

**Hélène HUBART, “Urbanization and postal equipment. Post offices in the suburbs of Paris (from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the 1930s). The case of the northeast section of the former department of the Seine” (“Urbanisation et équipement postal. Les bureaux de postes en banlieue parisienne (milieu du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle-fin des années 1930). Le cas du nord-est de l’ancienne Seine”), master’s thesis in contemporary history directed by Annie Fourcaut, Paris I, 1999.**

In everyday life, postal equipment plays an important role in the life of urban dwellers. It is interesting to conceive of the relationships between urbanization and the installation of postal establishments in urban areas in order to determine the influence of urbanization on the creation of postal infrastructures.

We look mainly at post offices from the perspective of their creation but also how they are operated (types of offices, services offered, hours of business, etc.). When source material permits, we also consider mailboxes.

Our study of the relationship between urbanization and the development of postal equipment focuses on the northeast quadrant of the former department of the Seine. This highly urbanized suburb, especially in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, was close to the city. Our study begins with this area that concludes at the end of the 1930s. These chronological markers allow us to demonstrate differences between the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the period between the two world wars from the point of view of changes in urbanization as well as the politics of postal administration concerning the equipment used in urban areas.

The thematic of our study is varied: among other topics, we look at the politics of postal administration concerning equipment, the impact of urbanization on different types of postal establishments, on the placement of this equipment on the local level, on hours of business, and on staff. The influence of the proximity of Paris must also be taken into account, as well as the specific activities that were developed in outlying municipalities. We also study the new concerns of the postal authorities that sometimes took precedence over issues regarding buildings, especially in the period between the wars.

This study enables us to understand how the postal administration reacted to the phenomenon of mass urbanization in the immediate suburbs of Paris from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the 1930s as well as how this administrations adapted itself to a new situation by taking other factors, such as budgetary problems, into consideration.