

One of our great American Specialties

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



The Confederate Post

By Patricia A. Kaufmann

Arnaud Eduard Préot (1818-1873) —An Ignominious End

One of a series of correspondences that I have handled lately is that of a French emigrant. Born and educated in France, Arnaud Eduard Préot came to America in 1837 and taught in a series of colleges and universities in both the north and the south where he served as a professor of music and languages. Well educated, he spoke four or five languages.

While in Petersburg at Southworth College in 1848, he met and married music student Elizabeth Anne Hammatt and they eventually had nine children. In the early 1850s, they moved to Buckingham County, Virginia where he served as music professor at Female Collegiate Institute, Virginia's first college for women. In 1861, they moved to Farmville where he served as professor of music and languages for one year and where Mrs. Préot taught music and French. In 1862, he became the president of Farmville Female College – now Longwood College.

The plainer of the two covers shown is franked with a 5¢ blue Confederate typographed single tied by a Petersburg, Va. May 14 (1862) cancel on cover addressed to “Mrs. E. A. Préot Care of Prof. A. Préot, Farmville, Virginia.” It contained a long articulate letter with great content from a family member saying, in part,

“these are horrid times’. The Yankee pickets are within six miles of us, and more there (sic) gunboats. How soon we may be in their hands I can not tell...the Gold and Silver have been removed for a long time out of the bank...the tobacco in the opposite warehouse is all piled ready for the torch...I expect the cotton is all collected at a lot on the heights...John & Charles both think Norfolk might have been saved. They say Genl Huger actually shed tears when the evacuation took place The Yankees were quick on their tracks not a half hour elapsed after their departure before the vandals took possession, Charly says they will have a gay time in his room for he buried about two pounds of powder in the hearth with a little fuse attached to it, so when they go to make a fire it will knock some of the villains in the head. Now aint that like Charly...do write on receipt of this perhaps in another week all communication will be cut off...this town is one vast hospital every house in it is a hospital... A.H. Hammatt”.

A second more colorful cover is an all-over illustrated college cover from Buckingham Female Collegiate Institute address to Mrs. Préot at Farmville. College covers are very popular with Confederate collectors and the Préot correspondence provides numerous examples.



The Préots also variously served at Danville Female College (later Stratford) and Roanoke Female College. Roanoke was chartered in 1859 as Union Female College, but this understandably became an embarrassment to the community and the name was changed to Roanoke. Today, it is Averett University. Préot served as one of three principals there 1871-72.

Regrettably, Préot became more notable in death than in life. He was accustomed to taking a little beer for its medicinal effect due to his poor health. The night before commencement in 1873, a keg of Préot's beer exploded in his face and he died shortly thereafter.

For information on the Confederate Stamp Alliance, visit the organization's large website at csalliance.org or contact Trish Kaufmann, 10194 N. Old State Road, Lincoln DE 19960; trishkauf@comcast.net ☒