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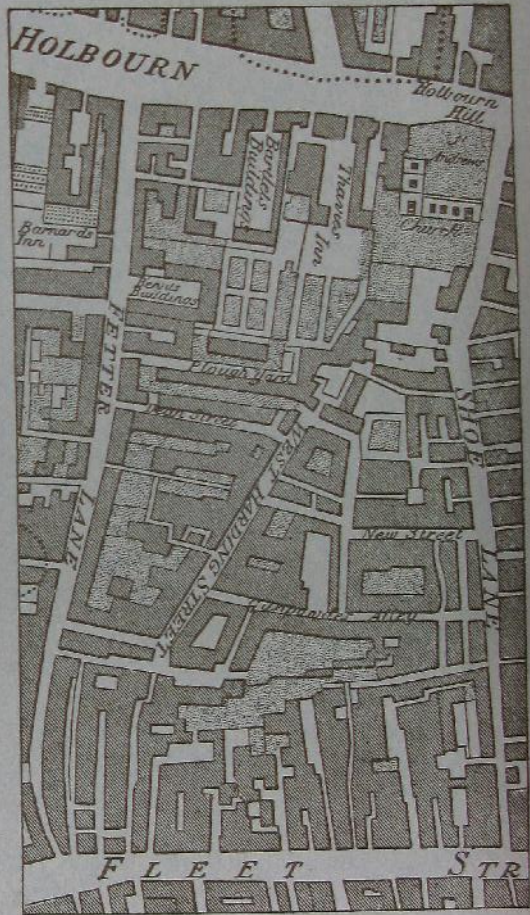
RECORDER

150th Anniversary of the French Revolution: A new and important article on François-Jean Baudouin, 1759-1838, by O. F. Abbott (p. 3)

Many Happy Centenaries to Messrs. Spottiswoode, Ballantyne & Co., Ltd. (p. 13) and Messrs. Hazell, Watson & Viney, Ltd. (p. 17)

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Fetter Lane and New Street Square in 1772 Block by courtesy of our neighbours, Messrs. Spottiswoode, Ballantyne & Co., Ltd., whose second centenary occurred this year. See article on p. 13 of this number.



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THE MONOTYPE RECORDER

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FRANÇOIS-JEAN BAUDOIN

1759-1838

Chief Printer of the French Revolution

OWNER OF THE FIRST IMPRIMERIE NATIONALE

By O. F. ABBOTT

To understand a man's character and career, it is well to know something of his antecedents and the environment into which he was born. Unlike most printers of the period, François-Jean Baudouin was not the son of a printer. His father, Pierre-Antoine, was a popular painter, famous for his water-colours, gouaches and miniatures. Born about 1719 or 1720, he gained admittance to the Royal Académie de Peinture on August 20th, 1763, with a lovely gouache entitled *Phryné accusée d'impiété*, which is still preserved at the Louvre.

Among his serious works were eight miniatures of the Life of the Virgin and a frontispiece to the Evangiles which he did for the King's chapel. He is best known, however, by his dainty pictures of considerable daring, engravings of which decorated all the boudoirs of the period, viz. *Le Coucher de la Mariée*, *L'Épouse indiscreète*, *L'Enlèvement nocturne*, etc., etc. Diderot, who was a close personal friend of the painter, wrote some witty descriptions of his pictures exhibited in the Salons of 1775-6.

Pierre-Antoine was the happy husband of Marie-Elizabeth, second daughter of the celebrated François Boucher, chief painter to Louis XV. Diderot's description of him is as follows: "A good fellow, handsome, easy-going, witty and somewhat inclined to lead a dissolute life; but what do I care, my wife is over forty-five!" Deshayes, another painter, who married François Boucher's eldest daughter, had pretty much the

same habits and they both died young, worn out by their excesses.

Notwithstanding his recognized talent, Pierre-Antoine was unable to save any money and spent his life in comparative poverty. A sister of his who married Michel Lambert, the printer, died without offspring. When Lambert's second wife brought him no children, he offered to adopt the infant son of his first brother-in-law, to whom he was very much attached. His wife consenting, the child was taken into their home quite young and educated regardless of expense to become a printer and his uncle's heir. In due course Lambert exerted himself to obtain a special permit from the King so that the boy could be a printer although not a printer's son.

Michel Lambert was not one of the men who introduced improvements in the art, but seems to have built up a flourishing business which was patronized by most of the great men of his day. He printed the works of Rousseau, Diderot and Voltaire, as well as the *Journal des Scavans*, *Journal Encyclopédique*, *Journal Étranger* and other advanced publications that kept him in constant hot water with the authorities. He must have enjoyed high protection in some quarters, for it is amazing that he was able to carry on his business with such a record of law-suits, perquisitions, arrests and seizures. Now it was Bayle's *Dictionary*, then Voltaire's *Pucelle*, or something of Rousseau's.

As he was "Syndic de la Librairie" there is a touch of humour in the solemn official reports of searches for forbidden books made by himself

on his own premises with the help of two "adjoints".¹ He was in serious trouble in March 1763, only to be reinstated on June 27th and arrested again in January 1764 because of printing prohibited books of the philosophers.

Born in 1759, "le petit Baudouin" was too young to have been aware of most of these exciting events, but it cannot be assumed that Uncle Lambert changed his ways or his patrons as the lad grew up in his workshops. At the age of eighteen, François-Jean obtained his licence as a bookseller and five years later (1782) was admitted to the Corporation of Printers and became a recognized partner of his uncle. From 1784, at any rate, both names appear on their output.

Everything seems to have run smoothly until the young man's marriage, whereupon serious friction arose between the young bride and the elderly foster-parents. The wedding notice, still preserved² shows the lady's name as Mlle. Carouge de Nantelle, daughter of the captain of a merchant vessel. The Lambert couple themselves selected the bride and fitted up a cosy little flat on the first floor of the old house in the rue de la Harpe for the young people. A sum of money was settled on them as well as a quantity of books to form the basis of a stock-in-trade.

Unfortunately, attorney Vuitry who drew up the marriage contract was an uncle of the bride, and with the connivance of her father found means of extracting from Lambert more than he intended to give. Probably recalling the spendthrift ways of the boy's father, Lambert wished to keep a tight hold on the common purse. His side of the dispute is recorded in a long printed memorandum³ in which he blames the young bride for all the trouble. Baudouin's side of the story is not known. Stouppé acted as arbiter for Baudouin and Didot-le-Jeune for Lambert. Three years later Lambert died and Baudouin was left in sole possession of the business. Among his clients were the Archbishop of Tours, the monks

of the Citeaux order and the Suffragan bishops.

One must assume that the young couple moved to another address at the time of the dispute with the foster-parents, for the move back to the rue de la Harpe after Lambert's death is recorded. Later, when the business had expanded considerably, one finds at least four different addresses recorded on his printed works.

There is no doubt that Baudouin received an excellent education otherwise he would hardly have been appointed printer to the Institut de France, for whose work a remarkable knowledge of dead and living languages was necessary. He also seems to have been a man of good sense, clear judgement and humane feeling. His amazing energy and organizing capacity enabled him to play an important part in the general upheaval of the Revolution.

When the great Assembly was convened to meet at Versailles in May 1789, he was elected as a substitute-deputy of the Third-Estate for Paris, although never obliged to take his seat at the meetings. He was then thirty and supported all the new ideas of the period with a young man's enthusiasm, although too well-balanced to sympathize with the excesses of the revolutionaries.

Anisson-Dupéron and P.-D. Pierres had both set up printing-houses in Versailles for the use of the Court and the Nobles, but when the three orders were merged into the National Assembly the latter refused to print its reports, out of gratitude to the King it is said, because of the manifest hostility to the Crown. Baudouin was requested to undertake the work and the National Assembly made a contract with him on June 24th, 1789, twenty-four hours after the Constitutive Assembly was formed and four days after the famous oath in the Jeu de Paume building.

This document entitled him to call his establishment the IMPRIMERIE NATIONALE, a name which gave great offence to the Court and especially to the Court printers. Hue de Miromesnil, Garde des Sceaux, summoned him to desist, but at great personal risk Baudouin refused to comply. Luckily for him, that official thought well to emigrate about that time so the

¹ MF 22,132 B.N. *Analyse raisonnée de Bayle*, March 29th, 1755.

² MF 22,106 B.N. Item 26.

³ MF 22,136 B.N. Item 104.

matter was allowed to drop, and Baudouin retained the title and functions until 1805 when Bonaparte organized the *Imprimerie Impériale* and put one of his favourites in charge.

From the start, Baudouin was able to place a hundred roller presses at the disposal of the Assembly for work connected with its deliberations and decrees, and although quality was to some extent sacrificed to speed, he performed prodigies of organization. The overcrowded condition of Versailles at the time made it difficult to obtain suitable premises and his complaints to the authorities on this subject have been preserved.¹ When the Assembly moved to Paris later in the year, he had the same trouble in finding accommodation, although he was eventually installed within the enclosure of the Tuileries. For a time he exercised great influence, but the rapidly shifting scene required diplomacy to keep on good terms with the various parties that rose to power.

Some members of the Assembly wished to publish a complete list of all persons drawing pensions from the Crown and the matter was discussed at length but the cost seemed too high.

¹ Arch. Nat. O-1 354 Items 198, 199, 298.

Abbé Gregoire estimated the lowest figure would be 40,000 livres for printing and distributing 12,000 copies.¹ With a magnificent gesture, Baudouin offered to do it free and recuperate what he could by selling copies. He lost heavily on the scheme as public attention was soon diverted to other matters and the sale of pension-lists dropped quickly.

On August 1st, 1791, he presented the Assembly with the first bound volume of the reports of the meetings, printed on vellum, and shortly afterwards made a full report on his work and the cost thereof. He had disbursed 1,174,000 frs. and received only 1,069,000 in payment. Thereupon the Assembly voted the necessary sums to pay him in full with a little extra for profit.

In addition to his official work and his newspapers, which will be referred to later, Baudouin undertook a great deal of printing for private individuals. Many famous pamphlets of the period bear the mark of his firm. Occasionally too, he had trouble with counterfeiters and wrote to the Assembly repudiating all responsibility for a pamphlet printed in Paris under the name of

¹ *Le Moniteur*, Sept. 28th, 1789.

Louis XVI and his family taking refuge in the Loge des Logographes at the National Assembly, 1791.

From a drawing by Gérard in the *œuvre*.



Imprimerie Nationale which contained a pretended interrogation of the King.¹

Many stories are on record of his personal bravery in trying to save victims of terrorism. Towards the end of June 1789, he rescued the Archbishop of Paris from a hostile crowd that was stoning him in the Place Dauphine at Versailles. Public opinion had been aroused by the rumour that this prelate had tried to persuade the King to dissolve the National Assembly. A month later, Baudouin made an unsuccessful attempt to save Intendant Foulon from a furious mob, but although assisted by Lafayette and others, the victim was torn from the arms of his protectors.

On the night of August 10th, a staff officer and seven Swiss guards sought refuge in Baudouin's printing house, where he disguised them as printers and enabled them to escape massacre. About seventy of their companions were rounded up and imprisoned in the cellars of the Feuillants monastery, where, with the help of his wife, Baudouin managed to bring them food and drink.

It has been stated by some biographers (Michaud) that when the Revolutionary Committees were established in 1795, Baudouin was appointed on the Tuileries section. Others however (Rabbe) correct this statement and maintain that Baudouin was not the sort of man to accept a salaried position under the Revolution. He was, however, selected with three others to act in an advisory capacity, without pay, and could not well refuse. His office expenses, which were high, were borne by himself and his influence had a good effect on the ignorant and unlettered men who served on that Committee. Already in 1792 Grouvelle, Chairman of the Tuileries section, with Baudouin and Froiduré, addressed a joint letter to the Assembly denouncing the pillage and murder in certain sections of the city.² Baudouin was able to prevent a great many arbitrary actions and persuaded the majority to punish three members guilty of serious misconduct. Among the persons preserved from the guillotine by his efforts was Miromesnil, ex-Garde-des-Sceaux.

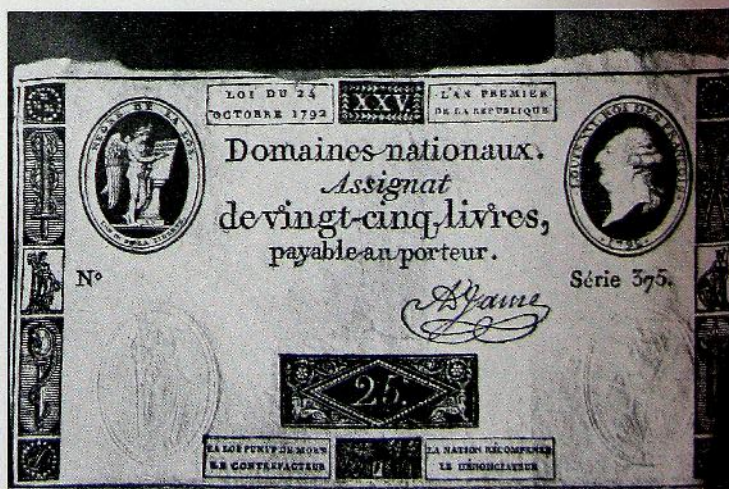
¹ *Le Moniteur*, June 28th, 1791.

² *Le Moniteur*, Nov. 1st, 1792.

RIGHT: A good specimen of an Assignat, 1792. From the Musée Méjanes, Aix-en-Provence.

The year 1789 saw the birth of the periodic press and a man of Baudouin's capacity was fully able to realize its possibilities. Brissot de Warville, who had spent some time in London in connection with the *Courier de l'Europe*, was the first in the field with his *Patriote Français*, the earliest French political paper. On May 5th, Mirabeau launched his *États-Généraux*, of which 12,000 copies were sold from the start. Then on June 1st, Le Hodey's *Journal des États* appeared, changing its name first to *Assemblée Nationale permanente* and then to *Le Logographe* on Jan. 1st, 1792. Baudouin started by printing this paper and then became its owner. It was a large in-folio sheet, more like English newspapers, and made quite a sensation at the time although it was never a paying proposition. Under sealed cover a copy was sent each day to the King, and it is said he rarely went to bed until he had received it. Had this been known at the time, it might have cost Baudouin his head.

Le Logographe is interesting because it marks the start of verbatim reports of French parliamentary proceedings, and for the first time a reserved space was set aside for reporters. The latter did not use shorthand but were fairly numerous and each one took down a few sentences in turn. This laborious system did not survive the suppression of the newspaper within a couple of years, and was immediately superseded by stenography proper.



Baudouin likewise printed and soon became proprietor of the *Journal des Débats*, launched by an Auvergnat lawyer named Gauthier de Biauzat, deputy for Clermont-Ferrand, who conceived the idea of corresponding with his electors by means of printed reports. Messrs. Grenier and Huguét, deputies from the same region were associated in the scheme. In a letter dated April 29th, 1789, Biauzat explained matters to his Town Council at Clermont:

"With your approval I will change the form of our correspondence. This change will not lessen the detail that you have a right to expect about everything that happens in the National Assembly. But such detail will be transmitted by printed reports, of which you have no doubt already received one or two sheets. I conceived this idea two months ago and explained it to Mr. Baudouin, printer to the National Assembly, giving him a prospectus of the plan. This proposal has been taken up again and put into execution last week by Mr. Baudouin with Messrs. Huguét and Grenier without advising me. However the matter is now arranged and I shall no doubt co-operate in the editing of these sheets and in the execution of the plan that I imagined."

The first complete number appeared on August 30th, 1789. Baudouin undertook to print the paper on condition that he was allowed to retain the profits on its sale in Paris, Versailles and all provinces of France except Auvergne. All that Gauthier and his friends stipulated by way of remuneration was that the paper be distributed free to any town or village in Auvergne that wished to have it.

By October 1st, 1791, the paper had not a single one of its original editors and it was no longer sent free to Auvergne. Baudouin had become its sole owner and had changed its type and form. The Girondists forced him to engage Louvet as editor at a salary of 10,000 frs. a year. At the start of 1800 he ceded it to the Bertin Brothers, whose newspaper *l'Éclair* had just been suppressed. In their hands it achieved fame.

Among the Decrees of August 16th, 1792, was one that ordered an advance of 15,000 frs. to Baudouin to facilitate the printing of instructions to the National Guard; this affair led to a public scandal. Warned by friends, Baudouin printed a thousand posters which were placarded all over the town and distributed to deputies in which he

indignantly denied having received the money. Called before the bar of the Assembly to explain matters, he did not scruple to use the epithet "Scoundrels" in respect to the persons controlling the civil list. A full inquiry revealed that a fake receipt had been signed in his name. Minister Bertrand de Molleville and a Mr. Gillet were the culprits. The money had been used to print *l'Impartial*, a paper devoted to Court interests. Baudouin's innocence was fully established.

It is claimed that the friends of Momoro, printer and type-cutter, who wanted to obtain the title of Printer to the Legislative Corps for their favourite, were accomplices in this affair. Momoro was one of the most ardent of the Revolutionaries and is reputed to be the author of the formula: Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité.

Baudouin had had enemies and jealous rivals almost from the start, but likewise had many excellent and devoted friends. On one occasion Mirabeau made a speech in his favour, referring to him as the man who had made "tant d'impressions dans le monde". It was sometimes necessary to print pamphlets and manifestos contradicting slanderous reports. The following, dated September 5th, 1792, is a typical one:

"I the undersigned, printer to the National Convention, declare to the representatives of the Nation composing the Committee of Surveillance, that I have just learned of an atrocious libel that is being spread against me. It is stated that I am included in a statement found among the papers of Tourteau-Septeuil for a sum of 200,000 francs destined for the *Logographe*. I affirm on my honour that this is false; that I have never received either directly or indirectly any sum from the Civil List; that I do not even know the address of the agents of this abominable list. I demand insistently that the Committee of Surveillance make a strict examination of my conduct and throw light on this matter, probably imagined to cause withdrawal of the confidence with which I have been honoured since 1789 by the Constitutive and Legislative Assemblies and which I will endeavour to merit from the National Convention. It is necessary to dispel even the suspicion against an innocent man and deliver the infamous guilty person to the rigour of the law."

(Signed) BAUDOIN.

After he joined the Jacobin Club his life was in constant danger, and on March 9th, 1793, he was the subject of a long debate in the Assembly.

When some members complained that his work was in arrears, he protested boldly that his printers had been called to their sections for military service and he wished to know whether their proper place was not at the *Imprimerie Nationale*. Other deputies argued that if he would stop printing so much private matter infected with aristocracy, he would have enough printers for his official duties. This was countered by an exclamation: "You are attacking the liberty of the press!" Deputy Thuriot then accused him of stirring up trouble in the provinces with his newspapers, and Tallien demanded that a commission be set up to investigate his case. When the report of the Commission was presented to the Assembly¹ it proved that Baudouin's conduct had been irreproachable and a motion was passed to the effect that he had never forfeited the confidence of the Convention.

A year later however his enemies caught him unawares and for some weeks he was in great danger. On returning from Rouen where he had successfully carried out a mission, he was arrested by order of the Terrorists, with several other Jacobins,² as being involved in a conspiracy of which he had never even heard. He was first sent to Vincennes—the only prisoner to be sent there during the Terror—but as it was then reserved for women criminals he was soon transferred to Luxembourg gaol and then to La Force. It was intended to send him to the fortress at Ham, but before his departure the truth was revealed. He owed his liberty to the efforts of his friends, principally deputy Le Cointre of Versailles.

After this episode he had to be more circumspect than ever and his presses were at the disposal of the heroes of the day. His activity was prodigious and his printing works turned out a tremendous number of political pamphlets. Among his clients were: Lafayette, Talleyrand, Benjamin Constant, Boissy d'Anglas, Dupin ainé, Casimir Périer, Foy, Lajuinais, Salvandy, Volney, Royer-Collard, de Broglie, Cormenin and others.

Things might have turned out differently for Bonaparte on November 9th, 1799, had Baudouin

not possessed both wit and sangfroid. He was known to be in the secret but kept his own counsel. When cross-examined by the Council of Five Hundred, his replies gave nothing away and did not compromise the truth.

His little son Alexander, aged ten, was the hero of an incident on that fateful night of the 8th. Baudouin had been asked by Lucien Bonaparte to call at the Tuileries at a late hour to fetch an important document to be printed at once. However, the palace was surrounded by soldiers and he was unable to approach. There was a small side door leading to his printing works, by which members of the Council were in the habit of slipping in to correct their proofs. This door was likewise guarded. While the printer was arguing with the guard, his son slipped in between the legs of a grenadier and found his way to the Council Chamber. General Bonaparte sat there alone before a small black table. When the child explained what he wanted, Bonaparte handed him a sheet of paper on which he had just written his proclamation, and drawing out his watch said: "Within a couple of hours I want this printed and distributed."

Although Baudouin furthered the interests of Napoleon to the best of his ability, he does not seem to have met with the appreciation he deserved. When the *Imprimerie Impériale* was organized in 1805, an Orientalist named Marcel, who had accompanied Bonaparte to Egypt, was made Director of the establishment and Baudouin lost his privileges as Government printer.

That same year he went to St. Petersburg to found an Imperial printing-house for the Czar, and was at once given the title of Director. Talleyrand may have suggested it. But because of changes in the Russian government and also because war broke out with France, he had to leave without completing his plans. Moreover, he received no compensation for his travelling expenses and loss of time. On his return to Paris, he published a complete scheme for the management of a State Printing and Publishing house.

His savings, like those of most of his contemporaries, had disappeared in the depreciation of assignats. The loss of his printing privilege and

¹ *Le Moniteur*, August 23rd, 1793.

² *Le Moniteur*, October 17th, 1794.

the disastrous trip to Russia with his family completed his financial discomfiture. He obtained a civil service appointment connected with the Excise Office, and in 1813 went to Groningen as Comptroller of Customs. The revolution in Holland put an end to this position after four months.

On his return to France again, Baudouin was employed as Director of printing and publishing at the Ministry of Police, but lost this position in 1821 with the fall of Minister Decazes. In spite of his great age, he continued to work and joined the staff of *Le Moniteur* as assistant-editor for parliamentary affairs.

His three sons were now grown up and all doing well. Jean-Marie Théodore, the eldest, was the author of several plays, while Alexander and Hippolyte were at the head of the biggest publishing business in Paris previous to 1830. Madame Baudouin, their mother, wrote fireside stories for her grandchildren which were published under her maiden name of Carouge.

Baudouin seems to have been a born organizer and took very much to heart the state of disorder into which the Royal Imprimerie had fallen during the Revolution, Consulate and Empire. In a long memorandum published in June 1814, he sets forth good reasons for reverting to the system followed in 1789 and pointed out all the errors and mismanagement of the succeeding régimes. When the old Imprimerie Royale became public property and Duperron's equipment was confiscated and carted off to the Hôtel de Toulouse, the management had been confided to Duperron's head clerk, Duboy-Laverne, who knew little about printing. The new manager soon got a swelled head from his exalted position and tried to obtain control of other printing houses. But very soon his establishment was overwhelmed with debt and the Expenditures Committee tried to put a stop to it. The Committee of Public Safety intervened and the abuses continued in spite of continual protests. Under the Directory, he says:

"There was no change in the management of the Imprimerie de la République, however in 1797 denunciations were urgently renewed and when preparing their Budget for 1799 the Finance Commission tried to bring about a general reform. The majority of

men on the Commission were friends and supporters of the Director, so nothing was accomplished. It would have been better for himself and other printers if they had never been associated with such governors.

"My colleague F. Didot recommended both for his talents and probity, always shared my opinions about this and refused to take the place of the first director.

"Until 1808 the Directory Decrees were the only basis for the existence of the Imprimerie de la République. Moreover, the special type designed for the Government was used for all kinds of private work and the profits therefrom were not available for the State. Money was retained from workmen who came late and was never accounted for. Accounts were cooked and the establishment showed an excessive number of employees who were only there to swell the salary lists . . .

(Here follows a long description of abuses, even to the enormous sums listed under the heading of Rat Poison.)

"The present Director of the Imprimerie Royale, whose only right to the post reposes on his journey to Egypt, is a perfectly useless intermediary between the Intendant-General and the chief typographer."

Just an old man's spleen perhaps, but it would hardly have been human if he had not resented being set aside so unceremoniously. His last years were spent happily in his suburban home at Anthony, with the knowledge that his sons were successful and prosperous.

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