

Chess at The Gambit restaurant in the City of London 1946  
It closed in 1961

The Visitors Book of the Café de la Regence 1850 - 1908

# British Pathe news item from 1946

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yowdTF5\\_EwY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yowdTF5_EwY)

# Café de la Regence Visitors Book 1850 - 1908

- The cafe de la Regence visitors book is a collection of carte de visite (many signed) of notable chess players and members of the Paris chess cognoscenti from about 1850 to 1908 when Numa Preti died
- 
- The cafe de la regence was run by the Preti family who kept the guest book which came to the market in 2016
- 
- There are about 130 photographs from a range of photographers of the time and including chess grandmasters and masters (including, Morphy, Staunton, Blackburne, Sam Lloyd, Petroff, Kolisch, Paulsen, Preti, Rosenthal, Harrwitz, Winawer, Lowenthal and many more) actors, politicians, chess writers and publishers (Paul Journoud) nobility etc.
- 
- There are photographs of Jean Preti and Lequesne, two of the famous 8 who played Paul Morphy (of whom there is a small signed photo) in the renowned blindfold simul chess match at the cafe in 1858.
- 
- The visitors book was the source of many images for the famous etchings of the cafe de la regence some of which include exact copies of the carte de visite collection but completely out of timely context. (So Paul Journoud appears in the same etching as Prince Villafranca, yet their visits to the cafe were some years apart
- 
- Because of the rarity of some of the images (they include a totally new image of Howard Staunton) I am not able to show the whole collection.
- 
- The owner is getting on a bit and after a couple of serious illnesses is minded to dispose of the collection to include a first edition of the book by Jean Louis Preti which is not only rare and valuable in its own right but also includes the original photograph, the basis of the most famous etching of the authors (Jean Preti and Anne Durand) playing chess and used in the book.
-

## Abbé Philippe Ambroise Durand and Jean-Louis Preti

- Jean Louis Preti was a French acquaintance of Paul Morphy. As such, he was one of Morphy's eight opponents in his famous blindfold exhibition at the Café de la Régence [the others seven being: Baucher, Bierwith, Borneman, Guibert, Lequesne, Potier and Seguin] with the distinguishing honor of being one of the two, along with the sculptor Eugene-Louis Lequesne, who managed a draw against Morphy that evening [the exhibition started at noon on Monday, Sept. 27, 1858 and lasted until 10 pm].
- Several of Morphy's acquaintances published books of his games: Thomas Frere, John Lowenthal, Max Lange and of course our subject, Jean Preti, who published *Choix des parties les plus remarquables jouées par Paul Morphy en Amérique, en Angleterre et en France* in 1859.

- Although best remembered as the founder and editor of the French chess periodical *la Stratégie* from 1867 until his death in 1881, Preti also published several books, such as:
  - Recueil d'études progressives sur les fins de parties au Jeu des Echecs composées seulement du roi et des pions* in 1856
  - and
  - Traite complet, theorique et pratique sur les fins de parties au Jeu des Echecs* in 1858
- He also published three books with his collaborator from the above sketch, Abbé Durand. According to the OCC Durand, who was born in 1799, a year later than Preti, and died on Feb. 2 1880 at age 81, a year earlier than Preti, was a professor of rhetoric at Falaise and an instructor of philosophy at Lisieux. He retired from teaching in 1860. Durand and Preti authored the following three books:
  - Stratégie Raisonnée des Parties a Avantage* in 1863
  - Stratégie Raisonnée des ouvertures du Jeu d'échecs* in 1867
  - Stratégie Raisonnée des Fins de Partie du Jeu d'échecs* in 1871

*L'Échiquier d'Aix* by Academie aixoise des échecs gave the following obituary of Preti in 1882 [translated from the French as best as possible by myself]:

- Jean Preti  
The death has struck Jean Preti, veteran of the great chess family, who died in Paris at the age of 81 years. The limited scope of this publication does not permit us to share here all the qualities of this apostle of Chess who devoted his life to spreading his favorite game, and pens with more authority than our own will have to fill this gap. Let us simply say that he founded the chess journal *la Stratégie* which recently launched its 15th year. Never has a chess publication, as far we know, lasted so long, and we send our good wishes that, under the able leadership of his son, Mr. Numa Preti, it enjoys its popularity for many years to come.
- Mr. J. Preti was also the author or collaborator of several theoretical works, progressive as a whole embracing all the science chess, and which are the best that have appeared in France until now. These are: *L'A B C des échec*, *Stratégie Raisonnée des Parties a Avantage*, *Stratégie Raisonnée des ouvertures du Jeu d'échecs*, *Stratégie Raisonnée des Fins de Partie du Jeu d'échecs* as well as a collection of the most remarkable of Paul Morphy. Let us say in closing that Mr. Preti was also an excellent Chess Player, as proven by various games that have been published, and finally a very distinguished problem-composer.

*The British Chess Magazine*, in 1881, also paid tribute to Preti:

- France.—We have to record with much regret the death of M. Jean Louis Preti, which took place on Jan. 27th, at the age of 83 years. M. Preti was chiefly known by his literary exertions in connection with Chess. He and his son have been for many years the principal editors and publishers of French works on the game, and their monthly magazine, *La Strategie*, has long attained a world-wide reputation.
- M. Preti pere was intimately associated with the late Abbe Durand in promoting the extension of Chess literature in France, and one result of their joint labours was the publication of *La Strategie Raisonnee*, a work consisting of three separate treatises on the Openings, on Games at Odds, and on Endgames, the latter being divided into two parts. Other books were also edited or compiled by M. Preti alone, such as his " *A B C of Chess*," and his collection of the most remarkable of Morphy's games.
- His enthusiastic devotion to Chess literature probably prevented him from ever attaining any high rank as a player, but his unfailing courtesy and other amiable qualities surrounded him with a large circle of attached friends, by whom his loss will be deeply felt.

Jean Preti's son Numa took over the editorship of *la Stratégie* upon his father's death.

Numa Preti's own death was observed in the *American Chess Bulletin* in 1908:

- It is with the greatest regret that we have to record the demise of M. Nuna Preti, editor of *La Strategie* of Paris. This magazine, which had done much to keep alive the interest of Frenchmen in chess, had reached its fortieth year. It was founded by M. Jean Preti, father of the late editor. The elder Preti was the author of *A.B.C. des Echecs*, a second edition of which quite recently was edited by his son.
- Concerning the future of *La Strategie* we are not now in a position to speak. As indicated in these notes last month, M. H. Delaire has taken over the publication of *La Strategie*, an event of which we are heartily glad. A discontinuance of this famous journal would have been a real loss to the chess world, and, under the experienced guidance of M. Delaire, who was latterly associated with Numa Preti in its editorship, it seems likely to gain rather than lose in prestige.
- We judge from the issues for this year, now lying before us. Neither in tone nor quality of contents are they a whit behind their predecessors; rather the reverse, we think. We wish M. Delaire all success in his task.

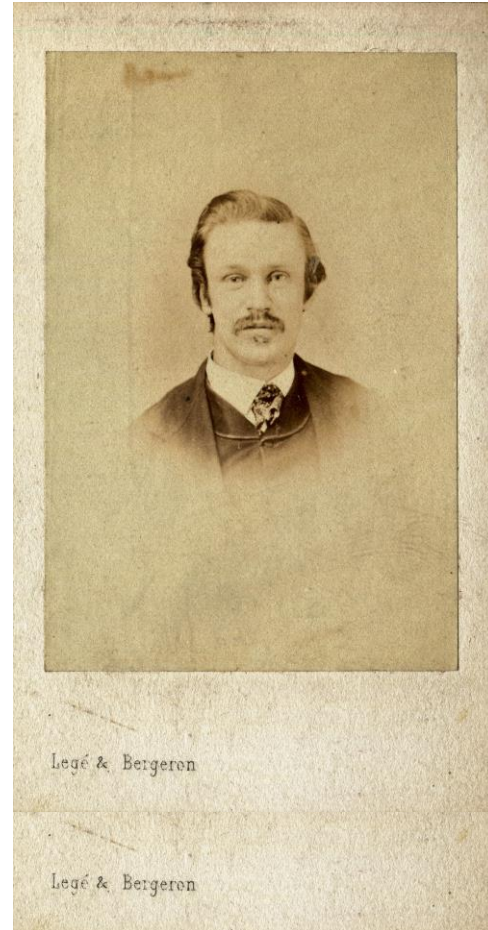


The *BCM*, also in 1908 (vol.28), published the following notice:

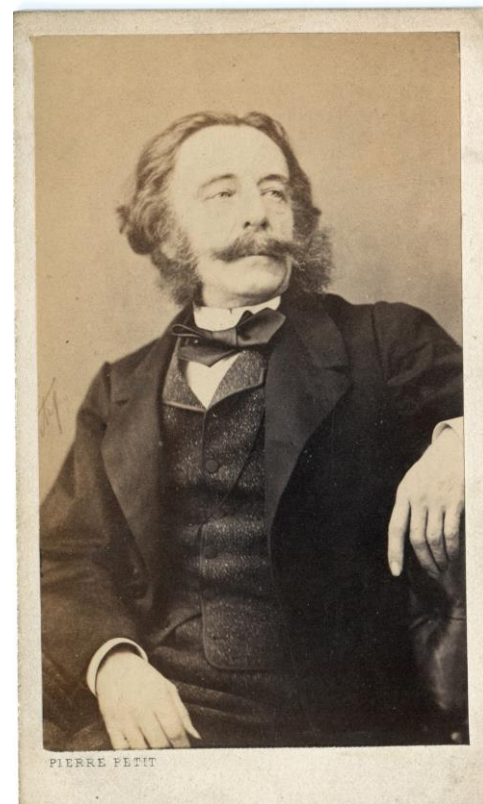
- We learn from the *Revue Sussie d'Echecs* that the *Strategie* is, as we feared, defunct. Its disappearance is a serious loss to chess literature. It had been in existence forty years, and was the sole important chess journal published in France. M. Numa Preti, who died at the age of sixty-five, had edited it with conspicuous ability for the long period of thirty years. *L'Echiquier Francais*, published by l'Union Amicale de la Regence, is the only surviving French chess organ, and will no doubt try to fill the gap left by its famous contemporary.

Since the foregoing note was set up in type we have been informed by the son of the late Monsieur Preti that the well-known Parisian amateur, M. Delaire, has taken over *La Stratagie*, and just as we were preparing our last sheets for press his first issue—a double number, January and February—has come to hand; but we must defer further notice until next month.

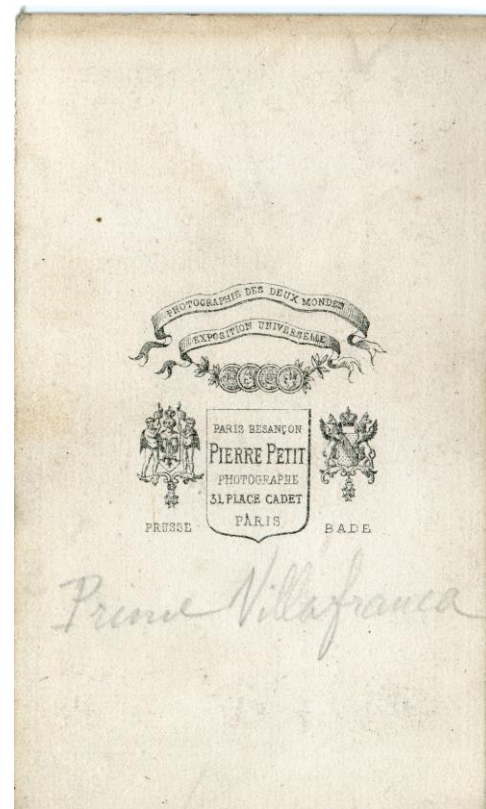
# Prince Villafranca



# Prince Villafranca



# The Photographer





# L'Abbe Durand & Jean Preti

