

## **The Drainage Canal and the Rue du Château d'eau**

In 1860, a canal was dug out between Troarn and the Dives estuary in order to drain the marshes. Despite having five bridges, the canal created a clear barrier between the world of the factory and the residents of the old village. It was lined with washhouses, including a floating public washhouse that moved with the tide. Some children from the housing estates learnt to swim in the waters of the canal, despite these being viewed as insalubrious. In 1962, the canal was finally channelled into pipes and filled with sand, and then served as a playground. It became the boulevard Maurice-Thorez in 1976.

Three water towers were built on the street in 1913, at the same time as the first section of the *cités Blanches*. Thanks to the wind turbines at the top of them, the water was drawn from the canal and then redistributed into the housing estate's toilets.

In 1924, the factory built the line of 25 small single-storey houses with gardens along the canal.

### Legend

The canal (now the boulevard Maurice-Thorez) and its floating washhouse. View taken from the bridge over the route de Caen (now the rue du général de Gaulle), around 1900. On the left, the housing estate on the rue Sainte-Marguerite has just been built on what was, up until that point, still virgin land. Jacques Gauthier collection.

### Legend

The canal's bucolic appearance could not conceal the fact that it had long been used as an open-air "sewer" into which people poured both their toilet buckets and slaughterhouse waste. Christine Le Callonce collection – Un fleuve pour la liberté, la Dives.

### Legend

Across from the cités Blanches, Henri Guyon poses in the garden of his house on the rue du Château d'eau. The three water towers were knocked down in 1963. Odile Guyon collection – Un fleuve pour la liberté, la Dives.