

## WELCOME TO THE LOCAL MUSEUM OF LEPPÄVIRTA!

*One numbered section in the text describes one theme in the exhibition. Please, follow the pictures and you'll know you're in the right place.*

### DOWNSTAIRS

#### 1 About the museum



In Finland there are more museums per inhabitant than in any other country. Most museums are quite small local museums like this one. The purpose of local museums is to represent local culture and ways of living. The museums are to collect historically and culturally valuable items, store them and exhibit them. By doing this the museum can maintain and increase the knowledge of our history.

In the museum the visitors meet the items and build an image of the past. Museums are so places of common memory and they can offer answers to the people who want to know more about their roots and how their ancestors used to live.

The museum of Leppävirta was opened in 1962. Before that already in the 1920s the youth association of Leppävirta had started collecting old items for a museum. The war

times upset those plans for the museum. After the war the municipality of Leppävirta decided to establish the museum and gave an old granary for that purpose.

Today there are more than 3000 items and about 7000 photos in the museum's collection.

#### 2 Prehistoric times



It has been found that there were people living in Leppävirta area already in the Stone Age. First people came here probably from the areas of East and East-South Europe some 6000 years ago.

The people of hunting culture gained their living from nature. Hunting, fishing and collecting berries, mushrooms, nuts etc. was their main livelihood. In the showcase you can find some tools made of stone that these people used. In the other showcase are pieces of clay pots that were used to preserve food. On the floor is an ancient model of flat-bottom rowboat.

The people of ancient hunting culture shared spiritual beliefs of nature as a sacred place. Most northern people have kept a bear as a sacred animal. The bear was worshiped for example to improve hunting fortune. There is a skull of bear in the tree.

After the Stone Age it seems that population disappeared from Leppävirta area. Only signs of separate wanderers have been found. When agriculture became the main livelihood new areas under cultivation were needed from the inhabited areas of eastern and

northern Finland. From the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards people were encouraged by a king of Sweden to move to east and start cultivation. New areas meant more taxing incomes to the kingdom of Sweden.

### 3 Mansion interior



The estate society was a common order in most European countries until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There were four groups that formed the estates: the nobility, the clergy, the bourgeoisie and peasants. They had their own representation in parliament. Others but peasants were called gentries. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the amount of people who didn't belong to any of the estate groups grew. These were for example the growing proletariat and people who didn't own the places they farmed. Estates lost their meaning during the same century and it is said that society turned into class society one.

One peculiarity of Leppävirta is that here flourished a rich mansion culture which is untypical for the inner and northern parts of Finland. There were very few noblemen in Savo area but mansions of Leppävirta were owned by other gentries. Mansions had great domains and offered living for many villagers as servants and workers.

Mansions were the places where fine customs were practiced. Gentries spoke usually Swedish but were very pro-Finnish. Political and social awareness spread among the ordinary people from the mansions. Manners and appearance divided gentries from other residents.

In the museum of Leppävirta you can find a construction of a drawing room that one could have found from a typical countryside mansion in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### 4 Education in Leppävirta



Finnish schooling system is world famous these days. Its roots can be found from religious teaching that was arranged already in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. In Leppävirta the first school was founded in the next century. Everyone wasn't pleased to send their children to school because time at school was out of the time children could spend working and helping their parents. A touring school system was formed so that the school would go where the children were and not vice versa.

Education became a municipal duty in 19<sup>th</sup> century. More schools were established. Compulsory education started in Finland in 1921 which is relatively late when compared to most European countries. New equal education was important for young state because it needed educated and civilized citizens. Now-a-days approximately a half of age group passes the upper secondary school after basic education that takes nine years.

In the best years there were dozens schools at Leppävirta. After age groups have decreased many small village schools have been closed.

## 5 Old moneys



Before own money, Swedish and Russian moneys were used in Finland's area. Swedish coinage was established here in the Middle Ages. First coins were silver; copper was used from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Some of the coins were notable big for their size.

After War of Finland in 1809 Russian ruble became the official currency unit in the Grand Duchy of Finland. Alongside rubles Swedish riksdalers were also used.

Take a closer look and you can see that it was usual that rulers get their profiles or initials minted in coins.

## 6 The War of Finland 1808-1809



As a part of Sweden, Finland was drawn into conflict between great powers, France and Russia. Napoleon of France wanted Russia to push Sweden into trade blockage against England. Finally a war against Sweden was the only option. Russian troops marched to Finland in spring 1808. Finnish and Swedish troops withdrew because Sweden didn't have any proper plan how to defend Finland.

The War of Finland is meaningful for Leppävirta since here took place two clashes between Russian and Finnish troops. Battle of Kalmalahti in March was soon over – only few shoots were changed and barely anyone got hurt. In mid-summer Finnish troops destroyed in Leppävirta a Russian colonna that was on its way to Kuopio with food and supplies. It is believed that Finnish peasants took part in happenings and after colonna was burned they stole a great amount of money from its remains. These moneys, over 1200 kopecks, were found in 1972 from hamlet of Moninmäki. You can find part of these coins from the showcase. In the other showcase under the map of Finland are some cannonballs beside a sword and a bayonet from the times of War of Finland.

After the War of Finland this country became a nominally autonomous part of Russia, as a Grand Duchy of Finland. In the Diet of Porvoo in 1809 was declared that Finland would sustain laws and rights that it had had under Swedish rule. Finnish peasants were not downgraded as land slaves as their Russian counterparts. Finland started to grow as a nation state under Russian rule. After over hundred years of not always so happy living under Russian rule Finland gained its independence in 1917 in the middle of happenings of World War I.

## 7 The Finnish Civil War in 1918



The young state of Finland was very unstable. The independence took place in the middle of modernization, industrialization and growth in the standard of living. The independence couldn't unite the people that had been divided into rich bourgeoisie and poor proletariat. Those groupings formed the basis of two sides of civil war and their military wings were called the White Guards and the Red Guards. People of the countryside were divided into both camps.

Civil war was short but bloody. During the spring 1918 died over 30 000 men in battle field, executions and prison camps. In that time population of Finland was about 3 million. The war taxed especially the working age male population. Over 200 inhabitants of Leppävirta died in the war.

The Whites won the war and treated its adversary after war with cruelty. In the hands of the Whites died five times more people than in hands of the Reds.

Leppävirta was conquered by the Reds in the early days of war. Varkaus as part of Leppävirta was one of the Red hotspots in Finland. The Red rule lasted only a month until the Whites started the takeover of Varkaus.

In the exhibition you see a plaque that belonged to White civil guard of Leppävirta.

On it is said that "poor is the farmer who doesn't leave his plough when freedom and faith are trampled upon in country of his". The backpack belonged to a freedom soldier that took part in civil war on the side of Whites. The wooden spoon and penholder were made by a Red soldier while in prison camp.

## 8 Second World War in Finland 1939-1945



The independence of Finland came under a threat in the years of Second World War. In fall 1939 the Soviet Union attacked Finland. In Winter War that lasted 105 days Finland managed to keep Soviet troops outside its borders. Winter War was widely noticed also in foreign press. Time of peace was short and in summer 1941 Finland in alliance with National Socialistic Germany tore into Soviet Union.

New peace was concluded in 1944. Soviet Union won but Finland preserved its independence. Price of war was high. Almost 100,000 Finns died in the wars. Also Leppävirta lost a significant amount of its male population.

In the exhibition there is a traditional dress that a Finnish women organization called Lotta Svärd used. Lotta organization was women's counterpart to men's civil guards. During the war these women worked for example in nursing and provisioning tasks.

Honour medals on the table belonged to Captain Paavo K. Nyysönen that led troops from Leppävirta area in the war. On the wall is a portrait of him. Above that is a portrait of Field Marshal Mannerheim who was the leader of all Finnish troops. Mannerheim visited in Leppävirta at least two times.

## 9 Municipal organization of Leppävirta before 1917



Leppävirta was founded in 1642, three years after a congregation was founded. Founding of Leppävirta was part of the development that took place in the kingdom of Sweden in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Local government in Finland was born under Swedish rule but real development started under Russian rule in the 1860s. In that time religious and profane living were separated. Until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century policy making was in the hands of rich and wealthy. Universal and equal suffrage was realized in 1906 in national elections and in 1917 in municipal elections.

On the wall is a portrait of Tilda Löthman-Koponen (1874-1962). She was the first one born in Leppävirta who was elected to the unicameral Parliament of Finland. She was elected first time in 1910 and worked as a Member of Parliament altogether 18 years from 1910 to 1945.

On the table is a portrait of Pentti Pekkarinen (1917-1975). Also he worked as a Member of Parliament and was chosen to government in 1972 as a Minister of Social Affairs and

Health. He died in a car accident in the age of 58.

Also on the table you can see a big bowl made of glass. It was used when selecting men to Russian army by drawing lots. Law for compulsory military service in Finland was made in 1878. This bowl was also used in the municipal council's elections until 1981.

## 10 Religious living and congregation of Leppävirta



Congregation of Leppävirta was established in 1639. By now parish work has been practiced here almost 400 years. Before the 1860s it was mainly church's task to educate people, organize lawsuits and take care of the poor and ill.

Leppävirta Church is one the most beautiful sights in Leppävirta. The building of the grey stone church designed by C.L. Engel took several decades to be finished in the 1860s. Before the grey stone church there have been three wooden churches at the core of Leppävirta.

## 11 Fire service



In Leppävirta worked a voluntary fire service from 1882 to 1937. Wooden buildings were prone to burning so volunteers got some fire-fighting equipment to protect the town. At first those were moved by horse, later fire service got its own car. On the wall you can see some fire extinguishers and horns that were used to give a fire alarm.

## 12 Interior of a typical peasant house



This room shows how Finnish peasants lived in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. All household practices were done mainly in one room. The most important piece of furniture was table. There was room for everyone in household around the long table. Cover of the table in this room is from the 15<sup>th</sup> century and it has been made of one tree.

A heart of the room is oven. Around it women of the house made food and baked. Coffee and tobacco were grounded up at home. Sugar was bought in huge bars which were chopped into smaller pieces at home.

Equipments for this can be found from the right side of the room.



When a shoemaker came to house he usually stayed there until he had made shoes for everyone. On the side table you can find tools that shoemaker needed. A small glass bowl hanging on the wall is a shoemaker's lamp. It was filled with water and used against the sun so that it shone.

## 13 Steamboats



Steamboats were the queens of Finnish inland waters in the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Also in Leppävirta a limited company owned many steamboats. There were in total four boats called "Leppävirta". One of these boats was yielded to Soviet Union when Finland was paying its reparations. One "Leppävirta" steamboat is still operating from Lappeenranta.

## 14 Post service



Mail has been delivered in Leppävirta area since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Own post office was established in 1871. In the showcase you can see old postcards and letters. The leather bag has been used to carry mail; there is date 1898 on it.

## 15 Factories of Hackman in Sorsakoski



A sawmill was founded in Sorsakoski torrent in the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Hackman & Co. owned the sawmill which was one of the most important mills in Savo area until the 1860s. Then new steam mills were developed and made it possible to found mills also in areas where no torrents were. Also Hackman build a steam mill but it was destroyed in a fire in the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Instead of lumber industry Hackman started to produce smaller products, such as knives and cutlery. Most of the products were sold to Russia.

Sorsakoski was a typical industrial area with great amount of workers and their families. There located own school and bank office. Lead of the factory took care of its workers

and arranged health care and apartments for them.

In the years of war Hackman manufactured munitions. In that time most of the workers were women because men were fighting at the front. After the war Hackman was producing reparations.

In the showcases you can see examples of the products that Hackman produced from the late 20<sup>th</sup> century to the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## 16 Banking



A need for banks developed during the 19<sup>th</sup> century when people started to earn money of their work. People were encouraged to deposit their savings to banks so that they wouldn't go to waste. Finland's own currency unit, mark, was broached in 1860.

First bank in Leppävirta started in 1877. On the walls you can see portraits of leading men who worked for this Leppävirta savings bank.

In the showcase there are old Finnish marks. On the right side there are Finnish coins from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. On the left side there is some paper money from 1918 to 1969. In the middle you can see a half of a paper money. In 1945-1946 state of Finland took a forced loan from its people. When a paper money was cut it lost half of its value.

## 17 Telephones



In the showcase is a telephone center. People called from their home phones or from neighbour's phone first to the center. In center worked a person who guided the phone call to the right place. The first telephone line in Leppävirta was built in 1892.

## 18 Mine of Kotalahti



Traces of copper and zinc were found from hamlet of Kotalahti in 1954. Mining started in 1959. In the 1960s mine shaft of Kotalahti was the deepest in Finland, almost 700 meters underground. Thanks to the mine, a significant population centre developed around mining area and provided living for many. Ore deposit dried up and the mine was closed in 1987.

## 19 Trading in Leppävirta



It was forbidden to sell goods in the countryside until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. In spite of this peasants did trade their produce from Leppävirta all the way to city of Viipuri near Gulf of Finland.

When trading was allowed new shops started to pop up in Leppävirta in short time. In 1917 here were some 50 stores that sold everyday goods. In addition here were also several special stores.

On the shelf you can see some household items that were used in Finnish homes in the 40s to 70s. Take a look at the small white plastic bags in the middle. They were used to store milk.

## 20 Traffic



Leppävirta is located nearby many waterways so it has been natural that those have been used to move from place to another. Because using waterways was cheap and easy it took quite long before villagers started to devote themselves to building a proper road network.

Photographs on the wall show different types of transportation. The bike in front of the wall has been made for a play, it is not sure if anyone in Leppävirta really had that type of bike where front wheel is notably bigger than the back wheel. That type of bikes was invented in France in the 1860s. It is known that first modern bikes arrived to Leppävirta in turn of the century.

## 21 Culture



Leppävirta has been an active culture community. The horn on the wall has belonged to a member of Leppävirta brass band. The violin has been made of wooden cigar box.

## 22 Winter



Winter and seasons as a whole are important characters that have affected to the peoples of northern parts of the world. Northern people have learned to survive in cold and dark environment that has sometimes been hostile. Snowy landscape is as important for traditional Finnish culture as are summery birch trees and blue lakes.

Coldness has made living based on agriculture at times hard. On the other hand it needs to be remembered that winter has made northern people innovative.

In the showcase there is some winter clothing like furs. On the wall is a decorative

rug with a year 1815 on it. On the right side of the showcase you can see a rug made of pieces of fur. Tailor had started working with rug in 1920 and it took ten years to complete.

## 23 Health and beauty



Before the time of organized health care, people turned to natural healers in search for cure for their ailments and illnesses. Natural healers used for example blood-letting, spells and herbs as their treatment. Blood-letting was based on the belief that bad blood in human caused illnesses and it needed to be taken away. A cupper used small blades and horns to remove the bad blood.

First doctors started to circle in Leppävirta regularly in the 19<sup>th</sup> century but folk medicine was still popular. Many trusted more in old ways than in new drugs. Hospital care was for the first time provided by municipality in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Almost whole population has been vaccinated against many former fatal diseases since the 50's.

In the showcase you can find some old equipment used by doctors and district nurses beside the tools that natural healers used. Take a look at the blood-letting horns. On the left there are equipment used for beauty care, for example razors. In the middle there's an electric perm machine.

Next to the healing equipments you can find an old X-ray machine that was used from 1949 in Sorsakoski industrial area where worked own medical care.



It was contributed to museum in 1974. The x-rays were invented in 1895 by a German physicist Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen. Radiography has had a great significance in preventing of tuberculosis. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century thousands of Finns died every year on tuberculosis but screenings have produced a change on that.

## 24 Children



Most of these toys were made to a competition of traditional toys and games. In the old times children didn't have many toys and most of them were made at home. Girls' favorites were the rag dolls, boys played with the wooden toys. Probably the easiest way to make a toy was to build a cow or some other animal of a cone and use little sticks as its feet. Childhood was formerly considered as a short period so children took part to house's work from early age. By playing they practiced for adult life.

## 26 Spare time



It is said that people's spare time started after the industrialization. That's because then considerable part of population stopped working with agriculture all day long. At first days were long also in industrial work. Legislation shortened the work days and people had more time on its own. People wanted to be entertained. Traditional dance, raffles and evening gatherings with people of the same age were old Finnish ways to spend time. Movies, radio and television added a new international twist to peoples' life.

First movies were brought to Finland from abroad but in the 1930s also own movie production started. Old Finnish movies dealt with rural life, patriotism and history. The cine projector that belongs to museum's collection was in use from the 30s to 60s.

First radios came to Finland in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. During the Second World War there was a radio almost in every household. Listening radio programs together, sport races for example, was a popular way to spend time with family and friends.

It was television that made living room the center of home. TV made a breakthrough to Finnish homes in the 60s.

## 27 Sports



Leppävirta has been an active place for doing sports. Many sport clubs have provided an opportunity to get into skiing, weightlifting and athletics just to mention a few. As everywhere in Finland and also in Europe clubs were commonly divided into workers' and bourgeois' clubs. In the showcase you can see for example medals that vet of Leppävirta Lauri Kumlin won in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## UPSTAIRS

### 28 Skiing



Skiing is one the oldest ways how the Northern people moved from place to other in wintertime. The oldest skis from prehistoric era have been found sunken into the lakes and bogs. As you can see, skis used to be much wider and longer than these days.

## 29 Hunting and fishing



People of the prehistoric era gained their living by hunting and fishing. After agriculture became the main source of livelihood those both remained important secondary means of living. Different types of traps and weapons such as spears and arrows were used. Later on also firearms were used.

There are rich fishing waters in Leppävirta. Net fishing has provided the biggest hauls. Also torch-fishing has been popular. It was commonly practiced at nights and a torch was attached to the bow of the boat. The fish was then caught with a harpoon in the light of the torch.

### 30 Making of fishing nets and ropes



One way to catch a big catch of fish is net fishing. Nets were mainly homemade until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. They were made of hemp or flax. The fish species desired determined what type of net was used.

Also ropes were on the countryside made at home. Hemp, birch bark and animal hair were used for example. Different materials had their best purpose of use.

### 31 From corn to flour



The cropped corn was threshed by flails made of wood. The seeds were stored in granaries. Then the round stones that were turned by hand or wind mills were used for grinding corn. The flour was sifted by home-made sieves.

A punnet of flour you can see is "pettu" flour, made of bark of pine. Bark bread was made in the years of crop failure.

### 32 Making of linen cloth



Flax has been reared in Finland since 16<sup>th</sup> century. Dried flax was processed at homes. Here you can see tools that were used to processing flax to linen. Wool of lamb was another fibre that was used to make weaving yarn.

### 33 Spirit distilling



It could be said that spirit distilling is one the old hobbies of Finnish people. Spirits were made at home since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Spirits were made in large copper pans like the one you can see in the museum. Grain and water were the basic ingredients.

The habit of drinking spread from soldiers and gentries among common people. Alcohol was used as a medicine but also in purpose of having fun. Authorities tried to control distilling and it was taxed. Making spirits home became forbidden in 1866. It is known that in spite of the prohibition pans still boiled at several houses...

### 34 Dairying



Dairying passed farming in importance in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Russia started to sell cheap grain to Finland and buy butter instead. By then there was already a strong livestock in eastern Finland.

Milk was mainly used to make butter and cheese. Only little children drank milk, adults drank sour milk that is thicker than normal milk and tastes sour. After cow was milked the milk was soured. A layer of cream formed to the top of milk. Cream was then churned into butter. Here you can see different kind of churns that were used to this purpose.

### 35 Farming



Agriculture was the main source of livelihood for most of the Finnish people from the Middle Ages to the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Still in the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century three of four Finnish people gained their living from the ground.

In eastern Finland slash-burning farming method was commonly used because of the rocky soil. Agriculture was strongly regenerated and modernized from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. New ploughs were invented so that use of soil would be more efficient. Iron sod ploughs were made after a Scottish example. On the floor you can see a sod plough, on the wall there are earlier models of ploughs. The big machine on the left side has been used to chop hays and make cattle feed of them.

In Finland have been traditionally reared rye, wheat, oat and barley. Potato became the most important food plant during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### 36 Haymaking



The growing cattle amounts needed more and more hay all the time. Hay poles appeared to Finnish landscape in the 1920s. Hayforks were used to get the hays to poles. Hays were stored in hay barns. On the wall you can see some wooden pots that were used to contain sour milk for a drink while making hay on the field.

### 37 Horse



Human has reared horses from the prehistoric times. Back then horse was known also as a sacred animal, in times of Christianity it became a symbol of paganism. In Finland developed a special Finnish horse race that is known as a strong and reliable carthorse. Horses have been used to pull a plough, a buggy or a sleigh in winter times. In the museum you can find a summertime buggy that has been made in St. Petersburg. On the back wall you can see horseshoes that have been designed specially to use in bog area.

Leppävirta has been well known for its horses that were also renowned in competitions and exhibitions. On the wall you can see some certificate of honour that these horses trained in Leppävirta won.

### 38 Evacuee carriages



In these carriages bring a Karelian family their belongings from Impilahti, Karelia to Sorsakoski, Leppävirta during the Second World War when Finnish and Soviet troops battled in the Karelian Isthmus. More than 400,000 people moved from Karelia to Finland when area was ceded to Soviet Union. The settlement of Karelians has been one the biggest evacuations in history.

### 39 Sleigh



This sleigh was used when traveling between countryside inns. Inns offered food, drink, a place to stay for a night and a chance to change a horse during the trip.

If you take a look to the backside of the sleigh you notice that the cloth has been cut by a knife. It seems that somebody had tried to rob the sleigh but probably the travellers had a gun as their protection.

### 40 Birch bark



The bark of birches has been used to make many utility articles. Most known are probably shoes and bags made of birch bark. A traditional Finnish Easter pudding called "mämmi" was by tradition baked and served in a punnet made of birch bark. Now-a-days there are not many left who has the skill of making birch bark works.

### 41 Timberwork and woodworking



Finland is well known for its forests. Forests have also provided important extra income for peasants who have sold forest or timber. Peasants used to do felling of timber alongside farming and their other work. In Leppävirta worked also many sawmills where logs needed to be flown.

Woodwork was a common hobby for the men folk of the family. They made utility articles of wood such as spoons, cups and tools. Also furniture and trunks were made.

On the wall you can see a collection of different types of axes.

## 42 Laundering



Laundering was traditionally on women's responsibility. Big laundering days were normally held only a few times a year. Soap and soft soap were made at home. Laundries were first soaked, soaped, bathed in hot water and then while rinsing they were hit with a special wooden tool that you can find from the wooden tub. Also washboards were used. Laundry was dried on the ground, on fences or branches. As you can imagine clothes of these days wouldn't stand up to that harsh treatment. Electric washing machines came to stores in Finland mainly after the Second World War.

## 43 Gauges for grain



These gauges are from municipal granary that worked in this building from the 1840s. There are crown stamps on gauges' sides which mean they were official measures.

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*Hope you enjoyed your visit at the local museum of Leppävirta. Please, feel free to leave your greetings in our Guestbook.*

*Thank you for visiting and welcome again!*