

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 Min-



The six-shot, .44 caliber Colt Army Model revolver that Marvin carried throughout the Civil War



Sgt. Mathew Marvin, about 1864
(MHS COLLECTIONS)

nesota 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



Bullet mold designed for use with Marvin's revolver



Powder flask of leather and brass, four-pound capacity



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