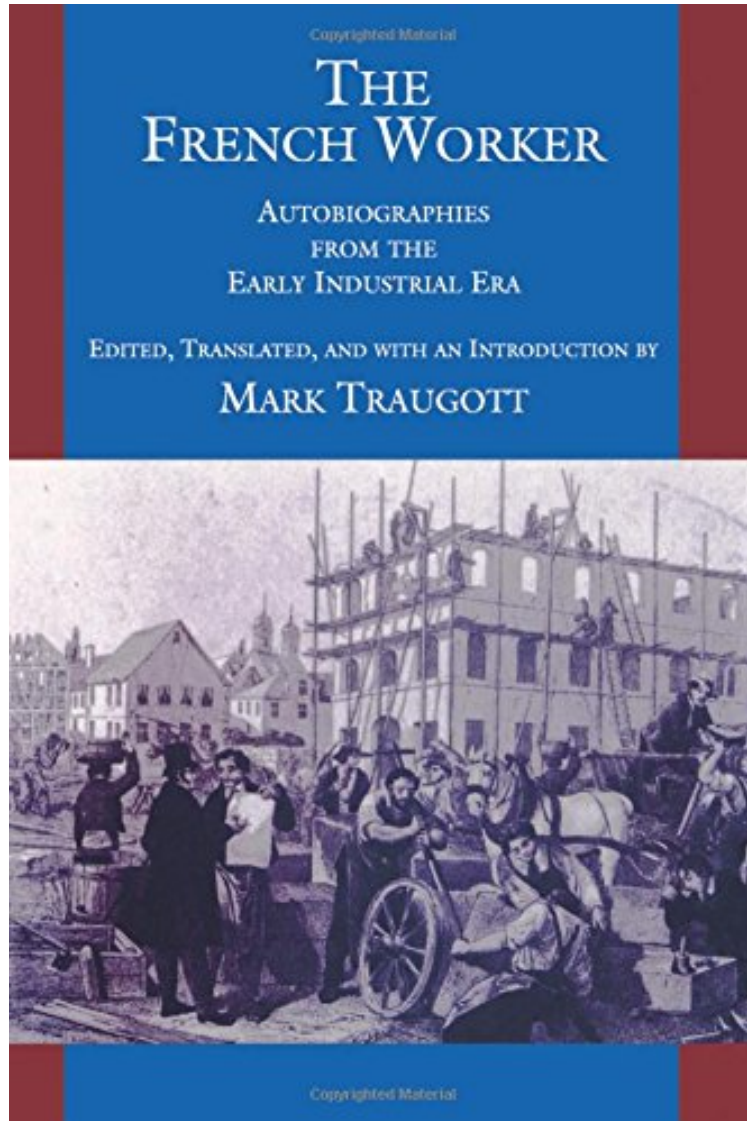


(Mobile library) The French Worker: Autobiographies from the Early Industrial Era

The French Worker: Autobiographies from the Early Industrial Era

From Mark Traugott

**Download PDF / ePub / DOC / audiobook / ebooks*



[Download](#)

[Read Online](#)

#1147529 in Books Mark Traugott 1993-03-25 1993-03-25 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.00 x 1.02 x 6.001, 1.20 #File Name: 0520079329408 pages The French Worker Autobiographies from the Early Industrial Era | File size: 51.Mb

From Mark Traugott : The French Worker: Autobiographies from the Early Industrial Era before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The French Worker: Autobiographies from the Early Industrial Era:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The French Worker By Rimer Used this item for my history class. The book is great depicting the lives of the people during the early industrial ages in Europe. 0 of 0 people found the

following review helpful. Fellow Travelers Unite! By Morgan T. Paine A book for a student that wants to work like the French: 32 hours per week and 6 week off in the summer! 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Are Traugott's contributors representative? By Bunny A. Goodjohn In his book *The French Worker*, Mark Traugott draws on translated autobiographies to paint the reader a picture of the realities of life for workers in France during the 1800s. Their writings tell not only of hardships, but also of the joys experienced in their personal and public lives. It is Traugott's intention that such accounts, when set against the turbulent backdrop of nineteenth century France, will provide the reader with a fascinating insight into how people lived during the French Revolution. Traugott, who obtained his Ph.D. from Berkeley University currently teaches at the University of California, Santa Cruz, specializing in social and economic history, historical sociology and revolutionary and labor history. Traugott does not restrict his research and writing to French history alone. His book *Repertoires and Cycles of Collective Action*, published in 1995, explores social protest in Great Britain. In *Armies of the Poor*, Traugott returns to France and investigates the Parisian insurrection of 1848. Whilst Traugott may not be described as a prolific author, it is clear that he is a man who knows and loves history. It is this in-depth knowledge that enables Traugott to provide us with a glimpse into everyday life in France through the eyes of people engaged in a variety of industries and trades: furniture, textiles, construction, metalwork and clothing. He also provides accounts from the point of view of unskilled laborers and from the world of the domestic servant. Whilst reading these varied accounts, one's eyes are truly opened to both the pleasures and pitfalls of having to earn one's wage during these chaotic times. Though life appeared to be harsh, workers seem to have had a much more concrete sense of camaraderie with their co-workers and with their profession as a whole. Agricol Perdiguier, a joiner, describes these brotherly feelings, "I was pleased to see young men from every part of France living as brothers, helping one another, and offering mutual support" (128). This sense of community within an industry continues throughout his account. Indeed, he appears to receive and give more support to his brothers within the *Campagnons* than he ever does with respect to his blood family. Where family is concerned, many of the narrators describe a difficult childhood. Jacques Etienne Bd had a mother who patently did not love him, Suzanne Voilquin lost her mother at an early age, and Norbert Truquin's father abandons him to a life of misery as an assistant to a wool comber. Family relationships appear much less important than the world of work. This skew on allegiances may have been due to the mobile nature of the France's workforce. Leaving home at an early age to embark on a Tour of France would have meant that one spent more time with one's co-workers than with family. Short term employment choices, essential when partaking the Tour, would have also made one dependant on the protection of like minded, but unknown workers upon the way, both to provide employment opportunities and a safe place to stay. Traugott's book amply describes this movement away from filial respect and affection towards attachment to those sharing one's profession. Whilst *The French Worker* provides the reader with a rich insight into the lives of those featured, it does have its problems. From a research point of view, the accounts included may well not be representative of the average worker in nineteenth century France since illiteracy and long hours would have made the act of writing a rare pleasure. Therefore, for Traugott's seven to have battled these particular odds and produced autobiographies indicates that they were not of an ilk with, or representative of their kind. In addition, the seven accounts are personal accounts, either written in the form of a journal or completed many years after the events took place. The journal risks portrayal of a knee-jerk reaction to the day or week's events, and the personal account may be self-serving in that it exemplifies the life and loves of the writer. Traugott then had to decide which accounts to include and which to abandon, thus adding the risk of editorial bias. If these problems were not enough, translation then opens the door for possible subjectivity. In Traugott's defense, he does discuss such editorial predicaments in both his Preface and Introductory chapters. Acknowledgement of the dangers by the author shows he is aware of the thin line he walks when producing a book of this type. The book heaves with footnotes, all essential when digesting a translation of a lifestyle account far removed from one's own. In the Preface and Introduction, Traugott cites other scholars, their works and government documents within these footnotes. However, when one tackles the remainder of *The French Worker*, the majority of footnote explanations are solely Traugott's. They serve purely as an opportunity to further explain a phrase or action. The book's credence would be improved by a wider variety of sources supporting the workers' accounts. The book is logically organized with each account taking the reader a step further through French history. However, for the reader not in possession of an in-depth understanding of this period, this chronological layout could have been enhanced if each account were preceded with a timeline outlining the pertinent historical landmarks. Traugott manages to provide the reader with a wealth of information, both incidental and core. As a social document, the book is both interesting and informative, but one may have problems in deciding if the lives depicted were actually representative of nineteenth century France. However, given the general lack of documented case histories of the French working classes, perhaps this is the best that one can achieve. Traugott is known for his love of the subject and one can only hope that he is true to that love.

This anthology, drawn from the autobiographies of seven men and women whose lives span the nineteenth century, provides a rare glimpse of the everyday lives of workers in the age of early industrialization in France. Appearing for the first time in English, these stories vividly convey the ambitions, hardships, and reversals of ordinary people

struggling to gain a measure of respectability. The workers' livelihoods are diverse: chair-maker, embroiderer, joiner, mason, silk weaver, machinist, seamstress. Their stories of daily activities, work life, and popular politics are filled with lively, often poignant moments. We learn of dismal, unsanitary housing; of disease; workplace accidents; and terrible hardship, especially for the children of the poor. We read of exploitation and injustice, of courtship and marriage, and of the sociability of the wine-merchant's shop and the boardinghouse. Traugott's analytic introduction discusses the many shifts in French society during the nineteenth century. Used in combination with other sources, these autobiographies illuminate the relationship between changes in working conditions and in the forms of political participation and protest occurring as the century came to a close.

Language Notes Text: English (translation) Original Language: French About the Author Mark Traugott is Professor of Sociology at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and the author of *Emile Durkheim on Institutional Analysis* (1978) and *Armies of the Poor* (1985).