

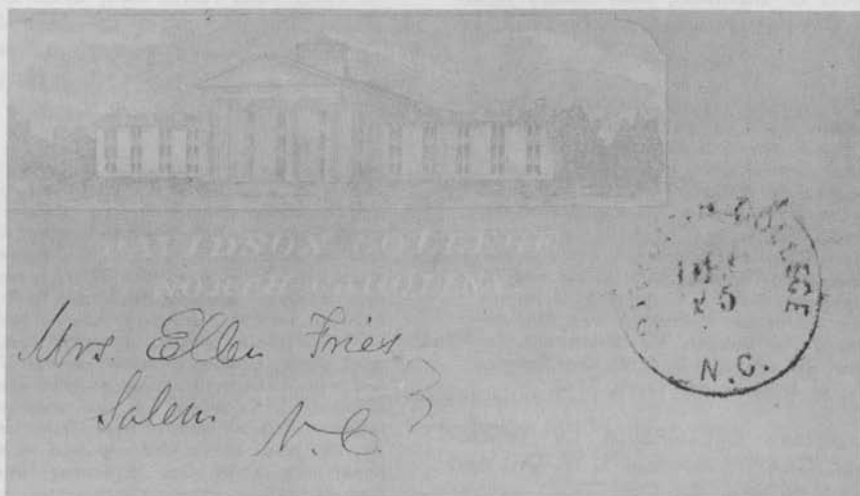
The Orr Etchings: An Addendum

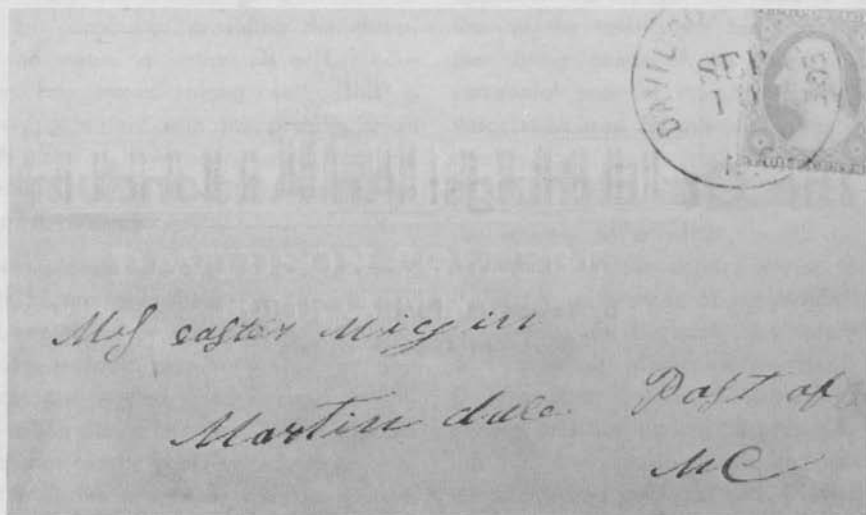
by Leland M. Park
Davidson College Library

The delightful and informative articles on the Louis Orr Etchings (Summer/Fall, 1975) brought to mind the fact that Louis Orr's connection with North Carolina did not begin with the series commissioned by Dr. Robert Lee Humber. In 1855 Davidson College received the handsome legacy of \$200,000 from the estate of Maxwell Chambers of Salisbury. With part of this gift, the nationally famous architect Alexander Jackson Davis, who designed the

state capitol building in Raleigh, was employed to design a main class room and dormitory building for Davidson. This he did, and it was one of the finest academic buildings in the South until it burned in 1921.

Proud of this fact, the administration decided to have stationery depicting this building made for the college. One J. W. Orr of New York was employed to do





drawings of the Davis-designed Chambers Building. Copies of this stationery, of which the letterheads are shown here, are in the college archives today and bear the date November 7, 1859.

Since the building was not completed until 1860, it is assumed that J. W. Orr must have used the architectural drawings of fellow New Yorker Davis to complete his work. In a 1959 letter to Dr. Chalmers G. Davidson, then library director at Davidson, Louis Orr acknowledged that

Yes, J. W. Orr was my grandfather. Orr's "Pictorial Guide to the Niagara Falls" was the first guide ever to be published. The title reads: "Pictorial Guide to the Niagara Falls." A manual for Visitors, giving an account of this Stupendous Natural Wonder; and all the Objects of Curiosity in its vicinity; with many Historical Incidents of Interest; and also Full Directions for Visiting the Cataract and its Neighboring Scenes. Illustrated by Numerous Maps, Charts and Engravings from Original Surveys and Designs; the Illustrations designed and engraved by J. W. Orr. Buffalo, Press of Salisbury and Clapp, 1845.

Appleton's *CYCLOPEDIA OF AMERICAN BIOGRAPHY* mentions J. W. Orr, and the *NEW YORK CITY DIRECTORY* carries

his name, first as an engraver and then as printer, with the statement: "this is the largest wood engraving establishment in the city." The New York Public Library's reference department reported that J. W. Orr did engravings as early as 1848 for Wiley and Putnam's edition of *Dombey and Son*, and some books were illustrated by him in 1847. He also did portraits and letterheads.

In 1948, Paul North Rice, Chief of the Reference Department of the New York Public Library, located an early advertisement for the J. W. Orr firm which reported that:

with superior advantages, he is able to execute all orders in his line, however large, with the utmost dispatch and on reasonable terms. Having the largest establishment of the kind in America, he is able to pay particular attention to every branch of his business: Portraits, animals, landscapes, public buildings, factories, machinery, societies' seals, hat tips, tobacco stamps, druggists' labels, bank checks, business cards, ornamental bills and newspaper heads, large or small show bills—plain or in colors, cuts for newspaper advertisements, all kinds of book illustrations, etc. Designed, drawn and engraved in superior style. J. W. Orr, 75 Nassau Street, New York.

Perhaps Louis Orr's successful execution of the "Sketches on North Carolina" was attributed not only to his superior skill, but also to his knowledge of his own familial connection with the state, coupled with the warmth with which he was received during his visits. In another 1959 letter to Dr. Davidson, he commented:

The South always, from childhood, intrigued me; I love North Carolina and if the Etchings express some of this sincere admiration, then I have not been chasing a mirage. Southern hospitality is not a myth; the courtesy and sympathetic understanding extended me by Mr. and Mrs. James Sprunt, while being their guest at Orton, is but one example. Some day (maybe) I shall write about the many and often amusing acts of friendliness extended an artist by North Carolinians.

It was, apparently and delightfully, a mutual-admiration society between North Carolina and Louis Orr, Etcher Extraordinary.

The Bicentennial is now!



ONLY
\$50.00

A complete
single-reference
source on the Bicentennial.

GAYLORD

GAYLORD BROS., INC.
P.O. BOX 61, SYRACUSE, N.Y. 13201

**Want to see more names or more libraries in the news?
Here's the person to give your news items to:**

COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES:

Leland M. Park
Library of Davidson College
Davidson, North Carolina 28036

SCHOOL MEDIA CENTERS:

William Pendergraft
Pender High School
Burgaw, North Carolina 28425

COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGE LIBRARIES:

John Thomas
Davidson County Community College
Lexington, North Carolina 27292

SPECIAL LIBRARIES:

William Lowe
North Carolina State University
Raleigh, North Carolina 27607

PUBLIC LIBRARIES:

Bernadette Martin
Forsyth County Public Library System
Winston-Salem, North Carolina 27101