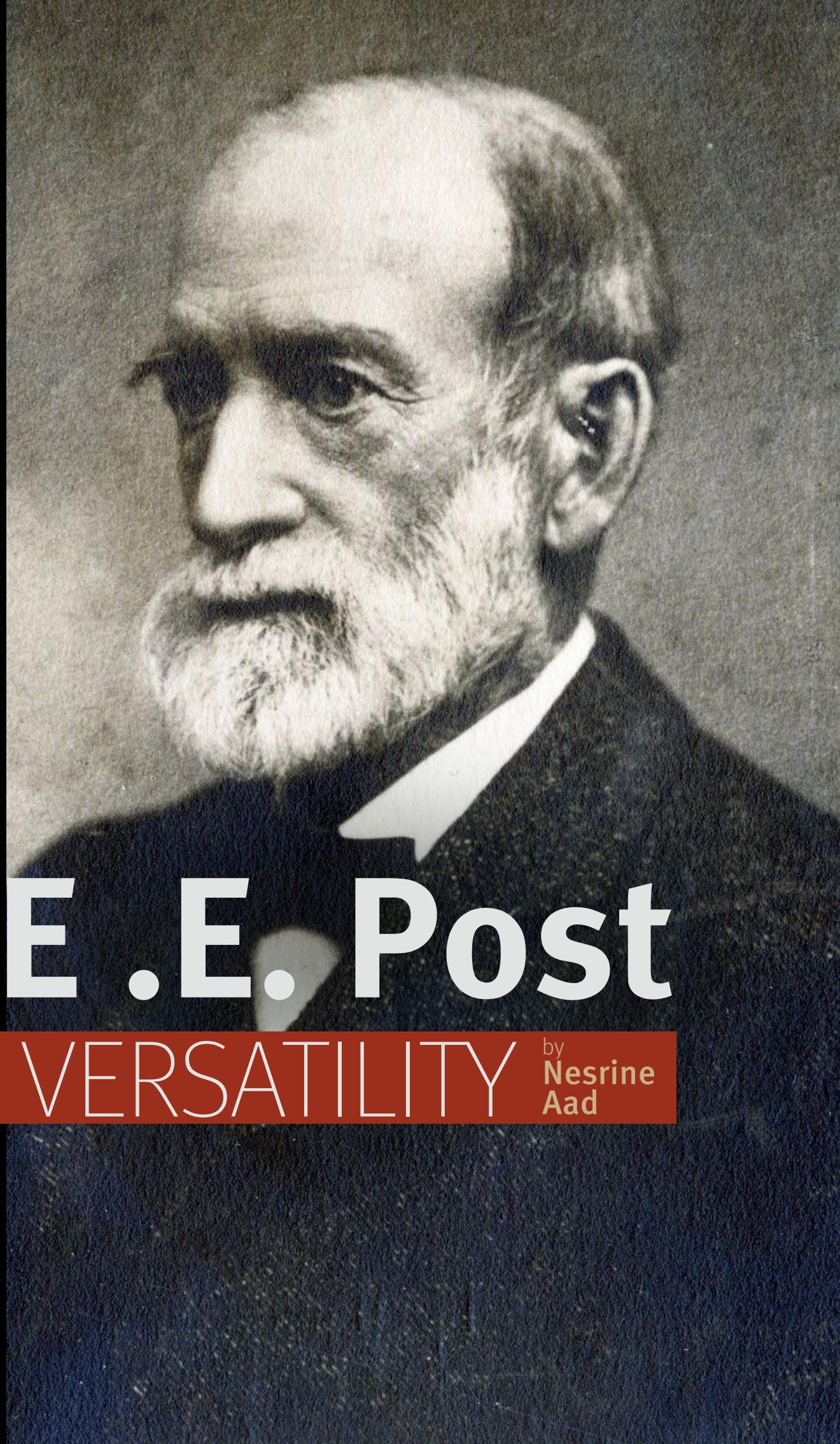


*The hidden stories*  
of the **ARCHAEOLOGICAL**  
**Museum**



# GEORGE .E. Post

A LEGACY OF VERSATILITY

by  
**Nesrine  
Aad**

***“I hand  
you back  
my scalpel  
rather  
than let it  
drop from  
my hand”***



Standing, from left to right, DR. DENNIS, DR. POST, DR. HENRY JESSUP,  
DR. SAMUEL JESSUP and MR. BIRD

Sitting, DR. VAN DYCK, MR. CALHOUN, DR. EDDY, DR. BLISS and DR. THOMSON

Made about 1874

The story of the Reverend George Edward Post remains, as the expression goes, hidden in plain sight. While the details of who Post was and what he did are no longer obvious, Post Hall looms large as testimony to his legacy and his versatility.

Currently home to the AUB Archaeological Museum, as well as the AUB Geological collection, Post Hall was conceived and designed by Post as a fitting repository for all the collections of the Syrian Protestant College (SPC) as AUB was then known.

*1/ Rev. George E. Post  
among the Founding  
Fathers of the SPC.*

The design and concept of Post Hall encapsulated the work of this talented polymath who was a mere 20 years old when he received his medical diploma.

He later studied theology and became an ordained minister before joining the Protestant Mission to Lebanon as a surgeon, dentist, botanist and amateur architect.

Founder of the chair of surgery of the SPC in 1868, Post was also the first curator of the archaeological collection, along with the geological, natural history and botanic collections.

Post's energy, enthusiasm and perseverance were legendary. Reverend Daniel Bliss, founder of the SPC, wrote about him saying, *"Dr. Post is doing more for this College than any other man in Syria. His energy makes the Medical Department"*.



Indeed Post fought hard to secure official recognition of the SPC medical school from the Ottoman authorities, even presenting the matter before the President of the United States of America. Soon after his return via Constantinople, the first Imperial Commission of medical examiners arrived in Beirut, accompanied by Post.

Appropriately Post Hall, 'the science building' became the venue for all examinations where among sarcophagi, busts and other memorials candidates came to face to face with Pashas, Beys, Professors and Doctors, the representatives of the Imperial Ottoman School.

*2/ The Science Building or Post Hall designed by George E. Post.*

*3/ George Post 1861 the year he graduated from the Theological Seminary*



Fluent in Arabic and an accomplished public speaker, Post was both admired and disliked by the local community of Ras Beirut, having a reputation for being arrogant and stingy, especially when it came to collecting payment for his medical services. Such was his reputation for control and calling the shots that when he passed away it was said: “Never say Post is dead...Post went to rule the dead!”

Nevertheless, Post gave 40 years of his life and energy to science and to the development of the SPC. He left behind a long list of achievements, including the “Post Herbarium” one of the rarest, most extensive botanic collections. When the time came to end his career it was at a time and in a manner of his own choosing.

In his resignation letter he wrote: “It seems to me, therefore, at my age, that this is precisely the ideal period for retiring. I hand you back my scalpel rather than let it drop from my hand. I hand you back my classes before I have failed to hold their attention and arouse their enthusiasm. But the chief difficulty I had and have is the inexpressible trial of withdrawing of my connection with a body of men with whom I have so long labored, who have borne with my shortcomings, and shown a confidence and affection which I would fain have deserved.”

*“Never say Post is dead...Post went to rule the dead!”*



*George E. Post passed away not long after his retirement in his house in Aley on September 29, 1909.*

*4/ George E. Post while organizing the collection when moved to the Science Building.*

## References

Abunnasr, M. B. (2013). *The making of Ras Beirut: a landscape of memory for narratives of exceptionalism, 1870-1975* (Dissertation/Thesis)

[https://scholarworks.umass.edu/open\\_access\\_dissertations/776/](https://scholarworks.umass.edu/open_access_dissertations/776/)

Bliss, D. et al. (1993). *Letters from a new campus: written to his wife Abby and their four children during their visit to Amherst, Massachusetts 1873-1874*. Beirut: American University of Beirut.

Dodge, B. (1958). *The American University of Beirut: a brief history of the university and the lands which it serves*. Beirut: Khayat.

Penrose, S.B.L. (1970). *That they may have life: the story of the American University of Beirut 1866-1941*. Beirut: American University of Beirut.

Post, G. E. (2007). *Flora of Syria, Palestine and Sinai: a handbook of the flowering plants and ferns, native and naturalized from the Taurus to Ras Muhammad and from the Mediterranean Sea to the Syrian desert*. (Ed. J.E. Dinsmore) Beirut: Librairie du Liban.

Ricardus, M and Semaan-Haber, M. (2009). *Floral enchantment to Lebanon*. Jounieh.

Yusuf Khoury, Gh. (1992). *The founding fathers of the American University of Beirut: biographies*. Beirut: American University of Beirut, Faculty of Arts and Sciences.

لبنان في ذاكرة لبنان: *Lebanese portraits national archives* (2001). Beirut: مؤسسة المحفوظات الوطنية.

*Minutes of the Board of Trustees of the Syrian Protestant College (American University of Beirut) Book IIIA, 1896- May 1907.*

*Annual Reports Board of Managers Syrian Protestant College, 1866-67 --- 1901-02.*

*Annual Reports Board of Managers Syrian Protestant College, 1867-1892.*

*Annual Reports Board of Managers Syrian Protestant College, 1894-1895.*



5/ George E. Post with  
the local community of Ras Beirut.



***Photos copyrights***

*1/ ©Library archives – American University of Beirut.*

*2/ ©Library archives – American University of Beirut.*

*3/ ©Library archives – American University of Beirut.*

*4/ ©Library archives – American University of Beirut.*

*5/ ©Library archives – American University of Beirut.*

*6/ ©Library archives – American University of Beirut.*

*6/ Post House that was  
demolished in 1969.*

