

## Louis Orr Etchings <sup>[1]</sup>

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North Carolina University, at Chapel Hill / "Old East and Old Well["] [Etchings of North Carolina Scenes] Album 9, Plate XXXXII, North Carolina Collection, UNC

by John L. Humber, 2006Libraries.

<sup>[2]</sup>

The Louis Orr etchings were 51 etchings by world-class artist [Louis Orr](#) <sup>[3]</sup>, portraying public school buildings, churches, private residences, and scenic views around North Carolina selected for their historic, architectural, or geological significance. A native of [Hartford, Conn.](#) <sup>[4]</sup>, Orr lived and worked for most of his life in Paris, where he gained a reputation as one of the foremost etchers of his time. Attorney and businessman [Robert Lee Humber](#) <sup>[5]</sup>, who hailed from [Greenville](#) <sup>[6]</sup>, lived in Paris during the 1920s and 1930s. In 1927 Humber and Orr met and developed a close friendship.

During the 1930s, Humber proposed that Orr execute a series of etchings reflecting some of the finest examples of North Carolina's architecture and historical sites. Humber hoped to preserve North Carolina's heritage through the work of a recognized master of the art and to provide affordable, original artwork to schools, colleges, public libraries, and institutions as well as individuals throughout the state.

Meeting in New York City in 1939, Orr and Humber agreed that Orr would produce 50 etchings of a uniform size, plus a larger one of the [State Capitol](#) <sup>[7]</sup>. Humber would underwrite the cost of the project. They refined the final list of subjects in consultation with North Carolina historians and other authorities on the state's history, including [C. Christopher Crittenden](#) <sup>[8]</sup>, [R. D. W. Connor](#) <sup>[9]</sup>, and [Archibald Henderson](#) <sup>[10]</sup>.

Orr began the series in 1939 and completed it in 1952. He made several tours of the state to sketch his subjects, returning to his Hartford studio to execute the copper plates. In 1953 Orr returned to Paris, where he continued to work until his death in 1966.

#### Reference:

Robert Lee Humber, "History of the Etchings on North Carolina by Louis Orr," *North Carolina Libraries* 33 (Summer-Fall 1975).

#### Additional Resources:

Durham County Library, Louis Orr Etchings: [https://durhamcountylibrary.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/NCC\\_0132\\_Louis-Orr-Etchings.pdf](https://durhamcountylibrary.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/NCC_0132_Louis-Orr-Etchings.pdf) <sup>[11]</sup>

North Carolina Museum of Art, Artist: Louis Orr: <https://ncartmuseum.org/artist/louis-orr/> <sup>[12]</sup>

#### Image Credit:

North Carolina University, at Chapel Hill / "Old East and Old Well["] [Etchings of North Carolina Scenes] Album 9, Plate XXXXII, North Carolina Collection, UNC Libraries. Available from <http://www.lib.unc.edu/blogs/ncm/index.php/2011/06/17/louis-orrs-north-carolina-etchings-1939-1951/> <sup>[2]</sup> (accessed July 25, 2012).

**Subjects:**

Art <sup>[13]</sup>

Artists <sup>[14]</sup>

Great Depression (1929-1941) <sup>[15]</sup>

N.C. Industrial Revolution (1900-1929) <sup>[16]</sup>

Post War 20th Century (1946-2000) <sup>[17]</sup>

World War II (1941-1945) <sup>[18]</sup>

**Authors:**

Humber, John L. <sup>[19]</sup>

**From:**

Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press. <sup>[20]</sup>

1 January 2006 | Humber, John L.

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**Source URL:**<https://www.ncpedia.org/louis-orr-etchings>

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