

## 6 The Tanneries

At the beginning of the 19th century, the town becomes an important centre for the leather industry in the county of Nice (see inset no.10 p.18) and the biggest warehouse for goat kid skins entering France through the southern Alps. On the French side, for a long time, Grasse was the town considered the capital of tanning before it focused on perfume. However, already in **1600 a tanning mill is mentioned in the district of La Blanquerie** (1.5 km to the east of the town), the name refers to tanning. This area had two advantages : abundant water and a distance which limited foul smells.

*What is more, a tannery was situated on the site of the present secondary school and another in a large building, which was destroyed, on Promenade Lieutenant Maurin. The latter dealt exclusively with bovine hides from the nearby abattoir. The ground floor was full of enormous barrels and vats in which hides soaked before being scraped and rinsed under a waterfall (the battering ram) then treated with tannin. The waste water was discharged into the Roudoule. The drying areas and apartments were situated on the upper floor. The tannery employed 10-12 workers of which 4-5 were scrapers. During the second World War the workshop was requisitioned by the Italian Army. It closed definitively in 1960.*