

Sébastien RICHEZ, “Development of the French Post Office in the 19th century: acculturation of the French people, implantation and transfer of the infrastructures and of the personnel through the example of Normandy from 1830 to 1914”, (“Le développement des Postes au XIX^e siècle : acculturation des Français, implantation et mutation des infrastructures et des personnels à travers l’exemple de la Normandie, 1830-1914”), Ph. D. Thesis in contemporary history directed by Jean-Pierre Daviet, university of Caen, 2002, 853 p.

During the 19th century, the Post Office administration was one of the main social, economical and cultural institutions in the country. Between 1830 and 1914, the French Post Office knew an extraordinary rise. This period witnessed the founding of a modern administration. Until 1849, the French Post Office went through a transition phase. Initially dedicated to the transport of people and mail, it turned into an administration mastering the entire postal forwarding process; the dispatching took an increasing place thanks to the offices and mail boxes basic infrastructure setting; the State's seizure and the service functioning modalities got settled. After 1850, the

French Post Office had to face a spectacular boom in its mail delivering and financial activities propped up by the enlargement of the French market to a national scale; it had to employ more people, better spread its office, and facilitate the material and cultural access to its services through pedagogical strategies. More than ever, the political power ensured a strict control over the image and actions of an institution becoming more and more familiar. From 1878, the French Post Office worked to handle its rising activities which now included telegraph. In fact, it was trapped between budgetary restrictions on the one hand, and the public opinion's expectations on the other hand.

The French Post Office chose the way of a partial financial disengagement, which was to the prejudice of its exploitation tools. Moreover, it had to handle more numerous and varied careers of workers, the wages and working conditions of which were leading to claiming. To this regard, Normandy - taken as the Ancient Regime united county - offers a good observatory post of the Post Office national rise steps.