

# Guide to the George Aust Papers

OSB MSS 270



by Nora Soto

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library  
P. O. Box 208330  
New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
(203) 432-2977  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

**CALL NUMBER:** OSB MSS 270

**CREATOR:** Aust, George, 1741-1829

**TITLE:** George Aust papers

**DATES:** 1746-1837

**BULK DATES:** 1762-1827

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 7.5 linear feet (10 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** In English and French.

**SUMMARY:** The George Aust Papers consists of professional papers, legal and financial records, professional and personal correspondence, and other documents pertaining to the life and work of British civil servant George Aust. Aust's papers document his career of over fifty years in government service, including his position as Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from 1790 to 1796. Correspondents include his wife Sarah Murray Aust; William Eden, first Baron Auckland; Sir James Bland Burges; Thomas Bowdler; Lord William Wyndam Grenville; William Augustus Miles; Lady Barbara Montagu; John Osborn; Bishop Thomas Percy; Sarah Scott; and Philip Yorke, second Earl of Hardwicke. The collection spans the years 1746-1837, with the bulk of the material dating from 1762-1827.

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

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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.gaust>.

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

## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased from Arthur Freeman on the James Marshall and Marie-Louise Osborn Collection Fund, 2002.

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### Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

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### Conditions Governing Use

The George Aust Papers is 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

George Aust Papers. James Marshall and Marie-Louise Osborn Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

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### Processing Information

Collections are processed to a variety of levels, depending on the work necessary to make them usable, their perceived research value, the availability of staff, competing priorities, and whether or not further accruals are expected. The library attempts to provide a basic level of preservation and access for all collections as they are acquired, and does more extensive processing of higher priority collections as time and resources permit.

This collection received a basic level of processing, including rehousing and minimal organization.

Information included in the Description of Papers note and Collection Contents section is drawn from information supplied with the collection and from an initial survey of the contents. Folder titles appearing in the contents list below are often based on those provided by the creator or previous custodian. Titles have not been verified against the contents of the folders in all cases. Otherwise, folder titles are supplied by staff during initial processing.

This finding aid may be updated periodically to account for new acquisitions to the collection and/or revisions in arrangement and description.

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### Associated Materials

[George Aust papers concerning the Secret Service, 1794-1800 \(OSB MSS 148\)](#). Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

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## George Aust (1741-1829)

George Aust was an English civil servant in the office of the Secretary of State in Great Britain during the reign of King George III. He was born in 1741 near Bath, England. After moving to London, he began his government career in 1763 as a clerk for the Northern Department of the Secretary of State, which would be reorganized as the Foreign Office in 1782. Aust was promoted to senior clerk in 1780 and appointed

deputy writer of the official government journal *London Gazette* by 1781. In 1790, he was appointed Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, a position shared with Sir James Bland Burges, where Aust's responsibilities included the fiscal administration of the Secret Service under Lord William Wyndham Grenville, then Foreign Secretary. Upon retirement in 1796, Aust was appointed Commissary General of Musters and Secretary to the Trustees of Royal Hospital Chelsea, and later served as Secretary to the Westminster Hospital until 1826.

Aust was married three times and remained childless. Little is known about his first wife, who died in 1803. In November 1803, Aust married Sarah Murray (1744-1811), a topographical writer who published two travel books about Scotland. Sarah was previously married to William Murray, son of the third Earl of Dunmore, from 1783 until his death in 1786. Aust subsequently married Catherine Feaver in 1813. He lived in the West End and Chelsea districts of London, where he died in 1829.

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## Scope and Contents

The George Aust Papers consists of professional papers, legal and financial records, professional and personal correspondence, and other documents pertaining to the life and work of British civil servant George Aust. Aust's papers document his career of over fifty years in government service, including his position as Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from 1790 to 1796. Correspondents include his wife Sarah Murray Aust; William Eden, first Baron Auckland; Sir James Bland Burges; Thomas Bowdler; Lord William Wyndham Grenville; William Augustus Miles; Lady Barbara Montagu; John Osborn; Bishop Thomas Percy; Sarah Scott; and Philip Yorke, second Earl of Hardwicke. The collection spans the years 1746-1837, with the bulk of the material dating from 1762-1827.

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## Arrangement

Organized into four series: I. Professional Papers, 1763-1827. II. Personal Papers, 1746-1837. III. Correspondence and Other Papers, 1762-1815. IV. Collection Inventories, undated.

## Collection Contents

### Series I: Professional Papers, 1763–1827

2.5 linear feet (3 boxes)

Professional Papers consists of documents related to Aust's civil service career in the Secretary of State for the Northern Department (which became the Foreign Office in 1782) from 1763 to 1796, particularly his appointment as Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, as well as later positions at the Commissary General of Musters office, Royal Hospital Chelsea, and the Westminster Hospital. Files include official documents, drafts, memoranda, lists, administrative records, financial records, salary negotiations, and professional correspondence concerning diplomatic work, foreign affairs, politics, the military, and veteran's pensions. Correspondents include diplomats, statesmen, and other government officials, such as Lord William Wyndham Grenville, then Foreign Secretary; Sir James Bland Burges; and William Eden, first Baron Auckland.

"The diamond snuffbox affair," as documented in the collection inventory in Series IV, refers to an incident during Aust's tenure as Under-Secretary of State, wherein fellow Under-Secretary Sir James Bland Burges received a cash gift and diamond-studded snuffbox in an exchange of diplomatic gifts with Russia, while Aust received nothing.

Arranged in chronological order, with files grouped by office held. Correspondence is filed at the end of the sequence.

#### Secretary of State for the Northern Department and Foreign Office

|                         |   |                    |
|-------------------------|---|--------------------|
| b. 1, f. 1              | "Titles of Foreign Princes as addressed by His Majesty," and "Forms of the Address and Superscription used by His Majesty in his Cachette Letters to the several Crowned Heads and Princes of Europe" | 1763, undated      |
| b. 9 (Oversize), f. 108 | "A Bishop's Oath of Allegiance," draft  | [1779?]            |
| b. 1, f. 2              | Letters from William Eden, first Baron Auckland, with letters from Francis Freeling, Lord Grenville, Viscount Bute, and Sir James Marriott  | 1791–1800          |
| b. 1, f. 3              | "The diamond snuffbox affair," concerning gifts from Catherine the Great to English diplomats, with letters from Sir James Bland Burges, and Louis Dutens   | 1795–1796          |
| b. 1, f. 4-9            | Commissary General of Musters office  | 1796–1827, undated |
| b. 9 (Oversize), f. 107 | Commissary General of Musters office  | 1805               |
| b. 1, f. 10             | Commissary General of Musters, on account of fees and contingencies of the said office  | 1812–1818          |
| b. 1, f. 11-12          | Royal Hospital Chelsea  | 1808–1814, undated |
| b. 9 (Oversize), f. 109 | Royal Hospital Chelsea  | 1807               |
| b. 2, f. 13-15          | Royal Hospital Chelsea, supplications by or on behalf of military men   | 1795–1826, undated |

|                |  |   |
|----------------|--|---|
| b. 2, f. 16    | The Westminster Hospital   | 1823–1826,<br>undated                   |
| b. 2, f. 17-19 | Salary negotiations with the War Department, with letters from Lord Palmerston and Nicholas Vansittart | 1812–1822,<br>undated                   |
| Correspondence |  |   |
| b. 2, f. 20    | Letter from Morton Eden, first Baron Henley  | 1793 June 15                            |
| b. 2, f. 21    | Letter from Sir Richard Clayton  | 1797 November<br>10                     |
| b. 2, f. 22    | Letter from John Waliot, with mention of Napoleon Bonaparte  | 1802 February 21                        |
| b. 2, f. 23    | Letter from George Aust to George Canning  | 1804 November<br>8                      |
| b. 2, f. 24    | Letters from Robert Jocelyn, Earl of Roden, and John Dalrymple, sixth Earl of Stair                    | 1805 September<br>25–1805<br>November 1 |
| b. 2, f. 25    | Letter from Sir Robert Liston  | 1811 March 6                            |
| b. 2, f. 26-27 | Letters from Edward Stanley, and family  | 1815–1816                               |

**Series II: Personal Papers, 1746–1837***1.25 linear feet (3 boxes)*

Personal Papers consists of records concerning Aust's roles as trustee and executor, personal financial records, and charity subscriptions. Materials include wills and related legal documents, account books, household expenses, subscriptions for newspapers and journals, bills, and receipts. The series also includes personal correspondence, and a small selection of Aust's literary writings.

Arranged by subject, reflecting the order found at time of acquisition.

| Estates, trusts, and wills |                                 |                       |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| b. 2, f. 28                | Hammond, Ann Francis            | 1802–1827             |
| b. 2, f. 29                | Rolleston, G.W.                 | 1802–1826,<br>undated |
| b. 2, f. 30-32             | Woodford, Sir Ralph, and family | 1808–1812,<br>undated |
| b. 9 (Oversize), f. 110    | Woodford, Sir Ralph, and family | 1778–1812             |
| Personal financial records |                                 |                       |
| b. 3, f. 33                | Account book                    | 1787–1794             |
| b. 3, f. 34                | Account book                    | 1793–1802             |
| b. 3, f. 35                | Account book                    | 1795–1802             |
| b. 3, f. 36                | Account book                    | 1812–1818             |
| b. 3, f. 37                | Account book                    | 1818–1822             |
| b. 3, f. 38                | Account with Thomas Hammond     | 1799–1801             |
| b. 3, f. 39                | Account with Thomas Lockington  | 1801–1804             |
| b. 3, f. 40                | Business with Thrupp and Son    | 1812–1817,<br>undated |
| b. 9 (Oversize), f. 111    | Business with Thrupp and Son    | 1811–1819             |
| b. 3, f. 41                | Debt booklet, "W. Fraser"       | 1789                  |
| b. 3, f. 42                | Finance booklet                 | 1815                  |
| b. 9 (Oversize), f. 112    | Mortgage with Cooper Crawford   | undated               |
| b. 4, f. 43                | Newspaper account book          | 1765–1774             |
| b. 4, f. 44                | Receipts                        | 1814–1827,<br>undated |
| b. 4, f. 45-46             | Unsorted accounting             | 1785–1824,<br>undated |



## Personal financial records (continued)

|                         |  |                       |
|-------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| b. 4, f. 47-52          | Unsorted correspondence, bills, and receipts   | 1746-1837,<br>undated |
| b. 9 (Oversize), f. 113 | Unsorted correspondence, bills, and receipts   | 1775-1815, 1837       |
| b. 9 (Oversize), f. 114 | Unsorted correspondence, bills, and receipts, vellum                                 | 1808                  |
| b. 4, f. 53             | Charities  | 1801-1827             |
| b. 5, f. 54-55          | Charities  | 1801-1827             |
| b. 5, f. 56-57          | Letters from Robertson, William Philip Colyear                                       | 1806-1816             |
| b. 5, f. 58             | Letter from Brooke, Samuel   | 1824 December<br>9    |
| b. 5, f. 59             | Letter from "Miss Dee" on behalf of Maria, Duchess of Gloucester                     | 1807 July 8           |
| b. 5, f. 60             | Prospectus by Butler, Reverend Weedon  | circa 1790            |
| b. 5, f. 61             | Lists of visitors to Staffa and Iona   | circa 1808            |
| b. 5, f. 62             | Autograph manuscript verses for the birthday of Francis Osborne, fifth Duke of Leeds | circa 1797            |
| b. 5, f. 63             | Schedule to two houses, no. 7 and 8, Paradise Row, Chelsea                           | 1805 March 15         |
| b. 5, f. 64-65a         | Unsorted personal correspondence   | 1796-1827,<br>undated |

**Series III: Correspondence and Other Papers, 1762–1815***3.75 linear feet (4 boxes)*

This series contains correspondence and personal and professional papers of Sarah Murray Aust, George Aust's second wife, and others. Most of the correspondence is addressed to George Aust. Sarah Aust's papers consist of personal letters, financial records, legal records concerning her first husband William Murray, as well as drafts, publishing correspondence, and accounts with printers and booksellers related to her travel writing.

The series also contains letters from diplomat John Osborn, and a related collection of "Osborniana," including letters to Aust from Osborn's brother, Sir George Osborn, and Osborn's wills and estate documents. Additional correspondents are philanthropist and literary editor Thomas Bowdler; writers William Augustus Miles and Bishop Thomas Percy; philanthropist Lady Barbara Montagu; novelist Sarah Scott; and statesman Philip Yorke, second Earl of Hardwicke.

Arranged alphabetically by last name.

| Aust, Sarah Murray       |  |                       |
|--------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| b. 5, f. 66-68           | General papers   | 1799–1812,<br>undated |
| b. 9 (Oversize), f. 115  | General papers   | 1811–1812,<br>undated |
| b. 6, f. 69              | Account book, executorship of William Murray's estate  | 1786–1811             |
| b. 6, f. 70              | Account book   | 1804–1811             |
| b. 6, f. 71              | Account book   | 1809                  |
| b. 6, f. 72              | Account book   | 1810                  |
| b. 6, f. 73              | Notes on minerals, autograph manuscript  | undated               |
| b. 10 (Oversize), f. 116 | Probate of the Will of the Honorable William Murray  | 1787                  |
| b. 10 (Oversize), f. 117 | Release of sums appointed by the will of the late Mrs. Aust  | 1812 January 29       |
| b. 6, f. 74              | "A short descriptive arrangement of Gems, stones and spars, Earths metals and semi metals," autograph manuscript | undated               |
| b. 6, f. 75              | Bowdler, Thomas  | 1810–1811             |
| b. 7, f. 76-77           | Miles, William Augustus  | 1776–1808             |
| b. 7, f. 78              | Montagu, Lady Barbara  | 1762, 1764            |
| b. 7, f. 79-82           | Osborn, John   | 1799–1814             |
| Osborniana               |  |                       |
| b. 7, f. 83              | Letters from Sir George Osborn, and Count Semyon Vorontsov [Woronzow], regarding the prisoner-of-war affair      | 1803                  |
| b. 7, f. 84              | Letters from Sir George Osborn, regarding message from John Osborn relating to Catherine the Great               | 1809 July             |

## Osborniana (continued)

|                      |  |                    |
|----------------------|--|--------------------|
| b. 7, f. 85          | Letters from John Miliquet   | 1807–1809          |
| b. 7, f. 86-87       | Letters from Heneage Osborn, Thomas Metcalfe, and Mr. Luntly, financial agent, regarding Luntly's frauds     | 1810–1811          |
| b. 7, f. 88-90       | Letters from Sir George Osborn and other correspondents, regarding Patent Customers at Custom House, Cardiff | 1812–1813          |
| b. 7, f. 91          | Draft will, Additional Codicils, and Minutes of the Will and Codicils of John Osborn Esquire                 | 1810–1814          |
| b. 7, f. 92          | Executorship of estate   | 1814–1815          |
| b. 8, f. 93-94       | Unsorted correspondence and documents  | 1802–1815, undated |
| Percy, Bishop Thomas |  |                    |
| b. 8, f. 95          | Autograph letters, signed (#1–9)   | 1800–1804          |
| b. 8, f. 96-98       | Dictated letters, signed (#10–31)  | 1804–1811          |
| b. 8, f. 99-100      | Insertions and associated material (#32–44)  | 1801–1811, undated |
| b. 8, f. 101-104     | Scott, Sarah   | circa 1760s–1790s  |
| b. 8, f. 105         | Yorke, Philip, second Earl of Hardwicke  | 1778–1787          |

## **Series IV: Collection Inventories, undated**

Two inventories prepared for the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library contain detailed descriptions of the collection's materials, providing historical context and biographical information about Aust and his correspondents.

b. 8, f. 106

Inventories

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.

Royal Hospital (Chelsea, London, England)  
Westminster Hospital

### Subjects

Civil service -- Great Britain  
Diplomacy  
Government employees, English

### Geographic Names

Great Britain -- History -- George III, 1760-1820  
Great Britain -- Officials and employees  
Great Britain -- Politics and government --  
1760-1820

### Genres / Formats

Account books  
Account books -- Great Britain -- 19th century  
Business records  
Probate records  
Receipts (financial records)  
Wills

### Occupations

Government employees -- Great Britain

### Names

Auckland, William Eden, Baron, 1744-1814  
Aust, George, 1741-1829  
Bowdler, Thomas, 1754-1825  
Borges, James Bland, Sir, 1752-1824  
Grenville, William Wyndham Grenville, Baron,  
1759-1834  
Hardwicke, Philip Yorke, Earl of, 1720-1790  
Miles, William Augustus, 1753?-1817  
Montagu, Barbara, -1765  
Murray, Sarah, 1744-1811  
Osborn, John, 1743-1814  
Percy, Thomas, 1729-1811  
Scott, Sarah, 1720-1795

### Corporate Bodies

Great Britain. Foreign Office -- Officials and  
employees