

# ORR FAMILY.

## Orr family papers, 1825-1970

Emory University  
Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library  
Atlanta, GA 30322  
404-727-6887  
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### Descriptive Summary

**Creator:** Orr family.  
**Title:** Orr family papers, 1825-1970  
**Call Number:** Manuscript Collection No. 268  
**Extent:** 4.75 linear feet (10 boxes), 1 oversized papers box (OP), and 3 bound volume (BV)  
**Abstract:** Papers of the Orr family of Georgia including correspondence, clippings, genealogical information, addresses and reports, scrapbooks, and manuscripts.  
**Language:** Materials entirely in English.

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### Administrative Information

#### Restrictions on Access

Unrestricted access.

#### Terms Governing Use and Reproduction

All requests subject to limitations noted in departmental policies on reproduction.

#### Source

Gift, 1958, with subsequent additions.

#### Citation

[after identification of item(s)], Orr family papers, Manuscript, Archives and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

#### Processing

Processed by SS, 1971.

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## Collection Description

### Biographical Note

Gustavus John Orr (August 9, 1819 - December 11, 1887), Georgia educator, was born at Orrville, Anderson County, South Carolina, the son of James and Ann (Anderson) Orr. His family moved to Georgia and he attended old-field schools there, Maryville Seminary in Maryville, Tennessee, the University of Georgia and graduated with honors from Emory College in 1844. He continued at Emory as a tutor until 1846, when he went to Jefferson, Georgia, to study law. After one year he became principal of the town academy and later, principal of a female school in Covington, Georgia. In January, 1849, he accepted the position of professor of mathematics at Emory College and remained there for seventeen years. During this time, Governor James E. Brown appointed him surveyor for the state of Georgia, to locate the Georgia-Florida boundary. As the Civil War forced the schools to close, Gustavus was appointed tax collector for Newton Co., and also acted as an agent of the Confederate government in buying hides and making shoes. He held the rank of captain in the army although as tax collector he was not allowed to participate in army life. In 1867, he served as President of the Southern Masonic Female College of Covington, until in 1870 he became professor of mathematics for Oglethorpe College, Atlanta, Georgia. Governor James M. Smith appointed Orr, as state school commissioner in January, 1872, in which capacity he served until his death in 1887. During this time, he organized the state public school system, brought educational funds into the state, and organized the Georgia Education Association under the NEA.

In 1847, Gustavus married his first cousin Eliza Caroline Anderson, (1825-1913), the daughter of Dr. William Anderson and Mary Mac le Downey (Hunter) Anderson of Anderson County, South Carolina. Their children were William Anderson Orr (1848-49); Edgar Harold Orr (September 25, 1850-November 22, 1914); Alice Gertrude Orr (1853-54); Mary Eliza Orr (1855-1900); Anna Gustava (1856-1958); Gustavus John Orr, Jr. (1860-1837); Jessie Olivia (1862-1937); Cornelia Agnes (1864-1936); and Angus Elgin (1867-1938).

Angus, nicknamed "Bill", attended Boys' High School of Atlanta and in 1887 graduated from the University of Tennessee, where he edited the school newspaper. He taught in the Brunswick and Carrollton, Georgia schools until 1891. From 1891-1931 he worked as a railroad mail clerk; after his retirement he devoted his time to writing.

Edgar, the oldest of the Orr children, was born and grew up in Oxford, Georgia. In 1862, he attended a prep school held on the Emory College campus, and later attended the College itself, graduating in 1870. By 1872, he had been admitted to the state bar and had set up practice in Atlanta, Georgia. Edgar, on February 5, 1885, married Martha Mood Reynolds, daughter of Thomas S. and Mary (King) Reynolds; and in 1887 their first child, Martha Reynolds was born. Edgar was appointed as superintendent of the Brunswick and Glynn County schools in 1889. A daughter Jessie was born in 1890. In 1892, Edgar resigned his position to sell "spring-operated" sewing machines, a project in which he invested heavily; the company soon went bankrupt. Edgar then ran for justice of the peace and held that office from 1892 until 1913, when he retired because of ill health. During those years, two more children were born; Edgar, Jr., in 1892, and Mary Gertrude ("Sing") in 1899. Edgar died November 22, 1914.

Martha Orr began her teaching career in 1906 immediately after graduating from Girls' High School. She became a principal in the Atlanta School system in 1922. In 1930 she was graduated

from Emory University and received her Master of Arts degree in 1932. During her years at Emory, she was instrumental in organizing the Theodore Henley Jack Historical Association and became its first president. She was also influential in organizing Kappa Delta Epsilon, a national educational sorority and was elected its first national president. Dorothy, as she came to be called, became Supervising Principal in the Atlanta schools and continued active in educational work until her retirement in 1952. She was named Atlanta's Woman o' the Year for 1949. She wrote *A History of Education in Georgia*, published by University of North Carolina Press in 1940; *Gustavus John Orr*, a biography to be published by Atlanta Historical Society; and *The Life of Edgar Harold Orr*, unpublished.

**Scope and Content Note**

The collection consists of papers of the Orr family including 538 letters written by or to various family members, between 1825 and 1970, as well as other miscellaneous material. Approximately ten percent of the correspondence is in photocopy form; these are marked as to source when known. The letters tell of family and business matters including comments on the Georgia-Florida Boundary, the Civil War and reconstruction in Georgia, educational facilities, World War I, European travel, and book publishing. Much of the remaining material concerns Dorothy Orr's biography of Gustavus J. Orr: Remembrances of other family members, news clippings, Gustavus Orr's addresses, reports, etc., and family pictures, in addition to the manuscript of the biography. There is also material relating to Dorothy Orr's work at Emory University and in Kappa Delta Epsilon educational sorority.

**Arrangement Note**

Correspondence arranged in chronological order.

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## Container List

### Correspondence

Box	Folder	Content
1	1	1825-1849
1	2	1855-1859
1	3	1860-1862
1	4	1863
1	5	1864-1868
1	6	1870-1879
1	7	1882-1884
1	8	1885 January-September
1	9	1885 October - 1886
1	10	1887
1	11	1888-1889
1	12	1890-1891
1	13	1892-1899
1	14	1900-1909
1	15	1911-1918
1	16	1919
1	17	1921-1939
1	18	1941-1949
1	19	1952-1956
2	1	1957-1958
2	2	1959
2	3	1960-1961
2	4	1962-1963
2	5	1964-1965
2	6	1966-1967
2	7	Undated
2	8	List of correspondence, handwritten [created by the Rose Library]
2	9	Miscellaneous

### Gustavus John Orr

2	10	Biographical materials about GJO by his children
2	11	Clippings
2	12	Speeches and reports
2	13	Receipt book, First War Tax Act, 1863
2	14	Scrapbook, 1882-1888

3 1 Biography of John Orr Gustavus by Dorothy Orr, MS

**Other family papers**

3 1 Catalogs and programs  
 3 2 Illustrative copy of material for biographies  
 3 3 Material used in writing biographies  
 3 4 Misc. notes taken for biographies  
 3 5 Misc. notes taken for biographies  
 3 6 Misc. notes taken for biographies  
 3 7 Misc. notes taken for biographies  
 4 1 Photographs (1)  
 4 2 Photographs (2)  
 4 3 Photographs (3)  
 4 4 Photographs (4)  
 4 5 Broadsides  
 4 6 Stories, addresses by members of the Orr family  
 4 7 Clippings of Orr family (excluding Gustavus Orr)  
 4 8 Tax receipts, 1843-1934  
 4 9 Photographs  
 4 10 Correspondence  
 5 1 Kappa Epsilon and Sterling Brinkley Fund for Emory University, 1955-1959  
 5 2 Kappa Epsilon and Sterling Brinkley Fund for Emory University, 1960-1966  
 5 3 Articles by Dorothy Orr  
 5 4 Emory clippings about Dorothy Orr  
 5 5 Kappa Delta Epsilon history  
 5 6 Mary Orr autograph book, 1881-1892  
 5 7 Appleton's School Readers, First Reader, 1878  
 6 1 Correspondence, 1945-1972 (2 folders)4 Writings:  
 6 1 Miscellaneous manuscripts (1 folder)  
 6 1 "Gustavus John Orr, Georgia Educator" - manuscript and copy of printed book  
 Unidentified manuscript (2 folders)  
 6 1 "An Adventure in Reading, Four Reports Covering Work Done 1934-1940," by  
 Dorothy Orr and Katharine A. Ransom, Atlanta, 1940  
 6 1 Journal, "Made When Twelve Years Old, Original Quotation"  
 7 1 Manuscript and typed draft of book re Angus Elgin Orr  
 8 1 Financial Records  
 8 2 Photographs, biographical info., clippings relating to Atlanta Schools  
 8 3 "Woman of the Year" photographs and clippings, mementoes clippings and  
 newspapers  
 8 4 Miscellany-Photographs, printed material, writings

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| 8  | 5 | Miscellany - Materials relating to education, 1 folder re Kappa Delta Upsilon            |
| 8  | 6 | Memorabilia - Emory University   |
| 8  | 7 | Guests books, school album, certificates and diplomas                                    |
| 9  | 1 | Correspondence (4 folders) - letters written by and to various members of the Orr family |
| 9  | 2 | Genealogical information   |
| 9  | 3 | Photographs (2 folders)  |
| 9  | 4 | Gustavus J. Orr (2 folders), clipping and biographical info.; address                    |
| 10 | 1 | Angus E. Orr - short stories;  |
| 10 | 2 | Angus E. Orr - writings and biographical info.   |
| 10 | 3 | Judge Edgar H. Orr   |
| 10 | 4 | "Life of Edgar Harold Orr," Atlanta Historical Bulletin                                  |
| 10 | 5 | Life of Edgar Harold Orr, Dorothy Orr, TS  |
| 10 | 6 | Judge Edgar H. Orr, Misc.  |
| 10 | 7 | Mary Eliza Orr, scrapbook [fragment]   |

**Bound volumes**

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| BV1 | Gustavus John Orr by Dorothy Orr, bound TS |
| BV2 | Dorothy Orr scrapbook (1 of 2)             |
| BV3 | Dorothy Orr scrapbook (2 of 2)             |

**Oversized papers**

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|-----|---|---|
| OP1 | 1 | Gustavus John Orr, diplomas, certificates, etc.   |
| OP1 | 2 | Dorothy Orr, diplomas                             |
| OP1 | 3 | Photograph, Orr family                            |
| OP1 | 4 | Mary Eliza Orr, Message of the Bells, sheet music |
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