



## Samuel Austin Collection

1718-1920

3 boxes (1.25 linear feet)

Call no.: MS 937

### Collection overview

An historian and educator, Samuel Austin (1816-1897) was known for his long association with the Friends Boarding School in Providence, R.I. (later renamed the Moses Brown School). An alumnus who married an alumna, Elizabeth H. Osborn, Austin taught at the Boarding school for decades and was instrumental in gathering and preserving documents relating to the school. He wrote and lectured regularly on the history of Friends' education and on the Boarding School, and its noted teachers and alumni.

A product of the historical work of Samuel Austin, the collection contains both essays, notes, and talks on the Friends' Boarding School in Providence and on Moses and Obadiah Brown, and some significant original documents used by Austin in his research. Noteworthy among the original materials are a fascinating series of records from monthly and quarterly meetings in and near Rhode Island, mostly in 1787-1793; a rich series of epistles received by Smithfield Monthly Meeting from other meetings in New England (1718-1767); some key printed epistles from Yearly Meetings, including those on war (London, New England, and Philadelphia Yearly) and slavery (London and Philadelphia). Of equal note are a series of letters from Elisha Thornton (a New Bedford merchant, educator, and antislavery advocate), a lengthy letter on doctrine from John Wilbur, and a 1765 sermon from Rachel Wilson.

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## Background on Samuel Austin

An historian, educator, and long associate of the Friends Boarding School in Providence, R.I. (later renamed the Moses Brown School), Samuel Austin was born on Nantucket, Mass., on June 15, 1816, the son of Joseph A. and Rachel (Hussey) Austin. Having attended the school during a flourishing period in the 1830s, Austin never broke his ties. When he married on Oct. 12, 1843, he married an alumna, Elizabeth H. Osborn (1820-1893), and for any years thereafter, he taught at the school and wrote historical essays centered on the institution, its noted teachers and alumni, and on local Quaker history.

Austin and his wife raised a family of five: Katharine Hanson Austin (b. 1841), Mary Louise Austin (b. 1847), John Osborne Austin (1849-1918), William Samuel Austin (b. 1854), and Rachel Austin (b. 1859). Both Katharine and Mary followed their father as teachers at the Boarding School. Samuel Austin died in Providence on Feb. 13, 1897.

## Scope of collection

A product of the historical work of Samuel Austin, the collection contains both essays, notes, and talks on the Friends' Boarding School in Providence and on Moses and Obadiah Brown, and some significant original documents used by Austin in his research. Noteworthy among the original materials are a fascinating series of records from monthly and quarterly meetings in and near Rhode Island, mostly in 1787-1793; a rich series of epistles received by Smithfield Monthly Meeting from other meetings in New England (1718-1767); some key printed epistles from Yearly Meetings, including those on war (London, New England, and Philadelphia Yearly) and slavery (London and Philadelphia). Of equal note are a series of letters from Elisha Thornton (a New Bedford merchant, educator, and antislavery advocate), a lengthy letter on doctrine from John Wilbur, and a 1765 sermon from Rachel Wilson.

## Inventory

Austin, Katharine H.: Letter to Thomas J. Battey <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.	1919 June 12	1 item	Box 1: 1
Austin, Samuel: Historical essays on Friends and Friends history	1879-1919	17 folders	
Austin, Samuel: Daniel Howland (notes for essay or talk) <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.	ca.1890	1 folder	Box 1: 2
Austin, Samuel: Education and some educators among early Friends <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.	1916	1 folder	Box 1: 3
Austin, Samuel: Elisha Thornton (folder enclosing essays, notes) <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.	ca.1895	1 folder	Box 1: 4
Austin, Samuel: Elisha Thornton (notes and essay) <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.	ca.1895	1 folder	Box 1: 5
Austin, Samuel: Friends Boarding School, Providence (notes) <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.	ca.1885	1 folder	Box 1: 6
Austin, Samuel: Friends Boarding School, Providence (notes and drafts) <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.	ca.1885	1 folder	Box 1: 7
Austin, Samuel: Friends' history (notes) <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.	undated	1 folder	Box 1: 8
Austin, Samuel: Friends Sufferings in Rhode Island (notes) <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.	ca.1919	1 folder	Box 1: 9
Austin, Samuel: Isaac Lawton (essay typescript) <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.	ca.1895	1 folder	Box 1: 10
Austin, Samuel: A list of ministers and elders of New England Yearly Meeting <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.	1879	1 folder	Box 1: 11

Austin, Samuel: Moses Brown, Elisha Thornton, et al. (notes) <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.	ca.1890	1 folder	Box 1: 12
Austin, Samuel: Portsmouth School (talk read at Friends School, in part) <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.	ca.1884	1 folder	Box 1: 13
Austin, Samuel: Portsmouth School (includes discussion of teachers Isaac Lawton and comments on Elisha Thornton and Job Scott) <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.	ca.1884	1 folder	Box 1: 14
Austin, Samuel: Saylesville (essay or talk) <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.	1896	1 folder	Box 1: 15
Austin, Samuel: Saylesville (talk), read at Saylesville, R.I. <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.	1896	1 folder	Box 1: 16
Austin, Samuel: Thomas Howland (talk) <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.	1891	1 folder	Box 1: 17
Austin, Samuel: William Rotch (essay) <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.	ca.1893	1 folder	Box 1: 18
Batthey, Thomas C.: The other side of the shield (newsclipping from <i>The Informant</i> on Indian affairs) <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.	1876	1 folder	Box 1: 19
Brown, Moses and Obadiah: Notes by Rayner W. Kelsey, Augustine Jones, et al. on Moses Brown and son <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection. <i>Contents:</i> Primarily assembled by Kelsey.	1918	1 folder	Box 1: 20
Clark, Samuel W.: Memoirs of Samuel W. Clark, as given by his mother <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection. <i>Contents:</i> Reminiscences of a deceased child.	1814	1 folder	Box 1: 21
Clinton Grove School (Weare, N.H.): Printed flier <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection. <i>Contents:</i> Flier announcing new term.	1841	1 folder	Box 1: 22
Coleman, Elihu: Advice to his children and grandchildren [later transcript] <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.	1790	1 folder	Box 1: 23
Collins, Micajah: Poetry from the Newport Mercury. A tribute to respect of the memory of Micajah Collins <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.	1866	1 printed handbill	Box 1: 24
Earle, John: Letter to David Buffum <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.	1815 Mar. 14	1 folder	Box 1: 25
<b>Epistles</b>	1815 Mar. 14	1 folder	
London Yearly Meeting [printed] <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.	1781-1795	2 items	Box 1: 26
➤ New England Yearly Meeting: <b><i>From our Yearly Meeting of Friends, held at Newport, : from the 14th of the sixth month, 1812, to the 17th of the same, inclusive. To the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings hereunto belonging</i></b> [printed] <i>Contents:</i> Concerning non-participation in the War of 1812. "Signed on behalf of the Meeting, by Samuel Rodman, clerk this year. Not in Shaw & Shoemaker." <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.	1812	1 item	Box 1: 27
➤ Philadelphia Yearly Meeting: <b><i>An epistle from our Yearly-Meeting, held at Philadelphia : for Pennsylvania and New-Jersey, by adjournments, from the 24th day of the 9th month, to the 1st of the 10th month, inclusive, 1774</i></b> [printed] <i>Contents:</i> "To our Friends and Brethren in these and the neighbouring Provinces." "Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, by James Pemberton, clerk."	1774	1 item	Box 1: 28

Provenance: Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.

▶ Philadelphia Yearly Meeting: <b><i>To our fellow citizens of the United States of North America, and others whom it may concern</i></b> [printed]	1799	1 item	Box 1: 29
<p>Contents: On ending slavery. "Signed on behalf and by direction of a meeting representing the religious society called Quakers in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, &amp;c. held in Philadelphia the 15th. of the 11th. month 1799. John Drinker, clerk"--Page 3.</p>			
<p>Provenance: Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.</p>			
▶ Philadelphia Yearly Meeting: <b><i>The ancient testimony and principles of the People called Quakers, renewed, with respect to the King and Government; and touching the commotions now prevailing in these and other parts of America, addressed to the people in general</i></b> [printed]	1776	1 item	Box 1: 30
<p>Contents: Quaker pacifist tract read as having loyalist sympathies; "the happy connection ... and our just and necessary subordination to the king." Signed by John Pemberton, Clerk.</p>			
<p>Provenance: Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.</p>			
▶ Philadelphia Yearly Meeting for Sufferings: <b><i>From the Meeting for Sufferings, held in Philadelphia, for Pennsylvania and New-Jersey, the 20th day of the second month, 1766</i></b> [printed]	1766	1 item	Box 1: 31
<p>Contents: Exhortation for Friends "to act consistently with the purity and Meekness of our Christian Profession; becoming the Followers of our peaceable Saviour Jesus Christ, and the Practice and Advice of faithful Friends in all Times of Trial and Difficulty" with quote from George Fox.</p>			
<p>Provenance: Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.</p>			
Epistles: Smithfield Monthly Meeting	1718-1739	1 folder	Box 1: 32
<p>Contents: Mostly epistles received from other meetings in New England; certificates of removal, etc.</p>			
<p>Provenance: Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.</p>			
▶ Newport Monthly Meeting of Friends (Newport, R.I.): <b>Newport Monthly Meeting epistle to Smithfield Monthly Meeting</b>	1718 Nov. 9		
▶ Comstock, Samuel: <b>Samuel Comstock petition to the monthly meeting at Thomas Smith's</b>	1724 Nov. 6		
<p>Contents: Confessing regret at "out going" and requesting forgiveness.</p>			
▶ Amesbury Monthly Meeting of Friends (Amesbury, Mass.): <b>Certificate of removal for Stephen Swett and wife</b>	1726 Mar. 19		
▶ Amesbury Monthly Meeting of Friends (Amesbury, Mass.): <b>Certificate of removal for John Cass and wife</b>	1726 Mar. 19		
▶ Providence Monthly Meeting of Friends (Providence, R.I.): <b>Providence Monthly Meeting certificate of disownment for Jonathan and Phebe Smith</b>	1727 Feb. 5		
▶ Pain, Benjamin: <b>Petition to Smithfield Monthly Meeting of Friends (Smithfield, R.I.)</b>	1732 July 28		
▶ Dartmouth Monthly Meeting of Friends (Dartmouth, Mass.): <b>Dartmouth Monthly Meeting certificate of removal for Joseph Lapham to Smithfield Monthly Meeting</b>	1733 Aug. 30		
▶ Hall, William; Joseph Edmunds; and Jeremiah Gould (North Kingston, R.I.): <b>William Hall et al., certificate of clearness for William Spencer to be married</b>	1734 Jan. 4		
▶ Lynn Monthly Meeting of Friends (Lynn, Mass.): <b>Lynn Monthly Meeting certificate of clearness for marriage for Richard Estes</b>	1736 Nov. 23		

<p>➤ Comstock, Hezadiah: <b>Hezadiah Comstock request for reinstatement to membership in Smithfield Monthly Meeting (Smithfield, R.I.)</b></p>	1739 Oct. 21		
Epistles: Smithfield Monthly Meeting <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.	1740-1749	1 folder	Box 1: 33
Epistles: Smithfield Monthly Meeting <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.	1751-1759	1 folder	Box 1: 34
Epistles: Smithfield Monthly Meeting <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.	1760-1767, 1798	1 folder	Box 1: 35
Free Produce Meeting [circular letter and pledge list] <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection. <i>Contents:</i> Organizing a free produce campaign in Newport and elsewhere in Rhode Island.	1849-1852	1 folder	Box 2: 1
➤ <b>Free Produce Meeting</b> (Newport, R.I.)	1849		
➤ <b>At a meeting Friends at their meeting-house in Newport, 6th mo. 17th, 1852</b> [Free Produce Movement pledge list] (Newport, R.I.)	1852		
French Quakers, letter to Edward Fox <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection. <i>Contents:</i> May relate to the capture of the Brig Providence (Edward Fox, Master).	ca.1807	1 folder	Box 2: 2
Greene, Lois Anna: Notes and reminiscences <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection. <i>Contents:</i> Greene (1840-1923) was from Providence and attended the Friends Boarding School.	ca.1920	1 folder	Box 2: 3
➤ Howland, George: <b>George Howland</b> [printed obituary] <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection. <i>Contents:</i> Undated, but appears to be the George Howland of New Bedford who died in 1852. The obituary first appeared in the <i>Whaleman's Shipping List</i> for June 1, 1852.	ca.1852	1 printed flier	Box 2: 4
Ives, Clara E. (granddaughter of Elisha Thornton) <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.	1888	1 folder	Box 2: 5
➤ Jenkins, William: <b>Obituary</b> <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.	1846	1 printed handbill	Box 2: 6
Kelsey, Rayner W.: notes from research on Friends' education <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.	ca.1920	1 box	Box 3
<b>Meeting Records</b>	<b>1722-1857</b>		
Dartmouth Monthly Meeting <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.	1787	1 folder	Box 2: 7
East Greenwich Quarterly Meeting (Women) <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.	1787-1791	1 folder	Box 2: 8
New England Yearly Meeting of Friends: miscellaneous fliers <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.	1853, 1857	1 folder	Box 2: 9
New England Yearly Meeting of Friends: Queries <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.	1722	1 folder	Box 2: 10
New England Yearly Meeting of Friends: Queries <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.	1755 June	1 folder	Box 2: 11
New England Yearly Meeting of Friends: Queries <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.	ca.1780	1 folder	Box 2: 12
Newport Yearly Meeting of Women Friends <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.	1789-1793	1 folder	Box 2: 13
Portsmouth Monthly Meeting: Prayers <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.	1809	1 folder	Box 2: 14
Portsmouth Quarterly Meeting <i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.	1788	1 folder	Box 2: 15
Providence Monthly Meeting (subscription for Barclay's Apology, support for the poor) <i>Contents:</i> Subscription list of 1729 is only tentatively identified and may be from Smithfield Monthly instead.	1729, 1787	1 folder	Box 2: 16

	<i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.			
Providence Monthly Meeting (Women)	1791	1 folder	Box 2: 17	
	<i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.			
Providence Quarterly Meeting (Women)	1789	1 folder	Box 2: 18	
	<i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.			
Rhode Island Monthly Meeting	1811	1 folder	Box 2: 19	
	<i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.			
Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting. School Committee	1779	1 folder	Box 2: 20	
	<i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.			
Smithfield Monthly Meeting (Women)	1771-1777	1 folder	Box 2: 21	
	<i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.			
Smithfield Quarterly Meeting	1787-1788	1 folder	Box 2: 22	
	<i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.			
Smithfield Quarterly Meeting	1819	1 folder	Box 2: 23	
	<i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.			
Swansea Quarterly Meeting (Women)	1788	1 folder	Box 2: 24	
	<i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.			
New England Tract Association of Friends	1838-1858	1 folder	Box 2: 25	
	<i>Contents:</i> "Removed from Austin Collection of Moses Brown Papers, Box 3, in 1996. -- R. D. S."			
	<i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.			
Register of all the Publick Friends that have visited New England since the year 1656, with Register of all the women Friends	ca.1820	1 folder	Box 2: 26	
	<i>Contents:</i> See several additional copies of the same manuscript in the Quaker Miscellaneous Collection (MS 926).			
	<i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.			
Rotch, William: Letters to Walter Allen (New Bedford, Mass.)	1813-1816	1 folder	Box 2: 27	
	<i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.			
➤ <b><i>The testimony of Robert Barrow, 11th month 16, 1691, at George Fox's burial, where were supposed to be four thousand friends, besides other people</i></b> [broadside]	1691	1 broadside	Box 2: 28	
	<i>Contents:</i> Text printed in two columns divided by a single rule. Followed by "Names of the brethren whose mouths were opened in testimony at George Fox's burial, in the meeting house." and "Appeared in testimony at the grave."			
	<i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.			
Thornton, Elisha: Correspondence with Moses Brown	1781-1806	1 folder	Box 2: 29	
	<i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.			
Thornton, Elisha: Letter to William Buffum	1810 Dec. 15	1 folder	Box 2: 30	
	<i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.			
Thornton, Elisha: Letter to Thomas Howland	1794	1 folder	Box 2: 31	
	<i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.			
Thornton, Elisha: Letter to Hyrena Paine	1809	1 folder	Box 2: 32	
	<i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.			
➤ Wilbur, John: <b>Letter to John Osborn (Hopkinton, R.I.)</b>	ca.1833 Sept. 2	1 folder	Box 2: 33	
	<i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.			
Wilson, Rachel: Sermon. . . delivered at the Friends Meeting House in the Province of New York	ca.1765	1 folder	Box 2: 34	
	<i>Provenance:</i> Originally part of the NEYM Austin Collection.			
Miscellaneous	ca.1914	1 folder	Box 2: 35	

# Administrative information

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## Access

The collection is open for research.

## Provenance

Part of the New England Yearly Meeting of Friends Collection, April 2016.

## Processing Information

Processed by I. Eliot Wentworth, August 2016.

## Digitized content

Selected materials from the Austin collection have been digitized and are available online through **Credo**.

## Language:

English

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*Cite as:* Samuel Austin Collection (MS 937). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

# Search terms

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## Subjects

- Antislavery movements
- Brown, Moses, 1738-1832
- Friends Boarding School (Providence, R.I.)
- Peace movements--Rhode Island
- Quaker women--Rhode Island--18th century
- Quakers--Education--Rhode Island
- Rhode Island--History--18th century
- Society of Friends--History--Rhode Island
- Thornton, Elisha, 1748-1816
- Wilbur, John 1774-1856

## Contributors

- Austin, Samuel **[main entry]**

## Genres and formats

- Correspondence
- Minutes (Administrative records)

## Link to similar SCUA collections

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