

The Factory's Housing Estates in 1900 and 1911

The rues Saint-Pierre, Saint-Jacques and Sainte-Marguerite led to two lines of houses built in 1900 and 1911 in the style of miner's cottages.

These 144 houses, which backed onto each other, opened up onto a small courtyard that separated them from the street. They had one room on the ground floor, which served as a kitchen and dining room, and a toilet. There were two bedrooms on the floor above, bringing the house to a total living area of 52,3 m². These houses also had a cellar where people would stock the coal they used to heat their homes and a barrel of cider.

These homes were managed by the factory, and were an improvement on the usual worker's accommodation of the time. Nevertheless, the basic nature of their roads, the lack of sewers and lighting, and the fact that water had to be drawn from a pump at the end of the street, soon condemned this neighbourhood to insalubrity due to the lack of improvement to its inhabitants' living conditions. Running water only became available in 1953.

These housing estates were preserved, unlike those built near the belfry between 1891 and 1897, but were knocked down together with the factory in 1989.

Legend

Rue Saint-Pierre, early 20th century. The housing estates would get flooded during spring tides. The street, which did not have a pavement, could become a quagmire. Pierre Cofrier collection.

Legend

Rue Sainte-Marguerite, around 1940. Despite the difficulties they faced in their daily lives, the housing estates remained a community which their residents were very attached to. Maryse Vernochet collection – Un fleuve pour la liberté, la Dives.

Legend

View of the rue Saint-Jacques taken from the avenue Gorgeu, 1954, with the Rivière children, Michel Rivière collection – Un fleuve pour la liberté, la Dives.