " 2, Short.....	12 00

Figure M

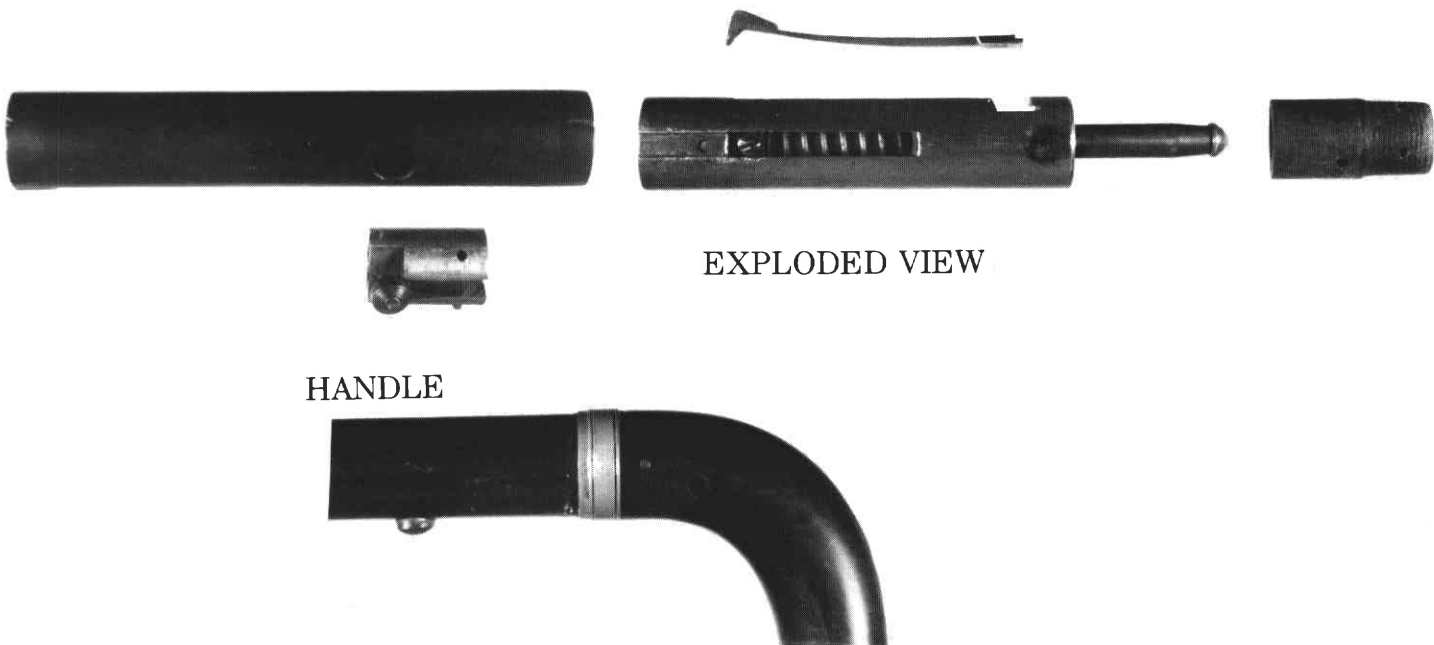


Figure N

turn is pinned to a metal tube that houses the mechanism, which will slide toward the dowel end to be removed. The mechanism has two main parts, the trigger portion and the hammer with spring. A spanner wrench is required to remove the spring. The sight is a separate piece. A most common wear problem is that the piece will not stay cocked.

A question in some collectors' minds is the legality of owning a cane gun. The question was put to the Department of the Treasury, not only regarding the present legality but the past history of cane gun laws. The following reply came from Mr. Edward M. Owne, Jr., Chief, Firearms Technology Branch:

"The Remington cane guns, Model 1 and 2 in .22 cal. rimfire and .32 cal. rimfire, respectively, have been removed from the provisions of the National Firearms Act (NFA) and are considered antiques.

"The original NFA of 1934, defined certain firearms that Congress felt should be under Federal control, such as machine guns, submachine guns, short barrel shotguns, short barrel rifles, and silencers. The Act also specified "any other weapons," capable of being concealed on the person, except pistols and revolvers. Cane guns fell in this "any other weapon" category.

"During 1968, a one month amnesty period was declared which allowed all persons to register the types of firearms mentioned above, which had not been previously registered. This amnesty period was declared in conjunction with the passage of the Gun Control Act of 1968."

In conclusion, some comments about the Remington cane gun are in order. The total production of the percussion model seems to be less than 300. Undoubtedly the fact that this model existed in toto before the Civil War period, the production would have been influenced greatly by the war effort. This model is a very rare item.

NOTE: Although not a "talk" at Albuquerque, this article by Mr. Berg was prepared for use in the *Bulletin*.

The cartridge models were produced near a total of 1800 and less than 50 were reported. This model is truly a rare item also. Even though the cane gun was offered from 1866 to 1885 in cartridge, the demand must have been limited and rightly so; its use as a firearm was limited.

As a firearm the Remington cane gun was deficient for several reasons:

1. No safety was provided. To uncock required pushing the rear sight under the mechanism housing, an awkward maneuver.
2. Alignment of the front and rear sight was contingent on the position that the handle was screwed to the barrel.
3. No shell ejection was provided. A ramrod was required.
4. The trigger was awkward to operate.
5. The advertisement as a rifle cane was misleading. The short rifling suggested a pistol.

Much of the information for this article came from the help of the American Society of Arms Collectors and the Remington Society of America whose members responded generously; it was through this cooperation that sufficient information was obtained to reach conclusions as to period of manufacture, numbers and types. Over fifty collectors responded; it would be impractical to recognize each of them, but thanks go to all.

Recognition is given to the following:

Richard A. Bourne Co. for cane gun information in their auction catalog.

New York Historical Society for advertisement shown in Figure D.

Harold R. Mouillesseaux's article about Doctor Lambert's Cane Rifle in the December, 1973, issue of *The Gun Report*.

Jerald T. Teesdale's article about Joseph Saxton's Cane Gun in the July, 1968, issue of *The Gun Report*.

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Note: Failure of the author to provide satisfactory photographs made it impossible to print Roy Marcot's talk on Spencer Rimfire Ammunition at this time.

To the Commissioners of Patents.

Your Petitioner, John F. Thomas, of Elion, Herkimer County, State of New York, represents that he did obtain Letters Patent, No. 19,328, dated February 9th, 1858, for improvement in Lane Guns; that he has reason to believe that through inadvertence, accident or mistake, the specification and claim of said letters patent as worded, are too broad, including that of which said patentee was not the first inventor. Your petitioner therefore hereby enters his disclaimer to that part of the claim in said specification which is in the following words, to wit:

"I also claim the continuous groove or shoulder around the end of the rod F, so that the said rod may turn in its bearings, without preventing the screw from catching it, whenever drawn back past it, as described."

John F. Thomas

Witness,

Chris. Critchley
Harrison Doan