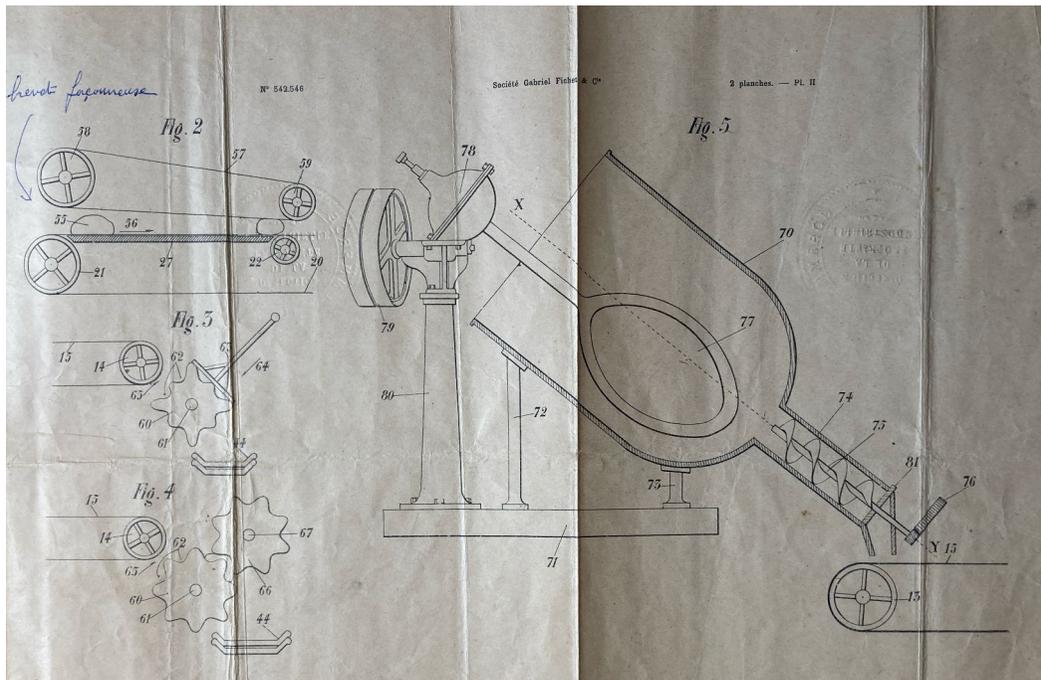


**“Let them eat cake”**

~Marie Antoinette,  
when told that French peasants had no bread.\*

\* Naturally, a quote this good is apocryphal. It seems the first usage was by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Les Confessions* (written in the mid 1760s): “Enfin, je me rappelai le pis-aller d'une grande princesse à qui l'on disait que les paysans n'avaient pas de pain, et qui répondit : 'Qu'ils mangent de la brioche [i.e., “**Let them eat brioche**].’ ” JJR. *Confessions*. Geneva, 1782. Vol.2, p. 278-9. This passage was written c. 1765, making the 10-year-old Marie Antoinette, then still in Austria, too young to be the princess in question.

**Nonetheless, the price of bread at the time of the French Revolution exceeded 85% of a worker’s daily income—bread, and its price, continues to play an essential role as an economic and social marker for well-being.**



**Above: a patent diagram for a bread making machine**

**BOULANGERIE. BREAD. 18 items, 18th-20th centuries.**

A selection of manuscript and printed items all related to the production, pricing, and taxation of bread in France, including documents for home ovens, a patented breadmaking machine, a real estate flyer for an extensive flour mill, etc. In the 18th century bread was a primary staple of the French diet and its cost ran from 50% of a day’s wages for a laborer up to 85% at the time of the storming of the Bastille. The ephemeral documents described below can provide some insights on the French economy and general well-being of its citizens.

**Offered as a lot of 18 items: \$3,200**



[BROADSIDES]. “Taux de pain blanc, rousset, et bis, dit de chipre...” Broadside regulating the price of bread, (Avignon 1755), [38.5 x 29.5 cm] and a handbill for the same, “Prix du pain donné aux Maîtres Boulangers”, (Toulouse 1775) [21 x 25.5 cm].

Documents for public display indicating the legal price for bread in the second third of the 18th century, a time when poor harvests meant potential starvation and the government placed strict price controls on the price of flour and the weight of bread. During the spring of 1775, France experienced the *guerre des farines*, i.e., the flour riots, which saw public demonstrations in hundreds of locations across the Paris region (the country’s grain belt at that time), eventually suppressed by military troops.

### **Quality inspection report for biscuits manufactured in Lille et Saint-Omer**

[MANUSCRIPT]. “Procès-verbal de vérification de la qualité des biscuits fabriqués à Lille et Saint Omer”, 1803. (30.7 x 20) 4 pp. (One sheet folded once).

The report verifying the quality of biscuits in northeastern France was written by a Commissaire Général in the army and describes inspections in the towns of St. Omer and Lille by three expert bakers from Boulogne, Calais, Dunkerque. An evaluation of the local production of *biscuits* took into consideration the flour used, manner of preparation, and quality of results.

[WEIGHTS and MEASURES]. A[ntoine]. Fournel. Balancier Imperial. “Devis des prix des articles nécessaire...” A price quote for the necessary items (scales and weights) for a bakery (Bordeaux, 1810). [24.5 x 18 cm]. 2 pp.

The price quote offered here includes a variety of equipment including two different scales for weighing bread, counterweights housed in wooden boxes, and measuring tools for grain and flour. Antoine Fournel was a “balancier de la Monnaie [*coin weigher*]” at the Mint, whose premises were located at 12 Marché de l’Égalité (after 1803); and, as listed here on his letterhead, as “Balancier Imperial” 7 Marché Royale”, Bordeaux (c. 1810-15). Fournel had joined the Bordeaux Mint as a sworn ‘weigher’ c.1788. That an expert in weighing coinage for the state mint was occupied with equipment to weigh bread indicates the precision and seriousness that applied to bakeries when measuring their loaves.

### **Tax on Bread**

[BREAD TAX]. *Taux du Pain*. 9 documents related to the tax on bread (1840-1855).

5 formularies with tax rates added in manuscript [approx. 19.5 x 25.5 cm] ; 2 small leaves in manuscript with date stamp detailing bread tax rate ; and a 1 p. manuscript letter signed by the Mayor of Chalons to the Mayor of Meaux posing various questions on bread taxes.

### **Baking your own bread at home**

[SALES BROCHURE]. M. Eeckman-Lecroart. “Boulangerie des Familles”, sales prospectus. 2 pp. flyer [22 x 13.5 cm].

This sales prospectus for an at home oven, suitable for daily cooking and baking one’s own bread, includes a rationale for baking at home, cost savings estimates, and cooking time for various dishes (Pot au feu, Roti de veau, etc.). Awarded a medal (2nd class) at the Expo. Universal, 1855, and commissions from the Minister of the Navy, the Charity Office at Lille, and various convents in France and abroad.

### **For sale: a bread mill with a house and gardens**

[REAL ESTATE]. A vendre. Grand Établissement de Meunerie [*Notice of sale of a milling establishment in Saint-Brieuc*]. 1 leaf. [27.5 x 21.5 cm].

The seller, Monsieur Piedevache du Boscq, offers: “Two factories, nineteen pairs of English millstones, and all accessories, in the center of a good region for wheat production, and excellently situated for commercial trade via

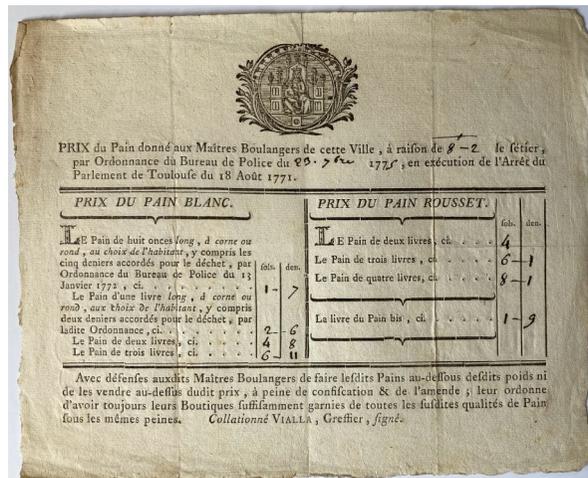
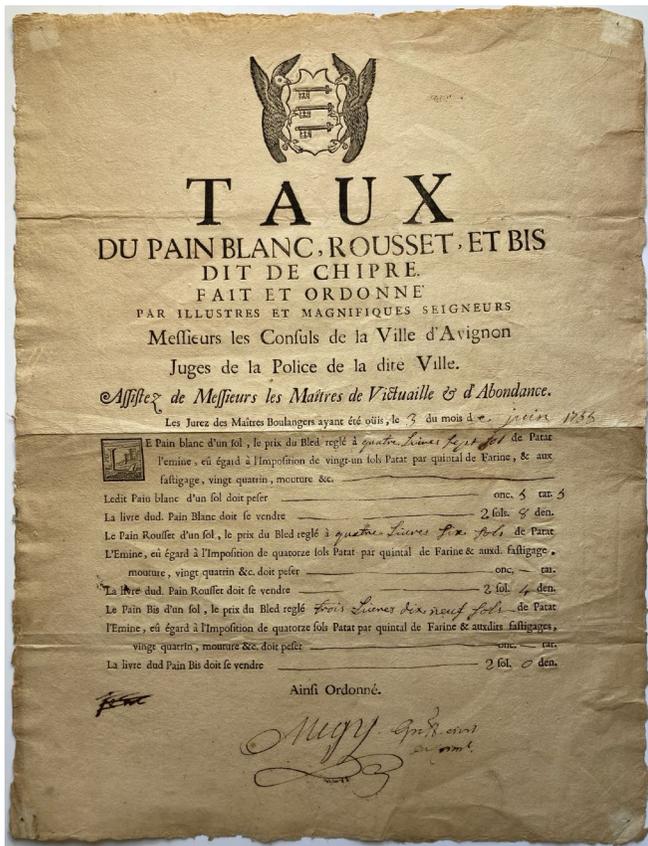
all the ports of France and England.” One property is in Saint-Brieuc and the other nearby, one mile from the sea, and a house with a garden and grounds. Tax stamps on the verso.

**Technical patent diagram for a bread making machine**

[PATENT]. “Brevet d’invention [*patent*]” for bread-making equipment by Gabriel Fichet (1921). A patent certificate of 3 pp. with detail’s added in manuscript ; and the highly detailed technical description of Fichet’s invention, 4 pp. of precise text, along with 2 illustrated plates depicting the invention. The patent certificate is heavily worn, but whole, while the technical manual shows old fold lines and a bit of soiling.

[ADVERTISING]. *Biscuits: Language des Yeux*. Advertising card for *Biscuits Vendroux*, located in Calais. [11.2 x 15.2 cm].

An engraved promotional card with 4 rhyming stanzas.









# A VENDRE.

GRAND

## ÉTABLISSEMENT DE MEUNERIE.

Deux Usines, dix-neuf paires de Meules à l'anglaise, & tous accessoires, au centre d'un bon pays de production de blés, & dans les meilleures conditions de commerce avec tous les ports de France & d'Angleterre.

1° Un Moulin de sept paires de meules, près le port et la ville de Saint-Brieuc (*Côtes-du-Nord*).

2° Un autre Moulin de douze paires de meules, situé à douze kilomètres du premier, à quinze cents mètres de la mer, avec un beau Magasin dans le port; chute d'eau de douze mètres sur un étang de seize hectares, alimenté par deux rivières.

Une force de plus de deux cents chevaux reste disponible et peut être utilisée, soit pour une filature, soit pour toute autre industrie.

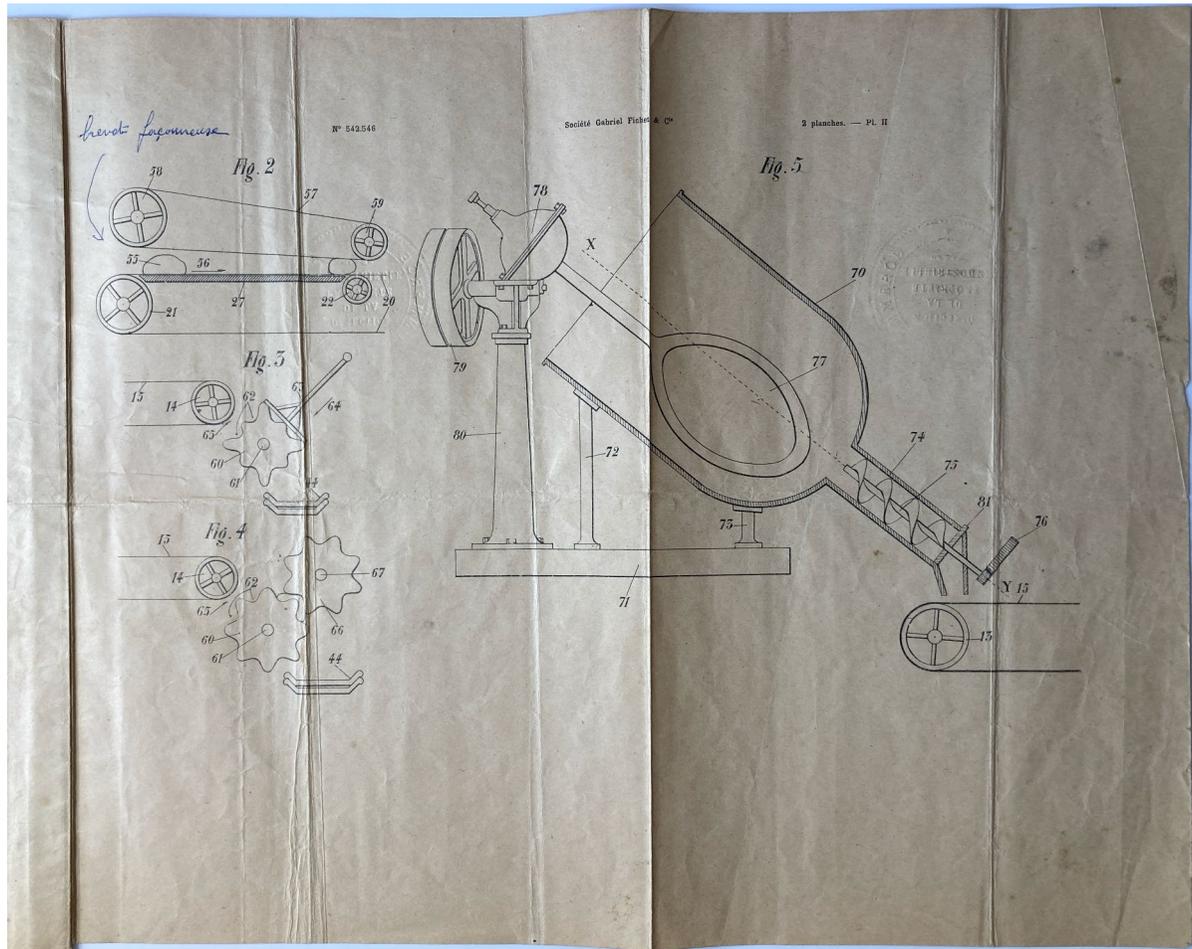
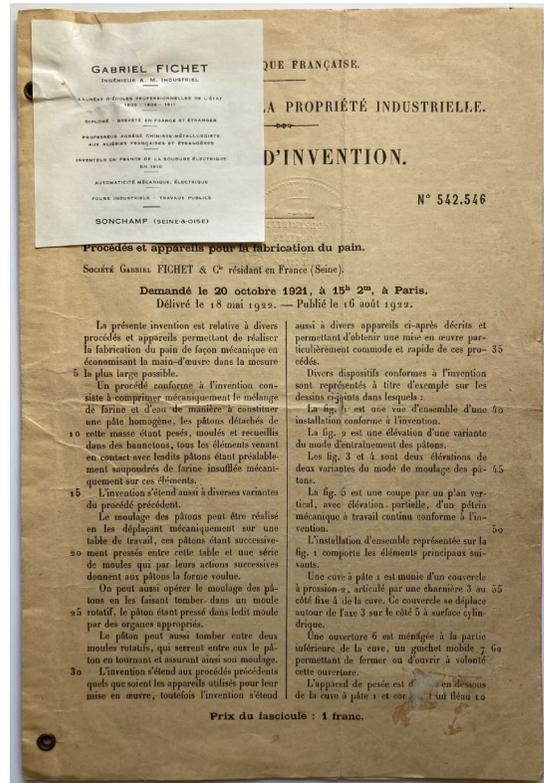
Maisons d'habitation, Jardins et Prés.

Toutes facilités seront accordées pour le paiement.

Le vendeur conserverait, au besoin, un intérêt dans l'exploitation.

S'adresser au propriétaire, M. PIEDEVACHE DU BOSCO, à Saint-Brieuc (*Côtes-du-Nord*.)

Saint-Brieuc. — Imp. de Guyon frères.



# BISCUIT

## Nourissage des Yeux.

1.

Le bon petit BISCUIT VENDROUX  
Est le meilleur dessert de table.  
Il est tantôt DUR, tantôt DOUX,  
Le bon petit BISCUIT VENDROUX.  
FRIPON, il plaît à tous les goûts;  
CURIEUX, toujours délectable,  
Le bon petit BISCUIT VENDROUX  
Est le meilleur dessert de table.

2.

Le bon petit BISCUIT VENDROUX  
A de l'ŒIL et fond dans la bouche;  
TENDRE ou VIF, il fait des JALOUX,  
Le bon petit BISCUIT VENDROUX.  
MALIN, sans craindre aucun courroux,  
Et captivant le plus FAROUCHE,  
Le bon petit BISCUIT VENDROUX  
A de l'ŒIL et fond dans la bouche.

3.

Le bon petit BISCUIT VENDROUX  
Séduit le gourmet qui le lorgne;  
AMÉRICAIN, nous charmant tous,  
Le bon petit BISCUIT VENDROUX  
Se choisit: lequel voulez-vous?  
TROMPEUR, CAUEL, LYNX, LOUCHE ou BORGNE,  
Le bon petit BISCUIT VENDROUX  
Séduit le gourmet qui le lorgne.

4.

Le bon petit BISCUIT VENDROUX  
A des noms d'AMOUR, de GAZELLE,  
Comme ceux qu'on dit à genoux,  
Du bon petit BISCUIT VENDROUX  
ÉTINCELANT, régalons-nous.  
Aimez-le bien, Mesdemoiselles,  
Le bon petit BISCUIT VENDROUX,  
Aux noms d'AMOUR et de GAZELLE.

**DERNIÈRE CRÉATION**  
de la Manufacture Française des Biscuits  
**VENDROUX - CALAIS.**

EN VENTE PARTOUT.

B. ARMAUD, GRAVEUR, LYON & PARIS

Il a payé Le Citoyen Baguet ancien Colonel  
la somme de deux livres six sous huit deniers  
pour sa quote relative à la prime accordée aux Boulangers, par la  
délibération du Conseil général de la Commune du 27 Septembre  
1792, autorisée par arrêté du Directoire du Département du 4  
Octobre suivant.

A Nîmes, le 19<sup>ble</sup> 1792 l'an premier de  
la République Française.

*Edouard*