

# Guide to the William Julius Mickle Papers

OSB MSS 159



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June 2010

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library  
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New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
(203) 432-2977  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

**CALL NUMBER:** OSB MSS 159

**CREATOR:** Mickle, William Julius, 1735-1788

**TITLE:** William Julius Mickle papers

**DATES:** 1753-1825

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 1.25 linear feet (3 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The William Julius Mickle Papers document aspects of the literary and naval careers of William Julius Mickle. The collection includes correspondence from literary figures such as William Ballantyne, William Bowles, David Garrick, Francis Gentleman, Isaac Reed, and John Sim, and from family friend and naval patron Commodore George Johnstone; manuscripts of several works by Mickle, including *The Concubine* and *The Death of Socrates*; and papers relating to Mickle's service as prize agent for Johnstone's naval squadron.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.micklew>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.micklew>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to [beinecke.images@yale.edu](mailto:beinecke.images@yale.edu).

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b.      box  
f.      folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased by James Marshall Osborn from Sotheby's (21 May 1968 sale), 1968. Bequest of James Marshall Osborn, 1976.

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## Custodial History

From the collection of T. M. Ellis.

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## Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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## Conditions Governing Use

The William Julius Mickle Papers are the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

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## Preferred Citation

William Julius Mickle Papers. James Marshall and Marie-Louise Osborn Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

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## Processing Information

This collection was arranged and cataloged by curatorial assistants in the 1970s and 1980s. Further rehousing and description were carried out in 2010. Information included in the Description of Papers note and Collection Contents section is drawn from information supplied with the collection and compiled from individual catalog cards.

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## William Julius Mickle, 1734 or 1735-1788.

William Julius Mickle (1734 or 1735-1788), was born William Meikle in Scotland and inherited his father's Edinburgh brewery in 1757. After it failed financially in 1763, Mickle secretly moved to London, changed the spelling of his last name, and embarked on a literary career. He was corrector for the Clarendon Press, Oxford, from 1765 to 1772. Mickle's first success was the neo-Spenserian poem *The Concubine* (1767).

From 1772 until 1779 he lived with a patron, Robert Tomkins of Forest Hill, and attempted to earn his living solely as an author. He repeatedly rewrote his verse tragedy, *The Seige of Marseilles*, in the hopes of seeing it performed, but the London theater managers repeatedly refused to stage it. His other ambitious project was more successful: his verse translation of Luís de Camões's epic poem *Os Lusíadas* (1572) was published by subscription in 1776 as *The Lusiad, or, The Discovery of India*. While Mickle's command of Portuguese was questionable, the work earned him almost a thousand pounds and remained the standard translation of this national epic for almost a century.

Mickle, however, was still burdened with old debts, and in 1779 his patron Commodore George Johnstone appointed him purser of the HMS *Brilliant*. Johnstone's squadron was stationed in Portugal, and the Portuguese welcomed the translator of their national poet, electing Mickle to the Academia Reale. His naval career was a success; in 1780 he was appointed prize agent for the squadron, which improved his fortunes enough for him to marry Mary Tomkins, daughter of Robert Tomkins, in 1782. The couple moved to Wheatley, Oxfordshire, where Mickle spent much time revising his works. He died after a short illness in 1788 and was survived by his wife and his son, Charles Julius Mickle.

## Scope and Contents

The William Julius Mickle Papers document aspects of the literary and naval careers of William Julius Mickle. The collection includes correspondence from literary figures including William Ballantyne, William Bowles, David Garrick, Francis Gentleman, Isaac Reed, and John Sim, as well as from family friend and naval patron Commodore George Johnstone; manuscripts of several works by Mickle, including *The Concubine* and *The Death of Socrates*; and papers relating to Mickle's service as prize agent for Johnstone's naval squadron in the early 1780s.

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## Arrangement

Organized into three series: I. Correspondence, 1753-1825. II. Writings, 1762-1774. III. Naval Papers, 1780-1789.

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## Collection Contents

### Series I: Correspondence, 1753-1825

0.83 linear feet (2 boxes)

*Correspondence* consists primarily of letters received by William Julius Mickle, mostly concerning literary matters. Major correspondents include the authors William Bowles, Francis Gentleman, David Price, and the book collector and scholar Isaac Reed. Letters from William Ballantyne and João Jacinto Magalhães discuss Mickle's translation of *Os Lusíadas* (*The Lusiad*). An undated letter by David Garrick offers the young poet advice, while a 1769 letter contains criticism of *The Siege of Marseilles*.

The letters of Commodore George Johnstone contain personal and family news as well as information relating to Mickle's service in the Royal Navy. Some of the letters by Mickle, located in folders 89-105, also concern naval affairs and prize money.

Alphabetically arranged by correspondent. Letters from Mickle to other recipients are filed under "Mickle, William Julius."

b. 1, f. 1	Anderson, Alexander	1780-1781
b. 1, f. 2	Armstrong, John	1767-1769
b. 1, f. 3	Armstrong, - (Mr.)	1788 March 15
b. 1, f. 4	Arthur, D.	[1780?]
b. 1, f. 5	Ashe, Robert Hoadley	1778 December 9
b. 1, f. 6-11	Ballantyne, William	1773-1805
b. 1, f. 12	<a href="#">Balmain, J.</a>	1780 March 16
b. 1, f. 13	Barclay, James	1768 December 26
b. 1, f. 14	Barnard, Frederick Augusta	1778 February 25
b. 1, f. 15-16	Bathurst, Henry, Bishop of Norwich	1785-1806
b. 1, f. 17-18	Bew, John	1777-1782
b. 1, f. 19	Birt, Richard	1788 March 28
b. 1, f. 20	Blake, Joshua	1781 March 6
b. 1, f. 21-22	Bowles, William (1755-1826)	1778-1786
b. 1, f. 23	Braithwaite, D.	1779-1780
b. 1, f. 24	Brooks, William	1772 April 6
b. 1, f. 25	Bryer, William	1783-1787
b. 1, f. 26	Bucknay, Andrew	1755 June 12
b. 1, f. 27-28	Caldecott, Thomas	1772-1783, undated

b. 1, f. 29	Campbell, Coll	1781 August 30
b. 1, f. 30	Campbell, Mrs. Hannah	1781 March 18
b. 1, f. 31	Charters, Thomas	1789 May 4
b. 1, f. 32	Cleghorn, William	1781-1785
b. 1, f. 33	Correa, Jose	undated
b. 1, f. 34	Crichton, William	1780 October 30
b. 1, f. 35	Fenton, Richard (1747-1821)	1773 May 10
b. 1, f. 36-38	<a href="#">Ford, Mrs. M.</a>	1784-1788
b. 1, f. 39	<a href="#">Garrick, David (1717-1779)</a>	1769 November 29, undated
b. 1, f. 40-41	Gentleman, Francis (1728-1784)	1764-1767
b. 1, f. 42	Good, William (d. 1776)	1763-1764
b. 1, f. 43	Graeme, (Captain) Alex	1781 March 22
b. 1, f. 44	Hadow, James F.	1783 February 28
b. 1, f. 45	Harmen, (John?)	1781 March 14
b. 1, f. 46	Hartwell, (Brod?)	1781 August 19
b. 1, f. 47	Hollist, Thomas	1776 August 6
b. 1, f. 48	Home, Rodman	1781-1783
b. 1, f. 49	Hoola, John	no year, August 27
b. 1, f. 50-51	Hopper, Thomas	1782
b. 1, f. 52	Hudson, William	1780-1784
b. 1, f. 53	Innes, Alexander	1782 February 28
b. 1, f. 54	Ireland, James	1768 February
b. 1, f. 55	Irving, Matthew (b. 1714)	1783 May 20
b. 1, f. 56	Jackson, P.	1783 October 18
b. 1, f. 57	Jackson, William	1782-1788
b. 1, f. 58	Johnstone, Alexander (1727-1783)	1779 May 18
b. 1, f. 59-62	<a href="#">Johnstone, (Commodore) George (1730-1787)</a>	1773-1786
b. 1, f. 63	Johnstone, John (1734-1795)	1787
b. 1, f. 64	Johnstone, Walter	1776-1778

b. 1, f. 65	Langhome, John (1735-1779)	1765 December 17
b. 1, f. 66	Lawson, James	1781 February
b. 1, f. 67	Lord, M.	1765 June 24
b. 1, f. 68-69	Lyttelton, George (1709-1773)	1763-1765
b. 1, f. 70	Lyttelton, Lord (verbatim copy of letters to and from)	1763
b. 2, f. 71-72	MacDonogh, Felix	1785
b. 2, f. 73-74	McLaurin, (Captain) John	1785-1787
b. 2, f. 75-77	Magalhães, João Jacinto (1722-1790)	1771-1780
b. 2, f. 78	Maltby, Richard G.	1782 September 26
b. 2, f. 79	Mayne, Edward and Mackenzie Chas	1783 March 19
b. 2, f. 80	Margetson, J.	1784 October 16
b. 2, f. 81	Maxwell, John	1778 July 27
b. 2, f. 82	Mayne, Thomas	1779 December 15
b. 2, f. 83-84	McDowall, Charles	1751
b. 2, f. 85	<a href="#">Meikle, Alexander and Thomas</a>	1751 March 14
b. 2, f. 86	<a href="#">Meikle, Alexander (d. 1757)</a>	1753 November 22
b. 2, f. 87	<a href="#">Mickle, Charles (?-1768)</a>	1762 November 1
b. 2, f. 88	Mickle, Thomas	1776-1789
b. 2, f. 89-105	<a href="#">Mickle, William Julius (1735-1788)</a>	1762-1788, undated
b. 2, f. 106-107	<a href="#">Murdoch, John (1747-1824)</a>	1766-1783
b. 2, f. 108-109	<a href="#">Mickle, Thomas</a>	1776-1789
b. 2, f. 110-112	Owen, David (1754-1829)	1779-1780, undated
b. 2, f. 113	Pasley, Charles	1780, undated
b. 2, f. 114	Pasley, Robert	1780 June 30
b. 2, f. 115	Piercy, Ed	1784 November 3
b. 2, f. 116-119	Prince, Daniel (d. 1790)	1765-1767



b. 2, f. 120	<a href="#">Pulteney, Sir William, 5th Bar. (1729-1805)</a>	1781 August 13
b. 2, f. 121	Raffles, Sir Thomas Stamford (1781-1826)	1825 November 30
b. 2, f. 122	Rebello, D. Alves	1777-1782
b. 2, f. 123-130	Reed, Isaac (1742-1807)	1772-1787, undated
b. 2, f. 131	Robins, William	1783 February 11
b. 2, f. 132	Rodney, George Brydges Rodney, 1st baron (1719-1792)	1788 May 16
b. 2, f. 133	Rutherford, W.	undated
b. 2, f. 134-138	Sim, John (1746-1824)	1783-1808, undated
b. 2, f. 139	Stephens, William	1781 December 19
b. 2, f. 140-141	Stephens, William and John James	1760-1786
b. 2, f. 142-145	Walker, William	1763-1768
b. 2, f. 146-147	Walpole, Robert (1736-1810)	1780
b. 2, f. 148	Warton, Joseph (1722-1800)	1771 June 10
b. 2, f. 149	West, James (1704-1772)	1769 June 27
b. 2, f. 150	Wheeler, William	1822 July 8
b. 2, f. 151	Whiteley, W.	1788 October 24
b. 2, f. 152	Willoughby, Dobson	1787 December 12
b. 2, f. 153-155	Wright, Thomas (d. 1797)	1769, undated
b. 2, f. 156	Unidentified	1757

**Series II: Writings, 1762-1774***0.41 linear feet (1 box)*

Contents include drafts of *The Concubine* and *The Death of Socrates*. The devotional essays at the end of the series are mostly incomplete.

Alphabetically arranged by title of work, with untitled material at the end.

b. 3, f. 157	<i>The Concubine</i> Notebook also includes draft of <i>Count Chateaubriant</i> , an early version of <i>The Siege of Marseilles</i> .	[circa 1767]
b. 3, f. 158	<i>The Death of Socrates, a Masque</i> : holograph	1758
b. 3, f. 159	<i>Providence</i> : holograph draft poem	1762
b. 3, f. 160	<i>The Siege of Marseilles</i> : proof fragment	1774
b. 3, f. 161	Untitled devotional essays	undated

### **Series III: Naval Papers, 1780-1789, undated**

Naval Papers includes letters of petition for prize money addressed to Mickle in his capacity as prize agent for Commodore Johnstone's squadron; copies of notes and memoranda; and a drawing of the squadron at anchor in a bay.

b. 3, f. 162

[Naval papers](#)

1780-1784,  
undated

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## **Selected Search Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### **Subjects**

Authors, English -- 18th century  
English drama -- 18th century  
English poetry -- 18th century  
Prizes (Property captured at sea) -- Great Britain

### **Names**

Ballantyne, William  
Bowles, William, 1705-1780  
Garrick, David, 1717-1779  
Gentleman, Francis, 1728-1784  
Johnstone, George, 1730-1787  
Lyttelton, George Lyttelton, Baron, 1709-1773  
Magalhães, João Jacinto de, 1722-1790  
Mickle, William Julius, 1735-1788  
Reed, Isaac, 1742-1807

### **Corporate Bodies**

Brilliant (Ship)  
Great Britain. Royal Navy -- Officers