

# GIFTED BY NATURE

TALES FROM POHJOLA

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## FOREWORD

*The stories in this book are based on real events. They open a door to the souls of the people of Pohjola, the heritage of the wilderness and the sea. When you next roam in Kuusamo, Rokua or Kalajoki, look around. Listen, smell, taste, observe and study. You will see that there is a tiny bit of the past hidden in everything – a piece of Pohjola in the old times.*

*We wish you a rewarding trip back in time!*



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# KUUSAMO

## I WONDER WHO LIVED HERE DURING THE STONE AGE?

"**F**ather, did people live here during the Stone Age?" a little boy asked in a clear voice by the Oulanka National Park Visitor Centre. Passers-by stopped to see how his father would manage such a tough question. It was well worth their while to do so.

The father and son had spent the night at the nearby camping site, and the father had promised his son an adventure into the history of Oulanka. He had not guessed that he would have to begin as far back as the Stone Age.

The boy's father suggested to the people who had gathered around that they all start hiking towards the Kiutaköngäs Rapids and travel 6,000 years back in time. He remembered to mention right away that the people who had roamed the area during the Stone Age had not called the rapids by the name Kiutaköngäs. No one knew what language the ancient people had spoken.

*"How can you tell for sure that somebody lived here thousands of years ago?" the boy asked again. His father calmly replied: "There are no signs of stone-age settlers left immediately by the River Oulankajoki, because the river banks have caved in in several places, and the water has washed the signs away. There was a stone-age dwelling site upriver, at the Taivalköngäs Rapids. You can still see the quartzite glittering on the ground."*

On the way to the Kiutaköngäs Rapids, the father explained that there were signs of the earliest settlers of Oulanka right by the rest spot at the rapids as well. There,

people had found quartz fragments and pits of different sizes in the ground. A few years back, during an inventory of the national park, someone had noticed that there had been a stone-age dwelling at Kiutaköngäs, right by the Karhunkierros Trail.

Jussi, the boy, continued with his questions: *"What are quartz fragments?"* His father explained that the tools people had used in the Stone Age had been made of white quartz. The stone had to be beaten several times to make it into the kind of object you wanted. This left a lot of sharp-edged chips of stone, or fragments, on the ground. They flew off the stone when it was being moulded.

*"Was it not hard to make objects out of stone?"* a man who had hiked along with them wondered. Jussi's father, who had been appointed the guide for the group, told the others that a skilled stone-age stone mason would make a usable object in no time. He would first cut the stones into appropriate sizes and then grind the object with sand and water on an even flat rock, or use a smaller grinding tool. Finally, the mason would even out the stone surface by means of spot cutting – i.e., knocking small dents very close to each other into the surface of the stone with a stick.

When the group got to Kiutaköngäs, Jussi sat down on the ground and started beating two rocks together, but he could not get them to turn into objects, nor did any stone fragments fly around. His father found a piece of quartz on the ground, and it was as sharp as a knife. Stone-age peo-

ple used to make scrapers, spear and arrowheads, as well as carving tools and knives out of quartz. The tools were used to skin animals and cut meat. Many of them had been attached to a handle made of wood or bone with leather straps and resin.

The hikers participating in the guided tour of Kiutaköngäs felt as if a stone-age mason had been sitting right next to them and cutting stone. *"I can't believe that people from thousands of years ago stood on this very spot admiring the red dolomite rocks"*, Jussi thought out loud.

Next, the group headed to the surroundings of the camping site between Kiekeröniva and Haaralampi, where several different-sized pits had been found. Jussi's father was a bit disappointed that no stone-age artefacts had been found in Oulanka. Still, there was a good chance that someone might unearth treasures of silver or flints, because such things had been found in other parts of Kuusamo.

The group put their heads together to wonder where the stone-age people had got their food. Of course, you

could catch fish in Oulanka with a hook and line or fishing nets, but what else had the people eaten? They concluded that all the bounties of nature and game available in today's Kuusamo had been available back then too. Plants high in vitamins, such as angelica, nettle and French sorrel, had been used fresh. They had also been dried and mixed with other foods. People had already known how to use mushrooms and even preserve them back then, not to mention the wild berries. Birch sap had been collected and drunk raw.

The group then got to thinking about the clothes the ancient people had worn. They had probably been made out of leather and plant fibres. People had also worn jewellery, although none had been found in Oulanka so far.

That night, before Jussi went to sleep, he asked his father: *"Was the one who lived here in the Stone Age related to you or mother?"* His father took a moment to think, then replied: *"I do think you will live to see a time when that will also be revealed."*

### → Oulanka prehistoric dating:

Preceramic Culture	7 000–4 200 BC
Comb Ceramic Culture	4 200–2 800 BC
Asbestos-Ceramic Culture	2 800–1 300/1 200 BC
Bronze Age	1 600–300
Iron Age	300–1 600
Historical Age	1 600–

- In the 1970s, different-sized pits in the ground and stone fragments produced by the working of quartz objects were found in Oulanka.
- A prehistoric dwelling site was discovered in connection with an inventory that was made at the national park in the 1990s.

- There are clear signs of stone-age dwelling sites in Oulanka National Park. Such sites can be found at Kiutaköngäs, Kiutakan-gas, Savilampi and Aventolampi, as well as in the vicinity of the Oulanka Research Station.
- The Patoniva stone-age dwelling was dated in 2008 in connection with the inventory of the relics in Oulanka National Park produced by the Kulma Project: It was dated back to 6023 BC. The inventory discovered 14 previously unknown dwelling sites.
- No actual excavations have been conducted in the area.
- Quartz fragments and the coloured culture layer are signs of early settlement.
- Some of the dwelling sites have collapsed into the river. The landslides may have been caused by the logging and log floating activities in the Oulanka forests at the turn of the 20th century.
- Stone-age artefacts have not been found.

## THE FOREST LAPPS OF THE SUMMER DWELLING BY THE RIVER SAVINAJOKI

"**T**here is a Lapp's tax for the Crown, paid in full. The skins were acquired during long hunting trips between two long dark seasons!" Nilla grunted and set down his bunch of skins in front of the tax bailiff. The Vicar had already received his tithe in the form of dried pike.

The whole after-Christmas time had been spent driving officials around with reindeer and holding the winter assembly. Throughout the heart of the winter, the womenfolk had worked hard to mould the deer skins and make new peski fur coats and Lapp shoes, which the men had tested on the Majavaaari Island on the River Savinajoki. They had brought back handsome beaver skins, but those had gone to the Crown bailiffs as tax payments. Nilla had not had time to do any business with the Russians before the Finnish tax collectors had come to demand their dues. The year's taxes were now paid, and the darkest months were beginning to give way to light in the winter dwelling by Lake Kitkajärvi.

In late February, Nilla was already itching to go hunting wild deer. Together with the other men from the winter dwelling, he set out towards the area between the Rivers Oulankajoki and Savinajoki. They took with them a few domestic reindeer as decoys for the hunt. During the same trip, Nilla went to look for a place for his family's summer dwelling on the upper stretches of the River Sav-

inajoki. There, you could go fishing as soon as the still waters were open, and you could go punting along the river. The familiar pond area was also a good calving place for the reindeer.

After the deer hunt, the families would set out to their summer dwellings. The twigs and boards that Nilla had taken to the Kotalampi pond were there, waiting for the family to build their kota hut. The frame was covered with the deer skins that Nilla's wife had worked on during the winter.

A short walk from the summer dwelling was a place of sacrifice that Nilla often visited on the spring mornings. Protected by the woods, he could still ask the Seida for fishing luck in peace. In the winter dwelling you could no longer even mention your own holy places, as the Finnish vicar was quick to sue a man for such a crime.

The Oulanka wilderness offered the Forest Lapps good opportunities for fishing, hunting and reindeer husbandry. There, Nilla's family did not have to argue with anyone over fishing spots. The season for catching spawning fish was a time the whole family could enjoy. They would lay their nets and traps in the river and catch plenty of pike, which they would then hang on the walls of the kota hut to dry. This would provide the following year's tithe payment for the Vicar. For himself, Nilla caught better fish.

The Finnish settlers did not venture far from the riversides to slash and burn the forests. You could not spot any

log cabins built by the Finns in the backwoods, and the reindeer were free to roam and calve in peace.

Nilla tamed some reindeer and herded them on the pasture. Together with others from the summer dwelling, he built reindeer herding fences to make it easier to gather the animals together in the autumn. The Finns also bought some good reindeer from them and started to raise them themselves. If the reindeer were not milked, they made for good, strong draught animals for transporting goods.

In the autumn, Nilla's family set out from Kotalampi along the lower stretches of the River Savinajoki towards the River Oulankajoki. It was time to move into the win-

ter dwelling again. On the way there, Nilla told the others about his ancestors who had named places according to where the place was, what it looked like or what it was used for. He said that the Finns had called them Lapps and their dwellings Lapp villages.

The floods had made the grass grow along the river, and the reindeer gathered to have a taste. Nilla wondered whether he could mow the hay to get some winter feed for the animals. At least the straws would make good, warm stuffing for shoes in the winter. A while later, they could hear the roar of the great rapids as the Giuhtakeävngis greeted them.

### → The Sámi Iron Age Dates from 300 to 1600 AD

- The Sámi people are the arctic indigenous people inhabiting regions of Finnish, Swedish and Norwegian Lapland as well as the far northern parts of the Kola Peninsula in Russia. The Oulanka Region used to fall between three Sámi villages (siidas).
- The local siidas were Maanselkä village on the north shore of Lake Kuusamojärvi, Kitka village on the west side of the Lower Kitkajärvi lake and Kuolajärvi village in the Salla area.
- Particularly in older literature, the inhabitants of these Sámi villages were referred to as Forest Lapps; today, they are called the Forest Sámi people.
- The Sámi Iron Age lasted from 300 to 1600 AD.
- The Sámi people who used to live in the Oulanka area left behind several place names that are still in use, such as Kiutaköngäs, Savinajoki (savina = still water) and Aikkipetsi (pine tree).
- Matters concerning the government and justice in the winter dwellings were settled at the winter assembly.
- Peski is a fur coat made from reindeer skins, with the hair outwards.
- At first, reindeer were used as decoys in hunting, and later, as draught and pack animals.
- A seida was a Sámi holy place, where people came to worship and sacrifice, and to ask the resident spirit for good hunting and fishing. Seidas were usually places that were unusual in some way, such as peculiar rock formations. In the Oulanka area, for example, the Ristikallio Rock and the Oulanka Canyon may have been considered holy places.
- A kota hut is a traditional Sámi dwelling, a cone-shaped tent resembling a tepee.
- After the 1670s, Finnish settlement spread to the Oulanka area in a few decades. The era of Sámi settlement was coming to an end, as the Sámi people either withdrew from the area or merged with the Finnish population. The Finnish peasant culture, together with its means of livelihood, conquered the Oulanka wilderness, and the signs left behind by the Sámi culture all but disappeared.





# THE ULTIMATE BOUNTY OF THE FOREST

## – TRAILING A BEAR

"Are you the shepherd from Paanajärvi who keeps blowing on his horn to chase off the bears? I could have done with your help when one of the beasts attacked me and tore my scalp off."

Young Antti looked in awe at the badly disfigured man who was missing an ear. He wanted to cry, because he had indeed been blowing his horn all summer at Paanajärvi. Still, bears had eaten more than two hundred sheep and several cows, and one had badly mauled Aappo from Mäntyniemi, who had been chasing one of them.

The bear had attacked Aappo, and his faulty gun had split when he fired it. Aappo had only had a dull rusty knife in his pocket, and had managed to use it to cut off the bear's tongue. He had been lucky that a famous painter had been visiting Paanajärvi and happened to bring some much-needed medicine. The bear that had mauled Aappo had eventually been shot.

Aappo went on talking to the shepherd boy: *"The same man who painted that picture of you drew my scalp back in place, but the bear had managed to claw the ear off completely. I can only recall one summer when bears did not eat any cows in these parts. The local men ought to have better guns, if you ask me."*

After the accident, Aappo had prepared a carcass to attract the bears, and men kept watch on the roof of the hay

barn for the rest of the summer nights. *"The beasts should be shot with proper guns and not the kind of toys that go and split when you fire them. We ought to get ourselves some proper rifles!"* Aappo said to the other locals who had gone with him to stalk the bears.

In the autumn, a bear appeared in the Jyrävä area at Kitkaniemi and ate some leashed reindeer. A large group of men set out to chase the beast, but it was able to get away. The bear had become so resourceful that it had thrown the traps set for it around and just eaten the bait.

Aappo had gathered the farmers of Kitka and Paanajärvi together to try and catch the creature. They found the tracks again in a thicket, where they were clearly visible in fresh snow.

The following day, the snow melted and the ground was bare. The men were not sure whether the bear was still around. A few forest officers from Kuusamo had joined the farmers and brought a hound with them to track the bear. When they had trailed the beast for half an hour, they found a hole on a hillside, but they still thought the bear was already gone. Soon the dog started barking on the other side of the hill. The men ran over to see what was up, and found the bear growling at the dog; the beast then dashed towards the nearest thicket with the dog close on its tail. One of the forest officers fired his rifle, and the men

thought they could start celebrating the kill. The shooter was already feeling inside his coat for his liquor bottle. But the bear had disappeared, and the men did not need to belt out any killing songs.

In the winter, the farmers had plenty of time to order some proper rifles from Oulu for the bear hunt and plan the next trip to be made on skis. At the beginning of April, Aappo and Hanno set out towards Jäkälävuoma in Jyrävänniemi, where they reckoned the bear would be. The spring sun was already beginning to melt the snow, and the skis sank in at every kick. The melting water had probably flooded the bear's den and woken the beast up.

Suddenly, the men noticed fresh bear tracks that became more and more distinguishable by the minute. They decided to wait for the snow to melt even more, making it difficult for the bear to get around. It was nice to sit in the brilliant spring sunshine and have a bite to eat. When they had finished their packed lunches, they got up, strapped on their skis and took off towards Jäkälävuoma. The bear was lying on the snow and saw the men coming. Hanno fired his new rifle, and the bear remained lifeless on the snow. The men skied over and noticed an old bullet hole in the bear's thigh. The animal lying dead in the snow was the same one they had tracked the previous autumn at Kitkaniemi. Aappo looked at Hanno and asked: *"How many bears is this one for you?"*

*"The twenty-first"*, Hanno answered after a while, for he had to add up the kills in his head first.

The first shot of homemade liquor was given to the dead bear, and the second was taken by Hanno. No killing songs were sung. The bear's meat and fur were sold to the forest officer from Kuusamo who had managed to wound the bear in the autumn. New bears would come and go.



## → The Bear – a Dear Enemy

- The Paanajärvi area was known to attract bears from the Russian backwoods.
- During the season when there was no snow on the ground, it was always possible that a bear would be a threat to cattle and people. Cow herders and shepherds used horns made out of bark to scare off bears.
- The bear was spoken of with various euphemisms and endearments in Finnish, such as mörkö (“bugbear”), mesikämmen (“honey paws”) and hännätön (“No-Tail”).
- Hunting traditions are visible in the place names in Oulanka National Park. The hunting of various species of fowl and ducks are depicted in, for example, the names Metsosuo (“capercaillie bog”), Soidinsuo (“mating display bog”), Teerisuo (“black grouse bog”) and Haapanapalo (haapana = European wigeon). The hunting of carnivores is represented by the names Karhujärvi (“bear lake”) and Kokkolampi (“eagle pond”). Hunters who were after precious furs made their way to Kärppäniemi (“weasel point”), Majavaaari (“beaver island”) or Saaruapuro (“otter brook”).
- The most common way of catching bears used to be tracking the animal to its winter den, or “circling” a bear. The den was spotted by the brown breathing hole visible in the snow.
- Sometimes a bear was trailed for several days before it settled in its den. Various rituals were performed in order to make the bear to settle in its den for hibernation – the hunters chanted and hammered nails made from alder into the tracks to keep them in place.
- When the bear was found, it was chased out of its den and shot, or, earlier, speared to death. Bears were also caught with cages, traps made from logs and steel-jaw bear traps.
- A successful bear hunt was celebrated by arranging a feast called peijaiset, a sort of burial in honour of the dead animal.
- The most famous man from Paanajärvi who was mauled by a bear was Aappo Rautio, whom the famous Finnish artist Akseli Gallen-Kallela assisted in 1892 while painting in Paanajärvi.
- The most famed hunter from the turn of the 20th century was Mänty-Ella (Elias Leinonen from the Mäntyniemi farm), who shot 22 bears and also caught some with a trap.



## LIFE IN THE BACKWOODS – FIVE MEN AND ONE PAIR OF SUNDAY TROUSERS

**W**hose turn is it to go to church this Sunday?” the farmer Oskari inquired at breakfast one Saturday morning. The household had only one pair of men’s Sunday trousers for five grown brothers, four of whom were yet to marry. The old master was no longer considered in the number of men who needed the fine trousers.

The church was sixty kilometres away across the wilderness, which meant that you had to set out in good time on

Saturday and spend the night on the road. “Does anyone have to go to church right now? We have more than enough work for each man in the house”, the lady of the house remarked.

“July is nearly over, and you’ve been reaping and mowing the fields in Oulanka for weeks on end. The dark August nights are almost upon us, and then you’ll go off torch-fishing for salmon on the River Kitkajoki every night. We’ll be lucky if you’ll have the energy during the day to go ploughing the rye field, let alone reaping and threshing the meagre crops.”

The hard-nosed lady of the house was not one to sit quietly as the men decided what to do. The unmarried brothers did not dare say anything to cross Oskari's wife. The menfolk did not even get a chance to get a word in edgewise before Liisa started listing the entire yearly cycle of labour in the household.

Everyone knew that the journey to church from the Oulanka backwoods was far from easy in the spring or autumn because of the soft snow, even if a man could have been spared from other chores. In April, when the snow cover was hard enough to carry sledges, firewood had been driven to the farmyard from Keroharju Ridge in the direction of Salla, and the nearby forests had been harvested for fence poles. The remaining dry hay had been driven home with reindeer from the stacks and barns on the flooded meadows and the riverside.

In May, during the land birds' mating season, the men had again gone to Keroharju for weeks to make the traps for catching capercaillies. Salted capercaillie breast brought a nice change to the springtime dinner table. The old master had used the long hours of daylight in the spring to mend the fishing nets and traps that his sons had then laid in the River Savinajoki and the Savilampi Pond. The first traps and nets had been laid while there was still ice on the water. The lady of the house had had many occasions to wish the men would also go to the Urriaava and Saviaava bogs in early summer to collect ruffs to chase the cockroaches in the corners of the cottage.

She had scribbled and spun yarn, weaved linens and even taken care of the cattle. She had hurried the men along to swap the fishing and bird hunting trips for the spring field work. Fortunately, they had managed to spread ashes on the fields when the snow would still carry their weight. There was not much manure to spare for the fields, but the men had bought anthills from the forest officers to mix with the dirt to fertilise the land. However, they had

not remembered to collect birch bark for Liisa to scrub the cottage floor. She had had to clean the unpainted planks with nothing but water and sand after the winter.

The men had spent their early summer mending the reindeer sledges and horse-driven sleighs. When the time had come, they had gone to collect fresh birch bark for the roof of the barn by Haaralampi and for the old master to make knapsacks.

Bird hunting would be on the agenda again in the autumn. The autumn slaughter, vendace fishing and mending of reindeer leashes were also waiting their turn. *"You should postpone going to the church until early winter and hope that the snow won't fall on unfrozen ground, so that we get proper winter roads. First you will fetch timber from the forest and hay from the meadow barns. In the heart of winter you may go catching willow grouse and even some burbot in the River Aventojoiki. As for the reindeer – well, the worry never ends. All summer they roamed between the Rivers Kitkajoki and Oulankajoki all on their own. There's no telling whether a bear will come from the Paanajärvi side again and eat them. And in late winter your time will be well spent felling spruces with beard moss for the reindeer to eat."*

In the end, the second-oldest brother was sent to church, with the fine Sunday trousers and specific instructions as to how to conduct himself among the young ladies. The household could always use another pair of working hands.

## → Various Means of Livelihood on Wilderness Farms

- The Finnish word *selkonen* for wilderness refers to remote, uninhabited or sparsely inhabited backwoods, where the distances are long. The Finnish term is derived from the word *selkä* for "back", as in the English backwoods, and the connotation is of large ridges and hills that act as watersheds.
- The dwellings in the backwoods were independent houses or rented crofts. In Northern Finland, the dwellings were often crofts built on State (previously Crown) land.
- The main source of livelihood in the wilds was farming and cattle keeping, with hay from natural meadows providing cattle feed. Fishing, hunting, reindeer herding, logging, log floating and driving trade with reindeer were timed according to the natural conditions in the different seasons of the year.
- In the Oulanka region, the traditional sources of livelihood for wilderness peasants were preserved well into the 20th century due to the delay in the general parcelling out of land.
- The wilderness peasants often lived in households of large extended families, with several generations and immediate family members living under one roof.
- The Salla Urriaava residential area for veterans, disabled soldiers and war widows who did not own any land was established on the west side of the River Savinajoki. Hautajärvi village gradually became a settlement with 18 farms on the rich fens along

the River Savinajoki. The resettlement of the Salla area also reached the rich marshlands of Isonkuusikko.

- Hay was also mown on meadows that were made to flood artificially by damming.
- Ruff is a North-Eurasian wading bird that was used in residential buildings to catch croton bug shiners, which are small brown cockroaches (8–13 mm long).
- In summer, when the trees are growing in width, the juices of the tree start flowing in the phloem tissue under the bark, making it easier to peel the bark off the trees.
- Capercaillies were caught with traps made from small logs.



# TREKKING THE KARHUNKIERROS

There was a loud bang as the brand-new rubber tyre on the bicycle broke. There was no choice but to dig out the patching equipment right by the Käylä churchyard. After the rubber glue had dried, the trip could continue on towards Oulanka.

The road from the Kuusamo parish via Ruka towards Oulanka was still not in very good condition. After the war, new houses had been built to replace those that had been burnt down. It was a time of rebuilding.

Some of the cyclists had heard that a national park was once again in the makings in the Oulanka wilderness. A meeting had been held at Hautajärvi in Salla and the Kiutaköngäs Rapids on the River Oulankajoki to gauge the local opinion concerning the national park. The young hikers were of the opinion that protecting the area was necessary. For several summers now, they had ridden their bicycles for dozens of kilometres to go plant hunting and bird watching.

The headmaster of the Kuusamo Secondary School had told them about the moccasin flowers, calypsos and mountain avens that grew in the peculiar calciferous soil and were not usually seen in these latitudes. A certain natural scientist had also accompanied them on several trips to the wilds, and he was very knowledgeable about all the birds that lived in Oulanka. The man had even

found the nest of a yellow-breasted bunting, which was very rare indeed.

The last downhill run before the River Oulankajoki was steep, and the youngsters had to put the brakes to good use. At the same time, they could admire the riverside meadows that had turned completely yellow with the globe flower blossom. An eagle that had not let the wartime activities disturb its nesting was still living on Kiutavaara Hill.

The young nature enthusiasts had heard from their parents that people had always trekked in the Oulanka wilds. *“You are not the first ones to venture out there. As early as the late 19th century, all kinds of lumberjacks, insect researchers and natural scientists have travelled the woods. There was always someone to take the scientists along the Rivers Oulankajoki or Kitkajoki to Paanajärvi, and even to the Russian side and as far as Vartiolampi and Kivakkakoski.”*

The parents had also described the many gentlemen who had gone fishing in the rapids before the war. During the war time they had only seen the kind of hikers that had a military roundel attached to their hats. Food tins discarded by the Russian partisans could still be found in the terrain. The Finnish army had had no qualms about chopping firewood for their own use, and after the war the locals had felled timber for building along the road to Lii-

kasenvaara. *“And now you should start protecting the place? What is this nonsense about marking a trail along the riverside? There is nothing but reindeer and the bears chasing them down there”,* the elders had commented as a response to the youngsters’ hiking enthusiasm.

The youngsters began using the old trails trodden by reindeer, as well as fishermen and meadow mowers, over the years. They painted yellow stripes along the trail and carved markings on trees with an axe. That way, it was safer to travel the wide wilderness and hike along the winding River Oulankajoki. The youngsters could only dream

that hanging bridges would be built over the river one day. Steel cable would have to be acquired from somewhere to build a safe passage across the Taivalköngäs Rapids.

The young hikers had still not thought of a name for the trail travelling along the River Oulankajoki. One of them suggested that they go and see the bear trap close to the Ryttilampi Pond. There must have been a bear’s den near the trap at some point for the hunters to try and track the animal there. Maybe they would find a suitable name for the trail there.

## → Oulanka National Park Is the Result of Years of Dreams and Hard Work

- Oulanka and Paanajärvi have been popular destinations for natural scientists and artists ever since the late 19th century, when the establishment of a natural park in the Oulankajoki river valley was first proposed. The establishment of the national park was delayed due to the Second World War and the interrupted land ownership arrangements.
- The Rivers Oulankajoki and Kitkajoki have been popular fishing and travelling spots since the 1930s.
- The friends of Oulanka grew in numbers in the late 1940s, when the supporters of the Kuusamo librarian, Mr Pellervo Koivunen, began to promote nature tourism in the Koillismaa Region.
- The dispute over the harnessing of the rapids in Kuusamo for power production caused the so-called ‘rapids war’ in 1950s’ Kuusamo, as a result of which the rapids of Kuusamo (for example, the Rivers Oulankajoki and Kitkajoki) remained in their natural state and the national park was established as the issue of ownership was settled.
- Oulanka National Park was established in 1956.
- Today’s Karhunkierros Trail was first marked in the terrain as early as 1954. It is the most popular hiking trail in Finland, travelling through the most spectacular sights in Kuusamo and Salla.
- Before the wars, Karhunkierros was actually a coach route from the Parish of Kuusamo to Paanajarvi, Tuutikylä and Käylä, and from there back to Kuusamo.
- In hunting terminology, the Finnish term karhun kierros (bear cycle) refers to trailing the prey back to its den, particularly by following its tracks.
- Salix pyrolaefolia is a rare and protected snow willow that is only found in Finland at Kuusamo and Tervola. After the Second World War, the protection of this species of willow became a special concern in Oulanka.

# THE KIUTAKÖNGÄS SIEGE OF THE WINTER WAR

**A** Soviet aircraft flew low over the Kiutaköngäs Rapids. The plane came from the east, across the border from the direction of Paanajärvi. The winding River Oulankajoki was a beautiful sight from up in the air, but the pilot was not there to admire the view. Suddenly, a loud banging noise started sounding from the engine, overpowering the cracking of the ice on the Kiutaköngäs Rapids in the freezing cold weather. Thick black smoke from the engine slowly descended on the river.

The Oulanka nature was still blissfully unaware of the war that had broken out between Finland and the Soviet Union. Under the thick snow cover, calypos and mountain avens awaited the spring and the time for growth. The ferryboat operator and his family who had lived by the River Oulankajoki had been moved to safety in Käylä village, because there was no ferry traffic across the river due to the war.

So far, Oulanka had remained a peaceful place, although large groups of frontier-zone residents, including the people of Liikasenvaara and the entire Paanajärvi village, had been forced to leave their homes and flee the military activity at the frontier. The people had been hurried onto trucks headed for Pudasjärvi and Ii via Kuusamo.

The pilot made a quick decision: he had to land the plane. There was no good spot for landing on the river, but after a while an even stretch of land appeared up ahead, and the pilot steered his plane towards it. The plane made

a thump as it landed safely in the thick snow on a frozen bog near the Rytilampi Pond. *“How on earth do I get out of here?”* the pilot asked himself and set out eastwards, ploughing through the snow along the riverside towards his homeland. He came by the ferryboat operator’s cottage, but luckily there were no Finns to be seen or heard.

The pilot noticed that the people had been in a hurry to leave; a cold and lonely heifer, a young cow, came walking up to him near the cottage. The pilot took a moment to think about what he could do with the heifer. It could not be milked or killed for meat. The animal should be taken to shelter from the bitter cold. The man noticed a cowshed nearby and took hold of the rope hanging from the cow’s neck. The animal had probably yanked itself free from the hands of the people who had been evacuated from the area.

The pilot walked the heifer to a stall in the cowshed and put some hay in front of it. The hay had probably been reaped from the natural meadows that he had just flown over. In the corner of the cowshed the pilot found a pail that still had some unfrozen water for the young cow to drink.

He reckoned that if the ferry operator’s family had left a cow at their cottage, they must also have left something else that could come in handy. Then he saw a pair of homemade wooden skis and proper cane ski poles leaning against the wall by the porch. He quickly fastened the ties to his boots and set out homewards across the ice on the river. The Kiutaköngäs Rapids were not easy to cross on

skis, but the pilot was in luck as an old log floating chute offered an easy passage to ski through. The pilot had visited the seaside at the White Sea before the war and had seen many old sawmills where timber from the Oulanka area had still been floated some twenty years ago. Who would have guessed that a chute that had been blasted into the rock to float logs to Russia would one day save his own life?

A few days later, a Finnish patrol skied from Käylä to Oulanka. It had snowed heavily, but the men could still see something of a track on the river. Who had made it? The men grew alert as something started to make banging noises in the cowshed next to the ferry operator’s cottage – was it the enemy?

The soldiers quickly got down and lay flat in the snow to watch the barn, for the enemy must not be aware of their arrival. The siege went on for half a day before one of the men dared to open the door. Instead of an enemy soldier, they found a living cow in the barn. The poor hungry creature had been kicking and thrashing the empty water pail. The young cow thus survived the Kiutaköngäs siege of the Winter War.

Sometime later, the enemy aircraft was pulled out of the bog and driven to Kuusamo parish on a truck. The incident proved that the enemy had made its presence known as far away from the border as Oulanka.

## → Mementos of War at Oulanka National Park

- The Winter War between Finland and the Soviet Union during the Second World War was fought between the 30th of November 1939 and the 13th of March 1940.
- When the war broke out, people living in the Paanajärvi area in the eastern parts of Oulanka were evacuated.
- As the war progressed, the enemy destroyed Paanajärvi village and extended their reconnaissance activities to the frontiers of Kuusamo and Salla, in areas that today belong to the national park.
- A Russian plane on a flyby made an emergency landing on a bog near the Rytilampi Pond by the River Oulankajoki. The pilot skied back to the Soviet side without being seen by any Finns.
- The road travelling downstream along the northern shore of the Kiutaköngäs Rapids was originally a wartime service route. Finnish troops stationed in Paanajärvi were serviced via the River Oulankajoki. Motor boats and rafts made of barrels were used to transport goods along the river.
- Finnish troops were stationed in the surrounding areas during the interim period of peace (1940–1941) and the Continuation War (1941–1944). Dugouts and trenches were built in the terrain along the River Oulankajoki. The site of the present-day visitor centre also housed barracks that served as soldiers’ quarters.
- Enemy partisans travelled the Oulanka area during the Continuation War.
- No actual battles were fought in the national park area.
- In September 1944, the frontier-zone villages of Kuusamo were evacuated at roughly one day’s notice. This marked the end of Finnish settlement in Paanajärvi.
- Signs left behind by the war were found as late as 1973, when an aerial bomb was detonated near the Oulankajoki bridge.
- A text apparently dating from the interim period of peace has been found carved on a tree on the Kiutavaara Hill: R W 19 1/12 40 Turku VR Pion.

# LUMBERJACKS ON THEIR WAY TO THE WHITE SEA

It was not until Kiutaköngäs that Ilmari realised that the logs floating in the river were going east, to Russia. There, by the roaring rapids, he finally understood why the other lads had been snickering at him all week. He had thought that they were floating the logs towards the Gulf of Bothnia, but the actual destination, as it turned out, was the White Sea.

Ilmari had travelled a long way to Kuusamo from Pudasjärvi. Folk back home had warned him that he would end up idly waiting for the chance to go logging. They had also said that he would not be able to save any money from his wages as he would have to buy his meals from the logging companies. But Ilmari had never been keen to go to the logging sites to work a cross-cut saw; he had always had his heart set on joining the log floaters and going river rafting. He had familiarised himself with log floating when he had spent a couple of spring seasons on the River Iijoki, where he had heard the other floaters tell stories about the Kiutaköngäs Rapids and the Kivakkakoski Rapids over on the Russian side. He had wanted to go there to stand and run on the floating logs, using a log driving hook to paddle his way through the roaring waters.

At the Kuusamo parish, Ilmari had been hired as a sawmill company's log floater by a Swedish foreman who

spoke very poor Finnish. The boss had looked at Ilmari with an assessing eye. Would the newcomer do as a man who could clear a logjam, or should he be sent to the tail crew to clean the shores?

Ilmari had already learned that an experienced eye could spot a log floater by his clothes. Back home he had already sewn a pair of old mittens to the shoulders of his high-collar shirt as padding against which he could hold his log driving hook during the log rolling.

A pack of cigarettes peaked out of his breast pocket, although Ilmari had never smoked. Around his neck he wore a bright-coloured scarf – or "a reckless man's silk", as they called it, although he was not one to be called reckless, just a young unmarried man. He had also donned a wide-brimmed hat and brand-new boots. The bedclothes were heavy to carry along, but Ilmari had swung his bark knapsack onto his shoulder and taken off towards the River Oulankajoki.

From the top of Kiutavaara Hill, Ilmari had seen for himself that the river offered a long stretch of still water for log floating all the way to the Kiutaköngäs Rapids. The logs had risen to the shores, when they were supposed to be floating along past the rapids and through the log float-



ing chute towards Lake Paanajärvi. The logs had formed a jam above the rapids, despite the men that were busy pushing them with their driving hooks towards the passage blasted into the rapids. The most courageous ones were running on top of the logs floating in the still water.

Ilmari wondered aloud why the riversides were looking so worse for wear. A man who had spent many seasons logging told him that in winter the big logs were driven to the riverside with horses. During the spring, the logs were then rolled down the banks to wait on the ice for the floods

that would take the timber to Russia. This also made some of the banks collapse into the river.

You had to be careful all the time, lest you end up like that Swedish lumberjack whose log load fell onto his leg. The man had lost the leg because there were no doctors to come and help.

In the winter, tens of thousands of logs were felled in the surroundings of Kiutavaara Hill and Kiutaköngäs Rapids. Ilmari was told that the State forest officials were not too keen on the biggest sawmill companies merging into

one huge corporation. That meant there was no competition for State-owned timber. Supervision of the felling was non-existent; but, then again, who would have had time to supervise everything that went on in the vast wilderness.

The lumberjacks' huts on the Kiutaköngäs hillside did not look very impressive. Maybe someone saw a certain kind of wilderness charm in them, but the cockroaches attacked Ilmari on the very first night. The hut was downright filthy, and as the log floating went on towards Russia, sleeping under a tree began to seem tempting. The surroundings of the rapids were a desolate sight after the previous summer's forest fire. The lumberjacks were constantly being told to look after their campfires.

Ilmari kept thinking about the White Sea far away in Russia. There, by the sea, a Swedish entrepreneur was sawing the logs from Oulanka and taking the sawn timber over the Arctic Ocean to England. Ilmari wished he could get that far!

He was a little worried, though. Would their food last until the White Sea? The meal service was not working, and they were heading towards the unknown wilderness.

The older men were quick to tell Ilmari that lumberjacks could live as a man is supposed to live in the wilds. They would get their food from the nature. *"We won't have to chew on mouldy bread or fry bacon in rancid butter. We'll do some fishing in between the log floating and eat bird's eggs. At Paanajärvi, there'll be houses where we can get some vendace and bread. On the Russian side we'll drink some Russian tea and eat pies"*, the men said.

The crossing of Lake Paanajärvi in a boat behind the logs was easy. In the Hämeenkoski stretch of the Kivakkoski Rapids, though, a boat carrying four men was tipped over by the logs, and the men were battered in the waves. Three men were picked up and saved by the following boat crew. Ilmari drowned.

When the survivors returned to the Finnish side of the border, they sent a 2,000-mark life insurance policy they had found in Ilmari's knapsack to his father. Ilmari's wages were lost in the rapids.

tion of timber became difficult, which brought an end to the forestry activities in Oulanka. Logging was also brought to a halt because of the confusion regarding land ownership, and the national landscape of Oulanka was preserved.

- The financial interest that had hindered the establishment of the Oulanka National Park was removed, and the values of nature protection were brought forward more vigorously.
- Fire broke out from the lumberjacks' campfire at Kiutaköngäs in late June 1907 and burned the forest on both sides of the river.
- Several Finnish films have been filmed at the Rivers Oulankajoki and Kitkajoki, such as the popular Juha in 1937.

## → Short but Intense Log Floating Season

- In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, logs were floated out to the White Sea via the Rivers Savinajoki, Aventojoiki, Kitkajoki and Oulankajoki that run through Oulanka National Park.
- Once on the Russian side of the border, the logs would gather into Lake Paanajärvi, from where they would be floated down the River Olangajoki to the seaside sawmill companies. Sawn timber was taken across the Arctic Ocean to England.
- The companies brought men not only from Finland but also Sweden and Russia to work at the logging sites and to float the logs.
- The First World War closed the border between Finland and Russia, and logs were no longer floated to Russia. The transporta-

# PAANAJÄRVI – TRAVELLERS DAY AND NIGHT, ALL SUMMER AND WINTER LONG

Letter from Paanajärvi in February 1898.

**A**t last we have arrived at Paanajärvi. We came here via the Rukatunturi Fell. We could not resist the urge to climb all the way to the top and have a look into the devil's den. The most magnificent experience was getting our first good look at the high shores of Lake Paanajärvi, which rose from the water like mountains. The Nuorunen Fell south of Paanajärvi was veiled in blue fog, but we could almost picture the oaks growing on the fell with our mind's eye. How strange to think that southern plants and trees grow there! As we got to the River Kitkajoki we carefully asked our boatman who would ever dare to sail down those rapids. The man just laughed and relied on his experience to take us further down towards Paanajärvi.

At the foot of the Päähkänäkallio Rock, we stopped to look at the towering kingdom of bank swallows that used to be called Pääskykallio. The River Kitkajoki wound its way through a grassy channel, and dried hundred-year-old pine trees stuck out on top of the heath. A great many spruces with beard moss, which had been felled to feed the reindeer, were rotting on the hill. Once we got to the shores of the River Oulankajoki, we saw a few reindeer ourselves. They were eating birch leaves, but as they caught sight of us, they quickly disappeared into the woods.

We also managed to scare some flocks of goldeneyes and teals into flight. We soon reached the yellow sands of

Paanajärvi, where blue-tinted alpine milk-vetches covered the shores. Our boat passed by low-lying headlands and islands. We came across some floating pine logs that would never make it to the White Sea to be sawn.

"Where is the Rajala farm?" we worriedly asked each other. At first we could only see small cottages and patches of field on the shores. We were beginning to get quite hungry and then, suddenly, we saw a house that was like a castle. They even had curtains in the windows. There was the Rajala farmhouse, ready to lodge and feed us. Dozens of people from the house were running to and fro between the buildings. We were received in light and spacious rooms, and the living room table was set with different kinds of bread for us. We nearly swallowed the first vendace live from the fish basin!

At midnight we were pampered with a sauna, after which it was nice to have a dip in the cold and deep, ravine-like Lake Paanajärvi. The steep wall of Ruskeakallio Rock tempted us to go explore its rare plant life. We were told that a bear and a deer, one chasing the other, had fallen to a certain death from the top of the rock one winter.

In the morning we woke up to the blasting of a horn made from birch bark. The lady of the house told us that it was the shepherd boys scaring off the bears.

We continued our trip to the abandoned copper mine on the south shore of the lake. They say the brass from Paanajärvi is very pure but difficult to transport away from here,

although word has it that a railway line to the White Sea via Paanajärvi is in the making.

We travelled further to the eastern-most end of Lake Paanajärvi, where the border between Finland and Russia runs. We admired the high grass and lush corn fields from our boat. Frost is rare in these parts, and the lake doesn't freeze until after Christmas.

We spent the second night at the Mäntyniemi house, where we could hear the rattle of rowing boats floating on

the lake during the night. We could also hear the creaking of a draw well somewhere, or maybe it was a black woodpecker making the noise. I doubt it was the same bird that was painted in the famous painting a few years back.

*We shall return here again!*

*Love, Into and Konrad*

### → Paradise for Artists and Nature-Lovers

- In the Middle Ages, the Paanajärvi area was inhabited by the Sámi people. Monuments from this era are the cult ritual sites of Nuorunen and Kivakka Fell. Sámi silver jewellery dating back to the 11th and 12th centuries has been found near Tavajärvi.
- Since the 18th century, the Finnish settlement of the village had concentrated around Lake Paanajärvi.
- Paanajärvi village, which used to belong to the Municipality of Kuusamo, was lost to the Soviet Union in the Second World War.
- In the 20th century, Paanajärvi was a popular travelling destination, but its development was cut short during the war years. During the peak years of travelling in Paanajärvi, travellers would arrive in the houses of the village day and night, all summer and winter alike. Some of the travellers continued on to the Russian side, to Vartiolampi and the Kivakkakoski Rapids.
- Akseli Gallen-Kallela (1865–1931) was inspired by the Paanajärvi nature when he painted the pieces Paanajärven paimenpoika ("The little shepherd from Paanajärvi"), Palokärki ("The black woodpecker") and Mäntyjoki from 1892.
- The establishment of Paanajärvi National Park was first planned in the late 1980s, when Finnish natural scientists were allowed into the area. Cooperation between the Karelian Research Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Universities of Oulu and Helsinki finally led to the establishment of Paanajärvi National Park in 1992. Today the Oulanka and Paanajärvi National Parks are important wilderness nature tourism destinations practising collaboration across the border.
- The Paanajärvi nature is quite unique as the area is a meeting place for eastern and western flora and fauna. Slashing and burning, farming and the management of flooded meadows have invigorated the natural environment of Paanajärvi.
- Lake Paanajärvi is some 24 km long, 1.5 km wide and 128 m deep, and currently belongs to Paanajärvi National Park. Lake Sovajärvi, the Kivakkakoski Rapids and Vartiolampi Pond village also belong to the national park area.
- A devil's den is a natural site that was once believed to house evil spirits. Today, the devil's den by the Rukatunturi Fell is known as the Juhannuskallio Devil's Church.
- Pääskykallio = "swallow rock"







## MEN AND WOMEN WITH SCYTHES AND RAKES ON A FLOODED MEADOW

"**M**y goodness, the ice has broken the meadow barn and the flood waters have taken the timber towards Paanajärvi!" Juhani exclaimed, heading the group of haymakers hiking to the meadow. This was exactly what he had been afraid of since leaving home for Haaralampi. The fishermen who had roamed the upper stretches of the Rivers Oulankajoki and Savinajoki during the pike spawning season had reported that the spring floods had reached a record high at Hautajärvi. Even the old folk had never seen anything like it.

Early in the morning, Juhani had led the group away from the shore of Lake Kallunkijärvi towards River Oulankajoki, and despite the reports, no one had imagined that the floods could have been this severe.

The young men and women had set out towards the Haaralampi meadow with their knapsacks. They had packed everything they would need on the trip the night before. The knapsacks were filled with as much dried meat, bread, salted fish, butter, grits and flour as the haymakers could carry. In the evening, they would cook "meadow gruel" from dried mutton and reindeer meat. The salt containers made from dried bark had rattled in the knapsacks in rhythm with the hikers' steps along the Kiutavaara hillside.

They had also packed wooden cups for drinking coffee and tea. The youngest girl, Liisa, had been charged with

carrying the pot, and Liisa's mother had also packed a little coffee in her sack for the final day of haymaking.

Some fishermen had given the group a quick boat ride to the north shore of the River Oulankajoki. As they approached Haaralampi, they had been forced to start jumping over some fallen fence poles. Juhani and his brother Heikki had built the fences the previous summer to mark their plots of meadow and prevent the reindeer and the pasturing cows trampling on the cattle feed. The group had decided to continue walking as far as the Runsulampi meadow to see what the flood situation was like there.

From far away, Liisa was able to see that the hay barn her father had built some twenty years ago was in pieces. Luckily, they could take new logs from the State forest to make a new shed. They would have to peel some trees to get some birch bark to cover the roof or carry shingles all the way from home. In the summer, the family had managed to soak some pine blocks in Lake Kallunkijärvi for cutting into shingles, but those had gone onto the roof of the cowshed. It had not crossed anyone's minds to save some to take to the meadows.

When the barn was fixed and the lunch eaten, the men began to sharpen their scythes. In the spring, Juhani had bought blades for the scythes from a blacksmith. The new sharpening stones were wrapped up in fishing net and



safely tucked away in their knapsacks. Juhani had bought slate for honing the scythes from a quarry near Tavajärvi. Over the winter, the slates had been beaten into strips that the women and children of the house had then ground with sand and water.

A few times over the years, Juhani had harnessed a team of reindeer and taken some sharpening stones to be sold in Oulu. *“Was it a good scythe honing year in Kuusamo?”* the men from other parishes had mocked. Juhani had simply thought to himself that the others were just jealous, because slate like that could not be found just anywhere.

The grass fell easily with a long-shafted scythe. The young women of the household used their rakes to bring the grass into the swath. The hay would dry nicely in the fair weather, and soon it would be carried onto the stack.

This summer’s hay crops would remain poor, because the riverside meadows had suffered frost damage in the spring. The horses would not have to do more than a few rounds of driving the hay loads home in the winter. By next spring, there would be a dire shortage of cattle feed.

In the evening the haymakers heated the meadow sauna and cooked salted meat to make a sturdy gruel that was thickened with barley flour. Despite the smoke from the fire, the mosquitoes would not leave the haymakers alone, and even spreading pitch oil on the skin did not help much. Luckily, the sauna, which relieved the bites and soothed the muscles, had been spared by the floods.

The haymakers made their beds for the night in the sauna, and each man and woman tried to cover their heads with blankets or skirts. In the early hours of the

morning they had to admit defeat to the mosquitoes. They started making hay at four in the morning.

Around the same time, other haymakers were also travelling along the River Oulankajoki. People from Paana-

järvi, Liikasenvaara and Ala-Kitka manned the areas upstream from the mouth of the river. The folk from Kuolajärvi went to mow their hay by the River Savinajoki.

A week in the wilderness would fly by.

### → A Week of Hard Labour in the Middle of Nature and Far Away from Home

- The floods brought nutrients to the natural meadows and fostered the growth of grass that was suitable for use as hay for the cattle.
- In Kuusamo, hay was also mown on meadows that were made to flood artificially by damming. The dam made the brook flood onto the meadow to facilitate the growth of the required grasses (sedge and horsetail).
- The grass was dried to make hay, which was stored in barns and stacks.
- In the winter, when the snow cover was thick and solid enough, the hay was driven home with horses or reindeer to be used as animal feed.
- Before the general parcelling out of land, every household could use land or meadows wherever they saw fit. Clearing the meadows brought the right to mow them.
- In the early years of the 20th century, the farmers of Oulanka still had some 150 hectares of natural meadows available for growing grass.
- The distance from the villages of Kuusamo and Salla to the meadows could be dozens of kilometres, and as there were no roads in the wilderness, the journey had to be made on foot or by boat.
- The meal schedule on the hay field was as follows:
  - Breakfast (“eine”) at 7 am, with sandwiches and salted fish
  - Lunch (“murkina”) at 12–2 pm, with porridge
  - Supper at 5 pm, with sandwiches, fish and tea
  - Dinner/evening meal, with meat gruel
- The haymakers who worked in the Oulankajoki area during the Second World War met Russian soldiers in the wilds, but the encounters went by without problems.
- The meadows were still in use in the 1950s, after which they lost their significance in providing feed for cattle.
- Today, the natural meadows of the national park are being maintained to preserve the traditional landscape and the biotypes typical of an economy where cattle keeping was based on natural meadows.
- The flooding rivers and brooks in Oulanka National Park helped people to grow natural grass to make hay for cattle feed.
- The present-day Municipality of Salla used to be the Kuolajärvi parish.
- A peasant from Kuusamo used a cup carved out of wood that is very much like the traditional wooden cups from Lapland.

# ELLI – NATURE’S GIFT TO THE PEOPLE OF THE BACKWOODS

There were thick cakes of bark bread on the table. “*That’s not bad at all*”, Elli, the new district nurse, said to the young lady of the house, who was serving her with some freshly baked bread. The flour that had been brought back from town on a reindeer-drawn sleigh in late winter was all but gone, and the young mistress had had to make bread out of bark meal. She had also learned to bake bread with straw and lichen. The people of the household had got used to the bitter taste the wood fibre left in the mouth.

Elli enquired about the recipe for the bread. As thanks for her help, the farmer gave her several plates of bark that had been peeled off pine trees early in the summer. The hard bark that had been peeled off from on top of the phloem layer of the tree had been put away to be used as fishing net floats and heat insulation for the cottage.

Elli had taken the reindeer paths to Sovajärvi to see the old mistress of the house, who had been feeling poorly for some time. She had shown the young mistress how to spread resin ointment on the nasty bed sores and even taught her to make it herself.

On the way to the patient, Elli had spent the night in a hay barn. Upon waking up, she had built a campfire to cook a meal for herself. Being resourceful, she had cooked a gruel of dried meat in a round-bottomed scoop. Earlier in the summer, the farmer had gone to see Elli while she was visiting the parish and asked her to come and check on

the patient in Sovajärvi. At the same time, he had offered Elli a packet of reindeer meat, so that she would have the strength to make the long trip.

Elli was already somewhat familiar with the Oulanka region as she had gone to the Ampumavaara logging site the previous winter to treat a man who had hurt his leg. She had happened to be staying at a croft at Tiermasjärvi and had been able to ski to the site to provide first aid. When all else had failed, she had had to resort to reciting the blood-stopping words she had learned from her grandmother. It had been a long journey to the Kuusamo hospital with the injured lumberjack, and Elli had given the poor man willow bark to eat because there had been no other pain medications available.

After tending to the old lady’s bed sores, Elli headed back home with the bark bread recipe in her pocket. She hiked to Liikasenvaara and found a good spot to eat as many berries as her stomach could take. Bears had been playing in the raspberry bushes that had grown high after the forest fires, and Elli thought it wise to sing loudly as she ate the berries. The lingonberries were not ripe yet, and she could not see many blueberries or cloudberry around. The frost had probably taken their blossom early in the summer.

Luckily, Elli had picked and dried enough blueberries the previous autumn to last several winters. She could also have her pick of the mushrooms growing in the forests, for the lo-

cals did not care for them, although the reindeer and cows from the Paanajärvi farms did taste them every now and then. In the autumn, Elli salted mushrooms and dried some king boletus. The pieces of king boletus were threaded onto a string and hung by the stove in the gentle after-heat. One autumn Elli had picked a large barrel of mushrooms that she had then cooked to make water for dyeing some wool. The skeins of yarn had turned a beautiful shade of green.

Elli managed quite well in the wilderness, no matter what the season. In the spring she collected roots and sprouts and was quite skilled in catching spawning fish. She bored holes in birch trunks to get sap to take to patients who needed extra energy after the long winter. She herself would even eat young shoots of spruce raw or cook them into syrup. On warm August days Elli hiked to the bogs to

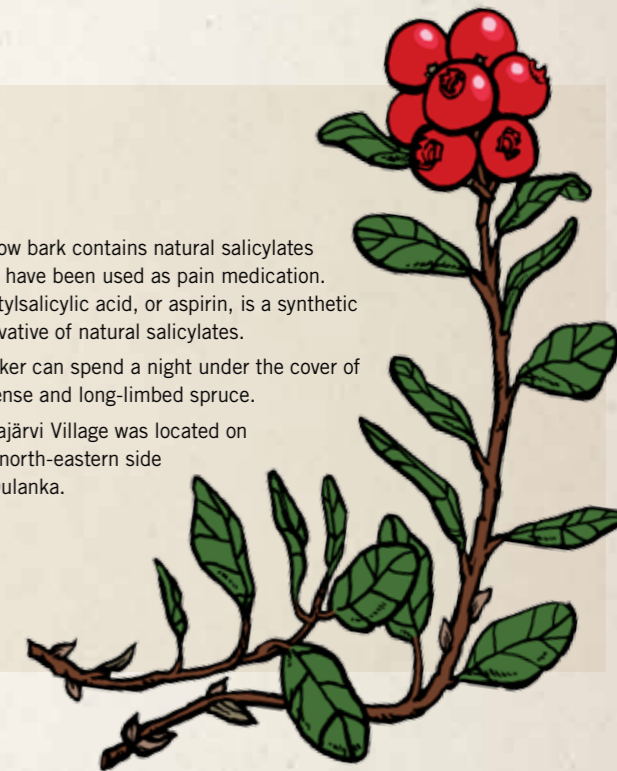
find sundew to make cough medicine, and she raced the cranes to find cranberries in late autumn and early spring.

Her feast of raspberries was cut short by heavy rain. Elli crawled under a spruce with long, thick branches, and could find no fault in her coniferous bed. She decided to return to the area to pick lingonberries as soon as they were ripe. She would preserve some in clean water for the winter. For the coming trip, she started looking for some logs that had been left by the river during the log floating. They would make a proper log fire when you laid two logs on top of each other. Elli would not take up shooting, but on the next trip she would lay a snare for forest fowl. She could then cook some capercaillie breast on the slow-burning logfire.

## → Living on the Bounties of Nature Year-Round

- The bounties of nature include natural berries, plants, wood material, mosses and lichens, soil resources, rocks and game. The bounties of nature that were utilised and the means of livelihood practised varied according to the seasons of the year.
- The traditional means of livelihood in the sparsely populated backwoods of North-Eastern Ostrobothnia were fishing, hunting and reindeer husbandry. Small-scale cattle husbandry, farming and growing grass on natural meadows to make hay were also practised in the wilderness areas.
- Collecting natural products for personal use and sale is an everyman’s right. For example, berry and mushroom picking is allowed in Oulanka National Park.

- Willow bark contains natural salicylates that have been used as pain medication. Acetylsalicylic acid, or aspirin, is a synthetic derivative of natural salicylates.
- A hiker can spend a night under the cover of a dense and long-limbed spruce.
- Sovajärvi Village was located on the north-eastern side of Oulanka.



# LONG-STUMP ANTTI, CLEARER OF REINDEER PASTURE

The spruce went down with a thump and sank deep into the snow, and all the while you could hear someone calling: “Oooh-oh, oooh-oh, oooh-oh!” Antti was calling his reindeer to feed by shouting out a reindeer call. The reindeer recognised his voice from kilometres away, for they were already used to people and herding.

In the autumn, the reindeer had been gathered into a holding pen, and the calves had received their new earmarks. Some of the animals had been leashed to keep the rest of the herd together. Antti had set out on skis at the first snowfall to protect his reindeer, as wolves were keen to tail the herd. But the real nuisance were the “two-legged wolves” that attacked the herd from across the Russian border. Reindeer thieves had taken many animals from the reindeer owners’ association Antti belonged to.

It had become difficult for the reindeer to get to the lichen on the ground during the heavy snow season, and Antti had begun to fell trees with *Alectoria* growing on them as additional feed. The tree-residing lichen grew on the branches of big old spruces, and the reindeer ate it up hungrily.

Antti’s job for the day was to fell one spruce for every reindeer. Over the winter, the number of spruces felled per reindeer could amount to several dozen, even a hundred. They would tide the animals over the coldest season with the most snow.

The reindeer had been in trouble for a while now, and the poor things had tried to dig out lichen from under the thick snow cover. There was not much regular lichen growing in these parts, anyway. In the spring, another problem had been over-eating. The hungry reindeer had chomped down so much lichen from the melted spots that they had suffered nasty stomach pains. Now it was again the time of the year when the reindeer had to be fed by man, or there would not be enough meat to sell. Without *Alectoria*, you could also not keep enough strong reindeer alive to harness a team to take the meat, fish and skins to the marketplaces and bring back flour, sugar and coffee for the people of the parish.

Antti had never married, so he had been appointed the family reindeer keeper without any formal discussions and sent to work by the River Kitkajoki. He had felled spruces for many winters, always leaving a long stump that was almost as high as he was. The other reindeer keepers had teased him and called him “Long-Stump Antti”.

Antti stood on his skis and felled another tree, cutting it down at eye level. When the snow melted, he was always appalled by the sight of the dead trunks lying all over the place among the long stumps. Typically, the only way to clean up a patch felled for reindeer was to burn the dried-up spruces, but the places always ended up becoming impossible thickets, no matter how you went about it.



The forests along the River Kitkajoki were particularly rich in spruces with *Alectoria*. However, the authorities did not look upon the felling of large areas of Crown forest over the winter with a kind eye. Some people thought the reindeer were nothing but trouble. In the summer, they stamped on the meadows and ate up the grass. They also trampled tree seedlings and ground the bark off the trees when they rubbed their horns against them. Others were of the opinion that reindeer helped to maintain the forest, as they softened the ground with their hooves and gave the tree seeds a good start.

Many had said that the spruces should have been left to become wood for the paper industry and not chopped down for reindeer. “But how on earth would the State float the timber west to the Gulf of Bothnia, when all the rivers flow east towards Russia?” Antti had once asked a Crown forest officer. In no time, the State had begun to sell timber to sawmills by the White Sea from the shores of the rivers flowing to Russia.

If the reindeer survived the winter, Antti would wait until the snowfall in the autumn then harness the animals together and drive them to the city for slaughter. In the summer, Antti’s life as a reindeer keeper was easier, as the animals roamed the riversides on their own. For the finest animals, Antti had already bought bells to tie around their necks to scare off bears.

## → Reindeer Needed Help in the Winter

- The Sámi people (Forest Lapps) were the first to herd reindeer in the Oulanka region. Finnish peasants have been keeping reindeer in Oulanka since the 18th century.
  - The reindeer population grew dramatically in the late 19th century, at which point the winter feeding began to pose problems.
  - The animals had to be fed *Alectoria* (which is a type of lichen that grows in hair-like clumps on trees) and beard moss growing on spruces and pine trees.
  - During the time the snow cover was thick, spruces with *Alectoria* and beard moss were felled for the reindeer. In the 1880s, some 20,000 spruces were felled for the 1,000-hectare reindeer pasture in Juuma.
  - Tens of thousands of hectares of forest have been cleared for reindeer in the Oulanka National Park area.
  - Reindeer meat has been important merchandise since the 19th century. Reindeer skins, horns, bones and hair have also been taken to be sold in cities.
- Reindeer carcasses were transported from Lapland to feed the lumberjacks who came to work on the waters of Oulanka.
  - In late October and early November, reindeer were herded into holding pens to be separated. The calves were earmarked, the bucks castrated and some of the animals slaughtered.
  - The many reindeer fences in the terrain are signs left behind by a hundred years of reindeer pasturing, such as the fences at Puikkola, Jäkälävaara, Kiutavaara (or Hiidenlampi) and Rytinki.
  - A reindeer grazing ground was called a *kiekerö*, and there are numerous place names along the River Oulankajoki that have been derived from the term.
  - Reindeer owners were organised into local reindeer herding cooperatives (*paliskunta*).
  - At the beginning of the 20th century, there were 12,500 reindeer in Kuusamo.



## TORCH-FISHING ON THE RIVER KITKAJOKI ON A DARK AUGUST NIGHT

**"D**on't fall off the boat, Jussi! You don't want to have to write your last will and testament just yet. And for goodness sake, be careful with that sharp fishgig!" likka shouted from the rower's seat. The boat glided slowly and soundlessly through the shallows along the shoreline of the River Kitkajoki. Jussi was standing at the bow of the boat with the fishgig in hand, aiming it at the neck of a salmon sleeping in the water. The fishgig was a wooden spear with five barbed prongs on top that curved slightly upwards. The men thought that a salmon that had met a sudden death at the end of a fishgig tasted far better than a fish caught with the more ordinary methods of a net or a hook and line.

Jussi and likka had set out on the river to torch-fish salmon as soon as the August nights had grown dark enough. The pieces of resinous wood that were attached to the iron grid at the bow of the boat were crackling as they burned brightly. The weeks of high summer had been spent mowing hay in the meadows along the River Oulankajoki, but the dark late August and early September nights were a good time to go torch-fishing on Kitkajoki. The men had heard rumours from other fishermen that torch-fishing on the rivers and lakes of Oulanka was about to be banned because it was a too-efficient method.

Coming to the river to stalk salmon was worth the effort just for the thrill, but vendace and whitefish were

best for household use. They would feed the family for a whole year. If not, the man of the house could blame no one but himself.

Perch would also do to feed the family, but roach would seldom end up on the dinner table in Jussi and likka's house. Brown trout was the kind of highly valued fish that was nice to take as a gift when you were visiting people, but there was rarely enough of it to sell. Nobody bothered with catching ruff and smelt from the waters of Oulanka – after all, the region was rich with proper fish!

For Jussi and likka, fishing had become part of their nature, a way of life, really. In the spring, the shoreline waters of the lakes would start bubbling, which was a sign of the ditches and brooks opening up; and when the streams started flowing, the pike came to life. The fish searched for spawning sites in the open spots, and Jussi and likka were quick to follow. The perches came swimming not far behind the pike. Fishermen from all over Oulanka hurried along to catch these fish, and the men would even go laying fyke nets amongst the ice.

When the waters were completely free of ice and the leaves were in bud on the trees, the roach began spawning. The waters would be swarming with the fish, and the hungry pike that had already finished spawning would eagerly chase them. This was also the time when Jussi and likka would appear to catch the pike. They could have caught a good number of roach with nets if they had wanted to. After spawning, the roach would go into hiding, and you would not even have known that they existed.

When the water started warming up, all manner of fish would swim into the shallows to enjoy the sunshine. In late June, fish lice and water fleas would start jumping across the surface, luring whitefish and vendace to come and catch them. Jussi and likka would then head out to the Lake Kitkajärvi to drag their seine nets. Seine fishing would continue into the very first days of July, when haymaking

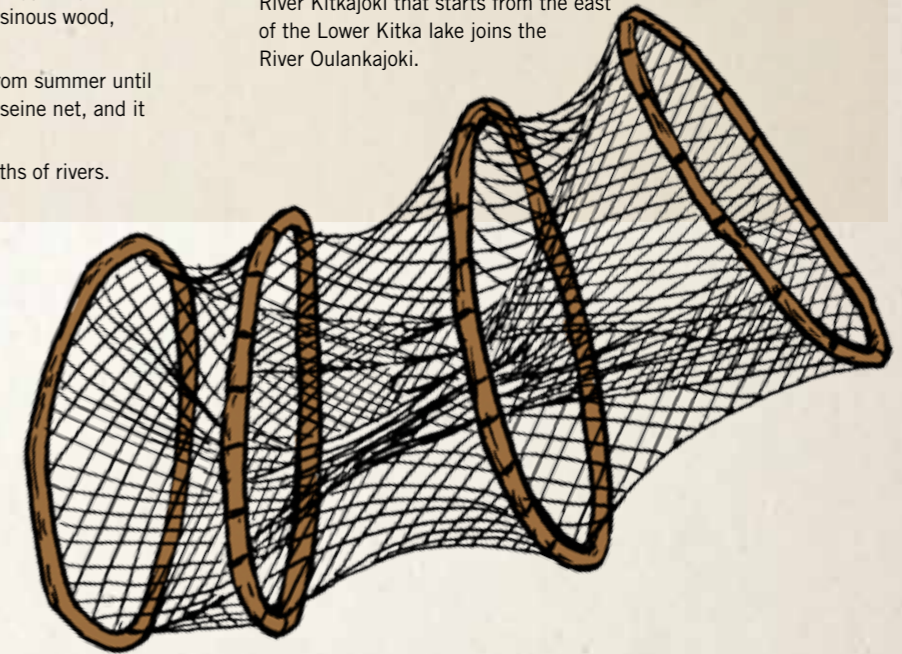
put a stop to the fishing. The men would take their fishing rods, scythes and rakes, and set out for the riverside to fill up the hay barns. They would go angling in between the mowing and reaping to catch fish for soup, as necessary.

In August the fish would start moving towards the deeper waters, and September was the best time to catch vendace with seine nets. likka had heard someone say that the authorities were busy coming up with regulations for the size of vendace. It had been said that future fishermen would have to catch their vendace with a measuring stick in their hand – as if the seine nets that began to freeze in the cold autumn weather were not difficult enough to handle as it was! *“I wonder what the men of the Lake Kitkajärvi will have to say about the ten-centimetre standard, as there are surely not many that are that long among the vendace of the lakes”*, likka thought out loud.

The big salmon in the River Kitkajoki escaped likka and Jussi's fishgig this time, but they would still catch enough fish for Christmas with a net under the ice at a guaranteed spot on the River Aventojoiki.

## → Different Traps for Different Seasons

- The most popular fishing spots in Oulanka National Park are the Rivers Oulankajoki and Kitkajoki.
- Before the national park was established, there was unrestricted fishing on the rivers and lakes of Oulanka from early spring until late autumn.
- Torch-fishing is an old method which was still common on the River Kitkajoki in the early 20th century. Torch-fishing is a method where the fish are speared with a fishgig. The torch-fishing season is in the spring and autumn.
- Torch-fishing was banned in 1902 because the fish populations had been reduced too much. However this method has been allowed again since 1951, but it is forbidden from mid-April to late June. It is also banned in waters with rich salmon and whitefish populations. Today, the fish are found with a lamp on the dark autumn nights. In the old days, the light source was typically a torch made up of an iron grid that was used to burn resinous wood, splints or chips.
- Seine fishing was practised on the larger lakes from summer until the waters froze. Every household had their own seine net, and it was particularly used for catching vendace.
- Nets for catching other fish were laid at the mouths of rivers.
- Fishing was a man's work; women were sometimes taken along to row the boat.
- Angling was for young boys and old men.
- Pike was salted and dried into bunches; this way the fish was light to carry and it kept well. Pike was not a very common fish in household use, but it was taken to the Minister as a tithe payment in the autumn.
- In winter fish were caught from under the ice with nets.
- Although, most of the fish were caught for household use, frozen whitefish and salmon were taken to be sold at the Oulu market, among other places.
- The small-sized vendace living in the Lake Kitkajärvi that spans areas in Kuusamo and Posio (divided into the Upper and Lower Kitka) are called “needle vendace” (neulamuikku in Finnish). The River Kitkajoki that starts from the east of the Lower Kitka lake joins the River Oulankajoki.





# ROKUA



## THE LAST TAR MAKERS IN THE FORESTS OF ROKUA

**H**eikki had agreed to be the pit master for the tar burning at Tulijärvi one more time. It was no longer worth the effort to cut trees for tar burning, and tar burning was not allowed in Crown forests either, especially next to the Rokuanvaara Crown Park. In the future it would be best to only burn tar for your own household in your own forest. The forester had already given the village men many warnings about illicit tar burning in the Crown forests; you should only be burning stumps and roots in tar kilns, and first buy the timber from the Crown.

Men from the village of Säräisniemi had been taken to court for illicit tar burning, and that was a bit frightening. Luckily, the forest ranger in this management area did not have time to visit every corner in his zone as he was responsible for such a large area. Led by Heikki, the men had flayed the last pines a couple of years earlier, near Lake Tulijärvi. Heikki had heard some talk and read in the newspapers that tar burning by farmers was not good for the Finnish forests.

The slender pines had had time to let the resin exude as their sides had been flayed bare with a bark scraper over several years. It took a whole day for one man to cut down a fathom of timber for the tar burning and another day to split and pile a fathom and a half of timber. This particular pit was planned to be filled with 40 fathoms of logs.

The old pit by the hill would serve once more. Heikki wondered whether the lichen growing on the hill would have any kind of demand out in the wide world. Right now, the money came from tar, but burning it was an arduous task. Besides, the greatest benefit went to the townsmen in Oulu, whereas the tar makers themselves lived in constant debt. The money for the tar had often been taken as an advance payment, and the burning process was not always successful.

They had hauled mud from the Pelso mires for lining the funnel-shaped pit so that it was air-tight and would endure the burning process. It only took three days from lighting the pit until the first barrels could be filled with tar. The previous summer they were paid 14 marks and 20 pennies for a barrel of premium tar, which was the price of a barrel of barley at the Oulu market. No one yet knew what the price of tar would be this summer. The men wondered if they should be working on their hay and barley fields and draining mires rather than spending the best time of the year on tar burning.

In total silence, the men put the split and chopped clippings into the pit in a radial pile, which was then covered with a layer of peat and the top sealed with soil. The pit master went round the pit holding a bunch of birch bark in his hand, and soon you could see smoke rising from the



shore of Lake Tulijärvi. Burning the pit required meticulous work: the pit had to be kept burning slowly as you were not supposed to let the tar turn into pitch. It took about a week to burn the pit, with the larger pits producing dozens of barrels of tar.

The barrels were made from pine boards during the winter; for one barrel you needed thirteen boards that were tightened up with eight hoops made from spruce twigs.

Transporting the tar was one of the heaviest phases in the process. The tar was taken along the River Oulujoki to Oulu in rowing boats. The tar makers at Rokua had heard that tar had been transported by train from Ostrobothnia for a few years already. Heikki said to the others that surely no railway would appear up here during his lifetime. This time they managed to fit 24 barrels into the tar boat, all of them weighed and marked as approved by the inspector.

A tried and trusted pilot hopped in to steer the boat through the Pyhäkoski Rapids. It took a long time as he had to watch out not only for rocks but also for the logs floating in the river. Every once in a while they were soaked in water, but the tar barrels rested neatly in the smoothly gliding boat. The pilot wanted, and received, three marks for his services, jumping ashore after the Pyhäkoski Rapids and heading back home. Heikki did not yet think about what a job it would be to haul the boat back home from Oulu.

Despite the pilot navigating through the rapids, the Tulijärvi tar ended up in a log jam in the Merikoski Rapids in Oulu: both the logs and the tar boat were trying to fit into the same route at the same time. The tar boat broke up but the men and the tar were rescued. After the accident the men had no more enthusiasm for burning tar by Rokuanvaara Hill.

## → The Rise and Fall of Tar Burning

- Tar is a waterproofing and anti-rot substance derived from wood. It was the first Finnish merchandise to be sold abroad. Tar was extensively exported to England, Holland, Russia and Sweden, especially in the era of sailing ships.
- There are several bases of tar-burning pits around Rokua. Tar from Rokua has also been transported to the Bay of Bothnia along the rivers Rokuanjoja, Neittävänjoki and Siikajoki.
- The aim was to exclude the Crown Parks from utilisation for forestry and tar burning. The Rokuanvaara area became a Crown Park, i.e. State-owned, in the 1870s.
- Illicit tar burning continued in State-owned forests until the late 19th century.
- Metsähallitus advised tar makers in the Oulujoki region, including the Rokua area, to use the permitted method – that is, to make tar from tree stumps and roots in tar kilns, which were commonly viewed with suspicion.
- The demand for tar decreased at the end of the 19th century as it was no longer used for protecting wooden ships, among other places.
- A fathom is an old Finnish unit of length = 3 ells = 6 feet = 1,781 metres; a cubic fathom is 2.83 m<sup>3</sup>. (The figures differ slightly from the US or Imperial figures, even if the names are the same.)
- Flaying means peeling some of the bark off the tree trunk, leaving just enough bark so that the tree will survive.
- The pit master was responsible for the burning process and its success.

## “THE FORESTER HAS BEEN NOTIFIED – A MIGHTY FIRE AT ROKUANVAARA HILL!”

**S**kirt flapping in the wind, Sirre was cycling towards Pookivaara Hill. She had already worked there as a fire guard for many summers. It was only a few kilometres’ ride from the former Lintula forest ranger’s house to Pookivaara Hill, but cycling along sandy heaths and virtually non-existent roads was hard.

The 20-metre-high fire tower had been built in the summer of 1936 next to the old triangulation tower, which Sirre had used as a fire tower until the men completed the new one. It had been a tough job as they had had to bring gravel and stones for the foundations from afar; there was only sand at Rokuanvaara Hill.

From the fire tower you had an excellent view of both the State-owned forests and the private forests. There were no extra forest rangers patrolling in the forests of Rokua in the summer as before, but in the winter the rangers still hopped onto their skis to control hunting on the birds’ courting grounds and the overwintering areas of elks. Sometimes people also came to Rokua to get timber and firewood without permission.

The Pookivaara fire tower and hut had telephones so that you could directly notify the regional forester and the fire chief if there was a fire. You no longer had to cycle all the way to the forest ranger’s house to raise the alarm and get help.

Sirre took her belongings to the fire guard hut and climbed the tower. She routinely wrote the entries in the fire guard’s diary, recording the weather (cloudless, partly cloudy, thunder, rain, snow), visibility (clear, dull, fog, smoke), wind direction and force (Beaufort), and temperature at 9 am and 3 pm.

For several summers, Sirre had observed the Rokuanvaara area with the binoculars from here, the highest spot on the hill. Sometimes, when the weather was thundery, she made a note in the diary saying “the air’s electric”. Indeed, you’d better hurry at that point to get out of the tower, even though there was a 300-metre copper cable from the tower to the ground as a lightning conductor.

South-west of the tower you could see the vast open Pelso mires. Further to the west was Tyrnävä, and in the east you could get a glimpse of the River Oulujoki and even Lake Oulujärvi. Here and there you could see the treeless stretches of firebreaks that the prisoners at the Pelso prison had cut the previous summer. Timber from the Rokua forests was sold for the needs of the prison.

At the foot of the fire tower there was also the Utajärvi civil guard’s ski lodge, which was made of logs bought from the Oterma blowdown area’s stand in the Vaala management area.

After eating her packed lunch, Sirre climbed the tower again. It was certainly good that the telephone was now working, as you could see smoke rising from the Pelso mire. Sirre grabbed the binoculars and tried to see what was happening. Could it be those smouldering fires again, caused by careless hay-makers brewing coffee and lighting a fire in the process? She wrote the compass reading and details in the diary: "275° and 272°, looks like smouldering" and reported the smoke to the forester and the fire chief. The smoke cleared during the day, so the report had paid off: the spreading of the smouldering fire in the mire had been prevented.

Sirre had a restless night in the fire guard hut, as if she had anticipated there would be a fire nearby the next day. There was no sign of a fire in the morning, but around noon Sirre made a call to report a "mighty fire" at Rokuanvaara Hill.

The fire progressed partially along the ground, partially from tree top to tree top, but it was brought under

control during the day by cutting firebreaks and digging ditches. In some places it was possible to throw soil onto the fire and beat it out.

Sirre later heard that the fire had started through cigarette smoking, and about 200 hectares of forest had burned. Sirre felt sad when she heard from the forester that the beautiful lichen had died in the fire. It would take several years before any lichen would grow there again. The trees damaged in the fire would be sold to Oulu Oy to be turned into cellulose. The burnt area would be sown with seeds, even though the seedlings did not really thrive in the harsh Rokuanvaara soil.

Before the time of the fire guards, the forests in the Rokua area could burn at leisure. There was no one to extinguish the fires, and no way to do it anyway. Forest fires were still common at the beginning of the 20th century, so the fire tower and the guard to protect the forests of Rokua came in useful.

### → Pookivaara Hill Served Many Purposes

- Pookivaara Hill at Rokua rises 194.2 metres above sea level and roughly 50 metres above the surrounding area.
- In the summer of 1936, Metsähallitus built a fire tower and a fire guard hut in the area it had rented at Pookivaara Hill. During the Winter War (1939–1940) between Finland and the Soviet Union, the Pookivaara fire tower and fire guard hut were used by the armed forces for air surveillance.
- On the slope next to the tower there was a dugout, which was used by the voluntary women taking care of air surveillance tasks.
- The fire tower was taken out of service in the 1970s. The present tower is the third tower on this spot.
- The fire guard hut now serves as an open wilderness hut.
- There is also a ski lodge at Pookivaara Hill, originally built by the Utajärvi civil guard and today managed by Utajärven Urheilijat ry, a local sports club.
- At one time, there was a triangulation tower at Pookivaara Hill that was part of the famous Struve Geodetic Arc built in the early 19th century. The Struve Arc is a chain of survey triangulations running through ten countries between the Arctic Ocean and the Black Sea. The purpose of the arc was to determine the exact size and shape of the Earth, and it consisted of 258 main triangles and 265 main station points. Mr Struve called the point Rokuavaara, but the present name of the station point is Pookivaara.
- The Struve Geodetic Arc station point used to be marked on a rock at Pookivaara Hill, but the latest archaeological inventory revealed that the point was destroyed.

## “BRING THE HORSES HERE – NOW!”

A man arrived at the Rokua Inn by the Crown coach and wanted a new horse right away in order to continue his journey to Säräisniemi. While still far off on the road, he had shouted to the innkeeper's wife that he wanted a new, rested horse. The innkeeper's wife shook her head and said that all of the Rokua coaching horses were on the road or busy at other tasks. The innkeeper himself was giving a ride to a land surveyor who was going round the parish of Säräisniemi, preparing land for the surveys and mappings for the general parceling out of land. Being springtime, the horses in reserve were needed on the farmers' own fields. Right now, it was impossible to get a horse from anywhere.

It was not the first time the Rokua Inn received a busy traveller: the inn by Lake Rokuanjärvi had served people on the road since the 17th century. The forester who had come to inspect the Crown forests had spent the previous night in the Ahmas Inn, visiting the Crown forests located north of Rokuanvaara Hill. It had been a tiring day as he had had to walk along narrow paths meandering across sandy, lichen-covered heaths. The next day, the forester was supposed to continue his journey by the Crown coach via the Rokua Inn to Säräisniemi.

Reeta, the innkeeper's wife at the Rokua Inn, said she could not find a horse for the forester but could provide a

meal and a place for the night at the inn. He could sleep in the coach station's guest room, which was better equipped than the station's common room. She also suggested the forester should walk up Pookivaara Hill the next day to see the triangulation tower that was part of the Struve Geodetic Arc, and check the "witch's churns" too; you would not find holes like that in every corner.

The innkeeper's wife made sure the kitchen stove had a fire burning at all times: hungry travellers had to be fed quickly. Now was an easy time to fill their stomachs as the fishing season at Lake Rokuanjärvi had started. The perch catch was abundant, and a slug of spirits was available too, if required.

Reeta told the guest that this road had been travelled by some noble men, including a king. Governors of the province had stayed overnight here, and even the Czar of Russia had almost travelled by. Because of a storm, the czar had changed his travel plans at the last minute and travelled to Oulu via another route. The road had been repaired for the visit, but now most of the traffic had shifted to another road. That was another reason why there were no horses available for the Crown coach.

The innkeeper's wife checked that the price list was in place on the guest room wall, as the State officials were very particular about the regulations. A guest book for

visitors' notes was on the table. The yard looked neat too, as the dozens of Karelian merchants with their horses were no longer crowding the place. Last winter, men from Pielisjärvi and Nurmes in North Karelia still came with their loads of meat and butter for the market in Oulu. On the way back, their sleighs were filled with heavy sacks of salt. Eating Karelian pasties, the men had said that next time they would get their salt from Lappeenranta instead. In the future, they would obtain their goods via the Saimaa Canal; this was their last trip on this road.

The following day, the forester walked to Pookivaara Hill. In the meantime, some coachmen had appeared at the inn, ready to take the forester to the Niskakoski Rapids in Säräisniemi. From there he could return to Oulu along the River Oulujoki and have a ride through the rapids in a boat.

On the way to the Niskakoski Rapids, the forester saw some clear signs of tar burning: Scotch pines with their sides flayed bare could be seen in several places.

### → Inns Provided Room and Board as well as fresh Horses

- In 1734, the Crown established a transport system in which farmers had to provide transportation with a horse and carriage for State officials and gentlefolk from one inn to the next. The coachmen changed twice a week. If all of an inn's coachmen were on the road, the innkeeper had to take the guests to where they wished to go (the next inn).
- The inn and its coach station was a place in which travellers and post carriers were provided with a horse as well as food and accommodation. In the countryside, the payment for food and accommodation was charged according to the tariff confirmed by the governor.
- There used to be two inns along Keisarintie ("Emperor's Road"), close to Rokua: Seppälä (Kivari) in Ahmas village and the Rokua house on the southern shore of Lake Rokuanjärvi. Both of these inns operated until the 1860s.
- The Rokua house also operated as a post office between Oulu and Kajaani. In that time, a winter postal route ran via Rokua

from Stockholm in Sweden, across the Gulf of Bothnia to Oulu, through the region of Savo, and all the way to Vyborg and the Baltic States.

- Keisarintie was no longer part of the Oulu–Kajaani main road after 1851, which meant a slow death for the inns along the road.
- The requirement to provide food for the guests was abolished in the 1930s, and the inns were then often turned into hostels.
- Isokivi, a large boulder located by Keisarintie, used to be the landmark for the place where one farmer's duty to offer a ride ended and the next one's started. Today, Isokivi marks the boundary between the municipalities of Vaala, Utajärvi and Muhos.
- The "witch's kettle" is the name for the kettle holes common in the Rokua area. A kettle hole is a deep hole formed during the melting phase of the Ice Age, created when a block of ice carried by the meltwaters and buried in sand later melts, and the layer of soil above it collapses.

## BACKPACKS, SKIS AND RAIL BUSES – DESTINATION ROKUA

The March spring sun was embracing the visitors who were heading towards Rokua early on a Saturday morning. Dressed in ski trousers and anoraks, people were standing with their backpacks on their backs and wooden skis under their arms. The diesel-smelling rail bus would soon depart from the Oulu railway station to take the skiers to Ahmas.

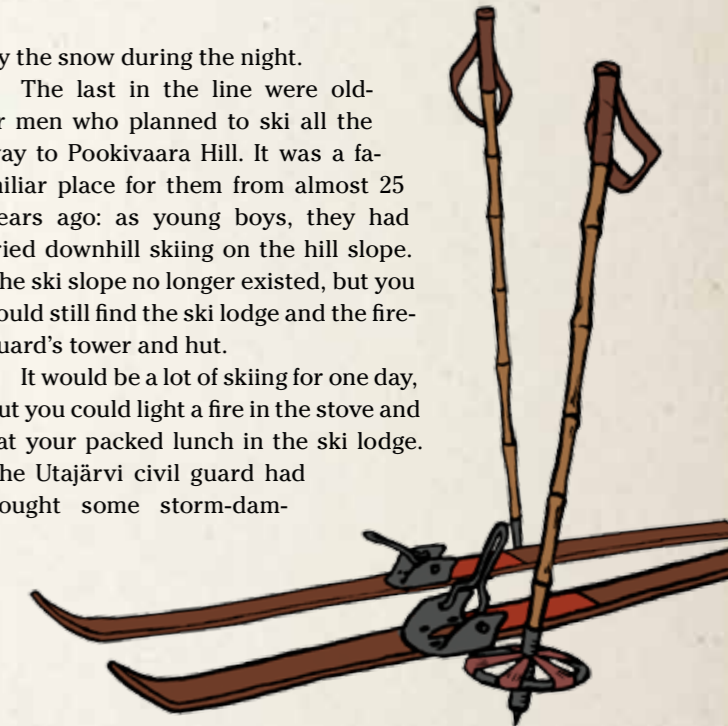
There were some sleepy boys from Kempele in the group, heading for a skiing competition in Rokua. They had arrived at Oulu railway station by the morning train from the south and were now eagerly waiting to get to the competition organised by the local sports clubs, Rokuan Seura, Utajärven Urheilijat and Rokuan Ryhti. They had heard that fine silver spoons would be awarded as prizes.

People jumped off the rail bus at Ahmas railway station and fastened their ski boots onto the skis. You could hear the cane sticks crunch in the snow as the skiers proceeded at their own pace towards Pookivaara Hill or the Lianjärvi ski lodge built by Rokuan Seura. The boys had to ski eight kilometres to the competition site. Those in a hurry led the way and opened the tracks that had been buried

by the snow during the night.

The last in the line were older men who planned to ski all the way to Pookivaara Hill. It was a familiar place for them from almost 25 years ago: as young boys, they had tried downhill skiing on the hill slope. The ski slope no longer existed, but you could still find the ski lodge and the fire-guard's tower and hut.

It would be a lot of skiing for one day, but you could light a fire in the stove and eat your packed lunch in the ski lodge. The Utajärvi civil guard had bought some storm-dam-



aged timber in the Vaala management area before World War II and built the Pookivaara ski lodge during the war. After the war the lodge was handed over to the Ahmas farmers' association and later to Utajärven Urheilijat, one of the local sports clubs.

The men were skiing at a leisurely pace along the same trails that Urho Kekkonen, a former President of Finland, had skied the previous winter. *"Large and small undulations and a terrain with thin enough forest"* had been the president's wish, and that's what Rokua had offered him. Kekkonen had read the words in a newspaper article on Tahko Pihkala, a famous Finnish sportsman, who had so eloquently described the Rokua terrains. Rokua certainly boasted an ideal terrain with something to offer skiers of all levels and appetites. *"Here, no one had to keep skiing*

*around one small pit"*, Kekkonen commented afterwards.

The Kempele boys' competition near the lakes Lianjärvi and Syväjärvi went well, with a large crowd spurring on the competitors of all ages. The day was long, but luckily you could have a break and warm up in the ski lodge built by Rokuan Seura. The boys were wistfully looking at the ski jump slope nestled by the hill; the most courageous ones would jump 50 metres.

At Midsummer, the province's most famous midsummer celebration would take place here. When you were old enough, you could come here with your friends and stay overnight in a tent in the camping ground.

Both of the boys came second in their class, and the journey home started with skiing back to Ahmas railway station. They would surely come here again.



## → A Cross-Country Skiing Centre since the 1930s

- In the 1930s, Rokua was already a popular skiing and hiking area for the local residents.
- In 1935, the civil guard district's cross-country skiing championship competition was organised in Rokua. The first open Rokua skiing competition was held in 1936 and the first Rokua slalom competition was organised in 1938 on the slope by Lake Lianjärvi to settle which of the civil guard youngsters was the Oulu district's champion. A slalom course fulfilling the national standards was later created on Pookivaara Hill.
- After the war, Rokua was especially favoured by the population in the Oulu region as the skiing conditions in Lapland had deteriorated as a result of the war.
- Urho Kekkonen (1900–1986), a former President of Finland, hiked in the Rokua area in March 1963. Urho Kekkonen was famous for his love of sports, and in his later years he became known as an enthusiastic cross-country skier. The presidential visit is considered to have significantly contributed to Rokua's later development into a cross-country skiing resort suitable for everyone.
- At its meeting on 13 August 1938, the Utajärvi civil guard decided to lease some forest land in Rokua from Antti Aitta, the owner of the Sorsa farm in Sotkankylä. A ski lodge was then built on Pookivaara Hill, the leased piece of land, with the completed building inaugurated on 16 March 1941. The Pooki lodge was used for a number of camps and training sessions before the civil guard was closed down. Today the Pooki lodge is a popular destination for excursions.
- Lauri "Tahko" Pihkala is especially known for developing the Finnish national game of pesäpallo, a combination of traditional

bat-and-ball team games and American baseball. Pihkala created the Lahti Ski Games (Salpausselän Kisat) and was one of the founders of Suomen Latu, the Finnish Central Association for Recreational Sports and Outdoor Activities, in 1938. He was an enthusiastic advocate of cross-country skiing, putting forward the ideas of long skiing excursions and school skiing holidays. Pihkala's article about Rokua's excellence was published in Kaltio, a Finnish culture magazine, in 1956.

- Rokuan Seura, a local non-profit association, built a ski lodge on the shore of Lake Lianjärvi in 1948, on land leased from Metsähallitus. The association aimed at promoting Rokua, its excellent terrain and its many uses.
- The first lodges and the café in the area were built by Urho Lähtevänoja.
- The Rokuantalo restaurant was opened in 1973, when a village of rental cabins, a motel and a caravan site were added to the area's services. Today, this site is occupied by Hotel and Restaurant Rokuanhovi.
- Rehabilitation services became part of the operations in the early 1980s, when the spa initiative was granted funding from RAY, Finland's Slot Machine Association. The rehabilitation services are run by Rokuan Terveys- ja Kuntouttamissäätiö ('The Rokua health and rehabilitation foundation').
- The Rokua ski stadium, the network of competition trails and the Suppa Information Centre were built at the end of the 1990s.
- Rokua is now a major cross-country skiing resort and it has provided excellent training terrains for many successful Finnish skiers.

## THE IRON AGE – WHO LIVED IN THE ROKUA WOODS BACK THEN?

**H**eikki Poutiainen had never heard of the terms 'archaeologist' or 'prehistoric relic'. Instead, he had heard talk about ancient items and researchers of ancient times. He himself had found a stone ice pick and a chisel in a nearby village. Many farmers from the Utajärvi and Säräisniemi parishes had stumbled over stone axes and chisels sticking out from the soil when working in their fields, but only Heikki had found an iron axe on Rokuanvaara Hill.

Heikki had been collecting lichen for domestic use when a finely decorated iron axe was revealed under the bed of lichen. Heikki looked at the axe from all sides and wondered who could have needed it in Rokua, and where its handle might be. The axe had been decorated by hewing a diagonal cross onto it, but it had not been made by any of the local blacksmiths; no one around here made axes like that. Something unfortunate had also happened to the axe: its blade had been banged totally flat. It was not new, either, and it had not been used for chopping firewood. Heikki sent the axe to the archaeologist who had spent many summers in the villages in the area, asking people about the old times and collecting all kinds of old tools and objects.



Heikki's find ended up in the hands of the young Artturi H. Snellman. He was a son of the vicar of Muhos, who visited the parishes of Utajärvi and Säräisniemi as a young history student and recorded local story material. At the same time, he collected prehistoric items around Northern Ostrobothnia. He had been awarded a grant by the Finnish Antiquarian Society in 1884 for this archaeological collecting trip. Snellman toured the Oulu region for three summers, and the result of these trips was the most extensive book on the history of the Oulu region written in his time.

In addition to artefacts, Snellman collected local oral folktales and earlier written material. His work also discussed the large stone wall structures found in the area; the potential use of these constructions as a calendar has lately attracted more and more attention.

In December 1886, Artturi Snellman wrote a thank you note in *Kaiku*, the leading newspaper of the time in Northern Finland, to all of the "finders of ancient items" who had sent him their finds. Snellman knew the objects had been so precious for some of the finders that they would rather have hidden them in their cupboards than handed them over to museum collections. Thanks to Heikki, the

Rokua axe found its way into the National Museum of Finland collection in 1889.

When receiving the axe from Heikki, Snellman was already able to shed some light on Iron Age life in Rokua. The only certain thing was that someone had walked on the hill with the axe. Perhaps it had been needed for lighting a fire on deer hunting trips? Or maybe it had been used to sharpen the stakes to be placed in the bottom of the trapping pits? Had the axe been dropped accidentally or been rejected on purpose? Both Snellman and Heikki surely mulled over these questions. The researchers of our time, in turn, are trying to figure out whether the axe bearer came from the east or the west. What was the ethnic origin of the man who had left the axe behind? Why was there an engraved cross on the blade?

Rokua's past is slowly being shaped, piece by piece. It was a coincidence that Heikki Poutiainen happened to give the iron axe to Artturi Snellman. The great thing is that this happy coincidence was recorded and thus became part of Rokua's history.

## → The Iron Age in Finland and Rokua

- The Iron Age in Finland is divided into the following periods:

Pre-Roman Iron Age	500 BC – AD 1
Older Roman Iron Age	AD 1–200
Younger Roman Iron Age	200–400
Migration Period	400–600
Merovingian Age	600–800
Viking Age	800–1050
Age of the Crusades	1050–1150/1300

- Rokua was an uninhabited area in prehistoric times, used as a hunting ground. Hardly any prehistoric relics have been found in the Rokua area. An iron axe from the Iron Age was found at the end of the 19th century. It is stored in the National Museum of Finland collection under the number 2508:01. In addition, several objects, pieces of earthenware and dwelling sites dating back to the Stone Age have been found in the nearby villages.
- Rokua's sandy eskers have been used for deer hunting with trapping pits, as evidenced by the chain of pits found in the area (fixed relic).
- As for sites from historic times, nine tar-burning pits were found in the relatively small area the inventory covered. The area's cultural heritage is thus characterised by a rather high number

of tar-burning pits. In addition, the inventory revealed a few unidentified pit sites from historic times. The area is bordered in the south by the famous Keisarintie, 'Emperor's Road', with an old landmark stone by the road.

- Researchers who have investigated Rokua place names hold differing views on the origins of the names: some think the names have a Sámi origin, others regard them as clearly Finnish, mainly Karelian-based.
- Heikki Poutiainen also gave Artturi Snellman a chisel and an ice pick, and Snellman writes about them as follows: "A roughly made chisel, sharpened the same way as a stone axe, and a large, badly worn ice pick, both from Kurki Island. Given by Heikki Poutiainen, tenant farmer."
- Professor Artturi H. Virkkunen, formerly Snellman (1864–1924), was a historian, a Member of the Finnish Parliament and Rector of the University of Turku.



## ISO-RÄISÄNEN – THE STRONGEST MAN EVER

**I**so-Räisänen's actions during the Russian oppression created stories that are still being told in many different contexts. These stories attracted Artturi H. Snellman, a young history student, back in the 1880s. He wrote down the stories he heard and compiled a travel account that was published in 1887:

*"On my travels, I managed to collect stories from people about the earlier phases in my research field, especially about the havoc wreaked by enemies in the past, so it should not be totally out of place to include a brief story."* This is how the stories about Iso-Räisänen, the famous opponent of the enemy, survived for us to read about:

*"In Ahmas village, Räisänen was a tough opponent of the enemy during the Greater Wrath, and he had a hiding place by the River Leppioja. The enemies went there and were delighted to see Räisänen all alone in the wilderness, so they said: "Well, now you are nicely in a sack!" To that, Räisänen replied: "You have not yet closed the mouth of the sack." The Russians hurried him up, saying: "Come on, put your shoes on and let's go see your goods!" Räisänen took his time with the shoes and said: "You should at least wait until I get my shoes on!"*

*When he had finished tying his shoelaces, he said: "Now we can go!" He had a sheath belt with a sheath in place. Taking the sheath in one hand and a knife in the other, he started to hit out all around him so that the men retreated and quickly ran away.*

*Another time, a group of twelve Russians settled for the night at the end of the Torakangas area. They lay down by the campfire and put the bow they had with them up on a tree branch for the night. The bow started to make a noise on the branch. The Russians then said to themselves: "Just shout as much as you like, tomorrow we will use you to get Räisänen!" Räisänen, who happened to be in the area with another man, found out about the enemy's plan and knew he had to keep his eyes open. When the Russians were asleep, he came with his companion and killed all twelve men with a spear."*

According to folklore, Räisänen also piled the bodies up cross-wise at the neck. People later came to see the cross-shaped monument made of skeletons.

Snellman continues his story about Iso-Räisänen, who, according to this source, moved about in the Rokua area too: *"There was a safe house on Rokuanvaara Hill too. Nine*

*Russians came and killed the folk hiding there, facing no resistance. Räisänen happened to go there and chased the Russians away."*

Over the course of time, the stories about Räisänen have become more and more colourful. It is said that even after the peacemaking, an enemy patrol crossed the border and went to Räisänen's home to take their revenge on him. Iso-Räisänen was sleeping on his side on a bench.

One of the men said to the leader: "You'd better not touch that man – look, his hips reach as high as the fourth tier of logs!" At that point, Räisänen woke up and the intruders rushed out of the house.

There is a statue of Iso-Räisänen along the Poem Singers' Trail in the Ahmas Kalevala heritage village. As you stand by the statue, try to imagine what is fact and what is fable in these stories!

## → Lauri Laurinpoika Räisänen – A Man and a Legend

- In the 16th century, a man called Iso-Räisänen lived in the Rokua area, leaving plenty of stories in the local tradition. The authenticity of the events related to him can no longer be verified by means of historical research.
- Genealogical research has shown that Iso-Räisänen's real name was Lasse Lassenpoika Räisänen or Lauri Laurinpoika Räisänen. He was first mentioned in the 1575 tithing records (tax records) as a farm owner at Ahmas, Utajärvi.
- Iso-Räisänen is said to have been larger and stronger than the average man.
- According to folklore, he took his family to a safe house in 1585; the house can be visited today by following a trail from the Ahmas heritage village.
- Iso-Räisänen presumably died in the 1590s, but a number of people belonging to his family still live in Utajärvi.
- Stories about Iso-Räisänen are still being told, set in the early 18th century period of the Greater Wrath, even though he lived back in the 16th century during the so-called Long Wrath.
- The Long Wrath was a war between Sweden and the Tsardom of Russia in 1570–1595, which ended with the Treaty of Teusina.

This was a time of guerrilla warfare, with the Karelian guerrillas attacking Ostrobothnia and the Lake Oulujärvi area, and the Finnish counterparts making strikes into Karelia.

- The Muhos-born historian Artturi H. Snellman published his *Oulun kihlakuntaa koskevia muinaistieteellisiä ja historiallisia lehtiä* ('Archaeological and historical papers pertaining to the Oulu jurisdictional district') in 1887. Snellman wrote down stories he had collected in Utajärvi, including the enemy stories, and gave lectures on the Lastila farm in Utajärvi, telling about the time of the Greater Wrath. His activities played a role in preserving the stories about Iso-Räisänen. The timing of the stories was left undone in the 1880s.
- The safe houses were hiding places deep in the backwoods, used by Finnish people during the hostilities. Although many hiding places still remain secret today, it has been possible to locate some of them based on the local folklore and the place names in the area (e.g., Pakokorpi, 'Getaway Woods', or Surmakangas, 'Killing Heath').

# KIVEKSENKYLÄ ROBBERS, VARISKYLÄ THIEVES – PIRATES AT LAKE OULUJÄRVI

The drying barn was filled with the aroma of freshly threshed rye. A number of men were silently lying near the stove that still felt warm after the day's threshing. They were not threshers, but robbers from Kiveksen kylä village, who had found a place for the night in the drying barn of the largest farm in the village. The men did not have permission to stay overnight, nor to do any of the other things they had been up to at Lake Oulujärvi and the surrounding villages. They had gone into the barn under cover of the autumn night darkness; there were no locks on the door, as was the traditional Finnish custom. The Variskylä thieves had no respect for the property of others.

They had lain down on the rye straw, but could not fall asleep, so they started to discuss the events of the past few days. Their empty stomachs grumbled, but you could not eat grain as such. Whose turn was it to sneak into the farm's storehouse? They had to get something to eat. There must be bread baked from the new crop stored somewhere in the grain bin.

The night before they had tried to rob the croft's food supplies. They had taken a large tree trunk to bolt the door, leaving one man to keep watch while the others went in to steal. The people of the house had woken up in the

middle of it, and the farmer had slipped out through a window and managed to chase the thieves away. They had been hiding in the woods during the day, but the chilly evening drove them into the warm drying barn.

At last the oldest of the men said out loud what many of them had been thinking for a long time: "Let's put an end to all this; even the Cossacks from Oulu are after us again. And all the newspapers in Finland write about us and our horrible doings." But the leader of the gang, who had been leaning against the sooty barn wall, disagreed: "Let's keep stealing and giving to the poor as before. That way we keep people on our side. We have all seen how people have been punished and starved by these years of crop failure. No one will refuse money when they are in distress." The youngest man suddenly stood up and surprised all the others by saying: "What have we been up to all these years? We have been robbing tar makers and village folk. We have stolen the little income the poor have earned from taking the tar barrels to the storage site in Oulu. All people fear us and our swift boats. I well remember the people's scared faces when we have attacked the boats returning from Oulu. Once I took a coffer from a young woman; she had all the supplies for her wedding in there. I took the coffee pot and coffee bought for the wedding reception. The



young lady wept bitterly, but they could do nothing to stop us. I think there is so little rye in here that it should be left for the house to be used for baking bread and as seed grain in the spring. This is such a small amount that none of us can even use it for making spirits. Besides, the new law makes distilling at home illicit.”

The group of men looked serious, as all of them knew their robbing lifestyle had run its course. They could not return to Kiveksenkylä village as they had been hiding on Ärjä and Toukka Islands on Lake Oulujärvi for years, using them as bases for the attacks. The victims had lost their money, tar, food supplies and valuables. They had struck in the middle of the lake or on the islands, where the men transporting tar and freight had landed for the night. The time had come for the Kiveksenkylä robbers and the Variskylä thieves to disband.

Only two men continued robbing and scaring the villagers. These men, too, were caught in 1867, on Lake Oulujärvi's Ärjä Island, where they had gone with their booty, a coffer full of goods stolen from the house. The people of the house sent three men to chase the thieves, and they managed to surround the robbers on the island and seize their boat. The local police chief was then called to come and get them. The police arrived with reinforcements and finally caught the men, who had run away to the woods in the inner parts of the island. The men were handcuffed and taken to the district court, where they were sentenced to be whipped. It seems the blows were effective, since even the last of the robbers calmed down and gradually returned to normal everyday life. The Pirates of Lake Oulujärvi finally found fairer ways of earning their daily bread in a country afflicted by crop failures.

### → Unemployment Led to Juvenile Delinquency

- Kiveksenkylä village, the thieves' base, is located on the northern shore of Lake Oulujärvi, Paltaselkä, near Varislahti and Varisjoki.
- In the 1850s, Kiveksenkylä village was invigorated by an iron factory, but it only operated for a few years. The village and the surrounding area were left with a bunch of unemployed young men who ended up spending their time doing bad things. They started robbing the tar and freight carriers who travelled via Lake Oulujärvi, and stealing food and goods from the houses in the villages by the lake.
- A gang of robbers were roaming about Lake Oulujärvi and its islands in the 1860s. They were called the Kiveksenkylä robbers or the Variskylä thieves, according to their home villages. Later they were named the Pirates of Lake Oulujärvi, as this kind of “water-borne” criminal activity was not found anywhere else in Finland.
- Mulari, the original leader of the gang, is no longer mentioned in the sources after 1864. Henrik Ananias Karppinen became

the new leader. He had a brother called Samuel, who was also involved with the robbing gang. The youngest of the brothers was Talas-Eera, the Kainuu strongman, who, unlike his brothers, stayed on the right side of the law and worked as a market policeman in Kajaani.

- At first the authorities could do nothing to stop the thieves from robbing people. The robbers were finally arrested in 1867. In 1868, a group of men were still trying to continue robbing, but they had little success.
- The Cossacks here refers to soldiers.
- The decree issued in 1866 prohibited the distillation of spirits at home.  
 ”The year eighteen sixty-six brought a rule with a new fix: no spirits were to be distilled or the days with drinking filled.”



# EMPEROR'S ROAD – THE ROAD THE RUSSIAN EMPEROR NEVER USED

*“...all who come into view during the visit of His Imperial Majesty must be clothed in clean and decent garments, especially at the inns...”*

The church folk of Säräisniemi sat in their pews in silence and could hardly believe the announcement the chaplain had just read. After the church service, people scattered all over the village to spread the news: the Russian emperor would use their road to travel to Oulu. The road had to be repaired and the carriage horses reserved, and the folk were expected to dress in homespun clothes. The same kind of public notices had been read in other churches in the River Oulujoki region. The emperor's journey would have a favourable impact; it would dispel people's suspicions towards the emperor.

The public notices had also ordered the farmers to fetch some boats from Oulu so that Alexander I, Emperor of Russia and Grand Duke of Finland, could cross Lake Oulujärvi on his way to Säräisniemi. From there the journey would continue by road via the Rokua Inn to Utajärvi and on to Oulu. It was a great surprise as the villagers had always boasted about the fact that the king of Sweden had

used the road in the 17th century. Now the road would become an emperor's road too!

The innkeeper and his wife urged the horse on, trying to get home as fast as possible. The road was ten ells wide but felt narrow as they rushed to spread the news. The innkeeper told the village men they had less than two weeks to repair the road to a condition good enough for the emperor.

The Rokua Inn had to provide fifteen men with their horses to take care of the transportation of the imperial entourage. No demonstrations of stubbornness or negligence would be allowed as this was the first time the ruler of the empire was to travel through this province. It took all the creative resources available to obtain clean and decent clothes for the villagers.

It was difficult to transport the boats brought from Oulu along the road on four-wheel carriages, but they were bravely pulled the 110-kilometre haul to Lake Oulujärvi. Everything was ready for the emperor; the boats and their



24 sailors headed for Vuolijoki, and soon they would bring the emperor and his entourage to Säräisniemi.

The long-awaited Friday finally arrived – but there was no sign of the emperor. He and his entourage never made it across Lake Oulujärvi to Säräisniemi. A violent storm had broken out during the first attempt, and all the travel plans prepared in advance were cancelled. The emperor no longer wanted to use a boat in such variable conditions and travelled via Vuolijoki and Piippola to the Oulu coastal road. Due to travelling through deep backwoods and enduring horrible conditions, the emperor never saw Rokuanvaara Hill and the rapids of the River Oulujoki.

What a disappointment it was when the message that the emperor had not come across Lake Oulujärvi

finally reached the folk living along the road. The carriage horses didn't take a single step on the road past Rokua with the emperor on board.

But at least the road was repaired, and it remained an important route between Oulu and Kajaani until the 1850s. And for decades, the inns at Rokua and Ahmas served others who travelled via Rokua.

Many people still thought the emperor had passed Rokua in some kind of a carriage. People put so much effort into repairing the road and tidying up the surroundings in those August weeks in 1819 that the road deserves the name Emperor's Road. Hardly any other event that was "announced in the church" yet didn't materialise has left so many stories for future generations.

## → Emperor's road

- The dirt road running along the western edge of Rokua National Park is nowadays called Keisarintie, or 'Emperor's Road'. The road was built in the 17th century to connect the Kajaani and Oulu castles to better defend the eastern border. The road ran from the City of Oulu through the villages of Muhos, Ahmas and Säräisniemi. From Säräisniemi the route continued across Lake Oulujärvi as a waterway in the summer and as an ice road in the winter.
- Gustav II Adolf, the king of Sweden-Finland, travelled along Emperor's Road in 1622 when returning from the war in Livonia via Vyborg to the parliamentary session in Stockholm.
- Finland became the Grand Duchy of Finland under Russia in 1809. In 1801–1825, Russia was ruled by Czar Alexander I (1777–1825), who visited Finland several times.
- The czar was supposed to travel from Säräisniemi through Rokua to Utajärvi and further on to Oulu in August 1819. To prepare for the czar's visit, many roads were repaired in Finland. The inns at Säräisniemi, Rokua and Muhos provided 139 men with their

horses for the emperor, all in vain. In reality, no Russian czar, or emperor, has ever used the road. The name 'Emperor's Road', however, became part of the local tradition and has survived as a place name. The name bears witness to the visit that required colossal arrangements and never materialised.

- The name 'Keisarintie' (Emperor's Road) became established during the 20th century and was marked on the basic map in the 1950s. The road has been called 'Ouluntie' (the Oulu road) or 'Säräisniemen maantie' (the Säräisniemi road). In the 1840s it became the 'Old Road' as the 'New Road' was completed between Utajärvi and Vaala (then part of Säräisniemi).
- Säräisniemi is today part of the municipality of Vaala.
- The pulpit used to be an important channel of communication in Finland. An announcement (public notice by the authorities) read in the church was considered a reliable source of information. Even today, Finns use the expression "it hasn't been announced in the church yet", if it's uncertain that something will happen.
- 10 ells equals 5.94 metres.

# A SWORN PILOT

**M**ikko was standing by the upper course of the Niskakoski Rapids and looking towards Lake Oulujärvi. A long, narrow tar boat with its sail still up glided towards him. The graceful boat was taking yet another load of tar to the tar merchants in Oulu. Mikko tried to quickly assess whether the boat would take a pilot or whether the crew would try to direct the boat down the rapids by themselves. More and more often the men from Kajaani transporting freight were saving their money by not taking a Crown pilot to steer the boat through the foaming rapids.

There was a young boy in the boat, who turned to the man directing the boat and said: *“Let’s take a pilot, dad, so that we make sure we get through the rapids.”* The father nodded his head in agreement. On the way, they had heard from other men transporting tar that Vaala’s Niskakoski Rapids had already demonstrated their force to the inexperienced several times this summer. Three boats had broken up in the froths of the rapids in the same week. The boat of the tar makers from Sotkamo had filled up with water at Siitari; the boat had flipped over a couple of times and ended up in bits. The men had grabbed a few base boards and planks and floated down the rapids. Losing the boat and important tools into the depths of the rapids was the greatest damage, as the tar barrels and men were rescued. But the Niskakoski Rapids had taken at least one life every summer.

Mikko took the pilot’s place at the back of the boat, and the father sat down behind his son to row, both of them awed by the pilot’s large paddle. In his calm way, Mikko started to tell them that the Niskakoski Rapids was

almost ten kilometres long. He took two marks for the ride that would take them down the rapids in about half an hour. There would be another pilot by the Pyhäkoski Rapids who would take three marks for the ride, and the Ahmaskoski Rapids pilot would charge one mark.

There were ten pilots at Niskakoski, double the number at Pyhäkoski, and five at both Ahmaskoski and Merikoski. Today, the boat would quickly move from the Vaala rapids to the checking and storage site in Oulu. Sometimes there were dozens of boats queuing at Vaala; then you might waste the whole day waiting for your turn.

Mikko had been authorised to operate as a pilot by the Governor of the Province of Oulu. The authorisation was only granted to professionals who had sworn an oath at the district court. Mikko, too, had had to give a monetary warrant guaranteed by two trustworthy farmers before he was allowed to work as a pilot.

Mikko had learned the routes in his youth, when his father, also a pilot, had taken him along to row the boat in the rapids. You had to know how to choose the appropriate route for times of shallow, medium and high water. You had to know the rocks and grounds by heart and be able to steer the boat past the foaming currents. The increasing number of logs that were being floated made the pilot’s work more difficult as the logs messed up the flow in the main stream. The previous summer the river had been so full of logs that a tar maker from Kianta village, trying to steer the boat on his own, had crashed straight into them, splitting his boat in half.

The pilot could not afford to make mistakes as he had to compensate any damage he caused. The pilots had no

easy rides at any of the River Oulujoki rapids. More often than before, the tar makers were also trying to save money by steering their boats through the rapids by themselves, which meant less money for the pilot.

The pilot was expected to behave decently towards his passengers: he was not supposed to curse, even if he felt like steering the boat with a few strong words in the worst currents. The local police chief did not hesitate to issue a rebuke for bad language.

The ten kilometres of the Niskakoski Rapids was a fast ride, and they saw many boats that were already being hauled back towards Lake Oulujärvi by steering them from the shore with long poles. Mikko told the father and his son that they would have to pull the boat along the road at the Pyhäkoski Rapids on the way home.

After the Niskakoski Rapids, Mikko the pilot jumped out of the boat and started to walk back to the Niskakoski

upper course in Vaala. Sometimes he had to run along a narrow path. On his best day, Mikko had managed to complete the trip eight times. On the way he was hindered by roots, branchy logs and brushwood by ditches.

You had to reach the Niskakoski Rapids quickly to be ready to serve not only tar boats but also boats with loads of butter approaching from Lake Oulujärvi. Lately, there had been more and more travellers wanting to cross Lake Oulujärvi. The pilots called them “travellers for pleasure”.

Yesterday, Mikko had taken some young men with their bicycles through the Niskakoski Rapids. The men had said they had first come along the road by the river from Oulu to Vaala and then continued on a steamboat to Kajaani. On the way back to Oulu they planned to ride all the River Oulujoki rapids in boats steered by pilots. The bicycles were thrown among the butter barrels and then they set off.

## → River Oulujoki and its Nine Rapids – Freight Route and Tourist Attraction

- The River Oulujoki starts in Lake Oulujärvi and runs through the municipalities of Vaala, Utajärvi and Muhos, emptying into the Bay of Bothnia at Oulu. The River is 107 kilometres long and the largest tributaries are Kutujoki, Muhosjoki, Sanginjoki and Utosjoki.
- The Niskakoski Rapids in Vaala are almost 10 kilometres long, with a drop of 35 metres.
- The Pyhäkoski Rapids in Muhos are 20 kilometres long, with a drop of 57 metres.
- The smaller rapids include Kurenkoski, Ahmaskoski, Utakoski, Sotkakoski, Montankoski, Madekoski and Merikoski.
- Today there are seven hydroelectric power plants in the Oulujoki main stream: Jylhämä, Nuojua, Utanen, Pälli, Pyhäkoski, Montta and Merikoski.

- The River Oulujoki was a route for transporting tar and freight to Oulu.
- Pilots were rafters that the Crown (State) had started to employ from the 17th century onwards. Pilots were used to direct the boats safely through the rapids until the 1930s.
- Tourist traffic on the River Oulujoki started in 1898. The pilots had their own boats that they used for taking tourists through several rapids and then staying overnight in the houses by the river together with the tourists.
- Once the Oulu–Kontiomäki railway was constructed in the 1930s and the rapids were harnessed for power plants in the 1940s, the services of the pilots were no longer needed.
- In 1906, the Finnish Tourist Association acquired boats for transporting tourists. The still stretches had motorboats and cars to speed up the journey.
- A passenger boat accident in which six people were killed at the Pyhäkoski Rapids in the River Oulujoki put an end to passenger traffic in 1944.

# AHMAS – THE VILLAGE OF KALEVALA POEMS

*"Ahmas was singing poems,  
Using the Kalevala metre,  
Finding the rhythm of the Finnish language,  
Bringing honour to the village."*

"How is it possible that here in the village of Ahmas you have a Kalevala heritage village? After all, this is Utajärvi, Northern Ostrobothnia, far away from the poem villages of Viena. Elias Lönnrot didn't wander up here in the 19th century while collecting poems for the Kalevala." A keen visitor exploring the surroundings of Rokua was slightly puzzled, with good reason.

The tour guide thought for a moment and went on to tell a story: *"The first poem singer in Ahmas village was Lusia Rusintytär Korhonen, whose father was a well-known seer and witch. Lusia herself was accused of witchcraft and taken to court in the 1680s because she had healed a sick girl with communion wafers stolen from the church. The matter was taken to the district court, but Lusia hanged herself in the woods before the verdict was announced. The court records show that just before dying, Lusia had been singing old spells. This is how the Ahmas village poetic rhythms first came to be recorded in written form.*

*Pekka Kukkonen (later Gullstén) was born in Ahmas village in the 1770s, and later had his poem singing recorded in the Kalevala, the Finnish national epic. As a young man, Pekka listened to the poem singers, writing down the spells and Väinämöinen poems (Väinämöinen is one of the Kale-*

*vala characters). Pekka became a parish clerk in Rovaniemi, where he also worked as a surgeon after receiving instruction in medicine from Zachris Topelius Senior. Topelius was a student of medicine, who later became known as a collector and publisher of old epic poetry. Around 1804, Topelius wrote down several poems sung by Pekka.*

*News of the parish clerk who knew old poems also reached Reinhold von Becker, a researcher in Finnish linguistics at the University of Turku, who then specifically travelled to Rovaniemi in 1819. He obtained a collection of spells and Väinämöinen poems from Pekka, the parish clerk, and published an extensive article with sample poems on the son of Kave Ukko, Väinämöinen, in Turun Viikko-Sanommat (the Turku weekly newspaper).*

*Von Becker portrayed Väinämöinen as an historical person and a great heroic figure, concluding his writing with the words "...the name of Väinämöinen will surely not disappear as long as Finnish folk are mentioned in the world."*

*Elias Lönnrot, Reinhold von Becker's student, completed his Master's thesis on Väinämöinen in Latin in 1827. He mentioned the folklore collections by Topelius and von Becker as one of his sources, so Pekka Gullstén had already become known at this point.*

*There are two other singers from the village of Ahmas in the group of Kalevala poem singers. During his poem collecting trip to Vuokkiniemi in 1834, Elias Lönnrot had Martiska (Martti) Karjalainen of Lonka village sing to him and obtained 1,777 verses of folklore, almost as many as from Arhippa Perttunen, the most famous poem singer.*

*Martiska Karjalainen had learned the poems from Heikki Samulinpoika Kylmänen, who had lived in Kylmäänkylä, Muhos. Heikki, in turn, had learned the poems and spells from his father, Samuli Heikinpoika Kylmänen. Both of these poetic masters, father Samuli and son Heikki, were born in Pekkala, Ahmas.*

*Samuli's mother was Marketta Karjalainen, who was born in Veneheitto, Säräisniemi, but spent her young adult-*

*hood in Rokua. She was probably a relative of Martiska Karjalainen as Martiska had lived at Kylmänen for many weeks, listening to the ancient poems sung by Samuli and Heikki.*

*As you can see, this region boasts several significant poem singers, so it is only fitting that we say goodbye to the Kalevala heritage in the village of Ahmas with a poem of thanks:*

*Keeping the tradition,  
Bringing joy to the visitors,  
Providing information  
to those who wish to stay in shape."*

## → From the Cottages of Ahmas to the Pages of Kalevala

- There has been a village settlement around Lake Ahmasjärvi since the 1550s.
- A poem singer is a person who recites epic poems.
- The village of Ahmas in Utajärvi is located north of Rokua, 15 kilometres from Utajärvi municipal centre. The village is famous for its poem singers representing the Kalevala poetic tradition.
- The Kalevala poem singing is a significant part of the Finnish cultural heritage. Poem singing was originally an oral way of conveying tradition from one generation to the next among the illiterate people. Poem singers acquired their skills by listening to others who knew the poems by heart. Thanks to the ancient Finnish language form, it was possible to remember long poems.
- The Poem Singers' Trail tells the story of the poem singers through buildings and outdoor sites. The trail is located in the Kalevala heritage village in the village of Ahmas.
- Pekka Jaakopinpoika Kukkonen, later Gullstén (1770–1825), used the name Gullberg when he was apprenticed to the parish clerk, and later changed his name to Gullstén.
- One of the poems Pekka Gullstén sang to Zachris Topelius Senior (1781–1831) was the basic text of the 8th poem in the Kalevala, Ilman immen kosinta (Wooing of the Virgin of the Air). In 1819, Pekka Gullstén sang the 152-verse Väinämöinen series to Reinhold von Becker (1788–1858), including the poems Väinämöisen polvenhaava (Väinämöinen's Wounded Knee), Laivaretki (Journey by Boat), Kanteleen synty (Birth of the Kantele), and Runo Antero Vipusesta (Poem on Antero Vipunen).
- Elias Lönnrot (1802–1884) was the compiler of the Kalevala.
- Heikki Samulinpoika Kylmänen, originally Pyykkö (1803–1858), and Samuli Heikinpoika Kylmänen, originally Pyykkö (1781–1843), moved from Ahmas to the village of Kylmäänkylä, changing their name from Pyykkö to Kylmänen.

## LICHEN EVERYWHERE

A young boy was swiftly collecting lichen, putting it under his arm. An armful, like a large loaf of bread, was quickly transferred to a wooden box that kept filling, layer by layer. The boxes were stacked in piles of four.

The following week the boxes of lichen would be transported to Oulu railway station for local merchants to take to Germany. Grandfather Aaro was standing nearby, admiring his grandson's way of working. This was work best suited to handy young people and women. Lichen sold well, as the war raging in Europe was taking its toll and lichen from Rokua was used for decorating tombs.

Aaro had already been involved in commercial lichen collecting back in the 1920s. Luckily, there was now a fire-guard at Pookivaara Hill, which had put an end to severe forest fires in the Rokua area. The lichens had a chance to grow in peace, and visitors were not trampling on them either.

Aaro suddenly remembered the last summer of the 19th century, the first time he had been collecting lichen. His father had sent him to collect lichen near Lake Lianjärvi. Star-tipped reindeer lichen was not collected for decorations at that time; instead, it was needed to soak up the moisture between the window panes. There was an advertisement in the local newspaper saying that somebody wanted to buy "window lichen". His father was eager to try collecting lichen – it might bring some extra income

and work for the young folk. The advertisement advised that the lichen should be pressed flat under some planks and had to be packed in an airy box, where it was left to dry for a couple of weeks. No soil, sand or other dirt was to go in with the lichen. It was a lot of work, and transporting it wasn't easy either, yet you were only paid five pennies for a kilo.

At the beginning of the 20th century a new vogue spread from abroad: lichen was wanted all the way to Berlin as a decoration for German gardeners' flower wreaths and baskets. Collecting and drying lichen during the autumn rains was a hard job.

On one occasion, Aaro had found a signal horn among the lichen at Rokuanvaara Hill; the older men thought it must have been left there during the years of the Greater Wrath in the 18th century. The horn was kept as a memento on top of a cupboard.

Rokua lichen has always been utilised by someone. People have even needed lichen to have something to eat. Aaro's grandmother had had to learn how to bake emergency bread in the famine of the 1860s. The governor even hired a teacher for the neighbouring parish of Kestilä to show the wives how to make bread with lichen flour. They were advised to soak the lichen in lye water and then rinse it with water. After that, the lichen still had to be soaked for another day in boiled water. The soaking removed the

last traces of bitterness. After soaking, the lichen was spread out to dry on a flat base. The last step was to dry it in a low heat in a baking oven. The dry lichen was then crushed and ground into fine powder. To make this slightly sour bread you needed one half of bread flour and one half of lichen flour. In those distressing times, mothers told their families that *"you can certainly eat this without suffering, even without butter"*.

Sometimes lichen was boiled to get feed for the cow; it had to be boiled long enough so that it was not tough. Shredded straw or hay was added to the concoction, and the cow happily produced milk, even on that kind of food.

The batches collected by the grandson only included clean and lush lichen. The rainy autumn weather was the best time to collect it, as wet lichen did not crumble in the bottom of the box. Before being sent to Germany, however, the lichen had to be dried properly so that it would not go mouldy during the journey.

Aaro went to pay Metsähallitus 60 pennies per kilo for the lichen collected at Rokuanvaara Hill. He then heard that the Halla reindeer herding cooperative from Suomussalmi had just bought Rokua reindeer lichen for feeding their reindeer. On the way home, Aaro thought that the Rokua lichens surely had many uses.



## → Decoration, Medicine and Reindeer Feed

- A variety of lichens and heathers grow in the dry heath forests at Rokua. The star-tipped reindeer lichen is the commercially most significant lichen in the Nordic countries.
- Most of the lichen for export (some 200,000 kg) is collected in Northern Ostrobothnia, mainly on Hailuoto Island and in Utajärvi. The best zone for decorative lichen in Finland extends from Manamansalo via Rokua to Hailuoto Island.
- Rokuanvaara reindeer lichen (*Cladonia stellaris* syn. *Cladonia alpestris*) was sold by Metsähallitus' Vaala management area to several buyers from Oulu during World War II.
- Lichen is still collected manually. However, the collecting phase is facilitated by a variety of watering and drying systems that lengthen the collecting season and prevent the lichen from crumbling. Lichen is dried in wooden collecting boxes and then transferred to cardboard transport boxes in sheets.
- The collecting season lasts from May until September, and in the last few years, people have come from Estonia and Russia to work for the season.
- Lichen collected at Rokua is mainly used for floral arrangements

in graveyards and dried flower arrangements, as well as landscaping and miniature railway decoration.

- Grey reindeer lichen is used as a homeopathic medicine, and Iceland moss as a natural cure for alleviating huskiness caused by a sore throat.
- There are no reindeer in Rokua, but the reindeer lichen growing in the area – i.e., the grey reindeer lichen (*Cladonia rangiferina*, syn. *Cladonia rangiferina*) – has been bought by reindeer management areas for reindeer feed.
- Visitors to the Rokua National Park are asked to stay on the marked trails in order to prevent erosion. The collection of lichen is not allowed in the Rokua National Park.



## FISHING TRAPS AND FOREIGN ANGLERS

Jussi's father was looking for a steep underwater slope by the shore of Lake Rokuanjärvi. There, deep into the lake bottom, they drove some poles for support and fastened the side poles to the frame poles with twigs. Jussi helped his father by bringing pine twigs to be put inside this 'rijo' trap. The pile of pine twigs would provide a good hiding place for the fish, but it would ultimately be a trap. Jussi thought this 'rijo', with sides of four metres, seemed enormous, but his father said he had sometimes made even eight-metre traps.

As usual, Jussi's father arranged some spruce branches around the 'rijo'. Small wooden traps were put side by side outside the 'rijo'. The mouth of the trap was attached to the 'rijo' and a net was put around the whole structure. He took a long stake and stirred the construction with it. Jussi watched wide-eyed as the fish that had already swum into the 'rijo' were suddenly startled and flocked right into their traps. His father told him that the perch should not be disturbed too often in the spring, as they were getting ready to spawn. They would do more fishing in the autumn, when the mergansers took over the lake. The birds would scare the fat fish into the 'rijo' and there would be boatfuls of fish to sell.

After an abundant catch, Jussi's father promised him a trip to the River Oulujoki: "I'll take you angling on the River Oulujoki, just like the famous salmon lords."

On the way to the river, Jussi was wondering who these 'salmon lords' actually were. His father told him that aristocrats and other gentlefolk with peculiar names and titles had started to make fishing trips to the River Oulujoki; the rapids attracted lords and earls from England and elsewhere in Europe, even as far away as Egypt.

Jussi and his father headed for a familiar house by the Niskakoski Rapids. The master of the house told them that almost all of the autumn's anglers had already gone and only a couple of men from Helsinki were still there. Salmon catches had been meagre over the summer because the fishing dams had been shut too tightly. The master said that the best time to catch salmon on the River Oulujoki was in late spring and in the autumn. In the summer, the salmon were not too keen on taking the bait, and when fat, they ate hardly anything.

Jussi was taken along on an angling trip to the Niskakoski Rapids. The master gave the boy a lure that had caught salmon weighing more than 20 kilos in the same rapids the previous summer. First they rowed out next to the visiting anglers' boat. The men said they had travelled a long way to get to the River Oulujoki: first on the Lake Saimaa waterways, then via Kuopio and Iisalmi to Kajaani and from there on a steamboat to Vaala. The fishermen laughed and said that they had not come to the rapids for a large catch but rather to have fun and splash out with their excess money.

Jussi was intrigued by the basket lying on the bottom of the men's boat: it was filled with silk fish, artificial baits, lures, rods, lines and metal reels. One of the men showed him the reel invented by a factory owner from Oulu: it could be fastened to a rod or even to the side of the boat. The reel released line into the water as far and for as long as the fisherman wanted to release it. Now and then, the man touched the retainer, and the line was left hanging from a spring. Held by the spring, the line was tugging the lure as if to tease the fish. The spring was holding the line

but giving just enough so that the line did not become too tight. After a while the man grabbed a net and lifted a salmon into the boat. "Where on earth do you get reels like that?" asked Jussi's father in amazement. The men said that they were sold in several shops in Oulu.

A boat from Lake Oulujärvi was now approaching them, with freight men on their way to collect goods from Oulu. Jussi looked at the boat and wondered if he would transport goods along the River Oulujoki when he grew up. Would he be one of the freight men one day?

### → Catching Roach, Perch and Salmon with Traps and Spinning Lures

- Known for its abundance of fish, Lake Rokuanjärvi is especially rich in roach and perch.
- The Lake Rokuanjärvi roach sometimes migrated in droves down the River Neittävänjoki through the River Rokuanoja. The schools of roach packed so tightly into the River Rokuanoja that they could no longer move.
- The Lake Rokuanjärvi speciality used to be fishing with the traditional 'rijo' trap.
- At the end of the 19th century and in the early 20th century, the River Oulujoki attracted foreign fishing enthusiasts, who came to "angle", or troll, for salmon. For example, an Egyptian pasha fished at the Niskakoski Rapids for several summers, and as a thank you, he gave the Lamminaho farm owner a telescope. Contemporaries called them 'anglers' and 'salmon lords'.
- At the end of the 1890s, a 22-kg salmon was caught in the Niskakoski Rapids with a lure developed by Herman Renfors, an

influential person and factory owner in Kajaani. Renfors himself caught a 22.5-kg salmon with his lure in the River Oulujoki. You had to pay 10 marks per summer to obtain the right to go lure fishing.

- Fredrik Kiuttu, another factory owner, developed his own version of a fishing reel.
- The sources include information on gentlefolk who came from afar to fish in the unharnessed river's foaming rapids and still stretches.
- The tradition of sport fishing on the River Oulujoki remained strong until World War II, but after the war the rapids were harnessed for power plants and the salmon could no longer swim up the river.
- Oulua soutamassa (1886), a book by the Finnish writer Teuvo Pakkala, describes a journey by the freight men who transported goods on the River Oulujoki.





# KALAJOKI





## JUSSI KURIKKALA FROM KALAJOKI – NORDIC WALKING PIONEER

**J**ussi came jogging along the gravel road of Kurikkala Village. He met no one on his run, which was probably for the best. An unfamiliar traveller would have been hard-pressed not to laugh at seeing Jussi with ski sticks in the middle of summer. Jussi Kurikkala, the most famous junkkari in Kalajoki had been running and walking with his sticks up and down the sandy banks of the River Siiponjoki all summer. There was no one to stop and wonder at his undertakings there. He had walked and run dozens of kilometres each day.

Now, Jussi's run continued all the way to the Kalajoki sand dunes, where there were even bigger inclines for him to run up and down for as long as his strength would allow. Jussi had no time to look around, even though Hilma's hotel, meaning the boarding house run by Mr. and Mrs. Pahikkala, would have had all manner of sweet treats on offer. The soft drinks sold at the stands were of no interest to Jussi either. The sugary drinks with lots of carbonic acid – white, yellow or red – or the pastries sold at the bakers' shops were not for Jussi. He would eat hearty fish or seal meat, preferably caught by Jussi himself. There was also plenty of yield from the family's own field on offer at home.

During the summer, Jussi had been exercising by making skiing motions as well as walking and running. People had been even more stunned when Jussi had gone skiing along the sands with wooden skis. When he wanted to go really fast, he kicked the skis off and set off running along the dunes with just the sticks in his hands. The old cane sticks had not been up to the challenge, and Jussi had gone and got himself sticks made of hollow metal piping. They were a bit more durable.

Jussi's down-hill skills were not really benefiting from his training methods, for which he had been criticised several times in newspaper articles about skiing competitions. His strength was not due to sand training alone. Farm work at home also served as good training. Picking potatoes with a backpack full of rocks did wonders for the muscles.

The late-winter seal hunt accumulated a good deal of training kilometres. Pushing along the piece of driftwood that was used in the hunt required strength, and the distances covered on the ice in a day could amount to a hundred, if not several hundred, kilometres.

Jussi was amused by the many newspaper caricatures depicting his stamina. One newspaperman had even

claimed that Jussi had once drunk seal blood direct from the bullet hole. Jussi had admittedly caught many seals in his time, but he was yet to meet a single reporter out on the ice to witness the act. But, of course, everyone was free to make guesses. At any rate, seal hunting was the best form of training for skiing competitions. It was too bad that the best competitions were arranged at the same time as the seal hunt.

One rumour that Jussi had to admit to was that he had once taken off on a particular competition trip with

a 30-litre container of Baltic herring under his arm. Who could blame a man for wanting to take the best his home town had to offer along with him? In Kalajoki, that just happened to be fish.

The trip to the seashore once again proved worthwhile, for Jussi began the run back home with a bunch of grayling slung over his shoulder. They had to be cooked right away – the grayling was not a slow man's supper.



### → Heritage that Moves the Whole World

- Juho, or "Jussi", Samuli Kurikkala (1915–1951) was born in the village of Kurikkala in Kalajoki.
- The cross-country skier pursued his active career in the 1930s and was known for his extensive training programme and peculiar training methods.
- Kurikkala won three Nordic skiing world championship medals: silver in the 1937 relay (Lahti), gold in the 1938 relay (Zakopane) and gold in the 1939 18km race (Chamonix). In 1941 (the Cortina d'Ampezzo World Championships), Kurikkala won gold in the 50km race and relay, and silver in the 18km race, but the world championship title of the competition was later cancelled.
- Kurikkala was also a good long-distance runner and finished 13th in the 1948 Olympic marathon in London.
- As a summertime mode of training, Kurikkala also used walking with ski sticks. This is why he is considered the first Finnish Nordic walker. Inspired by him, Nordic skiers especially have used the training method of running uphill with ski sticks to raise their heart rate.
- Nordic walking – i.e., walking with sticks – has since become a popular form of exercise worldwide. Today's enthusiasm for Nordic walking is considered to have originated in 1997, when advances were made in developing the related technique, products and training.
- Kurikkala was buried in Iisvesi, where he trained and lived with his family for the final years of his life.
- Jussi Kurikkala's testament to the world of sports: "Even if it is great to achieve success in the playing fields of sports, the salvation of the soul is more important. You should always remember God and eternal life." The words are also carved on the statue of Jussi Kurikkala which is located by the Kalajoki town hall. The statue was made in 1989 by Antonio de Cuda.
- In honour of Jussi Kurikkala's traditions, a Nordic walking park meeting international criteria has been built in the Kalajoki Hiekat resort.
- In Finnish, "junkkari" means a boisterous young man. The sports club Kalajoen Junkkarit is still operating in Kalajoki.

## A SAILOR'S LETTER HOME TO KALAJOKI

**G**reetings from the Seamen's Mission in London! A man wants to leave something for the following generations to remember him by. This is why I am also writing to you at home in Kalajoki, as I'm not quite sure whether I'll make it back in time for the 19th century to give way to the 20th.

*It has been many years since I first sailed from Kalajoki to Aberdeen in Scotland with the merchant Santaholma's cargo of stone. I was hired on an English steamer taking drilled stone from Kalajoki to be ground by the Scots. I hear there is plenty of stone from Kalajoki among the gravestones of the Newcastle churchyard.*

*A group of us men loaded the big blue-gray blocks onto the ship miles away from shore on the open sea. The captain would not bring the ship near the port because the water was so shallow. The blocks of stone weighed as much as five tons a-piece. They were mighty difficult to take right next to the ship on the tiny barge we were using. Had the stones shifted on the ship during the storms on the way to Scotland, we would soon have gone down with them to the bottom of*

*the sea. Well, at least we would have had our gravestones ready with us.*

*They let me on the steamer as the engineer's helper, as I had already got to know my way around steam engines at the Friis brothers' machine works in Kalajoki. I knew exactly how a steam engine works. From Scotland I sailed on to London, where I visited the seamen's mission to send out my Christmas wishes to everyone at home. I trust they posted them in the local papers over there.*

*In London I took a job on a Scottish steamer and came back to Kalajoki to fetch a new shipment of stone for the grinding mill. As you know, we had a bad accident that time around. A short distance from the mouth of River Kalajoki, we ran into a rock, the very same famous one that everyone has always complained about.*

*It did not end up well at all, with the ship loaded full of Santaholma's granite and pit wood floated down the river. We had to turn back, but the leak was so big that we barely had time to unload the ship onto the fine sandy shallows before the ship went down altogether.*

Ours was not the first ship to meet its match on that same underwater rock. It had been reported to the pilot administration several times. Maybe now they'll believe that something has to be done about the port.

I myself was not bothered by the accident. I just took a new job at the port of Kokkola. There were many men from around the area on that ship heading to the mines in America, but I got off in Liverpool. I've no interest in America, but I have travelled a good deal between the ports of Europe.

That's not to say that I've seen a lot of the lives and customs of foreign nations. As a man who speaks a little English and no other foreign languages, the bustle on the streets of seaports is all the cultural education I'm about to get. That is why I'm happy to be visiting the seamen's mission again.

I've even managed to get my hands on a Finnish newspaper here in London with a report stating that the Friis brothers have begun regular autumn traffic from Vaasa via the shoreline ports to Kemi. I've been thinking about coming back to Kalajo-

ki, for I've been promoted to engineer now. It would be nice to stay close to home and set out in the morning from Kokkola via Kalajoki and Raahе to Oulu and Kemi. The steamer would sail whenever there is no ice to block the way. I would not have to worry about sailing into an ice berg like the fellows from Kokkola who were on their way to America. We would take only a little cargo and some good-humoured passengers on board.

I have not had a chance to visit any of the Finnish ports in two years. Now, my ship is about to sail to Italy, where it will be sold and the crew sent out to look for new jobs, so I'll probably be making my way home to Finland soon.

Yours, Erkki

In reality, Erkki died of stomach fever in a hospital by the River Thames in 1902. The steamer Leimu that was planned to operate on the home coast, with Erkki as the engineer, remained just a dream.

## → Ship and Factory Owners

- Marine traffic in Kalajoki has always been challenging due to the dangerous coast waters of the Gulf of Bothnia.
- The port was originally located at the mouth of the River Kalajoki that runs through the town, but the location was already problematic in the 19th century due to the land uplift around the gulf. The Rahja Archipelago began to be used for shipping in the 1890s, and systematic development of the port began in the late 1950s. Today, the port is visited by roughly 100 boats and ships each year.
- The main export is sawn timber, which is transported to England and the Mediterranean countries.
- The most famous ship from Kalajoki to sail the world seas was the barque (a large freighter) Kalaja that sank near the coast of

Newfoundland in 1885. The Kalaja was built by the businessman Antti Santaholma in 1873–1874. During the famine in the late 1860s, Mr Santaholma brought grain from St. Petersburg direct to the Port of Kalajoki. The need was great, and people from all over the Kalajokilaakso region bought the ground grain.

- The Friis brothers' machine works produced steam engines, iron foundry products and tar kilns, among other items. The iron crosses on the graveyards of the Kalajokilaakso region have mostly come from the Friis foundry in Kalajoki. In 1898 the Friis brothers established a steamer line operating along the coast of the Gulf of Bothnia.

## AUKKU CATCHING BALTIC HERRING

Aukku looked pensively upon the small Kalla islets. Once again, late July had meant sailing out to catch Baltic herring. He would not see hearth and home again until sometime around St. Michael's Day, when the late September storms would set in. For now, his home at the mouth of River Kalajoki was two and a half Swedish miles away. Aukku was well and truly stuck at sea. On a stormy day he could lie on the narrow bunk in the fishing hut on Maakalla and hope for fairer weather. For supper, he would cook fish soup with not even potatoes to give the soup some variety.

Aukku had sailed out with his family crew and high hopes. Fishing in the rocky shallows had been good in recent years. The most experienced man in Aukku's crew served as captain. Aukku's cousin and Aukku himself had been appointed oarsman and "stone boy" – they were in charge of handling the top and bottom cord of the fishing net, with the stone boy attaching stones as weights to the bottom cord. Aukku had to admit that fishing was a welcome change from farm work.



Along with Aukku's crew, the Kirkkohamina dock by Maakalla church was crowded with boats from Kalajoki and Himanka. Fishermen were racing to moor their boats. You had to be nimble to jump over the rocky edge of the dock. Soon the dock would be impossible to reach, as the sea would withdraw and the land rise.

Aukku knew that by nightfall the Kalla islets, Maakalla and Ulkokalla, would be packed with people. He had heard someone mention that the head count had even reached more than 300. He could not imagine how there could be enough room for everyone. After all, there was no more than five hectares of land on Maakalla, and he had been told that Ulkokalla was not even two hundred ells long.

First there would be the Islet Council held by the church, and Aukku also made his way there. In his shirt pocket he carried the deed of title, *haminafa*, his father had given him. The document would allow him to participate in the decision-making concerning the fees and agenda on the islets. Aukku felt like a proper man, being allowed to be involved in matters concerning the islets. The King of Sweden had originally granted autonomy to the fishermen of the Kalla islets. That was not the case back home in the Kalajoki municipality, where a man was judged first by his number of tax units and only then allowed to vote in local matters. Here, all a man needed was to have a deed to a spot on the dock and the port duties deposited safely in the islet bailiff's chest at the Maakalla vicarage.

The men would still have to listen to the evening prayer recited by a smooth-tongued speaker in Maakalla church, but when he had said his Amen, the men would race out of the dock and let the skipper lead them out towards the shallows. *"Dear Heaven, give us a sign and lead us to the rock where the herring are swimming today"*, each man chanted to himself.

The hemp nets had been untangled and taken to the boats earlier in the day. The net anchors and floats had

been checked, as had the top and bottom cord of the string of nets. Father had told Aukku to handle the bottom cord. If even the top cord would not yield fish, the crew had to row to a different spot. Only after finding a good spot could Aukku lie down for a moment on the floor of the boat. The nets had to be watched all the time, or a storm could sweep in and wipe away your fortune. Aukku dared not even say out loud how much was invested in three fishing nets, when the family needed a horse on the farm back home. To buy one, you would have needed as many as 35 Baltic herring nets.

Once the crew found a good spot in the rocky shallows and laid their three nets, they would light a fire on the boat. A blackened open-fire pot would hang from the hook, and on it they would place a coffee pot.

Before dawn, Aukku's crew would lift the nets into the boat and head off back to the islet with their catch. Once there, they would still have to shake the silvery fish from the nets and hang the nets to dry.

The "silver flanks" would then be cleaned and placed straight into large salting basins. That was how it had been done for centuries, and it was still the order of business in the early 20th century. Fish were scooped up with a 15-litre container into a shingle basket and rinsed clean in sea water. Sometimes it took the men the better part of the day to mend the nets and then make 30-litre containers for the salted fish. It made Aukku feel a bit sick to think about the fish leavings that would soon float along the shore. Indeed, it had been wise to bring clean drinking water from home, although Aukku had already got used to the coffee that was made with salt water.

Aukku knew that now was the best moment to close his eyes on the bottom of the boat and wait for dawn. Lying there, he got to thinking about late spring and how he had gone seal hunting in the same area. It had been grand to climb to the roof of the Maakalla church to look out for seals.

But to make a proper living, he should start farming his own land. He should buy a horse and a proper iron plough.

Maybe the fishing would be good this year. Aukku wished for barrels and barrels of fish. He had heard of a

crew that had caught 73 barrels of Baltic herring in one go. That would be enough fish to throw some back into the sea as thanks to Ahti, the water spirit. And it would buy you a horse.

### → Fish, Lamprey and Seals

- The fishing in Kalajoki has mainly consisted of Baltic herring caught near the rocks and islets in the sea.
- The peak period for Baltic herring fishing was during the 19th century.
- The catch was salted and sold on the markets in, for example, Oulu. Today, the fish are sold fresh.
- The fishing season started in the spring with river fishing (ide, grayling, salmon) and continued (spring and autumn) with Baltic herring and whitefish caught at sea. Lamprey fishing began in the autumn after the Baltic herring season.
- A specialty in Kalajoki has been the migrating whitefish that swim up the River Kalajoki and the sea-spawning whitefish caught at sea.
- In early spring, many fishermen also hunted seals on the ice. In Kalajoki, farmers were also part-time fishermen. The actual craft of full-time fishing did not come about until the 20th century.
- Aukku is a man's name found in Kalajoki.
- Baltic herring tend to gather to spawn in rocky shallows.
- St. Michael's Day is on 29 September.
- A Swedish mile is 10.69 kilometres; twenty-odd "miles" is roughly 25 km.
- During the Swedish rule, an ell was 59.4 cm. During the Russian rule, a Russian ell measured 71.12 cm.
- A *haminafa* is a document entitling the holder to fish in the Kalla islets.
- Salted Baltic herring were stored in round wooden containers: 30 l ("nelikko"), 15 l ("napes"), 7.5 l ("kepes"), and 4 l ("penikka").



## HILMA'S HOTEL

*"May the weather be fair or foul  
Hilma shall not wear a frown  
she sings as she cooks up a feast  
one that'll sooth the hungriest beast."*

**H**ilma sat reading her guest book in which the author Ilmari Kianto had written such high praise about her in the spring of 1947. Hilma could still recall the exact moment when she had been informed by telephone about the arrival of the famous writer. She had immediately rushed outside to welcome the guests – only to find no sign of the famous Kianto. Hilma had then walked down the Tuomipakat hillside and found a man and a woman, Mr Kianto and his secretary, sitting on their suitcases. The coach from Kokkola had dropped them by the road near the Hiekkasärkät sand dunes.

*"Come right this way, if you please!"* Hilma had called, pleased about receiving long-staying summer guests to start off the season. She could look forward to boarding the same guests for three whole weeks. Secretly, Hilma was still pleased with herself for always having freshly caught fish to serve. The seal hunters had also delivered the last salted seal meats of the spring hunting season. Hilma's own two cows, Rusko and Krynsylä, had been milking well, and the maids had already churned some butter and buttermilk. Hilma had even managed to acquire some good pork.

Hilma got a little wistful thinking about the previous summer, and now a brand-new season was about to start. She sat on the veranda of her restaurant and smelled the

sea air that was still rich with the scent of the bird cherry blossom. This year the trees had bloomed in abundance, and for a good while too, making the name of the particular sandy hill, Tuomipakat, quite apt as "tuomi" is the Finnish name of the tree. One thing Hilma was missing, though, was real coffee. The war-time surrogates and ersatzes had not been to Hilma's taste, and real coffee was not yet available. The Continuation War had been over for several years, but coffee beans were still black market items.

It had been nearly twenty years since Hilma, together with Mr Jarkko Jyrinki from Rahja Village, had bought the old staff's dwelling at the Santaholma sawmill. To the amazement of the locals, the cottage had been dragged over the ice from Plassi to the sand dunes. The building had been turned into a restaurant and boarding house, i.e. Hilma's Hotel, in 1931. Hilma's husband Jalmari kept fixing the place up little by little over the years.

Hilma got up from her spot on the veranda and went to the kitchen to check on the maid who was cleaning some sea-spawning whitefish. The fish were large enough to be salted, even though they were small for whitefish really. Hilma took care to serve good food at the restaurant, for Midsummer was round the corner. Not everyone who came to the beach to celebrate the holiday brought their own sandwiches wrapped in wax paper. Some want-

ed to enjoy a fine meal sitting at a pretty table and were even prepared to pay good money for it. For them, Hilma planned to sing and play her harmonium over the late June holiday. She might even come up with a new song or two.

Hilma was a little displeased by the fact that there were no good potatoes to serve at this point of the summer. She would have loved to serve some of those tasty "Piekkon muikku" potatoes that the people over in Rahja were so keen to grow. The potatoes had to be cooked very carefully, but they tasted mighty fine. On several occasions, Hilma had tried to ask the villagers what on earth Aukko was using to fertilise the potatoes, but she had been told that she was better off not knowing the answer.

Hilma had been hoping for more cafés and accommodation at the beach. There was plenty of room to build, and each year brought more and more tourists to the area. Hilma had been running her boarding house for almost twenty years, and hers was still the only establishment occupying the Tuomipakat area.

Hilma saw young boys from various villages in Kalajoki running up and down the sand dunes. The boys had ridden their bicycles all the way from the villages of Kärkinen and Tynkä. Soon they would come and buy lemonade and doughnuts from Hilma and start popping open the white porcelain caps of the bottles. The boys could still enjoy their treats undisturbed by any other Midsummer

guests, and there was room for everyone on the clean white sandy beaches that ran for kilometres and kilometres to the north and south. The situation would soon change as the holiday got going. All manner of folk would drop by at Hilma's for a meal. People from all over the province were beginning to gather at the Kalajoki Hiekkasärkät beach to celebrate Midsummer by blazing campfires. Unlike in other parts of the country, large bonfires were only built at Easter in Kalajoki.

Hilma quietly admitted to herself that it was grand to hear the people of Kalajoki talk about Hilma's Hotel. After all, the place was really nothing more than a boarding house that offered a clean place to spend the night and a good meal to fill the stomach. Even now, Hilma had red whey, also known as Midsummer cheese, on offer, since the cows in Rahja had begun to produce suitable milk after being set out to pasture. It took an entire day to cook the whey, but it was well worth it.

In the midst of her cooking Hilma remembered another line that Mr Kianto had written in her guest book: *"Hilma is a strong woman of the North capable of anything she puts her mind to..."* Hilma dared say Kianto had been quite accurate in his assessment!

## → Recreation for Locals and Visitors

- The first restaurant and boarding house at the Kalajoki Hiekkasärkät beach was established in the early 1930s; some refreshment stalls for tourists had been operating since the 1920s. This first tourism service provider in the area was built near the Tuomipakat area and was known as Hilma's Hotel. It has seven guest rooms on the first floor and a restaurant on the ground floor.
- The owner of the boarding house was Mrs Hilma Pahikkala (maiden name Rahja, 1891–1972). Hilma started as a travelling school teacher in Rahja, among other villages, and also worked as a shopkeeper in her day.
- Ilmari Kianto visited Kalajoki inspired by his fellow author Tito Collander. The hotel guest book includes several notes from other famous guests from the spheres of politics, the arts and sports.
- The building was demolished by burning in 1987; the present-day Dyyini restaurant was built near the former boarding house.
- A scale model of the boarding house is showcased at Kalajoki Hiekat.
- In Kalajoki the spring fishing season is primarily dedicated to catching sea-spawning whitefish in the shallows.
- Coffee was among the last items to be released from war-time rationing, although the first coffee boat did arrive in Finland as early as 1946. Rationing ended completely on 1 March 1954, at which time coffee also became a freely distributed item.
- Piekkon Aukko was even known to collect urine from his visitors as fertiliser for his potato field.
- Coffee was among the last items to be released from war-time rationing, although the first coffee boat did arrive in Finland as early as 1946. Rationing was abolished completely on 1 March 1954, at which time coffee also became a freely distributed item.
- People used to go to the beautiful Lemmenlaakso glen known as the "Love Glen" by the Tuomipakat area to collect blooming bird cherry sprays. Inspired by the romantic ideas associated with Lemmenlaakso, entire truck platforms were covered with bird cherry twigs.

## WOEFUL TIMES IN A VALLEY OF GRIEF DURING THE GREAT WRATH

It was a time of great woe in Kalajokilaakso, a valley of grief and misery. The best farmers had been taken by the Swedish empire to fight in the Ostrobothnian regiment; first to the Baltics and Russia, then back to Finland and finally through Sweden to the fells of Norway. No-one was left to defend his own land.

The first news of war and mayhem was reported to the people of Kalajoki at the autumn cattle market of 1714. The townsmen from Kokkola had already seen the first Finns fleeing from the Cossacks and Russian cavalry.

In no time, the Cossacks and nomads from Western Mongolia were racing through the fields and woods of the Kalajokilaakso river valley. They had been ordered to destroy a hundred kilometres of land inwards from the sea – and they did.

Five years went by. In 1719, a battle-worn drummer from the Ostrobothnian regiment came walking down the Kalajoki coastal road on his way back from the cam-



paign in the Norwegian fell country. Half of the men who had gone there from Kalajoki had frozen to death on the fells. The king himself had perished there.

The drummer dragged his feet towards his home with dread in his heart. He saw nothing but ruins of burnt-down houses that no-one had managed to rebuild, even though many years had gone by. He also met a familiar but quite miserable-looking wife who began lamenting the events of recent years and the Russians' handiwork. Children and youngsters had been taken to Russia, where they had reportedly been sold as slaves to the people of St. Petersburg. People had been tortured, mutilated and finally drowned in the river. The cattle were all but gone, as were the horses. The Russians had even wrung the necks of all the cockerels, and people had had to eat the carcasses of the animals, leather and all, to keep from starving. The grain fields were filled with mud, and there were no seeds to sow.

The Russians had not been satisfied with the old taxes; people were forced to pay new ones. The fire tax was what they called it, and if you did not pay, they would set your farm on fire. They had also appointed some starosta to govern the people and collect robot money, the old wife reported.

People had hurried to hide their money, but some had gone missing for good. In some villages, people had been able to buy peace with silver goblets. Some of the hidden stashes had been robbed by the enemy, some by the people's own neighbours. Even old Sukka-Matti from Rahja had hidden a large copper pot with all his money in the village tar-burning pits, but the fortune was now lost forever, the wife sighed.

People had tried to hide their children, women and old folk in wilderness huts, but how were they supposed to live there when they could not even chop firewood or light a fire to heat up a pot? It was not as if there would have been much of anything to fill the pot with anyway. The smoke had betrayed the spot, and the hide-away had turned into

a coffin for folk from many villages. The most resourceful ones had managed in the wilderness until spring, and only then had they dared return home, when the situation had calmed down somewhat.

The men who had remained in town were no match for the Russians – they had nothing to defend themselves with. Everyone had tried to look after themselves and their own, but it had not done them much good.

The old wife continued to complain that the villages had no-one left to pay the taxes. The new population register would have “vacant” written under almost every house. The sea was not yielding fish as there were no men to go out fishing. People had been forced to eat lichen and bark bread, and the women had even tried to make bread out of straw.

The Minister, coward as he was, had fled, leaving the parish with no-one to keep a record of the dead. Who knew where he'd gone – perhaps to Sweden. All the other civil servants had vanished right along with him.

The wife had also heard about the victory in the battle of Narva in Estonia. But then the troops had suffered a defeat in some place called Poltava and continued from there to the fell country in Norway. There was still nobody to defend hearth and home against the Russians. Why had the troops run off to the north of Sweden after the battles of Napua and Pälkäne, the old wife wondered.

She also inquired about the men from Kalajoki that had fallen in the Norwegian fell country. The drummer rattled off a long list of names: Kääntä, Untinen, Tiikkala, Jaakkola, Lastikka, Sorvari, Vetenoja, Pitkänen. Hundreds of men would not be coming back home to Kalajoki.

The drummer went on to wonder what the rest of them were supposed to live on. Where would they find the money to buy grain and cattle? Who would run the shop now that all the merchants from Kokkola had fled to Sweden?

The old wife suggested that they should go and borrow money and salt from the merchants in Raahe to buy cattle

and seed grain. Maybe even the people who had fled east to Savo would bring seed grain with them when they returned home. Then the farmers could sow new grain in the river-

side fields. The old wife had heard that the district court would also start sessions soon. Perhaps the time of Russian occupation and misery was coming to an end in Kalajoki.

### → The Kalajokilaakso Region Suffered in the Great Northern War

- The Great Northern War fought in 1700–1721 marked the end of the Swedish empire and caused unrest to spread all over Finland. The country was invaded and subsequently occupied by the Russians. In Finnish history, the period of occupation is referred to as the Great Wrath (1713–1721).
- The people of the Kalajokilaakso river valley region particularly suffered from the enemy occupation and the destruction that followed. Houses were deserted, and some were even burned down. The worst of the troubles in Kalajokilaakso occurred in the autumn of 1714.
- The Nystad Treaty of 1721 established a civilian government for Finland.
- After the war, in 1722, the people of Kalajoki wrote an account of their grievances: 276 children had been taken to Russia, 400 men had died in the war, and only one in ten farm animals had survived.
- Parish records for the parishes in the Kalajokilaakso region have not been preserved from the era of the Great Wrath and the total number of the dead is unknown. In the neighbouring Kannus a list of the deceased has been partially preserved, with several accounts of murder, arson and torture ("af Ryssen dräpen, af fienden brand, död och af ryssen martered")
- At the time, the Greater Kalajoki area included the Kalajoki parish and the neighbouring parishes of Ylivieska, Alavieska, Sievi, Nivala, Haapajärvi and Reisjärvi.
- Robot money = a tax paid to the Russians in grain and labour (rabóta, robóta = work, labour).
- Starosta = a village elder who was in charge of collecting taxes for the Russians.

## LIVING IN THE LIGHT AND SHADOW OF THE ULKOKALLA BEACON

On the highest point of the Ulkokalla islet, some 15 feet above sea level, stood a beacon, which some also called a lighthouse. The chief lighthouse keeper's wife had to think hard to remember how many years she had lived in the light and shadow of the beacon.

Fishermen had managed to fit in dozens of fishermen's huts and salting rooms on the northern shore of the islet. Everywhere you turned, you saw fishing nets hung to dry, and it was impossible to even walk between them.

Liisa, the chief lighthouse keeper's wife, looked upon the treeless islet. She had already grown used to not seeing anything green except for a few strands of lyme-grass and campion and a single black currant bush. Everything else that bloomed on the islet could fit on a plot the size of a small window in the lighthouse keeper's cabin, and even that tiny garden was about to wither away. After all, it was already August, and the new century, the 1900s, would soon have seen its first couple of years go by.

Liisa was still chilled to the bone when she remembered the events of the previous winter and January. The junior lighthouse keepers and their families had already gone to the mainland, and only Liisa and her husband had remained on the islet. The beacon had been turned off, for the sea was frozen and ships no longer required guidance to lead them to the ports of the Bay of Bothnia.

Liisa and her husband had no way of contacting the mainland in the case of an emergency. There was no horse on the islet, even if they might have dared try to cross the ice on horseback. Skis and sleighs would also be useless be-

fore March. The previous spring they had had to wait late into spring before the sea opened enough for a boat ride.

Liisa had grown accustomed to the isolation. From early November on, when the sea began to freeze, the regular lighthouse people were left outside the rest of the world. The isolation usually lasted until the end of February, sometimes well into March. During the shallow ice season there was no way of reaching Ulkokalla by boat or even on foot. One minute the ice may appear to be solid, but in the next instant the sea was wide open. So the chief lighthouse keeper's family remained stuck on Ulkokalla throughout the darkest winter.

That year, in January, a rumour had started in Kalajoki that all the buildings on Ulkokalla had burnt down. People in Vasankari village had even stood on the mainland shore and watched as heavy smoke and great flames shot out of the islet. The villagers had reckoned that it could not have been the beacon itself burning, for that had been turned off since December. They had wondered whether it was the lighthouse keepers' dwelling that was in flames.

Liisa was amused to think that even the newspapers had reported the fire, speculating that the people on the islet should be alright until spring, for they had been storing all kinds of food throughout the autumn months. The lighthouse itself had also been thought to serve as a temporary dwelling; no-one had imagined that a sturdy brick building like that could burn down.

Recalling all this, Liisa was hard-pressed not to laugh, for the whole business about the fire had, of course, been



nonsense. There had been no fire at the Ulkokalla beacon. It was an illusion witnessed by a few shoreline inhabitants of Vasankari village on the 17th of January. The illusion had probably been caused by the ice breaking up between the Ulkokalla and Maakalla islets. When the steam rising from the water due to the extreme cold shimmered in the sun, the onlookers thought they saw a fire. Such phenomena that look like a blaze had often been reported by the lighthouse keepers as the ice broke on a clear and sunny day in winter.

Now, in the summer, it was much easier to get word onto the mainland via the fishermen. A large group of men, and even a few women packers, had come to the islet in late July to catch Baltic herring. That was not to say that communications were quick. Another set of problems was yet to come, when the herring would be cleaned and salted in large basins. The leavings would be left floating in the shallows and would surely start to smell in the warm weather.

The waste would make the sea water unusable for cooking. The sea would wash the cleaning waste onto the edges of the islet, and no man or woman would want to cook with, let

alone drink, the water. It was wiser to start gathering drinking water by other means, such as by collecting rain water.

Liisa had complained to her husband that she could no longer even cook potatoes, because they were all gone already. Fish there was plenty of, but a body could only eat so much fish soup. A woman had to be very resourceful to come up with some variety for the dinner table. There would possibly be a little more of that now that a shop-keeper by the name of Friis from Kalajoki had introduced a new way of smoking Baltic herring and whitefish. The fish were first kept in regular salt water and then smoked in a brick stove. The smoked fish had been very tasty, and the demand had been brisk from the start. Liisa would have to have a stove like that made on the islet too.

In early summer, Liisa had managed to collect fresh bird's eggs from the shores of Maakalla for supper. She had also spotted a strange bird there that laid its eggs in such a difficult spot that nobody could get to them. A Swedish-speaking man who had come by the islet had called the birds the urias. He had said the bird could even dodge shotgun pellets.

## → From Signal Fire to Fully Automated Lighthouse

- In 1856, fishermen were granted permission to light a signal fire on the Ulkokalla islet to assist them while fishing.
- The lighthouse was built in 1872, when several fishermen's seasonal dwellings had already been built on the islet.
- A chief lighthouse keeper and 2–3 junior lighthouse keepers, together with their families, lived on Ulkokalla year-round.
- In the early 20th century, the lighthouse or beacon was dark from December to May.
- The lighthouse was automated in 1974.

- The original lighthouse keepers' house burned down in 1944, and the current house was built in 1948.
- The house was renovated for tourism in 2003–2006.
- Ulkokalla has a Finnish Meteorological Institute weather station and a telephone tower.
- A beacon is a type of lighthouse.
- A foot is 30.48 cm long.
- According to a newspaper article from the late 19th century, urias were found on Maakalla.



## PIEKKON AUKKO, THE BEST OF ALL HUNTERS

Old Jussi from Rahja Village carefully felt his Piekkon muikku potatoes in the pot with the tip of his knife to see if they were done. The peculiar-shaped potatoes had originally come from the field of Aukusti Isokääntä, also known as Piekkon Aukko. Now they were grown on every farm in Rahja village. They were mighty fine-tasting potatoes, to be sure.

After supper, Jussi set out to visit Aukusti in his cottage in Piekkonniemi. Under his arm Jussi carried a newspaper that he planned to read aloud to the eccentric hermit. The hunting skills of the famous Aukusti from Kalajoki had again made the papers, as the autumn deer hunting season was about to begin.

This is what was printed in the paper: *“The fisherman and hunter Aukusti Isokääntä, living by the sea in Kalajoki, known for his hunting skills ever since he was but a boy, is again said to have shot six otters during this past spring and summer. Most of these lively animals were shot at sea with a bullet gun; the same one he has used for most of his shooting throughout his life. The man is unrivalled in all of Kalajokilaakso river valley in all categories of hunting, not to mention his skills as a marksman. His steady and accurate hand is yet to meet its match. He is still the very best in the demanding task of straightening the gun, which requires a very keen eye, indeed!”*

Aukko listened carefully to what Jussi read. *“That’s very high praise to be sure, but I dare say it’s well-earned”*,

Aukko said and began to tell Jussi more about his life as a hunter and fisherman.

*“I spend my winters here alone, with only my loyal dog, Nätti, as company. The nearest neighbour’s house is more than a kilometre away. In the summer, though, there are plenty of fishermen around, and I also do my share of fishing.*

*Just this last summer I caught something mighty peculiar. There were 50 planks floating about out in the open sea. The customs officials had to make a report about the wood in the papers to get the owners to come and fetch them. I had no use for them, for I already have my cottage right here.*

*I’ve also seen white whales in my day. Eight years ago a big white whale came up swimming just south of the Ulkokalla islet. Back in 1904 I also saw the dead four-metre female that had got itself tangled up in the fyke net belonging to the farmer Erkki Puskala from Vasankari village just north of the mouth of River Kalajoki. The north wind had thrown the whale against the rocks ‘til it finally died.*

*Once I was lucky enough to shoot a seal in the River Silponjoki. It was as big as seals come, and no-one had ever heard of seals swimming up the river before.*

*Last autumn, around the time of the bird-shooting season, I dropped well over a hundred black grouse from around the decoy grouse laid out to lure the birds in. After the snow came, I caught several weasels, as well as five foxes and three otters. I can tell you I know how to lay traps for weasels and otters in places where I’m sure to catch some.*

*Foxes I catch with poison. I first lure them out of hiding with dead bullheads and then lay out the poison. This winter, though, the snow has covered a few foxes, but I still have hopes of finding them.*

*Geese, swans and other larger birds are no match to me either, for they also like to flock here to the peaceful waters off Rahja. Needless to say that I set off shooting them every chance I get. That’s not to say that I don’t enjoy the sight of them flying free too.*

*Last autumn I took part in the deer hunt and assured everyone in advance that I’d have my first kill on the first day of shooting, which I did. Come morning on the first day and an elk had already died from my bullet.*

*Now, I’ve already asked around about lands for the next deer hunt, so that I can be the first man out there again. We see elks quite often in great herds hereabouts and especially*

*in the wilderness of Kauanen. At times I have been known to kill a few with my own permission.*

*I’ve tried to give advice to the youngsters and set a good example as a gunman. I have not kept my knowledge to myself but have given advice to anyone who will take it.”*

A while later the newspaper did post a notice listing nearly forty men who had been granted permission to kill elks in the Oulu Province, i.e. all of Northern Finland, for the autumn of 1906. In Kalajoki, farmers Juho Wiljam Nuorala, Antti Joensuu and August Isokääntä as well as blacksmith Antti Hitsala were allowed to hunt bucks during the first eight days of September.

Did Aukko kill an elk legally this time? It would appear so, as sometime later the paper reported that four elks had been shot in Kalajoki.

### → A Hermit Living on a Natural Economy

- The most famous hunter and fisherman in Kalajoki was August (or Aukusti) Isokääntä (1846–1928). The locals remember him better by the name of Piekkon Aukko.
- Aukko was a fishing hermit who is considered to be the last man in Kalajoki who lived on a real natural economy.
- Aukko became so famous that the local vicar and even the folklorist Samuli Paulaharju recorded information about him in various archives.
- Today, he is known for the variety of potatoes known in Finnish as Piekkon muikku. The Piekkon muikku variety is also called muikula; the potatoes are narrow and longish in shape, resembling the more common northern variety, puikula.
- He used to grow his potatoes on a plot by his cottage, and the variety spread throughout the neighbouring villages. The Piekkon muikku variety is still grown in Kalajoki and nearby areas.
- According to one source, Aukko received his first muikula potatoes from a German ship. Another source places the origin of the variety in Northern Sweden, where Aukko reportedly brought it home from his hunting trips.
- The decoys used in fowl hunting were made of cardboard or a similar material, with a real bird’s tail attached to it. The decoy grouse were set up high in the treetops to attract other grouse to the spot.
- Elk poaching was not unheard of, although the elk population was still quite modest in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.



## ANNA – THE SEAL HUNTER'S WIFE

**T**his year, Anna had walked with Antti all the way to the edge of the partially melted ice as he set out for his hunting trip. From there, the hunters from Rahja took off in a traditional long open boat along the edge of the ice cover to the north and the Kalla islets. There, the ringed seals would be found digging their burrows into the ice in the brilliant late-winter sunshine.

When Anna got back home to Rahja she looked out of the window of her cottage in the Myllyniemi croft. The March sun was warming the shingle roof of the small windowless barn that housed the family's only cow and three sheep with their lambs.

It was a small wonder that they had managed to keep the cow alive these past few years. All of the Kalajokilaakso region had been struggling with famine. Anna's first-born son, Matti, had died of typhus in late 1868. The little lad had run a high fever with stomach pains. As if that had not been bad enough, Anna's own milk had run out, and she had had to give the boy cow's milk with a hollow horn. At the boy's death bed the doctor had said that Anna should not have given the child cow's milk with a dirty cow horn. Infants weakened by disease could not tolerate spoiled milk. Little Matti had been buried in the common grave in the Kalajoki churchyard before Christmas.

Frost had taken the crops in the villages of Kalajoki for many years in a row, but the sea had yielded enough food to keep the families alive. Now it was again time for the men to go and collect it.

For all of February, Anna had listened to the men of the extended family as they had sat in her cottage and discussed the coming hunting trip at the islets. The big boat, as well as the smaller jullas and sledges, had been checked carefully. The big boat was really Antti's brother's fishing boat that was being used in late winter for the seal hunt, which could last several weeks. Antti had no boat of his own, but being a trustworthy man, he had once again joined the Rahja crew. In fact, except for the Crown Pilot or the Chief Lighthouse Keeper, no one else had such excellent hunting equipment.

As the men had sat planning their hunting trip, Anna had cooked some mutti for them with the last of her barley flour. Once she had almost burned the mutti when she had left the pot hanging in the fireplace and concentrated on scribbling and spinning hemp and flax to make yarn for the traps. Luckily, she had managed to lift the iron pot from the hook just in time.

Anna looked at the corner of the cottage where Antti's seal gun had leaned just a while ago and remembered once

again how much the gun had cost. As a partner in the previous trip, Antti had received some money from the sales of the train oil, and the money had changed hands quickly. The first time Anna had laid eyes on Antti had been at the Plassi market, where he had been looking at a fine gun.

Antti from Rahja had married Anna from Vasankari two summers ago. They had been married at the vicarage that stood on a handsome spot on the Kalajoki riverbank. The following summer, the godparents had taken their first son to be christened at the same vicarage.

Anna and Antti had both been born to farmers who owned their land, but their shares in the estates had not been enough to buy their own land and house. Antti had at least been promised a croft on the edge of his home farm. The land had been cleared and the cottage built sometime before autumn and the beginning of the Baltic herring season. Luckily, the timber had been obtained from the forests belonging to Antti's family farm. The following winter, Antti had spent the precious few hours of daylight mending the fishing nets.

Anna's inheritance had been a pregnant cow. She had been able to trade the calf for some sheep, and the wool had come in handy several times over. The cow was also expecting a new calf now. Anna could not help being a little disappointed about not having been dealt a better hand in life – after all, she was the daughter of a landowner. She had to eat nothing but salted fish from autumn to spring. With a bit of luck, though, the seal hunt would bring some new tastes to the plate.

Anna was also sorry that they did not own any forest land. Acquiring firewood had been difficult for as long as they had been living at the Myllyniemi croft. The nearby forest in the village had already been chopped down so efficiently that Antti had had to fetch felled and lopped poles from the forest behind his home farm all the way from the shores of the River Siiponjoki. The timber had to be paid for with several days of work on the estate.

Anna hoped Antti would catch some seal pups as their meat was so delicious. The meat could be salted in barrels. She also hoped there would be many jugs of seal blood that she could use to make black pudding. She was thankful she had put some rye flour aside; there were a few scoopfuls left in the bottom of the small bin. The seal fat would be used for making train oil. How Anna wished they could afford to keep just enough oil to make some proper oily red ochre paint. But it would probably end up being used to oil the bottom of the boat and the iron runners on the sleigh as usual.

Anna's spring turned out to be a long and lonely one, for the men made several seal hunting trips. The ice stood without moving for a long time. It had not even melted by May, when people in other parts of the Kalajoki parish began to prepare to sow oats. It was no use thinking about the dangers of the hunting trip. Many men in the Kalajoki church register had drunknad – the Swedish word for 'drowned' – written after their name.

## → Seal Hunting Then and Now

- Seal hunting has been practised in Kalajoki for centuries.
- The hunters would set out in the spring to look for seals on the frozen sea.
- The traditional types of boats used in seal hunting were a long open wooden boat with a single mast (isovene, or "large boat" ) and the smaller flat-stern rowing boat, julla.
- The hunting trips could last for weeks.
- The seal meat, blubber (seal fat) and skin were all utilised.
- A good hundred years ago it was estimated that as many as 90,000 grey seals and 180,000 ringed seals lived in the Baltic Sea. In the 1970s and 80s the grey seal population was roughly 2,000–4,000 and the ringed seal population just under 5,000 animals. In 2009, there were 20,400 seals living in the Baltic Sea.
- Today, seal hunting requires a special permit.
- In March 2010 the game management districts organised a course in Lohtaja, a parish near Kalajoki, to train people in traditional seal hunting skills.
- Mutti is a lumpy meal made from barley flour, water and salt. In the Kalajokilaakso area dialect, the food is also known as pepu which is typically finer in texture than mutti.
- Typhus is a disease that causes high fever, stomach symptoms and a rash.

## THE KALLA COUNCIL – WE ARE IN CHARGE

"**W**e are in charge of our own affairs here on the rocky Kalla islets of the Gulf of Bothnia." The newly elected Islet Bailiff opened the meeting and knocked the stone table with a rock to emphasise his words. There was a thick book of protocol, with appendices, in an open chest by the Maakalla church. The documents compiled at the council meetings over time, as well as the fishermen's many haminafasta documents and the Islet Board judgement book, were collected in the chest.

Yet there was not a word of Finnish to be read in all the documents. The Islet Bailiff thought it was high time for the Swedish to be replaced by Finnish. The older, German-style writing was not even legible anymore, even if one did know Swedish.

Old men had told the younger fishermen that the Kalla islets had not originally belonged to anyone. Each man to come to the islets had been free to build his own fishing hut. Later on, the islets had been known as the king's common land, where everyone was free to fish. There were

plenty of eager newcomers, and the first boat crews began to defend their own dock spots, fishing huts and net-drying stands. This gave rise to the practice of checking the fishing rights every year on the 25th of July to start off the Baltic herring season. The fishermen began to draw up unique fasta documents – i.e., deeds of title – stating the rights of each boat crew to use Maakalla and Ulkokalla.

The men who had arrived for the meeting crowded together to hear who had been elected to the Board. There were plenty of willing candidates. Every man on the islets had come running to the meeting when the church bell had been rung. They had left their lunches and had stopped cleaning the fishing nets in boiling water to go to the meeting. Someone had even set up a game of teikka to pass the time.

The Bailiff reminded the fishermen how the King of Sweden had granted restricted autonomy to the Kalla islets way back in 1669 and ordered the establishment of the Islet Council and Court. In 1771 King Adolf Fredrik had further issued the haminordningi, or islet bylaws, that were still in force. The legal document was also safely stored in the Islet Bailiff's chest.

The Bailiff was well known and well respected – after all, he had been elected to the highest position of trust for many years in a row. Liquor was not seen on the islets under his rule, and no-one dared start a drunken quarrel.

The Islet Bailiff knew his duties well. It was not difficult to reach agreement on common matters. On rare occasions he had had to take a particular matter to the mainland to be decided by the district court. The unique form of law and order on the islets had been enforced by trusted men elected by the fishermen themselves for a hundred years already, and the same order of business was about to continue.

The Islet Bailiff reminded the crowd about the ways in which the Islet Board, formerly known as the Islet Court, executed its jurisdiction. The Board held its sessions at the Maakalla vicarage and followed the procedure of a district court. It could hand out warnings and formal requests to those who had committed offences and also determine fines. Anyone found guilty of theft was invariably run off the Kalla islets. The decisions made on the islet were ratified by the governor of the province.

The executive authority and administration of justice were delegated to the Islet Bailiff. He was in charge of keeping order on the islets as well as taking care of the buildings. As a guideline, he used the islet statute book from 1771.

After the initial formalities, the Islet Council session proceeded with the traditional auction. The custom was to dole out duties to the lowest bidder. Setting the spar buoys and looking after the signal light could be managed by any man on the islet. However, the mounting of Moses' kumpale and the other navigation marks on the islet required a bit more skill. They had to be positioned exactly right. The Moses' kumpale was a slanting pole with a root-stalk attached to the top that stood on the west side of the church as a sort of cross pointing to the east and west. Crews had to be able to navigate towards the Pohjanpauha

shoals based on the pole and the other navigation marks. Someone from the crowd made a suggestion: "*Maybe the same men as last year should bid for the job this time too.*"

To finish the session, the boat crews were listed, the islet duties collected and all the information recorded in the book. The participants dug out their kopecks from the pockets of their waistcoats. The money would buy tar for the church roof and ruddle for the walls. The vicarage would be left as it was for the time being.

The Bailiff had again admitted new boat crews this summer, for some of the old ones had not arrived. Together with the members of the Board, the Bailiff had inspected and measured the boat docks and written up the protocols. If the boat was fit for the purpose, it received a deed of title. This way the boat dock was assigned to the crew for as long as they would use it.

To this day, the traditional Islet Council holds sessions on Maakalla remaining a significant and unique event in Finland.

## → Autonomy Since 1771

- The Finnish word *kalla* refers to an islet or rock rising from the sea. In Ostrobothnia, the word is also used to refer to a pile of rocks left by the late-winter movements of the ice cover.
- The Maakalla islet was used as a seasonal fishing site as early as the 16th century. The Ulkokalla islet has been used since the 18th century. The Kalla islets form a nationally significant cultural environment and traditional landscape that keeps extending due to land uplift.
- The fishermen of the Kalla islets enjoy a centuries-old form of autonomy that dates back to the Swedish rule.
- Important matters concerning the islets are discussed at the Islet Council which is the highest administrative organ on the Kalla islets. Those with a title to a fishing spot (i.e., boat dock) in the islets are entitled to vote at the Council meetings – today, the title equals ownership of a fishing hut. The Islet Council is still chaired by the Islet Bailiff.
- The Islet Board (previously known as the Islet Court), in cooperation with the Islet Bailiff, see to the enforcement of the decisions as well as the economy, administration and jurisdiction of the islets.
- The following Islet Council sessions of the summer were called by the Islet Bailiff, and were dedicated to the reading of the Islet Court rulings. At the last meeting of the season, the treasurer would report on the islet and church accounts.
- A *haminafasta* is a deed of title entitling the holder to permanent rights to a boat dock and, therefore, use of the islet.
- *Teikka* is a game where money is thrown into a pit.
- The autonomy of the Kalla islets is based on the following documents:
  - 1669 *Hampne-Rätt*; the bylaws of local ports
  - 1726 Extended revision of the port bylaws, stored in the Islet Bailiff's chest
  - 1771 The revised *Hamina-Ordningi* by His Royal Majesty
- A *kumpale* is a traditional Finnish navigation sign – these visual guides for seafarers have been built along the most important routes for centuries.



# BATHERS AND SEA ENTHUSIASTS IN KALAJOKI AS EARLY AS THE 1870S

A summer guest's letter home from Kalajoki in August 1879.

**I** decided to write a few lines about the sandy beaches and especially the Rahja Archipelago here in Kalajoki. I got here from Vaasa on the steamer Ahkera, which took me all the way to the neighbouring Himanka Port, where I took the innkeeper's horse coach to Rahja Village. A group of bathers has gathered here to enjoy the wonderful sandy beaches of the Gulf of Bothnia.

The local fishermen are already moving to the outer archipelago, where the autumn fishing season has started. The archipelago of Rahja Village has been abandoned and left for us health-conscious bathing guests to enjoy. We are travelling from island to island, taking full advantage of the fresh sea air. We have entertained ourselves by admiring the beautiful nature of the archipelago.

If even one doctor would come to the Rahja Archipelago announcing that he would receive bathing guests and offer assistance, I'm certain that the seashore would be an excellent spot for a proper spa. I would expect people from near and far to flock to the seaside to enjoy the healing benefits the refreshing northern seawater has to offer.

At the same time, the guests could visit the Hevoskari islet to wonder at the ancient stone labyrinth there. The stony

construction is built so that the mouth of the labyrinth faces south-east, leading to several passages. If one cannot choose the right one, he is cast right out of the maze.

There are also other piles of rock to be seen here left behind by ancient fishermen who have laid stones on the ground to support their net-drying stands. At least the Lepänen and Korkiakari islets have boasted bases for fishermen in the old days. On Hevoskari and Pappilankari, people have even attempted to farm land, and Pappilankari was occupied year-round up until very recent years.

The nature in the archipelago is quite fertile, and the islets are home to an abundance of various species of plants and trees that are rare in other parts of the parish. However, there are no human dwellings on the islets, except for a few fishing huts, for most of the islets are crown rental land. Lots of hey, leaves, berries and other necessities are harvested from the islets, though, making the landscape very pleasant indeed.

In addition to bathing, we have been travelling from place to place. The Roukala farm has sold us fresh milk at five pennies a jug. We have been able to camp out on the beaches of Rahja Village for two marks for the entire month. At Mansikkaniemi we have caught so many bullheads that we're growing tired of the fish already. The scary-looking cre-

ature makes a tasty soup when you throw out the head and only cook the tail end.

I'm not yet quite accustomed to eating the so-called hey fish that they make here in Kalajoki. The locals think it is the best salted fish there is. The Baltic herring are placed in salt water uncleaned, which, according to the local consensus, makes them quite tasty. We summer guests don't really have a taste for them because where we come from the fish are always cleaned before salting. Other buyers are not keen on acquiring uncleaned salted fish either. Transporting fresh fish has not been customary around these parts.

The sea temperature varies greatly on the coast, but I have had the opportunity to enjoy nice warm water after a dip in the sea; on a nearby islet, a tiny old grey-bearded captain has built a closet with water pipes that give warm and hot water at the turn of a knob. It's a real treat for a bather to

get out of the frigid sea and step right into a warm shower. To date, no-one has had the good sense to build bathing huts on the beach where visitors could change in peace.

The local farmers could also build proper summer cottages here, allowing guests to spend the summer in a great deal more comfort. The first log cabin has already risen in the forest, but the interior is still unfinished.

I took part in a wonderful trip to the Kalla islets and Mansikkaniemi. There were some one hundred people on board the steamer. It was nice to listen to a band playing in the sunshine, and even the sea remained dead calm all day. It would have been grand to hear the famous songbird from Kalajoki on that trip, but the opera singer Ida Basilier did not happen to be giving concerts at Kalajoki this year.

Love, Ada

## → Rahja Village and Archipelago as the Cradle of Tourism

- The first hikers and swimmers to enjoy the sandy beaches and the sea at Kalajoki came to the area in the summer of 1879. The twenty-odd travellers were accommodated at the beaches of Rahja, Roukala and Mansikkaniemi. They passed their time sailing from one islet to another and swimming in the sheltered coves and inlets. In between their nature excursions, the visitors took a steamer to, for example, the Kalla islets.
- They expressed a wish that bathing huts and better accommodation be built for summer guests so that the beachgoers could take care of their health in good conditions.
- The first steps of the tourism industry in Kalajoki were taken in the area of Rahja Village located south of today's Kalajoki Hiekat tourist resort.
- In the Swedish-language papers published in Finland at the time, Kalajoki was referred to as badort, or 'bathing place'.
- There is a historic stone labyrinth on the Hevoskari islet in the Rahja Archipelago. It is located at just 4 metres above sea level. Based on the rate of land uplift, the islet did not rise from the sea until the 18th century. The Hevoskari stone labyrinth comprises eleven rings of stones with an east and west-pointing cross in the middle.
- One milk jug is 2.6 litres.
- Today, the Rahja Archipelago is maintained by Metsähallitus; previously, the area was public rental land.
- The famous opera singer Ida Basilier-Magelssen (1846–1928) lived in Kalajoki during her childhood years. She held concerts in Kalajoki on, for example, 19 September 1875. An advert for the concert was published in the newspaper Oulun Wiikkosanomia on 11 September 1875.

## LUMBERJACKS ON THE RIVER KALAJOKI – MORE WOOD THAN WATER IN THE RIVER

The people living along the River Kalajoki were used to the spring floods washing away bridges and moving water mills and hay barns. The floods would cut off roads and make it difficult to get from one place to another. Great flocks of migrating birds would gather on the flooded lands. In the mid-1890s, Finland's growing forest industry and the brisk demand for logs also brought another migrating breed to the riverside – lumberjacks.

Men from the parishes of the Kalajokilaakso region had already travelled north to float logs on the Rivers Kemijoki and Tornionjoki in the early 1890s. Now, the forests in the province were beginning to attract sawmill entrepreneurs, who also needed log floaters from outside the region to come and lend a hand. In May 1896, news of 25,000 logs that had been rolled into the river spread throughout the Kalajokilaakso region. Two hundred men had been hired to float the logs, and the plan was to float them all the way from the mouth of the river along the coastline to the steam sawmill in Himanka.

However, the logs rolled from Kalajokilaakso accumulated into huge drives in the river rapids. The river ran through densely populated villages, and great crowds gathered on

the banks to watch the men clearing the drives of logs. Here, the lumberjacks were not working in the pristine wilds.

May was well underway, and the lumberjacks, along with the logs, were approaching the villages on the edge of the Kalajoki municipality. The timber had floated all the way from Haapajärvi and was already past Ylivieska. The crowds watched from the riverbank as the logs were being floated through the rapids that fell between Alavieska and the mouth of the river.

Local farmers stood watching the lumberjacks at work, wondering whether the salmon could still swim up the river in the midst of all those logs. At the rate things were going, the salmon dams would break and the traps would be ruined. The farmers were also worried about the fact that the salmon catching rental rights to the river were now in the hands of wealthy forest companies that were only interested in the value of logs and not in fish. Log floating would be the end of fishing on the river. Fishing in the upper stretches was also hindered by the many lamprey pots placed at the mouth of the river, making it impossible for the river-spawning fish to swim up any further.

The women who had come to see the drives of logs were, in turn, wondering whether they could still soak

their flax in the river. The fibre had to be soaked thoroughly before the breaking and scutching, and the river water had served the purpose well.

People had also gathered on the riverbank for the simple reason that two of the floaters had nearly drowned during previous spring seasons. This year – in fact, just last Sunday – a floater who had come to Kalajoki from Lammi had been battered by the logs. He had struggled in the water with the logs for a half a kilometre. People had not managed to pull him to safety until the still stretch. Someone among the men sitting on the bank told the others that he had read a newspaper report about Vellamo taking a lumberjack at the Sikalankoski rapids in River Vääräjoki at Sievi.

The lumberjacks were turning the air blue with their cursing when they realised that the flooding river had spread the logs all over the riverside meadows. *“This is no river for log floating. This stretch should be cleared in a hurry!”* the floating supervisor yelled in anger, seeing the widely flooding river and the logs strewn all over the place.

The lumberjacks were a naturally loud lot, but the spectators on the riverbank were even louder. Everyone was keen to catch a lumberjack having an accident. Children were warned not to go too close to the water: *“Näkki will come and take you like that boy who drowned last week over on the upper stretches.”*

The men were making guesses as to whether the logs had been bought by the businessman Santaholma or the Wolff sawmill. *“Could I join the log floating, and how much would they pay me?”* one young man had the courage to ask aloud. The farmers standing nearby were quick to disapprove: *“Now there's a fine fieldworker who would rather go floating logs than do proper land work. I would pay you eighteen marks a week, but I expect you could make more floating logs.”*

Some of the forest owners who had sold timber to the sawmill companies were standing among the spectators.

They had personally driven the logs to the riverside with their horses during the spring. The price of floated logs in Kalajoki did not please the sellers; the value of wood was higher in other parts of Finland. They were also put off by the fact that the forest companies were buying wood so young that not even thin stakes were left standing in the forests.

As the June of 1897 progressed, the log floating came to a standstill at the mouth of the River Kalajoki. The long rapids looked as if they had a lid on them, with logs and paper blocks all mixed in with each other. The timber would simply not budge due to the low water. The lumberjacks could curse all they liked, but the drives of logs would not move. The timber still had a long journey at sea ahead of it before it would reach the Himanka sawmill.

During the following winter, a sawmill run by the Wolff company rose at the mouth of River Kalajoki, and people from the parish were eager to sell their wood there. New lumberjacks arrived at Kalajoki the following spring at the same time as the flocks of migrating birds.



## → Log Floating from the 1890s to the 1930s

- The River Kalajoki is roughly 130 kilometres long. Vääräjoki is the largest tributary of the River Kalajoki, joining the main river at Tynkä village, roughly nine kilometres from the mouth of the river. The other tributaries include Malisjoki, Settijoki and Kuonanjoki.
- The River Siiponjoki that branches off the River Vääräjoki is another emptying route from the river basin.
- The River Kalajoki that runs through the town of Kalajoki was not suitable for log floating due to the extensive spring flooding. Despite the difficulties, log floating was introduced in the Rivers Kalajoki and Vääräjoki in the 1890s.
- Timber was floated to the Port of Kalajoki, mainly from Nivala, Haapajärvi and Sievi.
- On the River Siiponjoki, logs were actively floated well into the 1920s and 1930s, and the logs came all the way from Sievi via Vääräjoki.
- A well-known Finnish song with lyrics written by Teuvo Pakkala says that lumberjacks are like waterfowl: most water birds migrate to Finland in the spring.
- According to one source, Teuvo Pakkala wrote his play Tukkijolla (“On the log River”) based on the log floating on the River Siiponjoki.
- Vellamo is a female water spirit featured in the Finnish national epic Kalevala.
- Näkki is a water spirit who was believed to tempt people underwater by singing and playing. Finnish children used to be warned against getting too close to the water’s edge or well by telling them that Näkki would come and get them.
- The businessman Antti Santaholma was one of the most famous merchants in Kalajoki with business operations in various fields in Kalajoki, Oulu and the Raahe region.
- There used to be a market place, Plassi, by the port at the mouth of the River Kalajoki up until the late 19th century. The Plassi was built around a market square, with boutiques, sales stands and an entire village of fishermen’s quarters surrounding it.

## TURNESJUSSI AT THE KALAJOKI FARMERS' FAIR

**H**urry up, the fair is about to start and we have kilometres to go to reach the parish centre and the Juustila farm”, the farmer Joono called from the barn doorway to his wife, Jemina, who was still busy at work inside. The farmer had already harnessed the horse for the trip, but Jemina still had to pour the milk through a sieve into a can and drag the can to the well to set it down in cool water. Today, there would be no time to churn the milk into butter, for the couple were in a rush to get to the great farmers’ fair in Kalajoki.

Luckily, Joono had already been to the exhibition site the day before to lay out the turnips, a root vegetable previously unknown in Kalajoki, on the exhibition table. Joono had read about the new root that was suitable for cow feed in the papers and had taken a chance and bought some seeds through the farmers’ association. Joono had also taken the linens and a fine “silmikko” wall cloth made by Jemina to be shown at the fair. Jemina was mighty handy with the loom – after all, she had learned to weave at the Kalajoki school of handicrafts.

Jemina was a little nervous about going to the fair because some people in Kalajoki had no appreciation for Joono’s new root vegetables. Even the name was a right

tongue-twister for the Finnish mouth, and the correct turnips quite easily turned into turnes.

Joono had sowed a small paper bagful of turnip seeds in the spring, but the first seedlings had gone yellow because of the dry weather. And when the new batch was sowed, they had had to worry about frost damage. Then Kalajoki had received a grant from the Oulu Farmers’ Association to buy a turnip-sowing machine, and Joono had been among the first to try it. He had even subscribed to the farming magazine Maamies.

At the exhibition site, the Kalajoki parish dean gave an inspiring speech about the advancement of farming in front of a large crowd. To be honest, the dean spoke a bit too long, as the people were eager to go and look at the animals, new machines and farming plants on show.

And there they were: Joono’s handsome turnips out on a wooden platform for everyone to see. A man from another parish stood by the platform and said: “It’s all well and good for the farmers to grow the roots here in Kalajoki, where there is not a single rock to hinder the ploughman on the fields.” Joono simply thought to himself that using the right fertilisers in the correct manner may also have had something to do with it. He had dragged bags and bags of

bone meal, kainite and Thomas slag, as well as peat and even forest litter to his fields. On Joona's land, the banks had not spread all over the fields, and he had dug proper drainage ditches for each one. Luckily, the chairman of the farmers' association stated in a loud voice: *"You can't grow turnips on luck alone; you need proper learning to make it."*

Jemina was already pulling on Joona's hand to get him towards the pen of pedigree cows. All they had in their barn were some crossbreds. Their neighbours had bought a cow that was of the Western Finncattle breed and Jemina had her heart set on getting one of the well-milking purebreds. After all, they already had enough turnips to feed one more.

The cottage industry section exhibited Jemina's silmikko wall cloth, as well as some linens she had woven from home-grown flax. She had spent many days the year before scutching and cleaning the flax. The weaving itself had gone swiftly in late winter as Jemina had passed the time waiting for Joona to come home from burbot fishing on the river ice. By then there had been enough daylight to do the more precise work, which would not have been possible with only an oil lamp in the heart of winter.

Jemina and Joona walked from stand to stand, listening carefully to the people and presenters talking. Joona was left wondering which he should grow now, rye or barley. Should he plough the manure deep into the earth or

leave it on the surface? After some debate amongst the men it was decided that the primary grain to grow would be barley, but rye should not be left out altogether. Some folk were already beginning to rush towards the Youth Society Hall for the evening festivities.

On the way home, Joona said he would join Jemina in the barn from now on, as the speakers at the fair had said that men could also be more active in taking care of the cattle.

The following day, at home in Rahja, Jemina and Joona went to the woods to collect birch and spruce seedlings. The trees were planted around the house and along the driveway. There was plenty of room for the trees as the old ones that had grown closest to the house had been used as firewood and for other domestic purposes over time. The folk who had visited the Kalajoki farmers' fair had expressed a shared wish that birches and spruces be planted on every farmyard in the parish.

## → Bounties of Land and Water

- In the village of Rahja in Kalajoki, a farmer used to be called a "turnesjussi". This name is thought to have been derived from the fact that the farming of root vegetables (for example, turnips) began to become more common in Rahja village in the early 20th century.
- Chopped turnips were fed to cows in particular.
- In Kalajoki, the traditional annual cycle of farming included field work, animal husbandry and forestry. Farmers also went fishing and hunting to earn extra money. Fishing and hunting were seasonal means of livelihood.
- The cattle (cows, sheep and horses), however, had to be attended to every day of the year. Barn work (milking and the processing of milk) was the women's responsibility.
- In winter, the farmers sold timber from their own forests, which kept the men busy with felling, especially from the 20th century onwards.

- A farmers' fair was held in Kalajoki in 1905.
- A "raanu" is a traditional Finnish woven wall textile, and a "silmik-koraanu" is typical of the Kalajokilaakso region. It was often woven with red and black woollen thread onto a linen base. The surface of the pattern was made up of small square stitches.
- The mineral kainite and Thomas slag were fertilisers that were used in the early 20th century in Kalajoki, among other places.

