

## MARTIN SILK MANUFACTURE (1853-1955)

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Moirans was living to the tune of the textile industry. One in five people worked at the Martin silk manufacture or the Bickert velvet and plush factory, whose workforce was boosted by the arrival of immigrant workers from Italy and Poland.

To top up their modest agricultural income, until the 18<sup>th</sup> century, most families worked hemp to make sails for boats. The sails left the port of Moirans on the Isère river to be transported by boatmen along the Rhône to the major international fair in Beaucaire.

In the wake of the massive strike by Lyon's silk workers (1830-1840), the Lyon factories set up workshops throughout the rural areas of the Dauphiné.

In 1853, silk manufacturer Antoine Genin purchased the village mills supplied by a water catchment on the Morge and the Moulins canal. This marked the creation of the Martin silk manufacture. His son-in-law, Séraphin Martin, and the next three generations, Casimir, Georges and Roger Martin, all headed the growing industrial operation.

Before social conditions were improved in the 1920s, the work was arduous, and it was commonplace for children just 10 or 11 years old to be working as spinners, winders or creelers. From the age of 14, they were moved to the weaving looms. The young girls recruited from outside Moirans suffered difficult living conditions in the strict dormitories of local boarding houses.

The factory in Rue de Stalingrad closed in 1951, followed by the factory in Rue Séraphin Martin in 1955.



## MAISON MARTIN

*In 1881, Casimir Martin acquired a manor house in the centre of Moirans: a property set in luxurious gardens with an octagonal pond and water fountain, a lake and various outbuildings. A century later, it was sold to the town.*

*The kiosk of Halle Martin still has its original roof.*

*The old master house, in the traditional château style, and the lake are still visible.*

