

SMITH & WESSON AND THE CIVIL WAR

By Roy G. Jinks

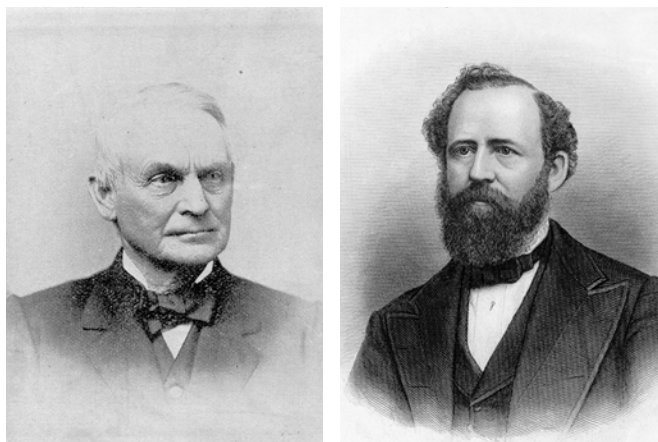


Figure 1. Horace Smith (left) and D. B. Wesson (right).

provided the new company exclusive rights to manufacture a cartridge revolver. The revolver was a small seven shot .22 caliber invented by Daniel B. Wesson in 1856.

The partners' respective investment in the new company was: Horace Smith - \$1646.18 and D. B. Wesson - \$2003.63 (Figure 2). On this same day they each contributed \$26.63 to finish the first model and purchase a small lathe. A second model was completed on March 1, 1857 at the cost of \$46.64. Their first shop was located in a rented facility on the second floor at 5 Market Street in downtown Springfield, Massachusetts (Figure 3).

It took the partners almost one year (from November 18, 1856 to October 19, 1857) before they sold their first revolver. This small seven shot revolver which is called the Seven Shooter Model 1, sold for \$13.50 - which included cartridges (Figure 4). This revolver was the first practical cartridge handgun made for full self-contained waterproof ammunition. The factory promoted the handgun as "the lightest revolver in the world, which shoots with as much force as any other arm" (just stretching the facts a little). Although small and light on the power scale, it was a desirable product as a pocket firearm.

Horace Smith and Daniel Baird Wesson (Figure 1) formed their revolver company in Springfield, MA on November 18, 1856, immediately following the signing of an agreement with Rollin White which secured the rights to his patent of April 3, 1855. This

Springfield November 18. 1856

Dr	Cr		
Nov 18 To	Cash Recd of H. Smith	1280.07	
" " "	" " " " D. B. Wesson	2003.63	
" " By	" " Paul Allen White for contract		497.50
" " To	" " Recd of H. Smith	26.63	
" " "	" " " " D. B. Wesson	26.63	
" " By	" " to pay expenses of first Model including one hand lathe		33.24-
Dec 4 " "	Cash to Wm H Robertson for Millers		980.00-
Feb 11 " "	" " Patent office fees		8.10
16 " "	" " to Wm H Robertson Springfield		165.00-
19 " "	" " Freight on Millers from Hartford		7.68
" " "	" " Cartage on " " "		1.25-
Mar 1 " "	" " to pay Expenses of 2 ^d Model including expense for bullets		46.64
" 9 " "	" " Expence on pistol to W.H.		.35
12 " "	" " Cartage on tools		.38
17 " "	" " Freight on tools from W.H.		1.68
" " "	" " Cartage " " "		.35

Figure 2. The first entry into the Smith & Wesson daybook dated November 18, 1856 showing the contribution of each partner and initial expenses. (Authors collection)



Figure 7. Model 2 (left) & Model 1 (right) in original boxes.

On October 16 of 1859, John Brown attempted a raid on the National Armory at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, to obtain arms that were to be used to supply slaves for an insurrection against slavery. As the political climate heated up and slavery and states' rights issues grew, there was a noted increase in demand for firearms, particularly in the southern and western Border States. Smith & Wesson began to get more demands for a large caliber revolver. By late 1860, the company completed a new model in .32 caliber and by the beginning of 1861 they placed the Model 2, a six-shot belt model, into production (Figure 7).



Figure 8. Abraham Lincoln.

Abraham Lincoln (Figure 8) was elected President on November 6, 1860, and one of the consequences of his election occurred on December 20, 1860 when the South Carolina legislature voted to secede from the Union. On January 9 of 1861, an unarmed merchant vessel, the "Star of the West", was fired upon by South Carolina when it secretly tried to carry federal troops into Fort Sumter at Charleston, SC. By February 1, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas all had followed South Carolina's lead and seceded from the Union.

On April 15, 1861 Lincoln declares a state of insurrection and calls for 75,000 volunteers to enlist for three months. This sends the demand for firearms to an all-time high. By the time that Lincoln had called for the volunteers, Smith & Wesson had shipped 20,251 units... all Model 1s. It was not until June of 1861 that the first 7 Model 2 Armies reached the market. There is no way to determine how many of the 20,251 units that the company produced before the beginning of the war reached the southern market (Figure 9).



Figure 9. This Model 1 was sold in the South and carried by a Confederate Soldier.

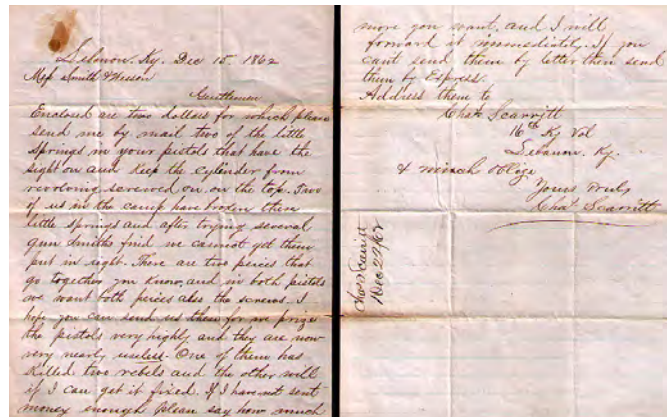


Figure 10. Letter from Charles Serritt of the 16th Kentucky Volunteers December 15, 1862 requesting shipment of spare parts. (Authors collection)

Lets now move away from our history and look at some of the letters that the company received during the period from 1861 to 1865 when the war ended. There were no Smith & Wesson revolvers purchased directly by the United States Government for issue to the troops. The purchases were generally by individuals either as gifts for solders going into service or by the enlisted individual to carry in his pocket. There was a State Militia that did purchase Smith & Wesson Model 2s to issue to the volunteers going off to war. The State of Kentucky purchased from B. F. Kitteridge Co. of Cincinnati, Ohio, Smith & Wesson Model 2s that are generally

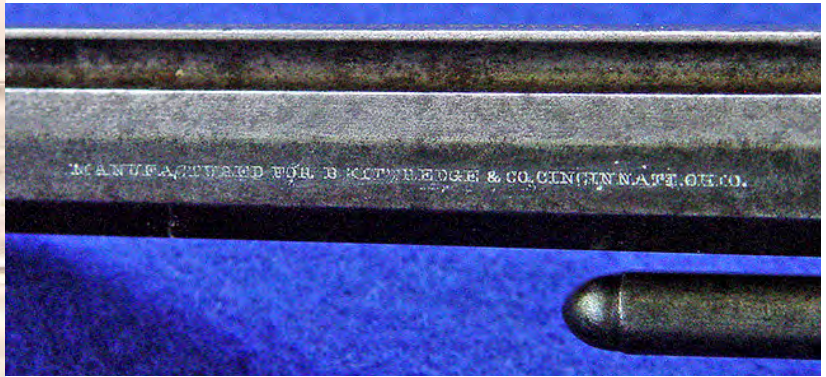
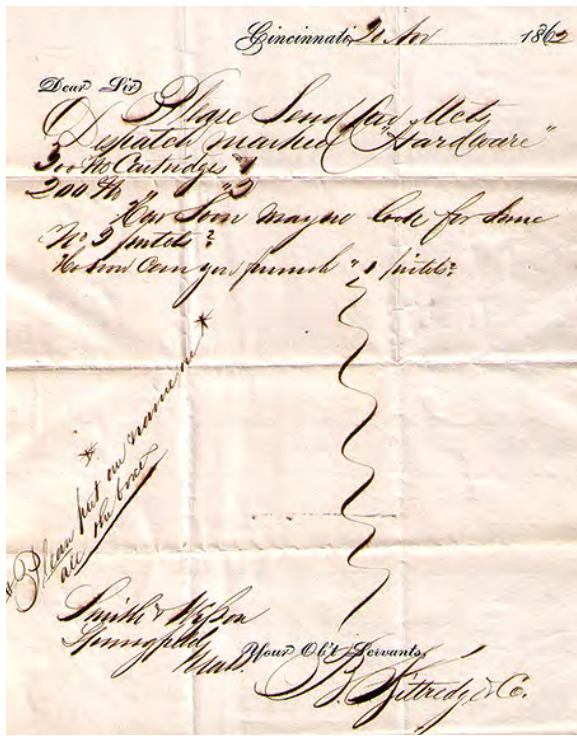


Figure 11. Order from B. Kittridge & Co. and Model 2 Army with B. Kittridge barrel marking: "Manufactured for B. Kittridge & CO. Cincinnati Ohio." (Authors collection)

marked with their store name. I have identified about 200 units that were shipped directly to this company in 1862. Here is a request from a letter (Figure 10) written on December 15, 1862, from Charles Serritt of the 16th Kentucky Volunteers that were stationed in Lebanon, KY:

"enclosed are two dollars for which please send me by mail two of the little springs in your pistols that have the sight on and keep the cylinder from revolving, screwed on the top. Two of us in the camp have broken these little springs and after trying several gunsmiths find we cannot get them put in right. There are two pieces that go together you know, and in both pistols we want both pieces, also screws. I hope you can send us these for we prize the pistols very highly and they are now very nearly useless. One of them has killed two rebels and the other will, if I can get it fixed. If I have not sent money enough, please say how much more you want and I will forward it immediately. If you can't send them by letter, then send them by express"

The State of Kentucky purchased from B. F. Kittridge Co. of Cincinnati, Ohio, Smith & Wesson Model 2s that are generally marked with their store name (Figure 11). In this November 1862 Kittridge order they request that their name be put on all items. I have identified about 200 units that were shipped directly to this company in 1862.

The demand for Smith & Wesson revolvers continued to be strong and there are many letters to the company asking for handguns. In Figure 12 is one example from Peru, Illinois, written on November 20, 1862, by G. W. Lininger.

"Gents, the pistols you sent me a few days ago are all gone they go like hot cakes. You will please send me another --- doz. of the No. 1 Plated Breech rosewood handle, the last time I ordered one with ivory stocks but you did not send it. I would like to have one if you have any on hand please send one. Send by express immediately as I have taken several orders for them already, the green backs are waiting for them.

Respectfully, G. W. Lininger."

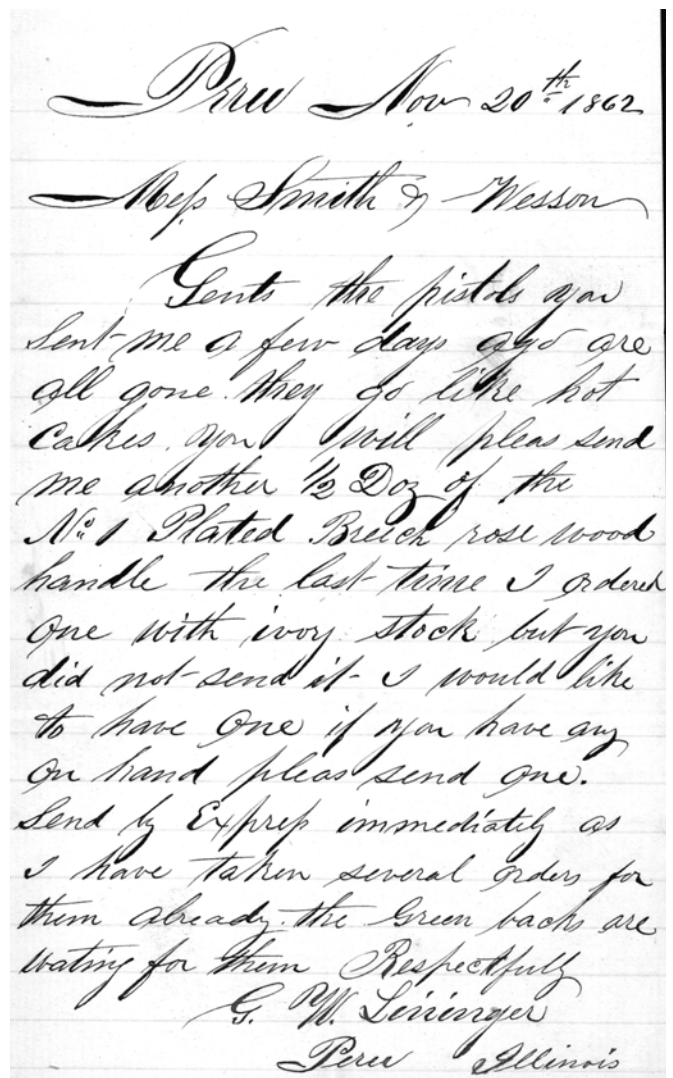


Figure 12. November 20, 1862, letter to Smith & Wesson by G. W. Lininger requesting additional shipment of pistols as they "go like hotcakes". (Authors collection)

The reason he did not get any ivory stocked revolvers is that the factory was concentrating on making plain guns, leaving the fancy work up to the dealers. To help emphasize the interest, there is another letter from Ottumwa, Iowa, dated December 24, 1862 (Figure 13).

Ottumwa Iowa, Dec. 24th /62.
Messrs Smith & Wesson
Dear Sirs. Enclosed please find ^{one hundred} eighty three dollars (\$183) the price of one dozen Belt Pistols. If you can't send but six of them now, send the remainder when you can, also please send me if you have any on hand twelve Pocket Pistols. I will send you the cash by the return of the Express, I will pay the cash to the Express company before they deliver the pistols, in United States notes. Please give me the address of Mr. Bacon manufacturer of revolving fire arms. I want a half dozen of his largest sized pistols, as I have some customers who want his pistols. Please fill my order as soon as practicable & reply as soon as convenient.
Yours truly John S. Walker.

Figure 13. December 24, 1862 from John Walker to Smith & Wesson requesting shipment of "one dozen Belt Pistol No. 2". (Authors collection)

"Enclosed please find one hundred & eighty-three dollars (\$183.00) the price of one dozen Belt Pistol No. 2. If you can't send but six of them now, send the remainder when you can. Also please send me if you have any on hand twelve Pocket Pistols No. 1 and I will send you the cash by return of the Express. I will pay the cash to the express company before they deliver the pistols in United States notes.

Please give me the address of Mr. Bacon, manufacturer of revolving firearms. I want a half dozen of his largest size pistols as I have some customers who want his pistols. Please fill my order as soon as practicable & reply as soon as convenient.
Yours truly, John S. Walker."

Major orders came in almost daily from J. W. Storrs. As an example the one illustrated in Figure 14 is dated December 5, 1862, for a total of 200 No. 1 revolvers and 100 No. 2 revolvers. The interesting part of this order is in the last paragraph; "I will attend to the English order. I have a man that is going to London this month that is going to take out some pistols and I will have him see the parties and supply them." It is a known fact that firearms were reaching the Confederacy via England. Could this be how some of the Smith & Wesson revolvers found their way into Confederate soldier's hands?

Storrs sales were so strong by the end of 1862, that he hired a clerk to handle the business while he was out promoting the sale of handguns and cartridges. This individual was M. W. Robinson, and he continued to work for Storrs until 1869 when he took over the company and became legendary for the sale and distribution of Smith & Wesson revolvers.

To help fund the war, the Lincoln Administration created a Federal Excise tax on manufactured goods. Smith & Wesson was issued their license (number 1444) on December 11, 1862 for a

fee of \$10. Their first payment was on December 22, 1862, for \$1194.98 which covered 1,698 pistols manufactured in October, and 1,312 manufactured in September as well as cartridges manufactured in the same time period (Figure 15).

New York Dec 5th /62
Messrs Smith & Wesson Please find check
for 50 #1 Pistols, order # 2 672.50
" 50 #2 " " " 668.75
25 #1 " order # 6 250.00
25 #1 " " # 12 250.00
1168.25
I'll com on 100 #1 Pistols 500
" " 50 #2 " 600 1100.00
1571.25
I will attend to the English order I have a man that is going to London this month that is going to take out some pistols and I will have him see the parties and supply them.
J. W. Storrs

Figure 14. J. W. Storrs order to Smith & Wesson December 5, 1862; mentions and English order for pistols. (Authors collection)

Although the orders from the Storrs business were written by his clerk, M. W. Robinson, was generally very business-like, but every once in a while, there is a little humor injected. Here is an example:

New Year's Day was not a holiday in the 1860's and everyone generally worked, especially in those war-time years. D. B. Wesson sent New Year's greetings to all his friends and important associates. One of the responses he received was from a telegram he sent wishing J. W. Storrs and Robinson a Happy New Year. M. W. Robinson replies on January 2, on the back of a Storrs order form (Figure 16):

"Had I been here yesterday, and at work as you were, I would have said 'Happy New Year' too - But in New York you know, on the first day of the year the women expect you to make a bow to them, smile and say pretty things, so of course, we must ignore all ideas of business, black boots, press our shirts, shave etc. and take to the streets. It's a pretty good custom if you let the 'oh be joyful' alone. (signed) Robinson."

Sometimes you paid your money and took your chances, as Mr. Morris W. Alexander, Hammond General Hospital, Beaufort, NC, writes on June 2, 1864 (Figure 17):

"Enclosed find twenty-nine (29) dollars for which please send me two pistols and two dollars' worth of cartridges - one hundred each for belt and pocket revolvers. The pistol will be plain of pocket and belt size. Please send by express. Collect on delivery".

This letter is followed by a second letter written on July 26, 1864. Here he states:

"On the second day of June, 1864, I enclosed in a letter to you twenty-nine dollars in greenbacks (\$29), for which I requested

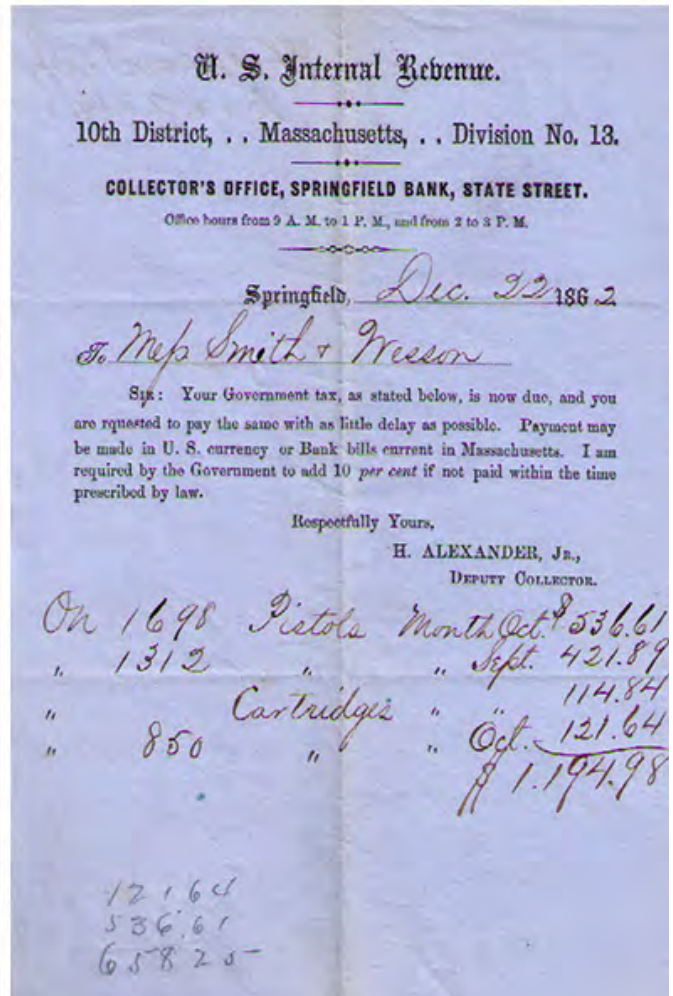
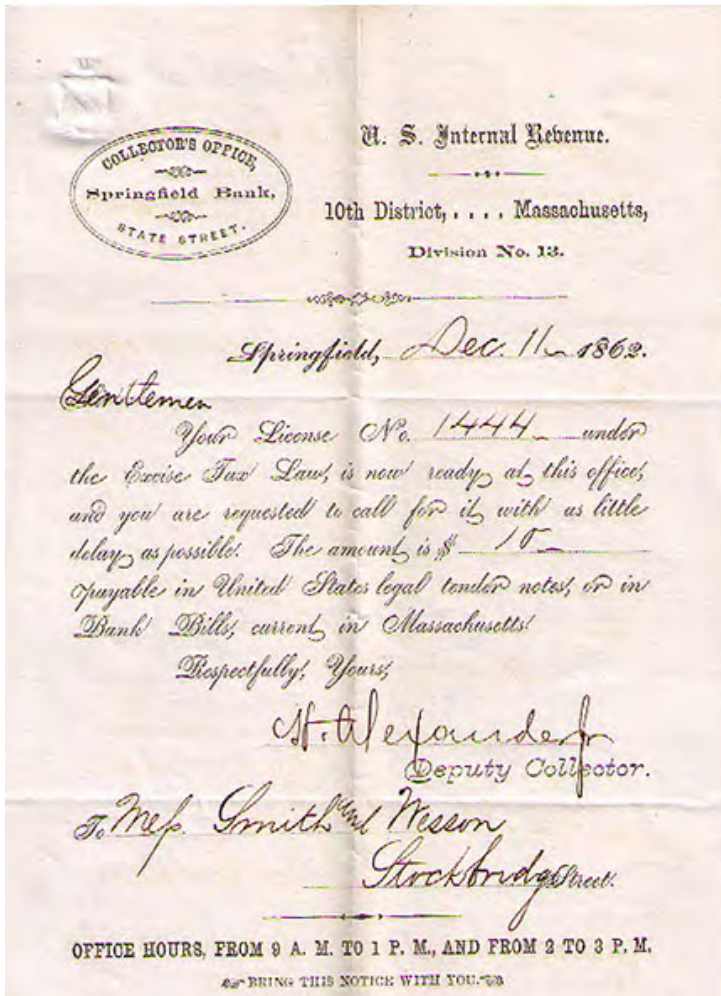


Figure 15. Smith & Wesson IRS License #1444 (left) and Smith & Wesson's first IRS tax bill for \$1,194.98. (Authors collection)

you to send me two of your revolvers – one large and one small one, and the rest in cartridges for the same, having heard nothing from it neither by express or mail, I thought I would write and inquire if you had received the letter and the money! If so, the articles have never reached me. Please answer this as soon as received and if it has not been received, I shall take pains to find out where it was stopped.”

October 3, 1864 (Figure 19) and a letter relating to the lifting of firearms sale restrictions: William Kock of Lagrange, Missouri writes on August 12, 1864: “Having received authority from Maj. General Rosecrans to sell firearms in North East Missouri, I would like to know your prices of revolvers by the wholesale, and especially your patent of April 3, 1855 – July 5, 1859 – Dec. 18, 1860, 6 inch barrel. Also prices of cartridges. Let me hear from you soon.”

In April of 1864 the Federal Troops burned down the city of Beaufort, N.C. It appears that this hospital became a Federal Hospital for wounded Northern Soldiers. So Mr. Alexander may have been trying to get a handgun for his self-protection. This could be an interesting story in itself. But Mr. Alexander was still hopeful as of December 19, 1864, when he writes Smith & Wesson an answer to a letter he had received from the factory on December 10 (Figure 18). “I received your letter today that was written the tenth...the first answer that I have received from the money or pistol since I sent the money. Enclosed you will find two (\$2) dollars; one is to pay the express and the other is cartridges if you're please. I desire that your would forward them as soon as you can. Yours very truly, Morris W. Alexander.” It would be great if we really knew the whole story behind this order and whether he ever got his two revolvers and cartridges.

The popularity of the Model 2 Army is obvious, as letter after letter pours into the company requesting purchase of this revolver. On May 1, 1864 Smith & Wesson publishes a new price list of their handguns and cartridges. Orders from J. W. Storrs came in almost daily...some for just firearms and cartridges and others for parts as well as handguns (Figure 20).

The sale of firearms was restricted in some of the Border States, and by the late summer of 1864 some restrictions were being lifted in Border States such as Ohio and Missouri as acknowledged in a publication from B. Kittredge & Co. sent to their dealers on

Smith & Wesson saw a broad use by various branches of the military. There is a request from Thomas Rodd, who wrote from his ship “Princeton” of the United States Revenue Service which was stationed at the Navy Yard in Philadelphia for 1000 Model 2 .32/100 cartridges (Figure 21, left). This was from an individual who was not fighting in the southern battlefield.

And from: Captain H. L. Wheat, Co. E Mounted Ms. Cavalry, Deball's Bluff, Arkansas, September 25, 1864 (Figure 21, center).

“I desire to know at what rate I can purchase the six inch, or longer size Smith & Wesson revolvers of the manufacturers, to the number of twenty or more. I am desirous of having my company own their own revolvers and I consider the Smith & Wesson the

best belt revolver I have yet seen. If the price is set satisfactory, I will remit when I hear from you.

Respectfully, Yours & C".

Ms abbreviation in his unit designation makes you wonder what state he was from?

Smith & Wesson continued to be pressured to make a larger size revolver. This is illustrated in a letter dated September 29, 1864 (Figure 21, right):

Camp 13th New York Cavalry

Near Falls Church, VA

September 29, 1864

Wants lager pistol or longer barrel:

Gentlemen, Having used your pistol as the best made for belt use for over one year I would ask if you make any larger than the six-inch barrel one carrying the 32/100. If so how large and what

dimension & are they sighted point blank at 12 or at 20 yards as the smaller ones are. A reply or circular will be received with pleasure.

Outrageous Prices

The prices of handguns in the war zone and even in major cities had gone out of sight. A Smith & Wesson Model 2 Army, which the factory sold for \$15.75 retail, was selling in the field for \$28.00 to \$35.00 each (Figure 22).

To illustrate the outrageous prices we have a letter from William H. Galder, Company B 8th Iowa Infantry: Memphis, TN September 22, 1864 (Figure 23):

William H Galder

Company B 8th Iowa Infantry V.V.

I wish to purchase for members of this company one half dozen of your Splendid Revolvers. But not knowing your terms I concluded to write for information.

Please send me what are your charges on the different sizes express paid.

The prices on revolvers of your make are enormous here. But I am willing to pay whatever your regular price is. I will forward the amount by Express or mail as soon as you send me a list of prices.

I am with respect,

Yours Truly

The demand for cartridge revolvers had led to many copies and infringements on the Smith & Wesson patents. Storrs, in his advertisements, warns the buyer to be sure they are getting the genuine

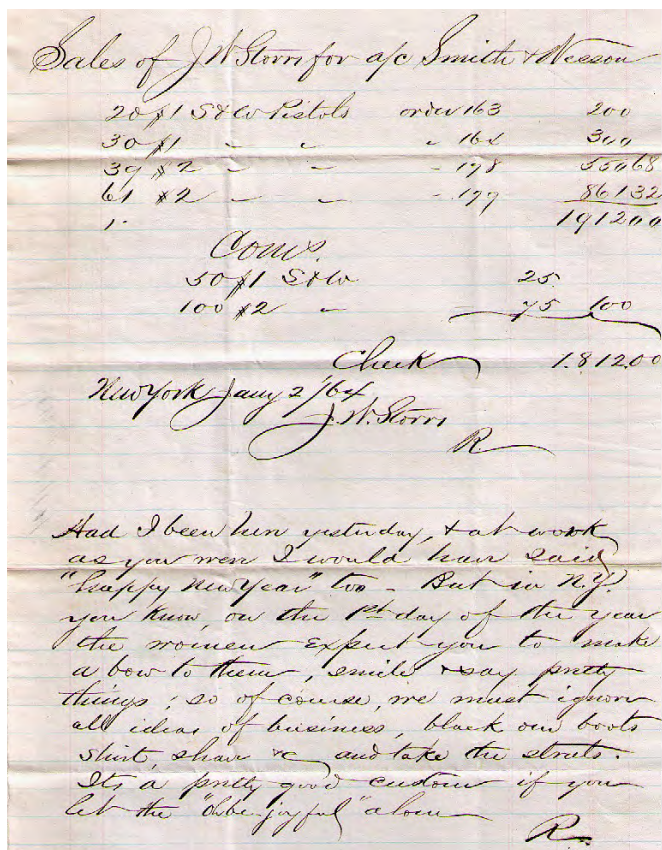


Figure 16. January 2, 1864 J. W. Storrs order to Smith & Wesson with M. W. Robinson comments about New Years in New York. (Authors collection)

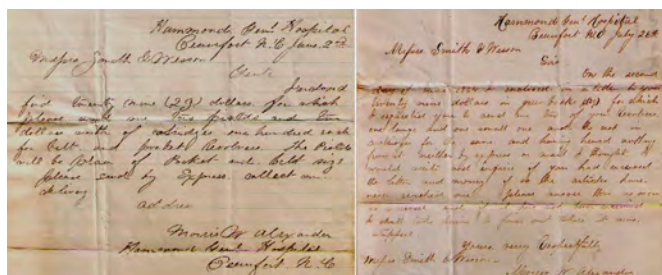


Figure 17. 1864 letters from Morris W. Alexander Hammond General Hospital Beaufort, N.C. to Smith & Wesson requesting shipment of pistols. (Authors collection)

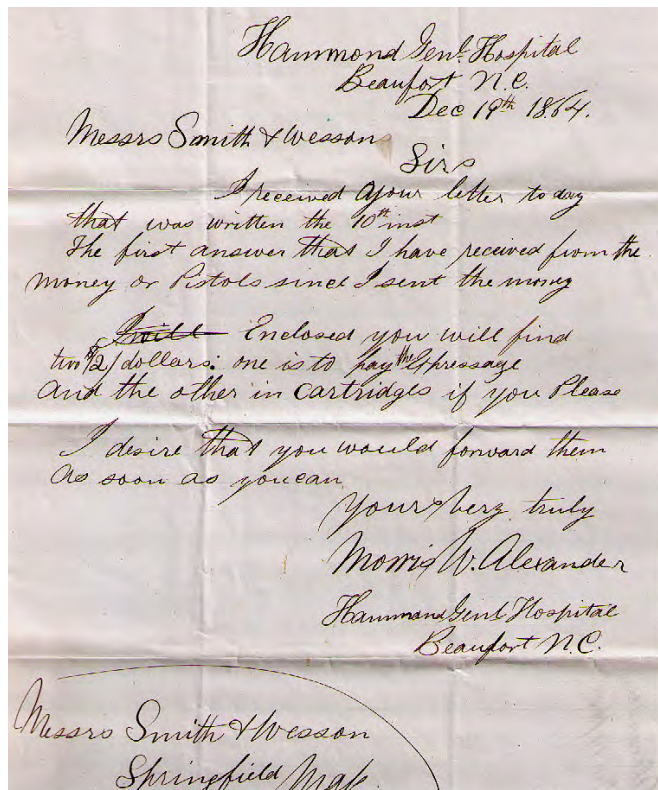


Figure 18. December 10, 1864 letter from Mr. Alexander to Smith & Wesson, his third letter requesting information on the pistol order he made. (Authors collection)

From Bellows Falls, Vermont on November 9, 1864 after being told by Smith & Wesson they could not supply them immediately, Amos & Willson write this plea to the firm (Figure 25):

"Yours of the 8th is received, saying that you could not fill an order from 10 to 12 months.

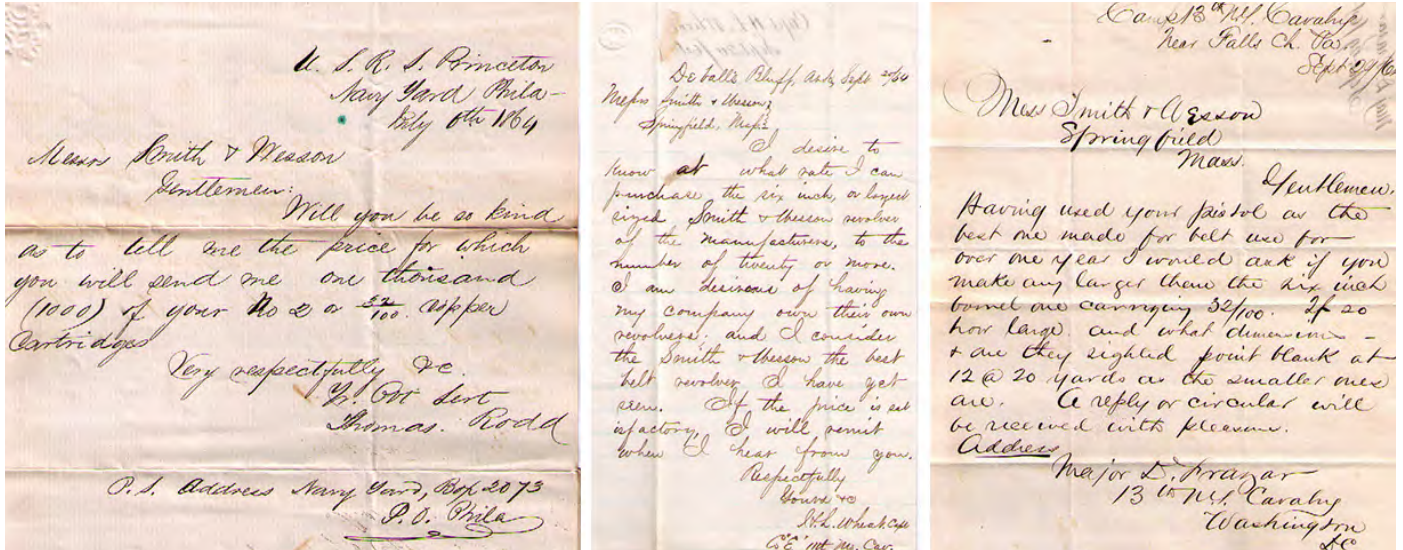


Figure 21. Orders request from the Thomas Rodd of the United States Revenue Service dated July 6, 1864 (left); Cavalry officer Captain Wheat of Deball's Bluff, Arkansas dated September 20, 1864 (center) and Major D. Frazer dated September 29, 1864 (right). (Authors collection)

PRICE LIST TO DEALERS IN FIRE ARMS
SMITH & WESSON'S
Superior Revolving Fire-Arms,
PATENT METALLIC CARTRIDGES.
MAY 1, 1864.

No. 1, or Pocket Pistol,—Plated Breech, Rosewood Stock.

In lots of less than 6.....	\$11 30
" " " 6 to 12.....	12 00
" " " 12 to 25.....	10 75
" " " 25 to 50.....	10 50
" " " 50 to 100.....	10 25
" " " 100.....	10 00

No. 2, or Belt Pistol,—Wrought Iron Frame, Rosewood Stock.

In lots of less than 6.....	\$15 75
" " " 6 to 12.....	15 50
" " " 12 to 25.....	15 25
" " " 25 to 50.....	14 87
" " " 50 to 100.....	14 50
" " " 100.....	14 12

Engraving on Pocket Pistol—Extra..... \$5 00
 Belt..... 6 00
 Ivory Stock Pocket Pistol—Extra..... 2 50
 Belt..... 4 00
 Full Plate, or Plated Barrel, Hammer, &c. on No. 1, or Pocket Pistol—Extra..... 2 00
 Plated Breech, No. 2, or Belt Pistol—Extra..... 2 00
 Full Plate, or Plated Barrel, Hammer, &c. on No. 2, or Belt Pistol—Extra..... 3 50

These Pistols are light, have great force, are sure fire, shoot accurately, can be left loaded any length of time without injury, and are safe to carry. Every Pistol warranted when Cartridges of our manufacture are used.

CARTRIDGES.

NO. 1, FOR POCKET PISTOL.		NO. 2, FOR BELT PISTOL.	
In lots of less than 1 M., per hundred.....	\$0 65	In lots of less than 1 M., per hundred.....	\$1 25
" " from 1 M. to 10 M., per M.....	5 97	" " from 1 M. to 10 M., per M.....	10 15
" " " 10 M. to 20 M., per M.....	5 62	" " " 10 M. to 20 M., per M.....	10 00
" " " 20 M. to 50 M., per M.....	5 50	" " " 20 M. to 50 M., per M.....	9 84
" " " 50 M. to 100 M., per M.....	5 37	" " " 50 M. to 100 M., per M.....	9 64
" " " 100 M. to 200 M., per M.....	5 25	" " " 100 M. to 200 M., per M.....	9 44
" " " 200 M. to 500 M., per M.....	5 00	" " " 200 M. to 500 M., per M.....	9 24

Goods delivered at Express Office, or Rail Road Freight Depot, in Springfield.
 TERMS—Cash on delivery, in Bankable Funds, New York City.
 ADDRESS
SMITH & WESSON, Springfield, Mass.

Memphis, Tenn.
 Sept 22nd 1864

Gentlemen Smith & Wesson.

Sir

I wish to purchase for members of this Company one half dozen of your Splendid Revolvers. But not knowing your terms, I concluded to write for information.

Please send me what are your charges on the different sizes Express paid.

The prices on Revolvers of your make are enormous here. But I am willing to pay whatever your regular price is. I will forward the amount By Express or Mail as soon as you send me. A List of Prices I am, with respect

Yours Truly
 Wm. H. Galder
 Co. B. 8th Iowa Infy.

Figure 22. May 1864 Smith & Wesson price list (left) and complaint from William H. Galder, Company B 8th Iowa Infantry: Memphis, TN September 22, 1864 that the prices "are enormous here" in the field (right). (Authors collection)

NOW DO PLEASE break over your rules in this instance. We need them very much indeed. We are obliged to patrol our streets every night to guard against Raiders or Bank Breakers and we want something to defend ourselves with. Please be so kind as to send us --- dozen of the No. 1 Pocket Pistols @ \$11.00 and 6 hundred No. 1 Patent Metallic Cartridges for these pistols.

NO ONE shall know where we got them. You would deeply oblige us if you would grant this favor – we would like them immediately by express. We would immediately forward cash

to you...or you could collect by mail as you choose. Concerning our responsibility, we would refer you to Bemis & Call Hardware Manufacturing Co. of your city.

I could go on with many more letters from Officers wanting Smith & Wesson's for their men. But I think it is time to end the Civil War. To bring it to a close I have chosen three letters from M. W. Robinson who was at this time J. W. Storrs company sales manager. These letters deal with the most important key events in 1865 at the close of the war (Figures 26 through 28).

Smith and Wesson's Seven-Shooter.



J. W. STORRS, Agent,
121 Chamber Street, N. Y.

THIS PISTOL is light, has great force, is sure fire, shoots accurately, can be left loaded any length of time without injury, is not liable to get out of order, is safe to carry. Every Pistol warranted

CAUTION TO DEALERS.

Be sure and get those stamped "Smith & Wesson, Springfield, Mass.," none others genuine. All cartridge revolvers that load at the breech are infringements. Suits are commenced, and all such infringements will be prosecuted. Be sure the cartridges have Smith & Wesson's signature on each end of the box

247-720

Figure 23. J. W. Stores advertisement warning buyers to be sure they are getting the genuine Smith & Wesson pistol. (Authors collection)

Pine Bluff Arkansas
 Sept 29th 1864
 Messrs Smith & Wesson
 Please
 Send to the below address
 the price List of your Cartridge
 Revolvers as you sell them
 both by retail and by
 the half dozen Yours Truly
 Theodore Dunn
 Co "B" 126th Regt Mo Infantry Vol
 Via - Cairo
 P.S. As it is not very safe send-
 ing through the Military lines
 I would suggest to send them
 to Rock Island to the Express
 office to Benjamin Dunn
 (who is my father) and let
 him receive them and pay
 the Express agent for them
 If I should determine on taking

Figure 24. September 29, 1864 letter from Theodore Dunn, Co., "B" 126th Regiment Illinois Volunteers at Pine Bluff, Arkansas noting difficulty of receiving shipments when in the field close to fighting. (Authors collection)

Lee's Surrender

M. W. Robinson April 5, 1865

Messrs Smith & Wesson

Sic Transit Gloria
 Southern Confederacy !!

Lee
 Meekly
 Surrendered!

Shout again O! Ye peoples!

Let joy be unconfined – throw up your hats – high up.
 Bring out your big guns and let them roar –

and then let them roar again, then put in more powder and let
 them roar-r-r-r!

Well, why let 'em roar. The last ditch has been found; and
 conquered so let 'em roar.

Truly yours,

M. W. Robinson

Thirteen days later on April 18, 1865, M. W. Robinson pens
 the following letter from New York City to Smith & Wesson
 (Figure 27):

"New York is gloomy, gloomy. Before the deplorable and hell-
 ish tragedy, all was joyous – glorying in victory; now the city
 is shrouded in mourning! I know of no word or words that will
 express the feeling of the people.

Away down in the heart – deeper than sorrow or sadness is
 a feeling inexpressible, but akin, I think, to vengeance. And
 what an utter loathing for the vile worm that did the deed.

It maybe that free government requires another stab to arouse
 the people to a sterner patriotism; if so, it has got it.

St Albans Vt Oct 21st 1864
 Messrs Smith & Wesson
 Gentlemen
 Will you
 please send us by Express soon
 as possible 1/2 dozen Revolvers
 of your Manufacture 32-100 Caliber
 Eastern Coll + Collect of Express
 or we will remit on receipt of
 goods. Will you also inform
 us what is the best & most
 effective repeating Rifle and
 where we can order them. What price
 we can sell in dozen or more
 if we have the best kind.
 Our raid is ended but the
 Citizens wish to be ready for the
 next time. Eleven of the rascals
 are arrested in Canada and
 about \$100,000 recovered.
 Yours respectfully
 Hyman & Huntington

Bellows Falls Vermont
 Nov 9th 1864
 Messrs Smith & Wesson
 Gentlemen
 Yours of the
 8th is recd. Saying that
 you could not fill
 our order for 10 to 12 mos.
 Now Do please break
 over your rules in this
 instance. We need them
 very much indeed.
 We are obliged to patrol
 our Streets every night
 to guard against Robbers
 or Bank Breakers & we
 want something to defend
 ourselves with.
 please be so kind as
 to send us 1/2 doz of
 the No 1 Pocket Pistols @ \$11.00

+ 6 hundred No 1 Police Metallic
 Cartridges for the Pistols
no one should know
 where we get them.
 you would deeply
 oblige us if you would
 grant this favor. We
 would like them
 immediately by Express
 We would immediately
 forward the Cash to
 you. Or you could
 collect for us as you
 choose. Conceiving our
 responsibility we would
 refer you to The Bellows Falls
 Board of Manufacturing Co of
 your City.
 Truly your friends
 Amos & Willson

Figure 25. Letter dated October 21, 1864 from Hyman & Huntington, St. Albans, VT requesting pistols (left) and Amos & Willson of Bellows Falls, Vermont dated November 9, 1864 pleading for shipment of pistols (center and right). (Authors collection)

Sic transit gloria
Southern Confederacy!!
Lee
meekly
Surrendered!

Shout again O! ye peoples!
Let joy be unconfined - throw
up your hats - high up -
Bring out your big guns &
let them roar - and then
let them roar again, & then
put in more powder &
let them roar-r-r!
Well, - - - - -
why, let 'em roar.
The last ditch has been
found; and - and - why
let 'em roar.

over

Figure 26. April 5, 1865 letter from M. W. Robinson to Mrs. Smith and Wesson concerning Lee's surrender. (Authors collection)

We now know that slavery breed assassins. Hereafter, no quarter to rebels and traitors till every vestige of rebellion and of slavery is uprooted.

Yours truly,

M. W. Robinson

John Wilkes Booth at the Ford Theater shot President Abraham Lincoln on April 14th, 1865. Seven days later, on April 20, 1865,

Robinson writes again to Smith & Wesson informing them how the events of the past have affected the business (Figure 29):

"Yours of the 18th to hand this morning. I will see Mister Lowerre tomorrow- today being fast day in New York by appointment of the Governor, no business is being done.

Yesterday was a solemn day here, as it was indeed throughout the land.

New York April 18/65

Gentlemen,

I rec'd back yesterday, without being repaired, the old style pistol sent up to you for cylinders &c. - As you say not a word in regard to it I infer that you have no cylinders of the old pattern & consequently do not care to be troubled with it.

New York is gloomy, gloomy. Every person you meet looks as if he had lost all his friends. Before the deplorable & hellish tragedy; all was joyous - glorying in victory. Now the City is shrouded in mourning! I know of no word or words that will express the feelings of the people - Away

down in the heart - deeper than sorrow or sadness is a feeling inexpressible, but ah! I think to vengeance.

And what an utter loathing for the vile monster that did the deed.

It may be that free government required another stab to arouse the people to a sterner patriotism; if so, it has got it.

We now know that Slavery breeds assassins - Hereafter, no quarter to rebels & traitors till every vestige of rebellion & of slavery is wiped out.

Yours truly
 W. W. Robinson

Figure 27. M. W. Robinson letter to Mrs. Smith and Wesson dated April 18, 1865 concerning Lincoln's assassination. (Authors collection)

I see by the papers this morning that the remains of Mr. Lincoln will be brought through New York, I presume, therefore, that business will be pretty much suspended someday next week.

Yours truly,

M. W. Robinson

President Lincoln was pronounced dead on April 15, 1865 at 7:22 AM. He was 56 years old.

This tragic event that occurred at the end of the Civil War is where I have chosen show just how lucrative the war was for the two partners. This can best be described from an article printed in the Springfield Republican Newspaper in July 1866. The Springfield Newspaper reports Horace Smith and D. B. Wesson incomes for the year of 1865:

Horace Smith..... \$163,012 (in today dollars \$1,715,916)

D. B. Wesson \$162, 552 (in today dollars \$1,711,074)

I hope that this helps you to understand Smith & Wesson's roll in the Civil war, but more importantly that it show how the Civil War helped to make Smith & Wesson one of America's great firearm companies.

Note: The correspondence cited above comes from company records in possession of the author. Additional company records are located at the Springfield Historical Society.

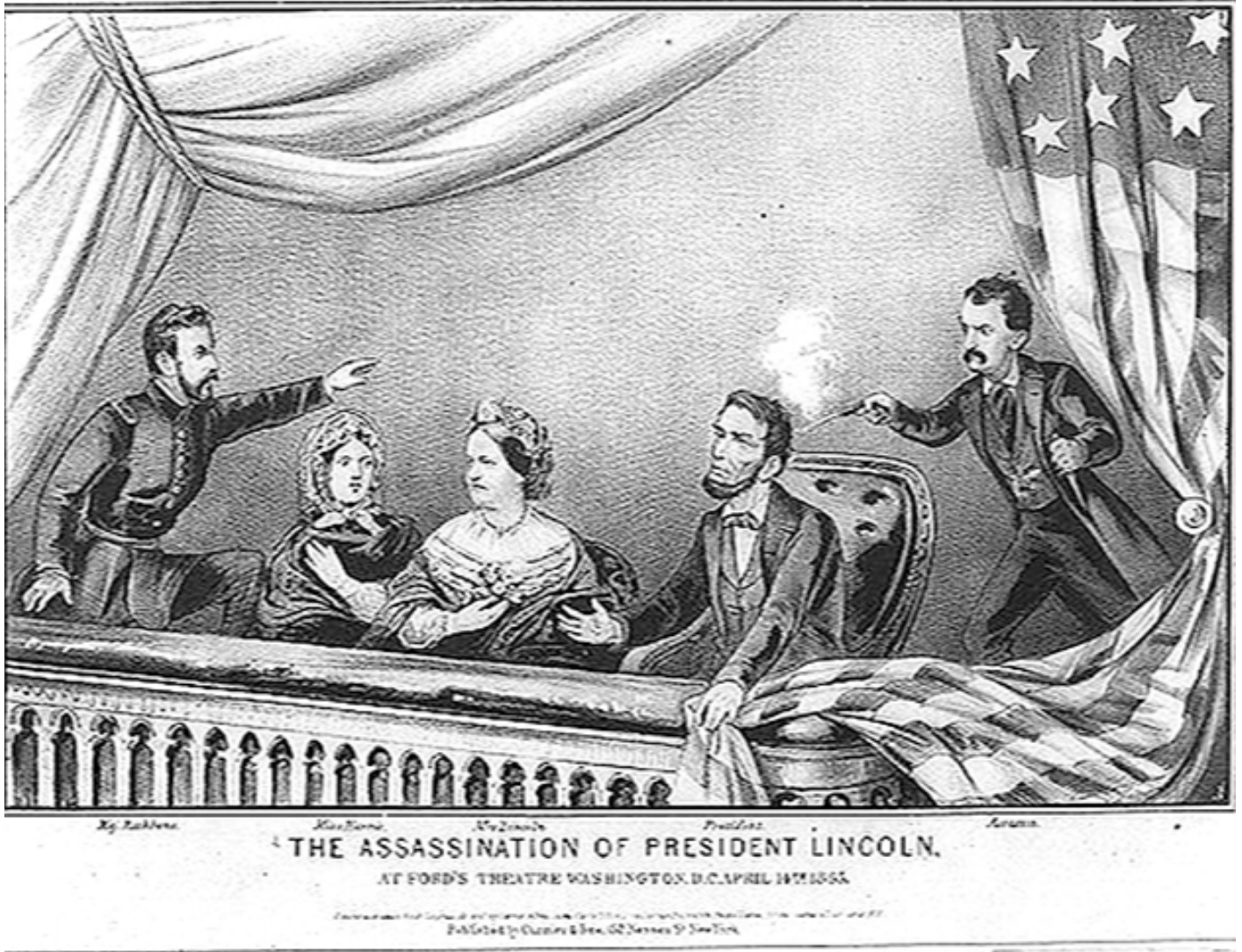


Figure 28. Newspaper illustration of the assassination of President Lincoln on April 14, 1865 (above) and letter from M. W. Robinson to Mrs. Smith and Wesson dated April 20, 1865 concerning closing of business while New York is in mourning (right). (Authors collection)

New York April 20/65
 Mrs Smith & Wesson
 Gentlemen
 Yours of 18th
 to hand this morning.
 I will see Mr. Edwards
 tomorrow - Today being
 fast day in N.Y. by ap-
 pointment of the Governor
 no business is being done.
 Yesterday was a
 solemn day here, as it
 was indeed throughout
 the land.
 I see by the papers
 this morning that the
 remains of Mr Lincoln
 will be brought through
 N.Y. I presume tomorrow
 that business will

be pretty much suspen-
 ded some day next
 week.
 Yours truly
 M. W. Robinson

These earnings were from the sale of firearms and 3% royalties paid to them from companies manufacturing cartridges under their patents. To summarize how good their sales were let me provide you with the number:

Year	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1½	Warner	Pond	Moore	Rollin White
1857	14	---					
1858	2,440						
1859	7,181						
1860	7,178						
1861	8,682	1,943					
1862	5,533	7,682					
1863	12,402	9,959		1,513	2,970	3,376	
1864	18,839	12,481	1,516				
1865	24,554	19,079	11,910				1,911

Total production 1857-1865 Model 1 86823, Model 2 51144, Model 11/2 11910, Warner 1513, Pond 4486, Moore 3376, Rollin White Arms 1911. None of the Model 1 ½ or the Rollin White Arms was sold early enough in 1865 to be used in the Civil War. The total number of all handguns sold was 166,677.

The handgun sales were only part of the story that supported their income. Lets now take a look at the sale of the cartridges.

Year	No. 1 .22/100	No. 2 .32/100	No.3 .44/100
1857	100		
1858	312,500		
1859	3,160,600		
1860	4,360,560		
1861	2,639,400	516,000	
1862	3,715,900	2,203,400	416,000
1863	4,637,300	2,924,450	6,600
1864	5,664,400	3,737,050	1,000
1865	4,956,000	4,479,000	2,000
Total	29,446,760	13,859,900	425,600

Smith & Wesson's total cartridge sale of all cartridges from 1857 to the end of 1865 was 43,732,260 cartridges. The company was also being paid a 3% Royalty for all cartridges being manufactured by C. D. Leet, Crittender & Tribbals, Smith Hall & Buckland, and Union Metallic Cartridge & Cap Co.

