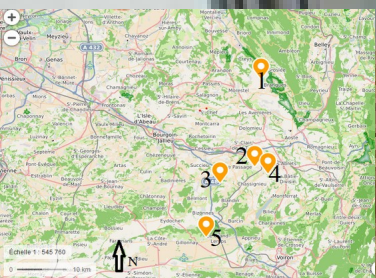


Abstract

In the North Isère, there were modest humble hemp combers and weavers who worked on the proper preparation of hemp fabric until the beginning of the 20th century. Cultivated very close to the proto-industrial villages, the plant, after the grinding stages, could be combed and then woven to give it its canvas shape. With no technical dynamics but a real proto-industrial organization, the hemp industry was studied here from 1836 to 1906. This research work aims to reveal the secrets of the adaptation of this industry until the beginning of the 20th century, from this industrial system to artisanal methods in comparison with the other textile industries of the region, gained by mechanics. Through a social and territorial history of the industry, this dissertation proposes to address the mechanisms of this flexibility and adaptability. The pluriactivity of the workers studied and the strategies developed at the individual and family levels are at the heart of the issue. More generally, these behaviors question the social identities of individuals, which are difficult to grasp through the prism of the sources consulted.

Keywords : XIXth century- proto-industry-pluriactivity-Industrial territory-social trajectory



Map :
1-Brangues
2-Le Passage
3-Doissin
4-Saint-Andras
5-Bévenais

Introduction

“ Our hemp industry in the department of Isère is lost if we follow our old mistakes [...] You only have the mechanical spinning mill to help it [...] You only have to fight prejudices and an old routine ” (Departmental Archives of Isère, 138M3. Letter dated 8 October 1841, M. Gueymard, Chief Mining Engineer of the Grenoble district

For my first Master's degree, I carried out my research on the hemp industry in the villages of Bévenais, Brangues, Doissin, Le Passage as well as Saint Ondras in the Tour-du-Pin district, from 1836 to 1906. This topic was widely despised and these skilled workers were seen as poverty-stricker. The corpus of sources aims to approach the secret of the survival of hemp activity in the Tour du Pin district, during the first industrial revolution. From then on, what individual, family, and professional strategies did the hemp combers and weavers develop to face the progressive decline of this industry?

What are the roles of pluriactivity in the industrialization of the Tour-du-Pin district? Finally, did the hemp industry contribute to "preparing minds for the silk industry", as suggested by Jérôme Rojon's thesis L'industrialisation du Bas-Dauphiné: le cas du textile (fin XVII-1914) Or did this industry remain a form of organization of the production of manufactured goods? More generally, we will look at the players involved in the industrialization of the Tour-du-Pin district to understand how the hemp industry developed within a territory whose economy is mainly based on the textile industry: hemp, silk, wool, and cotton.

The Hemp Industry in the North of Isère from 1836 to 1906 : A Microhistorical Approach



By Mélanie Nemoz-guillot, who was supervised by Anne Dalmasso, a senior lecturer

Materials and Methods

To get as close as possible to these hemp workers, I favored nominative census lists which initially seemed to be the most relevant for the follow-up of hemp workers and their households, from which I extracted the surnames, first names and ages of all the members of their households. Then, I collected information from the households, mentioning at least one hemp worker, while following the categories established by the prefectural institutions, and continued in this way until all the members "disappeared", to observe their professional reconversion and/or disappearance.

As a result, this primary sources enabled me to locate the communes where hemp work was the most consistent among the communes of the Bévenais, Brangues, Doissin, Le Passage and Saint Ondras. Using the information gathered, I went on to identify possible deaths between these counts, and searched for the names of the individuals concerned to find them in the mutations by death. However, the difficulty of my corpus, consisting of incomplete and fragmented population censuses, was to highlight the ability of these populations to make choices from sources not intended for this purpose. Therefore, my approach was a micro-historical approach, which is to say, a qualitative approach.

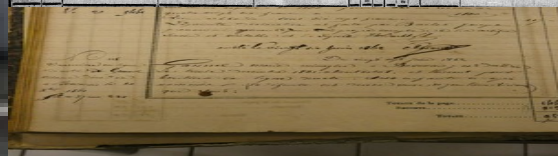
To make my research more concrete, I constructed computerized family trees of the households surveyed, showing the heads of households, their wives and children. After this task, I had to consult Industrial Surveys and Statistics to complete the taxonomy of weavers counted in hemp, wool and cotton.

Then, I completed all these data with the inventory after death, mentioning the material and financial assets of the people as well as their activities informed at the time of their death. But in view of the quantity of the contingent studied, I had to target and bring out the most relevant elements. Finally, I transcribed all my data into an Excel spreadsheet, as well as into family trees, which allowed me to create similarities and dissimilarities as well as networks within and between households.

A 3-step search :

NOM DE COURT	NOMS	PRÉNOMS	TITRES, QUALIFICATIONS, état an profession et fonctions.	ÉTAT CIVIL DES MARIAGES		AGE.	OBSERVATIONS.
				Sexe masculin	Sexe féminin		
DE FAMILLE.				Age masculin	Age féminin		

1-a nominative census list



2-a inventory after death

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
1	COC	Année	Canton	Commune	n° Ménage	Profession	Chef de ménage	Nom	Prénom	Age (ans)	Garçon	Fille	Homme marié
2	18M139	1836	Grand-Lemps	Bévenais		Pègneur de charnes	Chef de ménage	Vivru	Jean Pierre	36			Homme marié
3	18M139	1836	Grand-Lemps	Bévenais		cultivateur		Garnel	Maria	34			sa femme
4	18M139	1836	Grand-Lemps	Bévenais				Vivru	Jean Pierre	5			
5	18M139	1836	Grand-Lemps	Bévenais				Bouzet Martin	Thérèse	75			
6	18M139	1836	Grand-Lemps	Bévenais		Pègneur cultivateur	Chef de ménage	Robert	Étienne	44			Homme marié
7	18M139	1836	Grand-Lemps	Bévenais				Roux	Catherine	30			sa femme
8	18M139	1836	Grand-Lemps	Bévenais				Robert Martin	Alphonse	4			
9	18M139	1836	Grand-Lemps	Bévenais		Stressand	Chef de ménage	Victor	Joseph	28	Garçon		
10	18M139	1836	Grand-Lemps	Bévenais		Pègneur de charnes		Doydet	François	34			Homme marié
11	18M139	1836	Grand-Lemps	Bévenais				Thomas	Marianne	32			sa femme

3-Transcribed all my data into an Excel spreadsheet

Results

First of all, from the first half of the 19th century, the authorities of the department presented a declining hemp industry and they thought the external competition was one of the consequences. However, the census lists consulted showed the opposite: while the number of weavers was increasing, the number of combers was gradually declining. However, the logic of the census takers, making such choices being unknown to me, it remained difficult to know whether this apparent disappearance reflects reality, or whether it is a source effect.

Secondly, I noticed that all the individuals listed as hemp painters and weaver, did not cease to work with hemp. To adjust their life trajectories, while testing the health of this industry crisis of the 1840s, recourse to land could thus be a solution.

The closest members, spouses and children, were thus included in these choices, in order to develop multi-active strategies to support their husbands and fathers in their activities

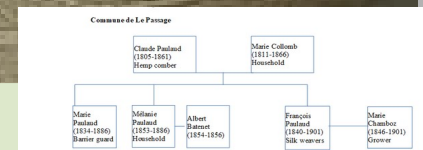
As income for from the activities carried on, if it appeared too low, the consultation of the mutations by death made one perceive the important possession of small plots, varied in their cultivation. Thus, while the authorities thought the industry was finished, all the individuals continued their proto-industrial activities, while keeping one foot in the ground and mixing agricultural and industrial activity, good household health, and social identities.

In the third part, I noted that in each of the towns analyzed, except for Saint-Ondras, some families devoted themselves entirely to textile activities, whether it was a father and his son or brothers and cousins.

Above all, this interweaving of hemp workers, within the same household, allowing its members again additional time and financial compensation.

Figure 1 :

The Paulaud family's tree



Discussion

In most cases, the lists of names consulted constitute a real limit to my work: I had to analyze whether the results obtained really reflected territorial specificities or whether these sources were biased.

As a result, the bare nominal lists leave many questions unanswered: why did women and children have an identified activity when the activity of the combers and weavers changes in the censuses? In fact, the inherent logic of censuses remains unclear and does not allow us to grasp the range of activities that make up the social identity of the individuals studied.

In view of the partial state of the census lists by population and in order to obtain greater representativeness of the territory, the sample analyzed should be enlarged by consulting the censuses for the whole of the North Isère region, thus combining a quantitative and qualitative approach. It would also be advisable to go directly to the municipal archives of the municipalities studied with a view to obtaining a more in-depth follow-up of the families analyzed. To a larger extent, focusing on the role of the northern Isère traders in the hemp industry would be relevant: who are they and how do they support the industry and the households living there?

Ideally, finding a good background on the Denantes company, which specialises in the manufacture of hemp canvas in Voiron, would provide a myriad of information and complete my corpus.

Acknowledgements

Academic conventions expect initial thanks to go to the research directors. However, it is far from any standard that I address my thanks to Mrs Anne Dalmasso and Mr Pierre Judet, without whom this year would not have been possible because they did not even think of it. Beyond that, it is their availability and their kindness that contributed to enrich my year. More generally, I would like to thank my brother Gaëtan, as well as my parents for their trust and support.

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