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Here is a subject philatelists have been enthralled with for over 100 years.



The Confederate Post

By Patricia A. Kaufmann

Dr. C. H. Dabbs— a Story with an Irish Twist



The folded letter shown is addressed to “Dr. Dabbs, Houston, Texas” and is franked with a CSA 10¢ blue (Scott No. 12) tied by a light Marshall, Texas postmark. The letter is headed “Mashal (sic) Texas Dec 23/1864” with the query, “let me know what Negroe men are selling for in Houston (field hands) also women ...for gold and silver __ and also what for Confederate Money...as I have Negroes which I wish to sell”.

Marshall became the seat of civil authority and headquarters of the Trans-Mississippi Postal Department after the fall of Vicksburg. The city remained influential in the Confederacy throughout the war as a power center west of the Mississippi. Towards the end of the war, Richmond shipped \$9 million in Treasury notes and \$3 million in postage stamps to Marshall. Some believe this indicated Marshall was the intended destination of a government preparing to flee from advancing armies. Marshall was occupied by Union forces June 17, 1865, well after Lee’s April surrender at Appomattox.

Christopher Hunt Dabbs (1806-1868) was born in Virginia. He received his M.D. degree from Transylvania University in Lexington, Kentucky in 1830. He practiced medicine in Monroe and Trenton in Ouachita Parish, Louisiana. During the Civil War, he served as Acting Assistant Surgeon, i.e., a contract physician who was serving the Confederate government as a doctor without any official appointment. Generally, when in that capacity, the physicians weren’t paid at all or wouldn’t accept pay from the CS Army. War records show that Dabbs treated the soldiers of Company H, 31st Louisiana Infantry, CS Army and served in the Confederate Hospital at Monroe, Louisiana.

There are some rather humorous stories about Dr. Dabbs. He was a financial supporter of the Catholic Church, even though he was not a Catholic and seemed to get into trouble with priests.

From the University of Notre Dame Web site come excerpts of an 1853 letter to Archbishop Anthony Blanc of New Orleans, Louisiana. The “Julia” referred to is the wife of Dr. Dabbs:

“Dabbs’ last letter to (Blanc) was suggested by Father (Julius J.) O’Do(ug)herty who had written to (Blanc) in a despairing mood and wished to have the impression of that letter removed. (Blanc) will perceive from their town paper that Dr. (C.H.) Dabbs is yet a zealous friend of the Church, although not a Catholic... All the carpenters have used one of Dr. Dabbs’s houses free. Dr. Dabbs has written to another carpenter in N(ew) O(rleans) to finish the church, agreeably with his intention to give it up to (Blanc). O’Doher(ty) has found great fault with some parts of the church as being too expensive. The plan is the one adopted by Father (Patrick) Canavan, Mr. Filhiol and Dr. Dabbs, the building committee. Their pastor told his congregation that Dr. Dabbs was a drunkard not responsible for what he said and not a friend of the Church. And that he, O’D(oherty) would place church matters in other hands. Dr. Dabbs does not feel that another person should have the credit of completing it. The Doctor is a jovial person and too prone to laugh at the Irish. What remarks he made about O’Doherty, when a little tipsy, were too ridiculous to notice. Dr. Dabbs is a Free Mason and subscribed \$100 toward building a lodge in Monroe. Julia’s uncle, Mr. Filhiol, wishes Dr. Dabbs to have the church finished. The Protestant subscribers, who are perhaps more than half, will pay no one but Dr. Dabbs. The Doctor is a Democrat which appears not to please their pastor who is a strong Whig. About Dr. Dabbs’ character (Blanc) is referred to Jos(eph) H. Moore, commissioner of N(ew) O(rleans), who is well known to Father Mullen of St. Patrick’s as a strict Catholic and the godfather of Julia’s son. Her feelings are so hurt that Dr. Dabbs should be thought of as an enemy of the Catholic Church; he got every name on the subscription list except 3. If he is permitted to finish the church in peace, she does not mention all the opposition among some of the Protestants, he will resign it to (Blanc) and not meddle with it any more.”

Quite the character, our good Dr. Dabbs, and an appropriate subject for the month of March when everyone is a bit Irish. ☒