



History and Culture

The Laestadius Trail between Lannavaara and Lainio

The History and Culture Project along the Laestadius Trail between Lainio and Lannavaara was carried out in 2014. The purpose was to briefly describe the history and culture of the district as well as provide facts about a pilgrimage hike along the Laestadius Trail.

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August Lundberg, Bygd och Vildmark 1935

Interviews with Agne Söderström & Roland Henriksson

Projektrapport Pilgrimsvandringar i Tornedalen, Hans Söderström 2009

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Photo: Oskar Skoglund

Hiking along the Laestadius Trail

A hike along the Laestadius Trail meets the needs of many people who long to be out in the countryside, get away from the daily toils and simply take care of themselves for a few days. The walk offers the opportunity to learn more about an interesting culture and history of a desolate country district in northernmost Sweden.

The beautiful Laestadius Trail has plenty of rest areas and overnighthing in tents or kåta, a traditional Sami-style tipi. The trail follows the old trails once used by those who lived here. It will take you through the primeval forest of Pessinki Nature Preserve, beautiful forest lakes and the turbulent waters of Saankijoki. The quaint village of Viiksjärvi awaits you at the end. Lannavaara was established during the latter half of the 1800's, whereas Lainio and Viiksjärvi were settled long before. You can also enjoy rafting along the Saankijoki and Lainio rivers.

The trail is easy to walk and well-marked. The lone pilgrim is offered a safe journey.



The trail is marked
with the symbol of
St Bridget of Sweden

*"When I returned from my
pilgrimage, the pleasant
feeling remained with me..."
Pilgrim 2012.*

The Pilgrimage

To go on a pilgrimage has been an integral part of almost all cultures and religions. The pilgrim strives to find themselves through their inner journey, escape stress and attain inner peace. Some wish to tell of life's deeper values and perhaps make themselves available for unplanned meetings in new situations. Another way they do this is by walking or travelling to churches or holy places.

One of the more familiar pilgrims of the Middle Ages was Saint Bridget of Sweden, from Vadstena. Together with her husband, she walked to Nidaros Cathedral in Trondheim, Norway to visit the grave of Saint Olaf, to the grave of Saint James the Great in Santiago de Compostela in Spain as well as to the Church of the Nativity in Betlehem.

The term "pilgrim" is often cited as having its origins in the meaning of the word "stranger". People who come walking and travelling from other communities or countries are then on foreign ground, among foreign people. This also fits in rather well in a spiritually conveyed meaning that we are here only temporarily. As the Bible explains, we are on a journey to a life beyond the visible.

At the same time, we become better acquainted with our inner selves, in harmony with nature.

The Pilgrim's Key Words

Spirituality

Simplicity

Slowness

Carelessness

Freedom

Sharing

Silence

Laestadianism

Lars Levi Laestadius became reverend in Karesuando in 1826. He is thought to have had his spiritual breakthrough when he was on an inspection tour and met the Sami woman Maria, and it was through their conversations that Laestadius experienced his actual religious awakening. It was first after that, around 1844-1845, Laestadius emerged as the indisputable leader of Nordkalotten, the northernmost regions of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. He attacked the “great dragon” alcohol that destroyed the people and he spoke encouragingly that God with his spirit shall free them from this slavery.

Laestadius also devoted himself to teaching and enlightening. His sermons were copied and read aloud in surrounding communities. As of 1879 there was even a Laestadius postil. In the mission schools established by Laestadius in the Finnish- and Sami-speaking communities, his protégés later became teachers. This meant that school work and revival went hand-in-hand.

True Christianity for Laestadians is something more than a connection to a denomination and its orders. It is based on honest penance and improvement, conversion and faith. One confesses one's sins for the congregation and is granted forgiveness. The Laestadian revival movement has never stood outside the church community, and despite periods of considerable tension, they have never resulted in separation.

The village of Lannavaara

Lannavaara is one of the youngest villages in the eastern region of Kiruna municipality, established in 1873 when farmers from the Soppero villages tried cultivating barley in the area. As it turned out, the southern slope of the Lannavaara mountain was the only place in the area where barley ripened for harvest. The first homestead was moved down on the Laino River from Nedre Soppero by the families Spett and Laestadius.

The same area was a natural camp site for the reindeer-herding Sami on their journeys with the migrating reindeer herds. The Sami called the place Lannavaara, from the Finnish lantalaiset which means “resident” and vaara which means “mountain”. Directly translated, Lannavaara means “the residents’ mountain”.

As it is with many of the small villages in the area, Lannavaara has endured many eras. In the beginning of the last century, it was alive with many families and plenty of children. The 1960's brought a drastic decline due to the new national agricultural policy, and in 1970 only 98 people lived in the village. In 1982, future prospects were clouded by, among other things, the impending threat of closing the school, shutting down the only grocery store as well as postal office, etc.

In 1989 the trend turned and Lannavaara was one of the villages in the area that had a rather bright future. The population had risen to 160, the majority which were young families, the school and grocery were given new leases on life – all of which was due to dedicated investment in tourism. Unemployment was now practically non-existent.

Today, in 2014 and 25 years since, the village has changed in a variety of ways. A few companies have become established, as well as an economic association. In collaboration with Luleå Technical University there is an education program in gemology and jewelry making, a Catholic monastery is being built up, tourism is still a cornerstone and the number of overnight stays for tourists continues to increase. The community service sector has been centralized, but the grocery is still open. The municipality is experiencing an overheated job market due to a boom in the mining industry, which means many of those living in Kiruna visit the village on weekends and holidays.



Preacher August Lundberg. Photo: Borg Mesch, (image archives).

Preacher August Lundberg

August Lundberg, born in Dalarna in southern Sweden, came to Lannavaara in 1885 to manage and teach at the mission school. He learned to understand the Laestadian-Christian faith and the value it encompassed. He was also quick to learn both Finnish and Sami. The work at the mission school met up against periodic misfortunes, among others the tragedy of the school burning down twice. Despite setbacks, he continued his work until 1916, when the State took over operating the nomad schools.

In March 1889, Lundberg married Vilhelmina Laestadius, daughter to the farmer Johan Wilhelm Laestadius and his wife Ella Persdotter Huuva. Through this marriage, Lundberg became part of the Laestadian family, which contributed to his understanding of the Laestadian sense of belonging. Since his wife was of Sami descent, he also had good contact with the Sami people. Lundberg affiliated himself completely with the Laestadian revival movement and contributed to its development through texts, letters and sermons. His evangelist travels during the summer seasons brought him in contact with the Swedish Sami and Norwegian fellow believers along the Norwegian coast from the Vranger Peninsula to Lofoten. Occasionally he traveled south to the counties of Småland and Östergötland, as well as held sermons for the Swedish royal family who even nominated him as court preacher. August Lundberg was of high moral stature and he was the one who founded the eastern branch of Laestadianism.

August Lundberg is said to have traveled over 9 000 km under his final years and held over 200 sermons for a total of 15 000 people. As a preacher, Lundberg made the most of the importance confession and improvement had for the people. Still today, annual Laestadian meetings are held on the Epiphany (Twelfth Day).

Sources: Summer of Projektet Lannavaara, del 3. 1989, app. 15 and
Per Boreman, Laestadianismen, pp. 177-178 and Bygd och Vildmark 1931

Lundbergs Pörte

Agne Söderström is grandchild to preacher August Lundberg and his wife Vilhelmina. He grew up in Lundberg's Finnish cabin, called a pörte. This was a traditional-style cabin, without insulation and only an iron stove that heated the entire kitchen. Lundberg intentionally built a rather large cabin, a house really, with a large round table in the middle of the kitchen, comfortable for conversation and times of prayer. This became the gathering place for everyone in the village. Agne remembers that once there were 58 Sami sleeping on the kitchen floor.

At the turn of the 1800's, only Finnish and Sami were spoken in the village. Lindberg quickly learned both languages, and as a teacher and preacher, became the village spokesperson. After his death in 1930, Agne's father Alfred Söderström took over this role, as well as running the post office and acting as the local patrolman. He was a talented writer and also spoke Gällivare Finnish. He was the one who translated everything that happened in the village to and from Swedish. As patrolman, he had the task of serving writ of summons and even accompanying police when serving. If an overlord came to visit, he had to help in interpretation and translations. With the arrival of radio broadcasting, Alfred Söderström interpreted the newscasts for the villagers who gathered in the house, which was especially important during the war.

When August Lundberg passed away, the house was regarded as holy. Agne's mother feared that the house would be used for other activities than prayer meetings and therefore decided to have it demolished in the 1950's. Today there is an August Lundberg commemorative stone at the site of the homestead (pörte), next to the church.

Narrated by Agne Söderström



Princess Eugenie's memorial church in Lannavaara, Lapland.

Lannavaara Memorial Church

The church was built in commemoration of Princess Eugenie and her work with the Lapp mission in Lannavaara 1883-1915. In the armory there is a commemorative plaque with the text (in Swedish): In thankful memory of Her Royal Highness Princess Eugenie, 1830 - 1889, founder of "Friends of the Lapp Mission", this chapel was built in 1933. "SHE HAS DONE WHAT SHE COULD" Mark 14:8.

The idea for building this church came from preacher August Lundberg. There is a portrait of Lundberg hanging in the armory, a present-day work by the Reverend Emeritus Jan-Erik Kouksu.

The church, or chapel as it was referred to from the beginning, was consecrated in 1934. It was managed by the Swedish Missionary Association in Stockholm (Missionssällskapet i Stockholm) until 1954. A desire for a more locally-rooted management by the church resulted in the founding of the Lannavaara Memorial Church Foundation (Stiftelsen för Lannavaara Minneskyrka), which is still active today.

A thorough renovation of the church was done in 1972, where the organ gallery was removed, reconstruction of an assembly room, sacristy and vestment, as well as the furnishing of an assembly room on the lower floor. The entire church was repainted and a new church organ was installed at the front by the sanctuary. At the consecration, the church received a grant from the Kempe Foundation for a cross called "Korset mot Klotet" ("The Cross and the Globe"). Still today the church is a place for annual East-Laestadian assemblies.

The church was consecrated once again in 1984 after receiving additional insulation, new wood paneling and windows as well as a fresh coat of paint on the steeple and spire.

At a consecration service on 12 August 2012, Bishop Hans Stiglund of the diocese of Luleå inaugurated the Laestadius Trail as a pilgrimage trail between Lannavaara and Lainio.

The Monastic Order of Marias Lamm

The Catholic order of Marias Lamm (Maria's Lambs) has been a part of Lannavaara since 2013. The nuns are working on establishing the St Joseph's Monastery in the old school on the Lannavaara Mountain, which was acquired in 2014. The monastery in Lannavaara is the only Catholic monastery in Sweden north of Stockholm, and their desire is to create a chapel and guest house for visitors. Their activities include woodworking, handicrafts and making herbal soap.

The monastery warmly welcomes guests who want to live a while in prayer and silence, take in the serene beauty of this unique countryside. Hikers are welcome!

Daily Prayer Times

05.00-06.00 Quiet prayer

06.00-06.20 Laudes (morning prayer)

08.00-08.20 Rosary

09.00- Mass

12.00-12.20 Midday prayer

17.30-18.30 Quiet prayer

18.30-18.55 Vesper (evening prayer)

21.00-21.25 Night prayer



Sister Amada and Sister Karla.

Hiking then and now

In the early 1900's, it was a bit of adventure finding your way around in the wilderness countryside. The few who traveled on foot to Lannavaara were on their way to visit someone in Viikujärvi or moving on to Karesuando or Lainio. Wintertime it was easiest to travel along marshlands and the Lainio River. Summertime it was more common to take a boat along the river, where the boats were rowed or poled up the rapids. The trails and routes were not as easy to find as today, where they were only visible on solid ground. It was safest to visit Lundberg's house before heading off, where you received the latest on what was going on in the area as well as weather conditions. Perhaps you met with someone to join you on your journey. During his hike to Viikujärvi in 1932, the author Ernst Marker hired two guides, the Sami Johan Mangi from Tuolpukkan and the settler Johannes Persson from Lannavaara.

A hike in wilderness around Viikujärvi meant considerable uncertainties. When Manker and his guides came to Saankijoki he described the situation: *"We arrived at Saangi but found no boat. The stream was wide as a river – deep, dark and dismal. The willows along the riverbanks were heavy with long veils of black tree lichens. It was raining and getting dark and we could not get across. This was just not very cheery. We tried to shout over the mountain by the lake to the Lapp camp, but there was no answer."*

It was not always easy for the villagers to find their way around either. Agne Söderström in Lannavaara tells that as a boy he often went with the preacher Pääjärvi when he walked to the Sami to give sermons. To be sure to find their way back, Agne carved markings on the birch trees. He says that Pääjärvi always kept an eye on him because he was rather afraid of getting lost. There were no maps whatsoever of the area in the middle of the last century.

Today we can hike along without worrying. Just think how much easier it is having weather forecasts, where you can plan your hike and rest stops accordingly. The Laestadius Trail that follows old trails over Viikujärvi was designated a pilgrimage trail in 2012, with rest areas complete with shelters, hearths and dry privys at Pullijoki and Pakajärvi. The trail was also cleared and fitted with footbridges. You can travel in both directions. The 2013 hike conclude with rafting along Saankijoki to the Lainio River and then onwards to Lainio.



Myllyjoki (Kvarnbäcken).

The stretch between Lannavaara and Pullijoki, 10 km

Preparations are important. Food and water have to be brought with from the beginning, as well as a tent for hikers. Summertime you will need mosquito spray and a mosquito hat. At the memorial church there is an information sign for the Laestadius Trail. The cabin in Viikujärvi must be booked before starting out.

The trail follows a gravel road in the beginning to Viikujärvi. After 500 meters, you will cross the stream Myllyjoki, or Kvarnbäcken as it is called in Swedish. It used to be difficult to cross the stream, where the safest way was to go upstream and take a boat at Jelkänensaari, or go downstream and wade across if the water level was low. The mill that was built at the end of 1800 was the first known structure in Lannavaara. The mill was for the barley that was grown on the south slope of Lannavaara, but it was destroyed during a high flood. A new mill was built at the upper outlet of the lake Ahvenjärvi.

Today you easily cross the stream on a bridge. The trail follows the gravel road and a sign indicates the turn-off to the great bog.



The Leastadius Trail at the Great Bog (Stormyren).



The place of sacrifice on Nunasvaara.

The trail follows the embankment from the 1900's. When you arrive at the forest, the ground is solid and the trail up to Nunasvaara is easy to follow. Thereafter the trail goes up along a slope. During the hike in August 2012, there were so many mosquitos that no one wanted to stop and rest. Ernst Mankel, who hiked in autumn, described this stretch: *"After a while we were above the coniferous forests and walked through a sparse twisted mountain birch forest, where the trees seemed to grow according to the same principle as the horns on a reindeer. Still we walked along with the crown out of reach ... and when the forest became a mountain moor, Nunas began to roll down the side. We had reached the crown of the mountain."* Here there is a place of sacrifice, and according to traditional oral tales, horns and stones were sacrificed for successful hikes, hunting or so that the reindeer would fare well. The view is magnificent on clear days, where you can see all the way to the villages of Soppero, Lainio and Vivungi.

On your way down, you pass by Kristalltrappen (the Crystal Staircase) that contains quartz crystals. These beautiful crystals have a vibrating ability, and in the past, villagers placed a quartz crystal in a pail so that the buttermilk or milk didn't turn sour.

The trail that leads down the slope of Nunasvaara is not as worn as it used to be. Here you have to be careful not to go the wrong way. After a while you reach the day's goal, the rest area in Pullijoki.



Rest area in Pullijoki.

Rest area in Pullijoki

This is where people used to stop and rest as well as let reindeer graze. A traditional Sami hut, called a *kåta*, was built when the road came through in the middle of the 1900's. Together with the Laestadius project in 2012, Agne Söderström improved on the rest area with a windbreak, dry privy and hearth. The idea is that the windbreak is a place to meet and protection against inclement weather. You can overnight in the *kåta* or in your own tent. A new dry privy makes your stay more comfortable. There is dry wood by the privy, and you can make a fire outside the windbreak. Everyone who stops here takes with their garbage when they leave.

The clear water of the stream Pullijokken is clean and tastes great. During the 2012 restoration, the bridge was built to make hiking easier. When Mankel came here in 1932, the autumn rains had turned Pullijoki to a turbulent, rushing waterway. He wrote: *"Persson pulled up his boot shafts again and stepped over the largest stones with the water gushing around his knees. Mangi tightened the laces on the leather shafts of his Finnish boots and followed ... and me, in my hiking boots and wool socks? Well, I quite simply had to take off my hiking boots while Persson pulled off his, and we flung them over to the other side. Even I made it over with dry feet in the Finnish boots."*

Source: STF Årsskrift 1933

Sights worth seeing along the Laestadius Trail

1. Prayer house in Lainio *Prayer house, built 1942 – 46. Bell tower, built 1957.*

2. Marttigården

The old homestead museum in Lainio with a summer café and museum. The founder of the homestead was Mårten Hemmison and the last permanent resident was Johan Petter Isaksson Martti, his wife Helena and their 11 children. The homestead burnt down several times, latest in 1895. In 1982 the homestead was donated to the Swedish Folklore Society. Dean Lars Levi Laestadius' correspondent pupil Johan Raatamaa ran the first permanent mission school here in upper Lappland 1847 – 1849.

3. Camp Tysnaden Lainio

Camping and cabins.

4. Ferry over the Lainio River

There is no regular ferry traffic. Ferrying over the river is done by hand, and residents with a key can use a motor. The road cooperative is responsible for general operating maintenance.

5. Memorial cross

Two people were killed here in an accident with explosives.

6. Rest area Pakajävi

Rest area with windbreak, firewood and dry privy.

7. Rest area Justojoki

An old rest area by the bridge over Justojoki.

8. Pyhävaara – The Holy Mountain

“Pyhä” means holy in Finnish. Pyhävaara is commonly regarded as the Holy Mountain.

9. Trapping pits

The trapping pit system along the mountain Pyhävaara was an old hunting method for trapping wolves, moose and reindeer – a common method in northern Sweden. The trapping pits are one of the oldest hunting methods, having been used since the Stone Ages.

10. Viikusijärvi

The village east of Lammavaara at the east end of the lake Viikusijärvi. The area is since long ago a part of the Vittangi forest Sami reindeer-herding and economic district.

11. Spring

The sand spring Hietä Kalten, next to Niipijärvi, is where people used to stop and drink fresh, invigorating spring water.

12. Memorial Stone

Raised to the memory of the “Lapp supervisor” Elias Stålnacke from Scappavaara.

13. Rest area Pullijoki

A rest area situated about 100 meters east of

dry privy.

14. The crystal staircase

A natural staircase of quartz crystals. In former times, people used to place a crystal in a pail so the buttermilk or milk would keep longer.

15. Place of sacrifice

The sacrificial stone on the south slope of the mountain Nunasvaara. People used to sacrifice reindeer horns for luck in reindeer hunting.

16. Old rest area

About one kilometer east of where the bridge is today. Where people used to stop and make fire to be picked up and transported over the stream Myllyjoki by the villagers.

17. The mill

At Myllyjoki (Ksarnbäckens, The Mill Stream), there was a mill at the end of the 1800s. This was the first known structure in Lammavaara. It was for milling the barley grown on the south slope of the mountain Lammavaara. The mill was destroyed by high water flows, and a new one was later built at the upper outflow of the lake Abvenjärvi.

18. Kunnaskapshuset – The House of Learning

A shop with minerals and handicrafts, a minerals exhibition, classrooms and restaurant.

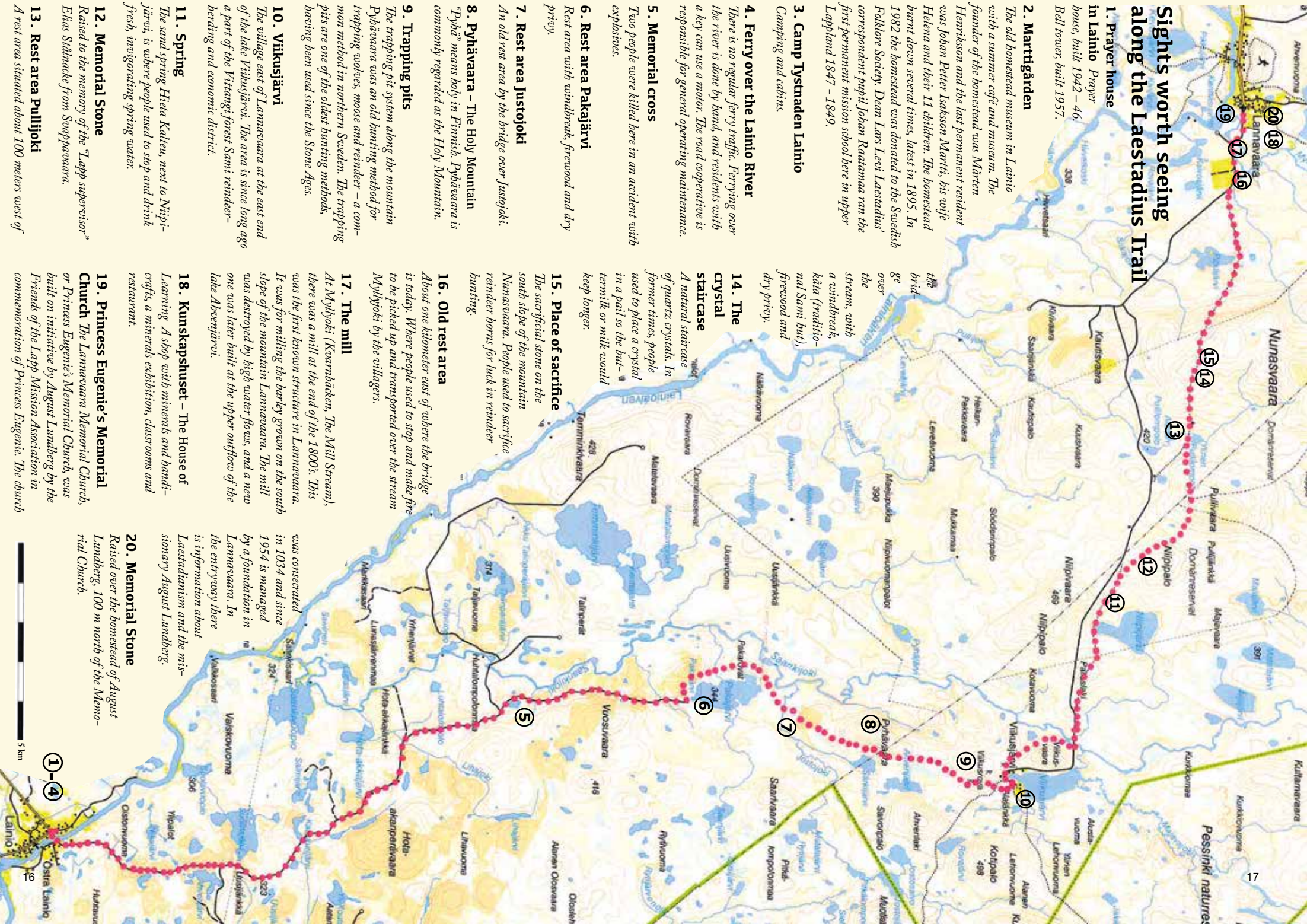
19. Princess Eugenie's Memorial Church

The Lammavaara Memorial Church, or Princess Eugenie's Memorial Church, was built on initiative by August Lundberg by the Friends of the Lapp Mission Association in commemoration of Princess Eugenie. The church

was consecrated in 1934 and since 1954 is managed by a foundation in Lammavaara. In the entryway there is information about Laestadianism and the missionary August Lundberg.

20. Memorial Stone

Raised over the homestead of August Lundberg, 100 m north of the Memorial Church.





The Sand Spring.

The stretch between Pullijoki and Viikujärvi, 13 km

Since sources of fresh water are sparse, it is best to fill your water bottle before starting off. The bridge is easy to cross nowadays, and when the path divides after about 400 meters, take the left branch. The path leads up to Pullivaara, a beautiful hike along a low mountain region. Note the trail markings when crossed by ATV tracks. The mark of St Bridget of Sweden shows you the way down Niipipalo. You can take a short break by the memorial stone raised over the “Lapp supervisor” Elias Stålnacke from Svappavaara who met his death here in the middle of the winter while on duty. The strange thing about this tragedy is that the horse the supervisor rode dropped dead at the same spot just a year later.

After a short walk you arrive at the Sand Spring. This is where travelers used to stop to drink from the spring. The water is pushed up through the earth's sand beds and is believed to be very good for you. This is a lovely place to stop with plenty of dry firewood lying about. It is easy to make a small fire and boil a pot of coffee. Relax and rest your legs a while.

The stretch from the spring and on through the primeval forest to the Viikujärvi road (Viikujärvivägen) is one of the most beautiful stretches along the trail. Once out on the forest road, you follow the road over the bridge at Saankijoki, and immediately after the bridge the trail turns off to the right. Before the bridge was built, someone from the village would come and take travellers to the other side by boat. Now the trail continues east of Viikusvaara in to the village, where only five people live permanently today. The trail continues along the village road up to the camping cabins, where you can rent the sauna and either set up your tent or rent one of the rustic cabins.



Emil's sauna.

The rest area at Viikujärvi

This rest area is on the east side of the lake at the end of the road. There are two basic cabins for rent. Water is available in the pump outside the cabins. You can pitch your tent at the rest area. You are not allowed to camp anywhere else in the surrounding area, and the permanent village residents live on either side of the rest area. The sauna is down by the lake, below the rest area, and is booked through the local supervisor Emil Sevä. Payment for renting/camping is made on the spot to Emil Sevä as well. There are no mobile or public stationary telephone connections available in the village.



The village of Viikuskjärvi

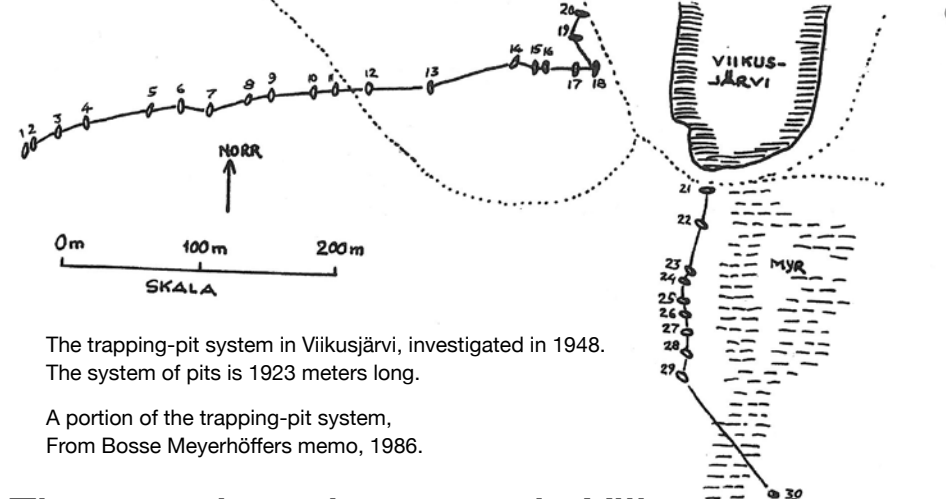
Viikuskjärvi is a solitary and picturesque spot. Now there is a road, but still, there are few who find their way here. There is quite a bit of support for this being the oldest village in the Karesuando area. Artifacts of old homesteads can be found around a few lakes. Among others, in 1956, Maria Ingegerd Sevä found a beautiful arrowhead from the Stone Ages. That hunters were active in the area is evident from the comprehensive trapping-pit system south of the lake Viikuskjärvi.

A settlement tradition is documented from 1765, but it could be much older. Court records are a great source of what happened in the village: Olof Persson Jalko had harvested hayfields around the village without permission. The land belonged to the Rikats family, who later on settled in the village. In 1836, Johan Magnissons farm was inspected as taxable, with a wealth of "1/8 mantal", a measure of land productivity in Finland and Sweden. The land was also granted taxation free for 15 years.

Around 1850, there were about 20 people living in the village. Constant setbacks, poor harvests and thieves forced family heads in the village to begin stealing reindeer in order to survive. After a legal process, the taxable land belonging to Magnisson was confiscated and the property became a part of Carolina Mannerstråle's foundation.

The reindeer thefts continued for a long time and the village was beginning to suffer from a bad reputation. It went so far that in the beginning of the 1900's, the county governor, KJ Bergström, believed it would be best to demolish the entire village. It wasn't until an official monitor, Petter Vilhelm Nilsson Prost, was sent in that the situation improved. It was during his time that reindeer husbandry became more organized. He began taking care of the farmer's tame reindeer, together with his own herd. In 1934, Henrik Sevä from Tuolpukka settled in the village. He had a herd of reindeer and a small farm that is still active today and is run by his sons.

It was first in 1970 that the road to Lannavaara was finished and in the 1980's the farmers were helped in renovating a barn and a few camping cabins for tourists. Today there are five people living in the village, year round.



The trapping-pit system in Viikuskjärvi, investigated in 1948.
The system of pits is 1923 meters long.

A portion of the trapping-pit system,
From Bosse Meyerhöffers memo, 1986.

The trapping-pit system in Viikuskjärvi

The trapping-pit system is difficult to date, since organic material is usually not available for dating. Where dating has been done, there are indications that the system is more than 1000 years old. By counting the number of annual rings on pines, the age has been estimated in some cases to 500 years. The trapping-pit system was rather wide, intended for herds of wild reindeer. There is no evidence of spears at the bottom of any of the pits, which is understandable since a pierced stomach would quickly ruin the meat. The oblong shape of the pit, becoming narrower towards the bottom, prevented the reindeer from escaping. One can presume that the trapping method is quite old, but that the method (for reindeer at least), was no longer used when the transition from using wild reindeer to tame reindeer occurred sometime during the late Viking Age to early Middle Ages (1000's – 1300's).

At the southern end of the lake Viikuskjärvi, there is an angled pit system with some 20 pits in the shorter branch, and 55 pits in the longer. A pit is about 220 cm long and 180 cm wide as well as deep. They were not all dug at the same time, and when one collapsed, a new one was dug next to it. A complete system took generations to build. Hunting with the pit system started in the autumn when the reindeer were fat. On 24 August, St Bartholomew's Day, it was a tradition to head out to cover the pits. The meat was prepared on hot stone hearths and then covered with peat moss. The greater portion of the meat and hides were probably taken to trading posts to exchange for more desirable items.

Trapping-pit hunting discontinued when the Sami began developing reindeer husbandry, probably in the beginning of the 1600's. After that, wild reindeer were hunted using snares and spears.

When Brita Stina Martintytär scribbled this in 1760 on the wall of a hut near Lainio, the age of hunting using trapping pits was a closed chapter: *The day after St Bartholomew's Day I'm at the trapping pits. The hay and barley fields are not harvested. This will most likely be a year of famine.*

Source: PM Kurser i Lannavaara, Bo Meyerhöffer, 1986 and Lainio vår hemby, Kemi 1981.

1) Anm: 1000-1300-talet



Forest reindeer.

Forest Sami

The village of Viikujärvi is part of the Vittangi Sami reindeer-herding and economic district. The village's reindeer-herding area is north of the Lainio River. The border of the forest Sami in Soppero runs through an imagined north/south line to Lannavaara. The forest reindeer are kept separate from the mountain reindeer.

Reindeer husbandry was organized in the beginning of the 1930's. In Viikujärvi this meant that hunting wild reindeer stopped. Tending to reindeer became a more intensive activity. The reindeer herders followed the reindeer and cared for the herd year-round. In the autumn, the reindeer were gathered together in Pullijoki to be divided up among different owners. In the spring, after calving, the reindeer stayed around the edges of the bogs. Viikujärvi had a summer camp west of the village at Kotavuoma. This is where the reindeer were herded in the summertime.

Brita Mangi from Tuolpukka wrote in her book Hem: *"When the reindeer come down to the bog, they grazed hungrily on the moist bog grass for a few hours while the reindeer herders lit smoke fires 1) on one of the bog islands where the reindeer, first the stags, would come to rest. Then they herded the entire flock so it would lay down and rest by the smoke fires and the dogs made sure none of the reindeer wandered off on their own ... twice during the night the herd was brought in to rest ... in the morning we set off to the enclosure."*

In the 1970's there was a change in reindeer husbandry when snow scooters began to be used. In the summertime the herders use motorcycles and ATVs. Fewer reindeer-herders were needed, the dogs and life in the traditional huts disappeared. Despite all this, working as a reindeer herder is still hard work. The greatest difference in Viikujärvi is that the reindeer are kept in a fenced-in pasture at the outskirts of the village.

1) The smoke kept the mosquitos and gnats away.

Pessinki

The Laestadius Trail passes through the Pessinki nature preserve which is east of the Viikujärvi-Pakajärvi line. From a landscape of vast coniferous primeval forests and bogs, the mountain-birch clad low mountain terrain rises to more than 500 meters above sea level. The Pessinki preserve contains a number of deep cliff ravines, carved out by the gushing Ice Age waters. There are paths leading into the nature preserve from Viikujärvi and Suijavaara.

The Saatukakursu Ice Age ravine is the most impressive with lush vegetation along the stream at the bottom of the ravine. Here you will find a number of rare plants. Marjakursu to the south is another very impressive ravine.

The entire area rests upon Archaean rock, far from the mountain chain to the west. To the northeast there is a large bog system where rare bog plants can be found by the springs. The low mountains are topped with mountain meadows. The forests are characterized by lying both to the east and north. The northern part of Pessinki has vast forests of mountain birch, while the southern contains beautiful coniferous primeval forests, and mostly spruce forests to the southeast.

Hiking through the area you will probably see Siberian jays, Siberian tits, three-toed woodpeckers as well as great wood grouse (capercaillie) and hawk owls. The preserve has plenty of wetlands and thus a rich bird life. Red-necked phalarope, jack snipe, broad-billed sandpiper and hen harrier are some of the more exclusive bog bird species. This is also an important breeding area for bean geese and whooper swans.

There are Bears and lynx in the area and otters play freely in the streams. This is also reindeer land for many of the forest Sami districts. Trapping pits, hearths and old hut foundations bear witness to that people and the reindeer have lived here together for a long time.

In the preserve, you are not allowed to harm the plants and animals

Consider the Swedish legal right of access to private land (open country) and take care of nature!

Text: Länsstyrelsen i Norrbottens län.



The new bridge at Jostojok.

The stretch between Viikujärvi and Pakajärvi, 9 km

The path goes through a reindeer pasture, where you can still see some of the old county markings. You pass by the trapping-pit system along Viikurova, although not visible from the path, as well as the mountain Pyhävaara, which means “holy” in Finnish. Along the bog the path can be a little wet, but becomes drier and easier to walk a bit further on. Jostojoki has always been a rest stop for hikers, and this is an excellent spot to take a break by lighting a fire and having a cup of coffee. Continuing on, you easily cross the stream with the new footbridge that was put in 2013, and then it is just a short stretch to the rest area in Pakajärvi.



Rest area at Pakajärvi.

Rest area at Pakajärvi

Roland Henriksson from Lainio built additions to the rest area in 2012, including a windbreak, dry privy and hearth. He takes care of the Laestadius Trail between Lainio and Viikujärvi. Here you can build a cozy fire inside the windbreak, and just like the rest area in Pullijoki, this is also intended to be a place to gather during inclement weather. You can set up a tent in the area around the windbreak and fetch firewood by the privy. There is an excellent spring for drinking water down by the edge of the lake, with utmost quality even if a few leaves and needles may be floating atop. This spring was essential for villagers used to timber in the area in the early 1900's, and you can still see a bit of the foundation of a hut that used to stand below the spring.



Rest stop while waiting for the raft ride.

Pakajärvi - Lainio 18 km

The forest road has changed the conditions for traveling along this stretch. The basic alternative is to walk the 18 kilometers along the road. At Pakajärvi the road consists of rough gravel that can be uncomfortable to walk on, but otherwise the road is perfectly fine. There is a rest area along the road where water can be fetched at Lihajoki. About 4 kilometers from Pakajärvi there is a memorial cross raised for two people who died from an explosion while building the road.

Hikers who start in Lannavaara towards Lainio

For those who do not want to walk all the way to Lainio, you can travel the last stretch by rubber raft along Saankijoki and the Lainio River. To do this, continue walking along the road from the memorial stone about 500 meters and then turn off to the right and follow the road down to the stream Saankijoki. Cross the bridge and continue on to the rest area, a couple hundred meters. When Manker hiked from Viikujärvi in 1932, he chose to take a boat the entire way along Saankijoki to Lainio, and he tells of a rather dangerous trip. Normally it is a very calm trip that takes about four hours. *Note! The transport must be booked four (4) days in advance!*

Hikers who start in Lainio towards Lannavaara

For those who do not want to walk all the way to Pakavaara, you can travel by river-boat upstream the Lainio River to the boat landing by the rapids at Huhtalompolonmaa. Thereafter you walk to the rest area at Pakajärvi. *Note! The transport must be booked four (4) days in advance!*

Lainio

Lainio is an old settlement. In the book Lainio – vår hembygd (Lainio - our home), the Clementsson family is said to be the first to clear land and settle on the north side of the Lainio River, north of Neitiniva at the end of 1620. The father Clement Olofsson was from Hedenäset, to the south in the Torne Valley. No one knows if he himself settled or if he just helped his sons Mårten and Olof build the homestead. The early settlers in Lainio were both hard-working and successful. Olof Clementsson had at the most ten cows and thrice the number of sheep. He also grew barley, so he built a small watermill at Hirvasoja a few kilometers from the homestead. Another mill was built in the village of Sualajoki.

In Åke Bark's book Kirunas byar (The villages of Kiruna), fifteen of Lainio's homesteads are documented, a sign of a very successful village. A postal route was set up to Vittangi in 1910, the main public road was completed in 1927 and electrical lines were established first in 1942. At the time there were 350 people living in the village. The population dropped to under 100 in the 1970's and today the nearest grocery store and school are in Vittangi, 40 kilometers away.

Despite the rather depressing development, the village has quite a few active organizations and clubs. The camp site Lainio Vildmark runs fishing tourism and the village's own opera house Utmaningen (The Challenge) sets up annual performances every Easter. The old school now houses activities run by the Lainio Center for Adoption and Family Counseling. Lainio has a tangible sense of serenity, and their motto is SILENCE.

Ferry at Lainio

The village of Lainio stretches across both sides of the Lainio River. The first farms had their fields on the north side of the river, and have always depended on a way of crossing the river. The first ferries were of wood, but when the public road came through, the traffic increased and finally a metal ferry from Vittangi was put in. The ferry does not have an operator, it is pulled over by hand.



Ferry at Lainio.



Johan Raattamaa.

The preacher Johan Raattamaa

Johan Raattamaa came to Lainio as a mission teacher in 1848. The first year he had 18 pupils, all Sami. The school period could cover anything from a few weeks to at the most four months of a year. The idea to start these schools came from the vicar and founder of Laestadianism Lars Levi Laestadius, and Raattamaa worked in behalf of his commission. The peak of the school operations was in 1853, with a number of schools established throughout the entire Torne Valley.

It was in Lainio that Johan Raattamaa came to the realization that the forgiveness of sins could be given by true Christians. This interpretation of the Bible, which essentially followed the learnings of the Bible and Luther, was the main reason to the rapid growth of Laestadianism.

With the decline of school operations, Raattamaa spent more time on extensive sermon trips. He became the obvious successor for the Laestadian revivalist movement after the death of Laestadius in 1861. He was the leader until he died in 1899. During his time, Laestadianism spread to Finland and Norway and later on to the USA. He succeeded in the task of keeping the movement united. After Raattamaa's death, the movement split into different branches, and Lainio has over the years been the gathering place for West Laestadians.

Source: Nordkalotten, Östen Groth, 1995



The Martti Homestead.

The Martti Homestead

Mårten Henriksson (1721 – 1773) built the homestead, and he was son to Henrik Hindersson Kyrö who is considered the founder of the village of Vittangi. The homestead is historic since it was here Laestadianism developed during the years Johan Raattamaa was a teacher in the village. During a nightly conversation in 1847 between Lars Levi Laestadius and his protégé Johan Raattamaa, they decided on the order of salvation (Ordo salutis) that they would later preach.

It is said that Laestadius came to Lainio to partake in Raattamaa's work and the awakening there. Raattamaa explained how he had approached the process and Laestadius thought hard about the steps taken by his protégé. Master and student sat in deep discussion throughout the night before the fatwood fire in the little smoke hut. They had concluded on the vital central essence of spiritual welfare and doctrine. Before the break of dawn, both men hugged and with great emotion expressed to one another the forgiveness of sins. Laestadius was convinced and explained that the unconditional exhortation of forgiveness was in agreement with the learnings of the scripture and Luther.

The homestead has been moved to its present location at Camp Tystnaden where it serves as Lainio's community center and old homestead museum.

Church services are now held in the prayer house that was completed in 1947.

Source: Ödemarsprofetens lärjungar, Hjalmar Westeson, 1922

LANNAVAARA

Pilgrimage along the Laestadius Trail

Information and application: tfn. +46(0)981-310 60

Mineral Museum

Address: Kunskapshuset, Guldvaskarvägen 4, 981 13 Lannavaara

Visit and guiding: tfn. +46(0)981-310 60

Princess Eugenie Memorial Church in Lannavaara

Visit and guiding: tfn. +46(0)981-310 60

Saint Josefs Monestary

Address: Skolvägen 7, 980 13 Lannavaara

Contact: sisteramada@gmail.com

Tfn. +46(0)76-104 04 91

Sauna Raft Ylinen Ahenjärvi

Contact: Lannis ekonomiska förening

Lannavaara 84, 890 13 Lannavaara

Contact: thore.johansson@lannis.se

STF Lannavaara Youth Hostel

Address: Guldvaskarvägen 4, 981 13 Lannavaara

Booking: tfn. +46(0)981-310 55, Email: info@kristallen.com

Lannavaara Lodge

Address: Byavägen 82, 980 13 Lannavaara

Booking: info@lannavaaralodge.com

Tfn. +46(0)981-590 990, mobil. +46(0)70-587 13 95

Guldgrävarens Bar

Kunskapshuset, Guldvaskarvägen 4, 981 13 Lannavaara

Booking: tfn. +46(0)981-310 60,

Email: info@kristallen.com

Conference

Kunskapshuset, Guldvaskarvägen 4, 981 13 Lannavaara

Information and application: tfn. +46(0)981-310 60

Hertz Car Rental, Lannavaara

Tfn. +46(0)981-310 60



VIIKUSJÄRVI

Trapping pits

Guidning: tfn. +46(0)981-310 60

Emil's Sauna. Book on site

Emil's cabins (basic standard)

Booking: tfn. +46(0)10-403 38 81

LAINIO

Pilgrimage along the Laestadius Trail, including ferry transport

Information, bicycle rental and application: tfn. +46(0)981-410 25

The Martti Homestead

Guided tours about Laestadianism & visits to the chapel.

Application: tfn. +46(0)981-410 25

The old watermill

Information and booking: tfn. +46(0)981-410 25

Neitijärvi bird lake

Information and guiding: tfn. +46(0)981-410 25

Camp Lainio Vildmark

Address: Lainio by, 980 10 Vittangi

Booking: tfn. +46(0)981-410 25

Email: info@lainio.com

Food

Marttigården

Booking: tfn. +46(0)981-410 25

Email: info@lainio.com

Conference

Lainioälvens Café - Mat & Prat

Address: Lainio skola, PL 4191, 980 10 Vittangi

Booking: tfn. +46(0)70-557 24 88

Email: lgc.lainio@gmail.com

Utmaningen

Booking: tfn. +46(0)981-410 25

Email: info@lainio.com





www.laestadiusleden.se