First Sgt. Mathew Marvin of Company K, First Minnesota Volunteer Infantry, carried this six-shot, .44 caliber Colt Army Model 1860 revolver throughout the Civil War. In October 2011 the Minnesota Historical Society purchased it at auction, along with its holster, cartridge box, powder flask, and bullet mold.

Born in upstate New York, Marvin made his way to Winona in 1859, where he found work as a clerk in a leather goods store. When Fort Sumter fell, he was among the first to volunteer for the Union, mustering into the First Minnesota on April 29, 1861. After training at Fort Snelling, he went east with his unit that summer. Marvin was wounded at the regiment’s inaugural engagement, taking a bullet to the foot at the Battle of Bull Run in July 1861. Little more than a year later he was wounded again, this time in the thigh, when a gun accidentally discharged in camp. Marvin missed the Battle of Antietam while recovering but was back with the First Minnesota in time for the Gettysburg campaign in the summer of 1863.

With uncanny prescience, on the morning of July 2, 1863, Marvin noted in his diary, “This is to be the battle of the Civil War.” That very afternoon, he and the other 261 remaining members of the First Minnesotans faced the fight of their lives as they charged against a larger force of Confederates. Only 47 of the Minnesotans survived unscathed. Marvin was among the wounded, shot through the length of his foot. The injury ended his active service, and he was discharged with the rest of the unit in May 1864.

After the war, Marvin recuperated at his parents’ home in Illinois. He married Angie Towle in 1867 and returned to Winona. He remained active in veterans’ affairs for the rest of his life, joining his comrades at regimental reunions and visiting the Gettysburg battlefield on multiple occasions. When Marvin died in 1903, his Colt revolver went to his daughter, who passed it on to a collector shortly before her own death in 1955.

Mathew Marvin’s gun and accessories will be quite at home in the Society’s collections, which include his uniform frock coat, canteen, and the very diary in which he recorded his wartime experiences. This recent acquisition is especially exciting as we approach the Gettysburg sesquicentennial in 2013.

—Matt Anderson, formerly MHS objects curator, now curator of transportation at the Henry Ford Museum, Dearborn, Michigan
Copyright of *Minnesota History* is the property of the Minnesota Historical Society, and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or users or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder’s express written permission: contact us.

Individuals may print or download articles for personal use.

To request permission for educational or commercial use, contact us. Include the author’s name and article title in the body of your message. But first--

If you think you may need permission, here are some guidelines:

**Students and researchers**
- **You do not** need permission to quote or paraphrase portions of an article, as long as your work falls within the fair use provision of copyright law. Using information from an article to develop an argument is fair use. Quoting brief pieces of text in an unpublished paper or thesis is fair use. Even quoting in a work to be published can be fair use, depending on the amount quoted. Read about fair use here: [http://www.copyright.gov/fls/fl102.html](http://www.copyright.gov/fls/fl102.html)
- **You should**, however, always credit the article as a source for your work.

**Teachers**
- **You do not** need permission to incorporate parts of an article into a lesson.
- **You do** need permission to assign an article, either by downloading multiple copies or by sending students to the online pdf. There is a small per-copy use fee for assigned reading. Contact us for more information.

**About Illustrations**
- *Minnesota History* credits the sources for illustrations at the end of each article. *Minnesota History* itself does not hold copyright on images and therefore cannot grant permission to reproduce them.
- For information on using illustrations owned by the Minnesota Historical Society, see [MHS Library FAQ](http://www.mnhs.org/mnhistory).