

# Guide to the Marshall Cousins Papers, 1837-1947

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## Summary Information

**Title:** Marshall Cousins Papers

**Inclusive Dates:** 1837-1947

**Creator:** Cousins, Marshall, 1869-1939

**Call Number:** Eau Claire Mss I

**Quantity:** 6.6 c.f. (13 archives boxes and 4 flat boxes)

**Repository:** Housed at the Area Research Center, William D. McIntyre Library, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire; owned by the Wisconsin Historical Society, Library-Archives Division

**Archival Locations:** UW-Eau Claire McIntyre Library / Eau Claire Area Research Ctr.

**Abstract:** Papers of Marshall Cousins, a prominent local historian in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, consisting of correspondence, diaries, historical source material he collected, extensive subject files and notebooks containing information transcribed from published and other sources, and a small collection of papers of his father, Henry Cousins, an East Troy attorney, including letters written by John Fox Potter, a Wisconsin congressman. The Potter letters, 1857-1869, contain caustic characterizations of other political figures and assessments of party alignments in Wisconsin. The papers include correspondence from Cousins' presidency of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin (1928-1939); minutes of the Griffin Rifles Club of Eau Claire (1887-1896) and other information on local military companies; records (1882-1946) of Grand Army of the Republic Eagle Post No. 52 of Eau Claire; two cashbooks (1861-1864) which belonged to C. C. Spafford, an Eau Claire banker; and much collected information on Wisconsin banks and banking, biographical information on Eau Claire area residents, and general information on the Civil War, Masonry, local government, steamboats on the Mississippi and Chippewa rivers, the press in Wisconsin, and general state and local history.

**Language:** English

## Biography/History

Marshall Cousins was a banker by profession. He served as assistant cashier in the Union National Bank of Eau Claire for many years and was for a short time, during the governorship of Emanuel Philipp, state banking commissioner. In 1888 Cousins enlisted in the National Guard and for the remainder of his life maintained his

connection with the state military organization, rising to the command of the 6th Wisconsin Infantry and serving with troops in the Spanish-American War and on the Mexican border in 1915. His election to the presidency of the Wisconsin Historical Society in 1928, together with his freedom from family or office cares, gave him the opportunity to gather information on many phases of local history of his home region.

- 1869, September 4
  - Marshall Cousins born in Eau Claire, where he resided until moving to Madison, probably in the 1920's.
- 1888
  - Joined Griffin's Rifles, the Eau Claire branch of the Wisconsin National Guard.
- 1895-1897
  - Wisconsin State Assemblyman
- 1895
  - Chairman of Wisconsin State Assembly Committee on Military Affairs.
- 1898-1900
  - Served in Spanish-American War.
- 1918
  - Discharged from active military service after World War I duty in Waco, Texas.
- 1918-1923
  - Served as State Commissioner of Banking. Previously he had worked as the cashier of the Union National Bank in Eau Claire and as a collector for its predecessor, the Bank of Eau Claire.
- 1928-1939
  - Served as president of the Board of Curators of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.
- 1938
  - Became a member of the American Military Foundation.
- 1939, February 28
  - Died four days after being stuck by a car in Madison.

## Scope and Content Note

The Marshall Cousins Papers are organized in two parts. Part 1, the Original Collection, contains correspondence, diaries, and files Cousins had collected; these materials date 1837-1939. Part 2, the 1990 Additions, almost exclusively contain transcribed and collected documents from Cousins' historical research.

## Part 1, Original Collection, 1837-1939

This portion of the collection consists of a small amount of correspondence of Henry Cousins (Marshall's father), Marshall Cousins' own correspondence, diaries, and a subject file of articles, notes, and material he had collected on Wisconsin banking and other subjects.

The collection opens with a group of letters received by Cousins' father, Henry Cousins, an attorney at East Troy in Walworth County, Wisconsin. Among these letters are about 20 written by John Fox Potter, the fiery

Republican Member of Congress from Wisconsin's 1st District, 1857-1863, whose defiance of the representative from Virginia, Roger Pryor, fastened on Potter the nickname "Bowie Knife Potter." Potter's letters run from the time he took his seat in Congress to 1869. By that time he had retired to his farm in East Troy and his former neighbor, Henry Cousins, had moved to Eau Claire. The letters touch upon national and state issues, but are chiefly valuable for his witty and caustic characterizations of political figures and his able diagnosis of party alignments in Wisconsin.

The Marshall Cousins correspondence shows clearly the varied interests of the man. It relates primarily to the early history of Eau Claire: its people, banks, newspapers, churches, steamboats that came up the Mississippi and Chippewa rivers in the early days, letters inquiring about the first railroad, temperature extremes, the date electricity was first used, and when the first telegraph connection was made between Eau Claire and the outside world.

Although the collection dates to 1837, the first part consists only of copied excerpts from newspapers about happenings that interested Mr. Cousins. The main part does not begin until 1913-14 when several letters were received from the Office of the Adjutant General in Madison, Earl Driver, and others, concerning records of Eau Claire military companies in the early days and their dates of organization. Throughout the correspondence there are letters by Marshall asking for information to supplement a biography of Eau Claire men which he intended to write. This interest in military affairs was maintained throughout his life and in 1938, one year before his death, he became a member of the American Military Foundation.

In 1915, in response to requests, Mr. Edwin Greene of Hudson wrote several letters about the early days of Eau Claire and recalled his first trip to Mississippi in the "War Eagle" in 1857. In 1916 the history of the lumber industry in the Chippewa Valley interested Mr. Cousins; then no letters appear until 1924 when he began to collect biographical materials about Eau Claire men.

To collect this biographical material, Mr. Cousins was tireless in his search. He wrote many letters inquiring about the dates of births, names of parents, when married, number of offspring, education, profession or business, military record, and dates of death of people who at one time or another had lived in Eau Claire. Some of this unlabeled biographical material has been filed chronologically with the correspondence, but the bulk of it is in groups as it was arranged by Cousins, and filed alphabetically under the names of persons dealt with, in the Subject File. (See the appendix of this finding aid for a list of people represented in these biographies.)

About this time (1924) he acted on his interest in the history of banks in Wisconsin and collected many notes about territorial day currencies. In 1926 Howard Greene of Milwaukee wrote him concerning the banking history of Wisconsin and from this time on there is considerable material about banks. Seventeen notebooks, miscellaneous typewritten articles, notes, and memorabilia have been filed in the Subject File. No attempt has been made to alter the original arrangement of this material.

Two bound volumes largely duplicate the information contained in the notes about various Wisconsin banks: authorized capital, capital paid in, date of articles, date of filing, when business began, and when the charter expired. These banks were listed chronologically from the date business began. One of the volumes (1853-1932) gives notations about several banks that were liquidated during the depressions of 1873 and 1931.

Beginning in 1926, Mr. Cousins must have spent much of his time gathering data about the history of the press of Eau Claire. He acquired considerable information about the various newspaper and magazines that had been published in that locality and wrote an article entitled "The Press of Wisconsin." All of the letters are to be found with the correspondence but the typewritten articles and notes concerning the Wisconsin press are in the Subject File.

During these years, many letters were exchanged concerning various other subjects: the location of certain Eau

Claire buildings and who owned them in the early days, who was sheriff of Eau Claire County from 1861-63, and the part that county took in the Civil War. For this last information he corresponded with the Adjutant General's Office at Washington and in 1929 he wrote Pat Hurley, Secretary of War, about lands formerly owned by the Federal Government and known as Fort Winnebago, near Portage, Wisconsin. Mr. Cousins was chairman of the committee appointed for the purpose of purchasing, if possible, the lands formerly embraced within the military reservation for public park purposes and restoring some of the buildings which were not entirely in ruins.

From 1932 to the end, the correspondence changes in tone. Men write for information concerning the subjects on which data has been gathered. The La Crosse Trust Company inquires about the history of La Crosse banks; the vice president of the Bank of St. Croix Falls asks about the location of an old town named Brikenhoff; another bank official wants to know about the beginning of the Germania Lodge. In 1926 the Eau Claire press informs him that his articles about George A. Buffington and Sever E. Brimi will soon be published in the local paper and various Eau Claire residents compliment him on articles of historical interest that have already appeared.

In 1937 Mr. Cousins, as president of the State Historical Society, carried on a correspondence with Daniel Grady, president of the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin, Howard Greene, and others, concerning the advisability of constructing a new building for the Library of the University of Wisconsin, then housed in the Historical Society building. This would relieve the congestion now very apparent in the Historical Society Library. Mr. Grady favored the erection of a building on State Street, to be connected to the Historical Society by an underground passage so books and other material could readily be transported from one building to the other. Mr. Greene believed a new museum was the answer, thus leaving the fourth floor of the Historical Society free for book stacks.

The original collection also contains diaries for the years of 1901, 1902, 1903, and 1907. For the most part, these diaries contain summaries of daily events, engagements, and personal comments, but one 1907 diary contains merely a record of births and deaths, presumably of Eau Claire people.

Besides the items mentioned earlier, the Subject File includes four articles by Cousins: "The Press of Wisconsin," "Eau Claire and the Contest of 1855," "Chippewa Valley and Northwest Wisconsin," and the "Contest for the Location of the State Capitol." Also included are collected records consisting of a daybook, apparently kept by C. C. Spafford of Eau Claire in 1861-63; and a minute book of the Griffin Rifles Club, a military organization in Eau Claire, for 1887-96.

## Part 2, 1990 Additions, 1861-1864, 1918-1947

The Additions have been arranged into three subseries: subject files, notebooks, and published material Cousins transcribed, mainly still in manuscript form. There is very little in these additions that is original material, and it has generally been impossible to determine the date at which Cousins transcribed or annotated these documents. The material was copied from local newspapers such as the *Eau Claire Leader*, the *Eau Claire Free Press* and the *Telegraph*; from federal, state and local government publications; and from published histories. Each subseries is arranged alphabetically and contains material on the following topics: local government, political activities and elections, banks, newspapers, masonry, state and local history and the military.

The Additions' Subject File includes drafts of articles Cousins wrote, many of which appeared in Wisconsin publications. There is also correspondence concerning his research and lists of his published writings and biographical information, as well as his manuscript transcriptions of materials from published sources. The transcripts in this series are unique in that Cousins annotated them all, indicating the direction his research was taking at the time. In this series is also one cashbook (1861-1864) which had belonged to C. C. Spafford, an Eau

Claire banker. It complements the one in the original portion of the collection.

The Notebooks subseries is composed of additional transcribed material, rarely annotated by Cousins.

The final subseries is composed of Transcribed Materials copied on loose pieces of paper. Included here are lists of soldiers, mainly from the Civil War, detailing enlistment dates, discharge dates, rank and company number, and also local birth, death and marriage records.

In addition to the material in this collection, the Historical Society holds 13 volumes of newspaper clippings of Cousins. They are available on microfilm at the Historical Society's Newspaper Section. These scrapbooks contain biographical information about prominent Eau Claire and Chippewa Valley citizens.

## Administrative/Restriction Information

## Acquisition Information

Presented by the Marshall Cousins estate, 1939, and by the Eau Claire Public Library, 1990. The 1990 portion was originally transferred from the State Historical Society to the Eau Claire Public Library in 1944; these records were temporarily transferred to Madison to be processed by State Historical Society staff in 1975 and returned to Eau Claire in 1976; they were then gifted to the State Historical Society in 1990.

## Processing Information

The Original Collection's processor is unknown. The 1990 Additions were processed by Eleanor McKay and Patty Affholter, April 6, 1976.

## Search Terms/Subject Terms

- Potter, John Fox, 1817-1899
- State Historical Society of Wisconsin
- American newspapers—Wisconsin
- Banks and banking—Wisconsin
- Local history
- Steamboats—Wisconsin
- Eau Claire (Wis.)—Biography
- Eau Claire (Wis.)—History
- Wisconsin—History
- Wisconsin—Politics and government
- Cousins, Henry, 1826-1888
- Spafford, C.C. (Charles Calvin)
- Griffin Rifles Club (Eau Claire, Wis.)

- Grand Army of the Republic. Eagle Post No. 52 (Eau Claire, Wis.)

## Contents List

**Series:** Part 1, Original Collection, 1837-1939

Box 1 Correspondence of Henry Cousins, 1848-1885

Box 1 Correspondence of Marshall Cousins, 1837-1939

Box 2 Diaries, 1901-1903, 1907  
Volume 1-5

Subject File

Box 2 Articles and notes on Eau Claire and the contest of 1855

Box 2 Articles and notes on Chippewa Valley and northwest Wisconsin

Box 2 Articles and notes on Contest for the location of the state capitol

Box 2 Articles and notes on the Press of Wisconsin

Box 3 Biographical material on Eau Claire men (arranged alphabetically)  
**Note:** See the appendix to this finding aid for an index to the biographies in this box.

Box 4 Notebooks

Box 4 Miscellaneous notes and articles on the early history of banks in Wisconsin

Box 2 Records of Wisconsin banks, 1853, Feb. 8-1901, May  
Volume 7-8 14, and 1853, July 4-1932, Feb. 16

Box 2 Griffin Rifles Club of Eau Claire, minute book, 1887, July  
Volume 6 27-1896, April 9

Box 3 C. C. Spafford, Eau Claire, daybook, 1861, Dec. 181863,  
Volume 9 July 8

**Series:** Part 2, 1990 Additions, 1861-1864, 1918-1947

Subject File

Box 5  
Folder 1 Banks, 1921; undated

Box 5  
Folder 2 Biographical, undated

Box 12 Cashbook -- C. C. Spafford, 1861-1864

Box 5  
Folder 3 Churches, undated

Box 5  
Folder 4 Correspondence, 1926, Aug. - 1938, March; undated

Box 5  
Folder 5 Elections and Other Political Activities, 1918, Nov.; undated

GAR, Eagle Post No. 52, Adjutants Record

Box 13 1882-1894

Box 14 1894-1907

Box 15 1908-1924

Box 16 1925-1946

Box 5  
Folder 6 Land, undated

Box 5  
Folder 7 Lists of Cousins' Published Writings, undated

Box 5  
Folder 8 Local Government, 1930, May; undated

Box 5  
Folder 9 Local History, 1936, Aug.; undated

Box 5  
Folder 10 Lumbering, undated

Box 5  
Folder 11 Military, 1919, April; undated

Box 5  
Folder 12 Miscellaneous, undated

Box 5  
Folder 13 Newspapers, 1935; undated

Box 5  
Folder 14 Post Offices, undated

Box 5  
Folder 15 Wisconsin Early History, undated

Box 17 Wisconsin National Guard, Co. E, 3rd Regiment,  
Descriptive Record

Notebooks, undated

Box 6  
Folder 1 Banks



Box 6 Births, Deaths, Marriages  
Folder 2

Box 6 Index to the Notebooks  
Folder 3

Box 6 Local Government  
Folder 4-5

Box 6 Locations, Abstracts, Landmarks  
Folder 6

Box 6 Miscellaneous  
Folder 7-9

Box 7 Newspapers  
Folder 1-3

Box 7 Political  
Folder 4-5

Box 7 "Sundry"  
Folder 6-7

Transcribed Material, undated

Box 8 Banks  
Folder 1

Box 8 Biographical  
Folder 2

Box 8 Births, Deaths, and Marriages  
Folder 3

Box 8 Business -- Miscellaneous  
Folder 4-5

Box 8 Census Information  
Folder 6

Box 8 Counties  
Folder 7

Box 9 Fire  
Folder 1

Box 9 Masons  
Folder 2

Box 9 Military  
Folder 3-4

Box 9 Miscellaneous  
Folder 5-6

Box 10 Miscellaneous, continued  
Folder 1-3

Box 10 Political Activities and Elections  
Folder 4-6

Box 11 Post Offices  
Folder 1-2

Box 11 Real Estate  
Folder 3

Box 11 State and Local Government  
Folder 4-6

Box 11 Weather  
Folder 7

## Appendix I: List of People Represented in the Biographical Information in Box 3 Note

Information is filed alphabetically by name in Folders 1-3 and in random order in Folder 4. “(#4)” after a name below means the information is in Folder 4.

- Alexander, Joseph Bullen
- Allen, William (Dr.)
- Allen, William W. (see Randall, A.)
- Anderson, Robert H.
- Anderson, Robert H. (#4)
- Argard, Martin J.
- Avery, William (#4)
- Barbar, George (#4)
- Barber, George
- Barnard, Luther A.
- Barnes, Alpheus R.
- Barnes, Horace W.
- Barnum, Israel
- Barry, George A.
- Bartlett, Milton Duane
- Bauman, Andrew
- Becker, Henry
- Beeman, Harrison
- Bellinger, F. J.
- Bleuel, Albert
- Bleuel, Albert (#4)
- Born, Charles A.
- Born, Charles A. (#4)
- Bosworth, A. W.
- Bosworth, Gus
- Boyden, Noel Byron
- Brown, Adam
- Brown, Andrew
- Brown, Nathaniel K. (#4)
- Buck, Frederick R.
- Buckley, William
- Buckley, William (#4)
- Burbank, Israel B.
- Burkhart, John
- Burlingame, Eustis
- Burpee, George H. (#4)
- Butters, Charles E. (#4)
- Button, Joseph B.

- Callahan, Jonathan Gardner
- Cameron, Duguld D.
- Canfield, Stephen
- Canfield, Stephen (#4)
- Chamberlin, Hiram
- Chapman, George B.
- Chatwood, William
- Cochrane, Sanders
- Congdon, Christopher
- Connell, William
- Coon, Thomas B.
- Copeland, Richard H.
- Cowan, Benjamin F.
- Culbertson, Andrew Thompson
- Culbertson Henry M.
- Delaney, Arthur W. (#4)
- Delany, Arthur W.
- Devoe, Isaac
- Dickershied, Martin
- Dickey, Harrison
- Dickey, Harrison (#4)
- Dodge, Robert
- Drake, Philander N.
- Dunn, B. C.
- Edwards, John B. (#4)
- Edwards, John Bastian
- Edwards, Truman
- Edwards, William M.
- Ellis, Joseph R.
- Emerick, Philip
- Foote, Mr.
- French, A. J.
- French, John O.
- Friedlander, Theodore
- Fuller, Dana S.
- Fuller, Dana S. (#4)
- Fuller, Solomon (#4)
- Galloway, Elias A.

- Gebhart, Gabriel
- George, Thomas (#4)
- Gleason, William H.
- Godard, Marshall N.
- Golden, Thomas C.
- Goodwin, Ira F.
- Grasser, Ferdinand
- Graves, Warren
- Green, Charles A. (#4)
- Greer, Napoleon B.
- Griffith, Shipman W.
- Grinnell, Henry
- Grout, George E.
- Grover, Milton
- Hadley, Joseph D.
- Hall, Shedrack A.
- Hall, William B. (#4)
- Harrigan, John (#4)
- Haswell, George F.
- Hath, Jacob
- Hath, Jacob (#4)
- Haynes, Benjamin F.
- Hazen, D. L.
- Hedge, Riley
- Hill, Julius A.
- Hill, Julius A. (#4)
- Hitchings, George
- Homiston, Edward
- Hotchkiss, Lyman P.
- Howard, Charles H.
- Huey, Harry G. (see Hill, J. A.)
- Huston, James S.
- Jackson, Leo M. (#4)
- Jackson, Oscar T.
- Joachim, George H. (#4)
- Joachim, John P. (#4)
- Kelly, John J. (#4)
- Kennedy, Donald

- Ketchum, Elias
- Kimball, John
- Kirk, William George
- Klein, William
- Lampman, Herbert H.
- Langrell, R. T. (Dr.)
- Latimer, Levi E.
- Loomis, George A. (#4)
- Loomis, Harrison B.
- Macauley, Hugh
- Markle, Edwin T. (#4)
- McCann, Arthur J.
- McCann, Jordan J.
- McCann, Stephen S.
- McCauley, James D. (#4)
- McCord, Wilbur F.
- McFait, see Wheeler, Charles
- McGuire, Frank M.
- McLeod, Collin S. (#4)
- Mead, Ira
- Miller, Christian W.
- Montheith , William
- Moore, Martin T. (#4)
- Morgan, Nathan E.
- Morgan, Nathan E. (#4)
- Mori, Frederick
- Nary, Thomas J.
- Nelson, James P.
- Nichols, William H. H.
- Noble, David
- O'Connell, Michael E.
- O'Mera, John
- Olin, George
- Olson, Peter O.
- Page, William F.
- Palmer, George W.
- Palmer, George W. (#4)
- Palmeter, Silas M. (#4)

- Palmiter, Silas M.
- Parker, Benjamin F. (#4)
- Parker, Charles (#4)
- Parker, Charles H.
- Pettis, Levi
- Phillips, Charles J.
- Phillips, J. N.
- Phillips, John W.
- Pitsch, Adolph (#4)
- Pomeroy, Hugh E. (#4)
- Pond, William H.
- Prine, Elijah H.
- Pringle or Prindle, Charles
- Quentmeyer, Henry W.
- Quick, Walter
- Randall, Adin
- Randall, George W.
- Randall, Jabish
- Randall, Nicholas D.
- Randall, Simon
- Reed, George M.
- Reed, Malcolm
- Reynolds, David K.
- Riddall, John W.
- Riley, Albert M.
- Robbins, Daniel
- Robinson,, Charles Wesley
- Scammon, Dan R.
- Schadel, Samuel P.
- Schadel, Samuel P. (#4)
- Schlosser, Chris
- Schlosser, Matt
- Schmidmayr, Francis
- Scholkopf, Christian (#4)
- Seaman, Horace M.
- Seaman, Horace M. (#4)
- Segar, Charles (#4)
- Selb, Paul

- Seley or Seeley, Chapin M.
- Shaw, Walter
- Sherman, Arthur
- Sherman, Stanton F.
- Shipman, Curtis F.
- Shipman, Curtis F. (#4)
- Sibbald, Mark (#4)
- Siebenthall, Franz A.
- Smith, Dighton
- Sniteman, Charles C.
- Snodgrass, Earl
- Soal, John (#4)
- Solliday, Albert
- Solliday, Albert (#4)
- Spencer, Newton B. (#4)
- Spencer, Theodore C.
- Sprague, Benjamin L. (#4)
- Stevens, Chase
- Stevens, Taylor
- Stillman, John Edwin
- Stoddard, Orange B.
- Strasburg, Charles
- Stringham, Henry T.
- Stringham, Joseph
- Strong, Bennett U.
- Tainter, Stephen
- Taylor, John (#4)
- Tewksbury, Charles
- Thiel, August
- Thurston, Alfred M.
- Tinker, John T.
- Todd, William H.
- Turner, John
- Turner, John (#4)
- Tuttle, Alfred W.
- Tyrrell, Andrew B. (#4)
- Weber, W.
- West, Thomas



- West, Thomas (#4)
  - Wheeler, Charles
  - Wheeler, John R.
  - Whipple, Charles
  - Whipple, Darwin C.
  - White, Harry D.
  - Wilcox, Ephraim
  - Williams, Edward
  - Williams, H. Clay
  - Winegar, Robert (see Goodwin, I.)
  - Wolf, Victor
  - Woodworth, John
  - Wyckoff, Peter
  - Wyckoff, Stephen V.
  - Wygant, Sidney T.
  - Wyman, Daniel A.
  - Wynkoop, William McNair
-