

One hundred years ago... The Great Flood of 1910 A flooded Paris as seen by *Journal des Débats*

*January 13 to March 7, 2010
at the Louvre des Antiquaires*

At a time when scientists are predicting the imminent occurrence of a major flood in Paris, the *Louvre des Antiquaires* is looking back at a monumental event in the capital's history: the Great Flood of 1910, through one of the very first "special editions" combining photos and text, which *Journal des Débats* devoted to the flood. An exhibition of photos excerpted from the report will be presented by Patrice de Moncan, a Paris historian, from January 13 to March 7, 2010.

These spectacular first-hand accounts taken from *Journal des Débats* at the time offer us a strange, Venice-like Paris in which the inhabitants face the whims of their river the Seine with humor and strength.

First great flood photographed and commented on



Rue de Seine.
Courtesy Editions du Mécène.

Paris under water

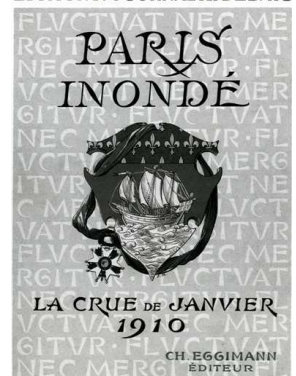
In the words of *Journal des Débats* at that time: "The river started to rise in the middle of January. **By the 17th it was quite serious and by the 20th navigation was stopped. After that, it rose steadily.** By the 23rd, the 1876 level had been passed; by the 28th, the maximum was reached with the next height surpassing the highest flood levels recorded up to that time: 8.5 meters at the Tournelle bridge. On the 30th, the level dropped slightly and Parisians felt an immense relief, but there were only isolated fluctuations until the beginning of March.

It wasn't until March 15 that the Seine started to return to it

The history of Paris would not be complete without a history of the Seine and its whims. Grégoire de Tours is the first to talk about a flood in Paris in February 583, which seriously hampered navigation. But every century Parisians are taken by surprise by about ten floods.

The Flood of 1910, however, is the first for which we have images. Indeed, for the first time photography made it possible to immortalize events. Starting on January 17, 1910, the editorial staff of *Journal des Débats* went into action with reporters and photographers fanning out throughout Paris... one month later the *Paris Flooded* album was published. The photos taken on the fly and now being shown at the Louvre des Antiquaires are reproductions of the original images published in that work in March 1910. They are placed in context with text excerpted from that extraordinary special edition.

ÉDITION DU JOURNAL DES DÉBATS



Journal des Débats. Courtesy
Editions du Mécène

certainty, leaving unfathomable ruin in the suburbs, on its banks and wharfs, and in countless other locations.

The exhibition thus unveils the unusual spectacle witnessed by the Parisians of the time.

1910-2010?



29, quai des Grands Augustins
Courtesy Editions du Mécène

Each overflow of the Seine surprises us. In particular, the DIREN (French Environmental Protection Agency) has conceived several flood scenarios for prevention purposes. In addition, numerous facilities have been put under close watch, particularly the Louvre whose underground reserves have been moved.

Patrice de Moncan, a historian of the city of Paris, has published numerous works on the capital and particularly *“The covered passageways of Paris,”* “Charles Marville, Paris photographed in the time of Haussmann,” and *“The Paris of Haussmann”* published by **Editions du Mécène**, which are now authorities on the subject. He received the **“Haussmann 2003 Award”** and the **“Charles Garnier Award from the Geographical Society”** in 2004 for his publications on the urban transformation of the capital under the Second Empire.

He curates the “Paris! of yesterday and today” collection for that same publishing house, with *“Paris flooded,”* a reprint of the special March 1910 edition of *Journal des Débats*, being the fourth title in this new, highly successful collection.



Louvre des Antiquaires

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Free admission. Metro station: Palais Royal – Open Tuesday through Sunday from 11 AM to 7 PM.

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