

The Filson Historical Society

**Humphrey Marshall, 1812-1872
Papers, 1827-1921.**

For information regarding literary and copyright interest for these papers, see the Curator of Special Collections, James J. Holmberg

Size of Collection:

1.33 cubic feet

Location Number:

Mss./A/M368

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Scope and Content Note

The collection consists of correspondence, a journal, a copybook, legal papers, speeches, and miscellaneous items related to Marshall's political and military career. Correspondence from the antebellum period concerns Marshall's political career with the Whig Party and the Know Nothings. Included are a variety of materials related to Marshall's service in the Mexican War, particularly his involvement at the Battle of Buena Vista. A small amount of correspondence from the Civil War discusses Marshall's service in the Confederate Army and his election to the Confederate Congress. Also included is Marshall's journal covering his journey to Mexico after the fall of Richmond in April 1865. The collection also includes a copybook from the time Marshall served as United States minister to China. The copied correspondence deals with China's Taiping Rebellion and American efforts at establishing trade with China and Japan. Other items include legal papers from the antebellum era as well as numerous incomplete speeches from both before and after the Civil War. A substantial amount of correspondence from Marshall's sons regards negative depictions of Marshall in historical works and is devoted to defending Marshall's reputation after his death. The collection also contains a 29-page handwritten autobiography by Supreme Court Justice John McLean.

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Biographical Note

Humphrey Marshall, the grandson of politician and historian Humphrey Marshall (1760-1841), was a politician, attorney, and Confederate general. Born in 1812 in Frankfort, Marshall graduated from West Point in 1832 and briefly served in the military before resigning his commission to pursue a career in law and politics. Marshall's military career resumed during the Mexican War, when he served as colonel of the 1st Kentucky Cavalry, which fought at the Battle of Buena Vista. After the war, as a Whig and later a Know Nothing, Marshall acted as ambassador to China from 1852 to 1854 and then served two terms in the United States House of Representatives from 1855 to 1859. After supporting Kentucky neutrality in 1860 and 1861, Marshall joined the Confederate army and earned a brigadier general's commission, commanding troops in eastern Kentucky and Tennessee. In the summer of 1863, Marshall resigned his commission and represented Kentucky in the Confederate Congress. When Richmond fell in April 1865, Marshall fled the city with the Confederate government and eventually reached Mexico. After the war, he returned to Louisville, where he practiced law and died on March 28, 1872.

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Folder List

- Folder 1: Correspondence, 1827-1845
- Folder 2: Correspondence, 1846-1849
- Folder 3: Correspondence, January-April 1850
- Folder 4: Correspondence, May-July 1850
- Folder 5: Correspondence, August-December 1850
- Folder 6: Correspondence, 1851
- Folder 7: Correspondence, 1852
- Folder 8: Correspondence, 1853-1855
- Folder 9: Correspondence, January-February 1856
- Folder 10: Correspondence, March-April 1856
- Folder 11: Correspondence, May-December 1856
- Folder 12: Correspondence, 1857-1860
- Folder 13: Correspondence, 1861-1872
- Folder 14: Correspondence, undated
- Folder 15: Copybook, 1849-1853
- Folder 16: "Humphrey Marshall of Kentucky: Letters and Papers, The China Years, 1852-1854"
- Folder 17: Journal, 1865
- Folder 18: Miscellaneous China Papers
- Folder 19: Military Papers
- Folder 20: Legal Papers
- Folder 21: Correspondence regarding Nathaniel S. Shaler's *Kentucky: A Pioneer Commonwealth* (1884)
- Folder 22: Correspondence regarding R. S. Cotterill's "Humphrey Marshall, II, Eccentric Leader Who Led Picturesque Career During Civil War Period" (1921)
- Folder 23: Miscellaneous Correspondence
- Folder 24: Papers regarding Justice John McLean
- Folder 25: Speech fragments
- Folder 26: Revolutionary War Pensions Essay
- Folder 27: Newspaper Clippings
- Folder 28: Miscellaneous writings
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- Folder 31: Newspapers (Oversize)

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Subject Headings

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Buchanan, James, 1791-1868
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China – Foreign Relations – United States
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Clay, Cassius Marcellus, 1810-1903.
Clay, Henry, 1777-1852
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Crittenden, John J. (John Jordan), 1787-1863.
Early, Jubal Anderson, 1816-1894.
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Jackson, Andrew, 1767-1845
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Prentice, George D. (George Denison), 1802-1870.
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Shaler, Nathaniel Southgate, 1841-1906.
Shanghai (China) – Maps
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Slavery – Political aspects
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Stephens, Alexander Hamilton, 1812-1883.
Taylor, Zachary, 1784-1850

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United States – Politics and government – 1845-1861
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United States Military Academy
Utah Expedition, 1857-1858
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