

Factories in Paris

A blog to explore industrial Paris

Wednesday, December 26, 2012

The three hair cutters of Charonne and Brooklyn



49 rue de Bagnole
Metro: Alexandre Dumas

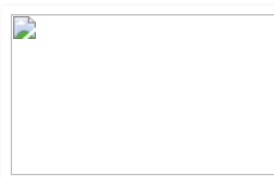
A year ago, I launched a call for help here, looking for information on Pellissier Jonas & Rivet Inc., the Franco-American company that was installed 49 rue de Bagnole, in the twentieth arrondissement. I have just received it thanks to Jean-François Chauvard, a historian whose grandfather operated this factory and who worked on the family archives. Here, thanks to these new pieces, is the story of the three hair cutters from Charonne ... and Brooklyn.



The entrance around 1900
(Chauvard-Rivet collection)

The second key man in the story is François Rivet, a distant cousin of the Pellissier. He was born in the Puy-de-Dôme, Mazoires, in 1852. In the 1870s, he came to Paris every winter. Thanks to his mastery of steam engines, he worked as a specialized worker in the world of trading and haircutting for millinery. His cousins Pellissier call him to train apprentices to replace striking workers, rue de Bagnole.

In 1881, François Rivet settled for good in Paris with his family, and set up his own business with his brother-in-law, Michel Liandier. His attempt to export skins to American cutters fails, but convinces him of the interest of this market. Thus in 1891, associated in equal parts with his



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Denis Cosnard

Journalist in the World, Parisian, I am the author of In the skin of Patrick Modiano

(Fayard, 2011) and Frede (Ecuador, 2017)

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cousins Jean and Antoine Pellissier, he decided to go to New York to found a cutting plant.

His mother tries to dissuade him: *"My dear son, what are you thinking, you will soon be 40. Life is so short for so much undertaking, you will risk your life and that of your dear family, go "To exile in a distant country, you must be well denatured,"* she wrote in a vehement letter of February 1891.

He nevertheless maintains his project. With success. Built 39-49 Stockton Street, in the Brooklyn neighborhood, the new plant thrives quickly. Rivet had a house built next door where he moved with his wife Marie and their two children. *"They were joined after 1893 by Victorine, Marie's sister and her husband, Fred Sumy, of Swiss origin who was overseeing the workshops. They were, according to them, a small "colony "united and independent," says the historian Jean-François Chauvard, one of the descendants of François Rivet, in an article on the subject (1).*

And as the porch of the rue de Bagnole mentions the New York establishment, the inscription on the brick walls of Stockton Street proudly presents the "Pellissier Jeunes & Rivet" as "Cutters of hatters furs" to "Paris and B'klyn".



In Brooklyn, the factory sister of the street of Bagnole, photographed by its founder François Rivet (Rivet-Chauvard collection)

Fortune made, François Rivet returns to settle in France in 1905, entrusting for a few years the responsibility of the Brooklyn factory to his brother-in-law Fred Sumy. In 1914, the directory Hachette always quotes two names as "hair cutters" at 49 rue de Bagnole, next to the laundry Saint-Victor: Young Pellissier and Rivet.



Places around 1900. On the far left, the entrance to the workshop of young Pellissier and Rivet. In addition, rivets (the same?) Also hold the flow of wines and liqueurs (Rivet-Chauvard collection)

The third man, Louis August Jonas, is an American who takes control of the American branch, probably around 1910. When he died in 1915, his only son, **George Edward Jonas, nicknamed**

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Freddie , took over. Par later *"French and American branches are separated in the interwar period, even if the French associates had interests in American society ,"* recounts Jean-François Chauvard.

Both branches enjoyed a very prosperous period. Pellissier had a beautiful 7-storey building built on Avenue du Trône, near Place de la Nation (1903), and another avenue de la Bourdonnais, in the seventh arrondissement (1910). Freddie Jonas, for example, spent some of his money in 1930 on a *foundation to help young people* , including creating summer camps for them. In the 1940s, the American branch was installed in Walden, New York, *as shown by a patent filed in 1947* . This factory was *put on sale in 1953* .

André Chauvard, grandson of François Rivet, ran the Parisian factory from the 1930s to the 1950s. *"He stopped producing for health reasons and because of the changing market, and the building on rue de Bagnolet was then sold,"* says his grandson.



Brooklyn Factory Staff
(Rivet-Chauvard Collection)



The entrance to the Parisian workshop circa 1930
(Rivet-Chauvard collection)



The interior of the Parisian cutting workshop circa 1930 (Rivet-Chauvard collection)



Warehouse of skins around 1930
(Rivet-Chauvard collection)

1.- Jean-François Chauvard, «Migration et lien familial. Les Rivet entre l'Auvergne, Paris et New York au tournant du XIXe et du XXe siècle», dans Jean-François Chauvard et Christine Lebeau (dir.), *Eloignement géographique et cohésion familiale (XVe-XXe siècle)*, PUS, Strasbourg, 2006, p. 97-121



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3 commentaires:

Anonyme 1 janvier 2013 à 01:39

Merci pour cette extraordinaire évocation.

Un ancien du 11^e Arrt

[Répondre](#)



Denis Cosnard 1 janvier 2013 à 20:00

Merci à vous ! Avez-vous connu cet atelier ?

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Anonyme 20 mai 2015 à 17:59

..Great! -and congratulations for the research work ...

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