

VUOKSI CULTURE ROUTE

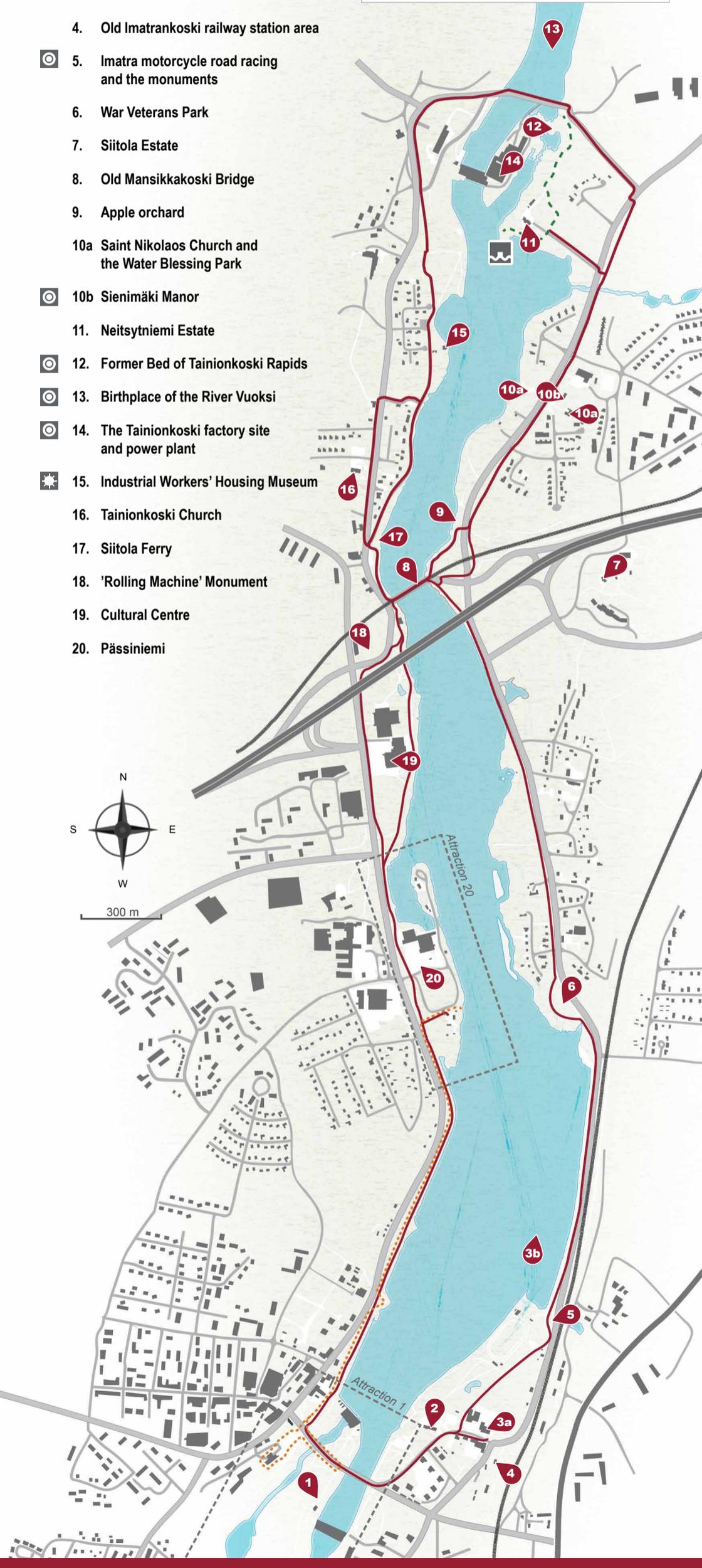
Open in summer 

Scenic site, no access 

Fishing pier 

- 1. Kruununpuisto – Sights and places of interest
- 2. Imatrankoski church and churchyard
-  3a Former 'Hotelli Turisti'
- 3b Old wood hotels
- 4. Old Imatrankoski railway station area
-  5. Imatra motorcycle road racing and the monuments
- 6. War Veterans Park
- 7. Siitola Estate
- 8. Old Mansikkakoski Bridge
- 9. Apple orchard
- 10a Saint Nikolaos Church and the Water Blessing Park
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- 16. Tainionkoski Church
- 17. Siitola Ferry
- 18. 'Rolling Machine' Monument
- 19. Cultural Centre
- 20. Pässiniemi

- Primary route
- - - Alternative route (Trail or old roadbed, slippery when wet)
- • • Accessible route



SIGHTS ON THE VUOKSI CULTURE ROUTE

1. Kruununpuisto – Sights and places of interest

The designated national landscape of the Imatra Rapids is the heart of the Kruununpuisto Park. There are plenty of things to see

in the park, such as the castle-like Valtionhotelli in the Jugend Style, the rare giant's kettles in the river bed, monograms en-

Former bed of the Imatra Rapids.

Image: Fennevisio, Juha Kalaoja.



KRUUNUNPUISTO

Sights and places of interest

1. Valtionhotelli Hotel 
2. Imatrankoski rapids' river bed   
3. Observation deck   
4. Rock carvings   
5. Observation pavilion 
6. Pavilion 
7. Potholes   
8. Imatra hydro-electric power plant 
9. Power plant channel 
10. Turbine monument 
11. "Maiden of Imatra" sculpture 
12. Imatrankoski rapids' dam 
13. Old lanterns on the bridge 
14. Bridge over the rapids 
15. Kalevala rock bench and tree 
16. "Boy and frog" sculpture 
17. Summer theatre 
18. Mellonlahti recreational area 
19. Urban stream  

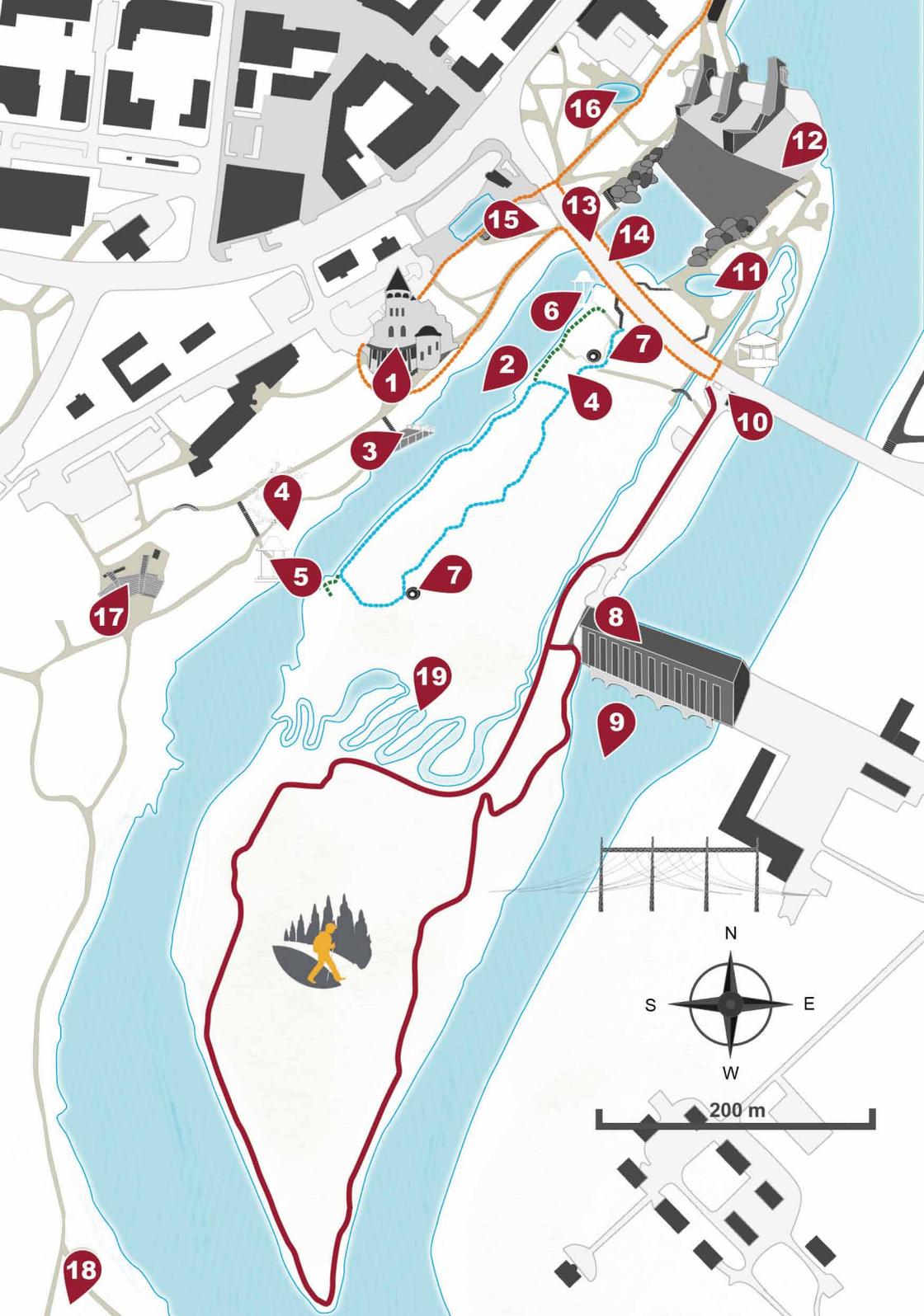
Site of cultural interest 

Site of environmental interest 

Site of geological interest 

graved on rock by visitors over time, an open-air summer theatre, and the Imatrankoski hydroelectric power plant. In summer, thousands of spectators attend the popular dam gates openings. The park has gazebos and sightseeing spots, and a landscaped brook runs through the parkland, designed to support the ecological conditions of the indigenous trout stock in River Vuoksi. Take a walk on one of the paths to explore Finland's oldest nature reserve. If you are lucky, you may even catch a glimpse of the rare flying squirrel or the white-backed woodpecker. The Ivoniemi nature trail runs around the power plant promontory. The trail runs in a riverside landscape influenced both by forces of nature and civilisation over the centuries. There is a playground for the youngsters near the 'Poika ja Sammako' sculpture. The Imatra Power Plant houses an exhibition about the power plant and its construction.

Kruununpuisto scenic and nature trail 600 m	
Ivoniemi nature trail 1,8 km	
Difficult terrain	
Accessible scenic route	



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200 m



2. Imatrankoski church and churchyard

The Evangelical Lutheran Parish of Imatra is a successor to the former Jääski parish, which is today on the Russian side of the border. As a result of the Second World War, the greater part of Jääski parish, as well as its churchyard ravaged by war, became the territory of the Soviet Union. New church buildings were constructed on the Finnish side of the border. Originally designed to serve as a parish hall, the building was consecrated as church in October 1954. Imatrankoski church was designed by architect Aleksis Lindqvist, and the altar, pulpit and pews by architect Yrjö Vaskinen. The altarpiece entitled 'Come Unto Me' was painted in oils by Arvid Liljelund in 1888 for the fifth, and also

the last, church of the former Jääski parish. 'Gethsemane' (copy) and 'Holy Family' (original), commissioned from painter Petter Lang in the early 18th century for the fourth church of Jääski parish, are also on display in the new church.

The bell tower of the Imatrankoski church contains the bells cast for a church under construction before the war in the former Enso, now Svetogorsk. The construction was never completed before the outbreak of the war, but the core of the building remains standing in Svetogorsk. In the Imatrankoski churchyard, there is a copy of the churchyard gate of the former Jääski parish.

Copy of the former Jääski churchyard gate. Bordering on the Kirkkopuisto Park, there is a road paved with massive reinforced concrete plates, a rare construction method at the time. Originally, the road ran from Imatrankoski to Enso, and was completed in 1931.



3a Former 'Hotelli Turisti'

Today housing a school, this impressive building of the former 'Hôtel des Touristes' gives an idea of the grandeur of tourism in Imatra in its heyday at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. The hotel's services included, for example, an orchestra entertaining guests in the dining room under the direction of Miss Holm, originally from Copenhagen. The present stone building was preceded by a wooden hotel, which, during the Russian Revolution, was the headquarters of an armed revolutionary guard organisation. In order to keep the activity secret, the hotel did not receive any regular guests, but remained fully booked all the time. The secret police managed to infiltrate the hotel regardless of these precautions, and exposed the true nature of the activity.



3b Old wood hotels

In addition to the 'Hôtel des Touristes', there were also other facilities on the eastern bank providing lodging, such as the Kriminski, Vuoksela pensionat, Uusi hotelli and Pensionat Egeberg. Most of these service providers discontinued operations when the site was submerged as a result of the construction of the hydroelectric dam.

Hotel Egeberg.

4. Old Imatrankoski railway station area

IMATRA.



Old Imatra Railway Station.

Image: Imatra City Museum of Cultural History.

The old Imatrankoski railway station was situated in the vicinity of the Hôtel des Touristes. The rail line from Viipuri to Imatra was completed in 1892, and immediately acquired huge popularity: now there was a direct train connection from Saint Petersburg to Imatra. According to old tales, up to 14 trains a day carried holidaymakers to the shores of River Vuoksi and Lake Saimaa. Occasionally, the hotels were so overbooked that some travellers had to stay overnight on the train. The old railway station has been demolished, but the area contains a few buildings belonging to the original complex, chief among which is the rather decorative station master's house.

Old Imatra Station Master's House.



5. Imatra motorcycle road racing and the monuments

Imatra has a proud history as a venue for motorcycle road racing. A major event in the Nordic countries, the famous Imatra Tourist Trophy and Road Racing race was organised on the Imatra street circuit from 1962 to 1986. The Imatra Race was the

Finnish round of the FIM Grand Prix motorcycle racing championship from 1964 to 1982. The popular Imatra Memorial Trophy Race is organised annually, enticing thousands of motorcycle aficionados.

6. War Veterans Park

The War Veterans Park was established on River Vuoksi in 1987 in commemoration of the 70th jubilee of Finnish independence. A silver birch seedling was planted for each of the 529 war veterans in Imatra, and 13 anti-tank barrier boulders from the Salpalinja fortification system were erected in the park. A commemorative plaque in memory of the park's establishment was attached to one of the granite boulders. The park was designed by architect Kari Pärssinen.

Salpalinja anti-tank boulders in the War Veterans Park.

Salpalinja fortification line

The Salpalinja fortification line, 'The Lock of Finland', constructed in 1940–1941 and 1944 on the country's eastern border from the Gulf of Finland to the Arctic Ocean, is an intricate system of defence fortifications. The fortification line is approximately 1,200 kilometres long, and comprises hundreds of individual fortifications. Salpalinja remains Finland's largest construction site to date, involving up to 35,000 men at a time. Salpalinja is among the most solid defence systems built during the Second World War, though its effective strength was never tested in battle.



7. Siitola Estate

Commanding a view over River Vuoksi, the Siitola Estate is one of the old estates in the Imatra area. The estate was formed in the early 1660s, when the ruler of Sweden granted Rittmeister Joakim Dunckner feudal tenure over the landed estate. The oldest sections of the present great manor house may date from 1772, i.e. the year when Empress Catherine the Great, with her retinue, toured the Imatra Rapids and

dined at Siitola before returning to Saint Petersburg. The present external appearance in Jugend style was completed in the early 1900s to a design by architect Uno Ullberg, who later acted as the Viipuri city architect. The manor house has previously housed an arts and drawing school.



8. Old Mansikkakoski Bridge



An old double-decked bridge crosses the River Vuoksi at Mansikkakoski. The lower deck is intended for road traffic, while the upper deck is reserved for trains. The bridge is unique in South Finland, and rather rare in other parts of Finland too – in all, Finland has only five double-decked bridges. The bridge was constructed in 1933, in the era of steam locomotives.

9. Apple orchard

The Imatra apple orchard has nearly 300 apple trees. In the park, there is a tree dedicated to every child born in Imatra in 2000. The children, accompanied by their parents, planted the trees in 2001. The

apple trees are of old traditional varieties, common in Imatra's gardens in the past. In all, there are 14 apple varieties. The city continues to donate an apple tree today to every newborn child in Imatra.

Sweeter than sweet

The following apple varieties are represented in the Imatra apple orchard: Junost, Punakaneli, Champanjaomena, Ananaskaneli, Moskovon päärynäomena, Antonovka, Sokerimiron, Anisovka, Sortavalan imelä, Borgovskoje, Valkea Nalif, Korobovka, Tsaarin kilpi and Antonovka Safrannoje.



10a Saint Nikolaos Church and the Water Blessing Park

Orthodox believers in Imatra belong to the Lappeenranta Orthodox Parish, established in the 1740s. Orthodox religion is a relatively recent newcomer in the Imatra area. The Saint Nikolaos Church in Imatra was first consecrated as a chapel in 1956, and then as church in 1986. The church was designed by architect Toivo Paatela. The oldest items in the church come originally from the Saint Nikolaos Military Church in Lappeenranta

(1903–1921). The oldest icons date from the 18th century. A new iconostasis was erected in the church in 2011. The iconostasis was crafted in Kursk, and the icons were painted in Imatra. In 1998, the Water Blessing Park was constructed between the church and the River Vuoksi. A major feast in the church calendar, the 'Great Blessing of the Water' ceremony, is celebrated on the banks of the River Vuoksi.

Great Blessing of Water Park.



10b Sienimäki Manor

The Sienimäki Manor is the oldest residential building in Imatra. The wooden building in Neo-Classical Empire Style was originally constructed in the early 19th century. The history of the Sienimäki manor is closely related to the formation of the Neitsytniemi and Siitola estates in the 17th

century. At the turn of the new millennium, the building's exterior and interior were fully restored to their original 19th century condition. The garden features old, traditional garden varieties of trees and plants. The building is in private use.

11. Neitsytniemi Estate

The Neitsytniemi Estate, possibly the oldest estate in Imatra, is an allodial estate granted by Queen Christina of Sweden in the 1650s. In 1889, the estate was bought by Baron Edvard von Nottbeck, who built the present main house in Neo-Renaissance Style. Constructed in 1895–1900, the building was designed by architect Karl August Wrede. According to certain

sources, Baroness Eugenie von Nottbeck specifically requested that the building resemble the summer residence of the President of the United States; she was born in America. The estate is today the property of the City of Imatra. The estate is operated by a catering business, which is open on demand.



Image: Imatra City Museum of Cultural History.

12. Former Bed of Tainionkoski Rapids

Fishing was unrestricted on River Vuoksi until the Crown claimed the most productive fisheries in the 16th century. Fish was also accepted as payment of taxes in natura. The first written records of the crown fishery date from the early 17th century, but the site was well-known long before that. After a history of over 300 years, the subsequent state fishery was discontinued at the beginning of the 1930s, when catch volumes dwindled. In the early 19th century, the fishery produced approximately 650 to 800 kg of salmon per annum.



Neitsytniemi fishing pier.

The former bed of the Tainionkoski rapids is today bare, while water is routed through the Tainionkoski hydroelectric dam along a new feeder channel. At the foot of the dam, there are fishing piers on both banks,

which are in popular use. The River Vuoksi has an indigenous stock of trout, which is reinforced by regular stocking. In addition, the Saimaa salmon migrates downstream along River Vuoksi from Lake Saimaa.



Image: B. Lindholm.

Salmon traps

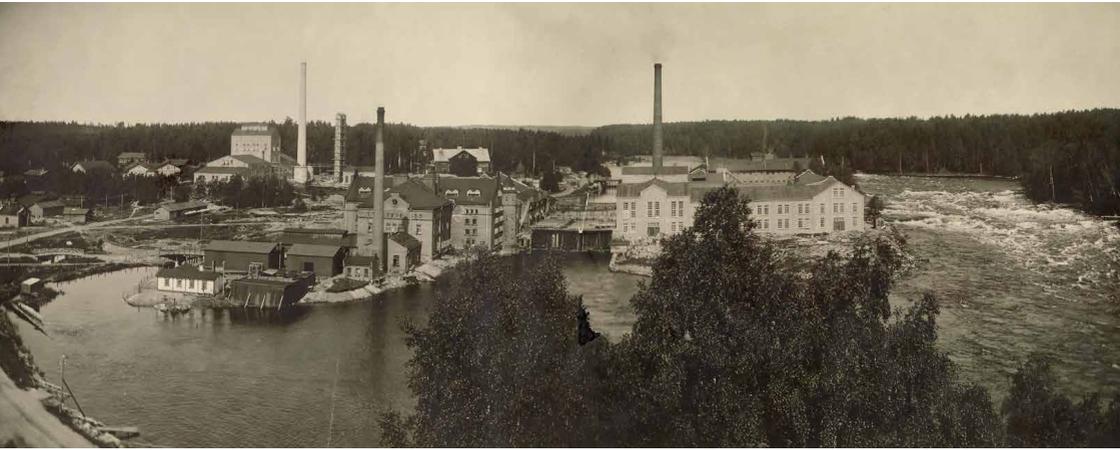
At Tainiokoski rapids, salmon was trapped by using fixed fishing weirs constructed of piles and boulders. The weirs were equipped with wooden salmon cages, i.e. 'tainio'. Hence probably the name 'Tainionkoski'.

13. Birthplace of the River Vuoksi

This is where the River Vuoksi was formed some 5,700 years ago. The formation of the river was a major geological event for the local population, as well as the stone-age population on Lake Saimaa in general. According to scholars, memory of the

river's formation may have been retained in epic folk poetry, especially in the poem depicting the bleeding knee of Väinämöinen. In this case, the tale would have lived on in oral tradition from one generation to another for several millennia.

14. The Tainionkoski factory site and power plant



Tainionkoski industrial site in the 1900s.

Image: Imatra City Museum of Cultural History.

The Tainionkoski factory site is an interesting piece of Finland's industrialisation. Large-scale industry took root on 'Torna Island' and at Tainionkoski in the 1890s, with the establishment of a combined spool and paper mill and a wood grindery. At its high point, the factory site was a community of several factories and mills, along with a population of 5,000 to 6,000, spanning the river mouth and shores of Lake Saimaa. The site was full of activity, and the ports of Saimaa were in heavy use. A multitude of factories and mills, railway facilities, log stockpiles, warehouses and office buildings dominated the landscape. The site boasted Finland's first facility for manufacturing potassium chlorate, and, apparently, the first industrial-scale production globally of synthetic camphor. Chymos Oy, a company engaged in the processing of non-alcoholic beverages from berries, started out at Tainionkoski. With the establishment of Chymos, wild berries were, for the first

time in Finland, picked and exploited for industrial purposes. For a number of local women, picking berries became a primary means of gainful activity.

Over time, the factory site became overcrowded. The paper industry relocated further away to the shores of Lake Saimaa. The factories at Tainionkoski were closed in the 1960s, resulting in a gradual decline of the old industrial and residential community. Today, the former industrial hub leads a subdued life. Nature has partially reclaimed the site, even to the extent of its being declared and protected as nature reserve. Some of the old factory buildings remain in ruins on 'Torna Island' as monuments to its past glory. New office buildings have been constructed on the site, standing side by side with the old factory buildings. Completed in 1949–1950, the Tainionkoski Hydroelectric Power Plant now operates on the site.

15. Industrial Workers' Housing Museum

The new industrial concentration at Tainionkoski required an ample supply of labour, and these workers needed housing. Tornator Oy constructed worker's housing first at Ritikanranta, and, soon afterwards, also at Niskampi. Ritikanranta, with the factory's primary school and fire brigade, was to become the centre of a factory community that was full of life. The local post office, market place, various shops and other services were also situated at Ritikanranta. Of the buildings, only one tenement building, as well as a combined sauna and bakery building, remain standing today. The buildings have since 1975 housed the Industrial Workers' Housing Museum. The old market place has been transformed into a sports field.



Image: Imatra City Museum of Cultural History.

16. Tainionkoski Church

The Tainionkoski Evangelical Lutheran Church was originally built as a chapel serving the Tainionkoski factory community. The building was designed by architect Yrjö Vaskinen. The first service was given in the building at Christmas 1932. The chapel was consecrated as a church by the Bishop of Viipuri Diocese in summer 1933, and

became the main church in Imatra. The church building represents the Revival Classicism of the 1920s, with traits of Rationalism and Early Functionalism. A crucifix sculpted by Eelis Reinilä in 1940 for a long time occupied the place of the present altarpiece. The church's altarpiece in the Modern style, *'For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face'*, was painted by Kristiina Uusitalo in 1997.



Tainionkoski Church
Altarpiece.

17. Siitola Ferry

Image: Finnish National Board of Antiquities.



The Siitola ferry is one of the three historic crossing points along the River Vuoksi. The ferry was manned by a ferryman who transported passengers across for a small fee. The first written records indicating the Siitola ferry date from the first half of the 17th century. In the latter half of the 17th century, an inn was established on the eastern bank, which would provide food and shelter to travellers for over 200 years.

The inn was moved to the western bank in the 1800s. The plinth of the last inn building remains visible on the ferry site. The Siitola ferry site grew into a lively trading and leisure spot, often bustling with people; perhaps not least because of the inn's popular public house. The Siitola ferry and inn were used until the 1890s, when a bridge was built across the Imatrankoski rapids.

18. 'Rolling Machine' Monument

The 'Rolling Machine' monument commemorates the history of Imatra's steel industry and its beginnings in 1915.

The steel mill of Ovako Imatra Oy Ab carries on the tradition near the border.

19. Cultural Centre

The Cultural Centre was completed in 1986. The building was designed by architect Arto Sipinen. The form language of the Cultural Centre displays reflections of the Functionalism of the 1930s, and an aspiration of rendering architect Alvar Aalto's form language into more modern terms; Arto Sipinen had previously worked in Aalto's office. The Cultural Centre is a multi-purpose community centre comprising, for example, the Main Library, the Arts Museum, the Music Academy, the City Museum of Cultural History, a cafeteria and various other spaces serving further cultural functions. The Cultural Centre has been used intensively by the citizens.

Next to the Cultural Centre, there is the City Hall designed by architects Mane Hetzer and Arto Sipinen, completed in 1970, leaving an opening between the buildings for the Citizens' Agora, which features the 'Loggers' sculpted by Professor Aimo Tukiainen (1917–1996) in 1948. Aimo Tukiainen was one of the most prominent sculptors of the post-war generation.

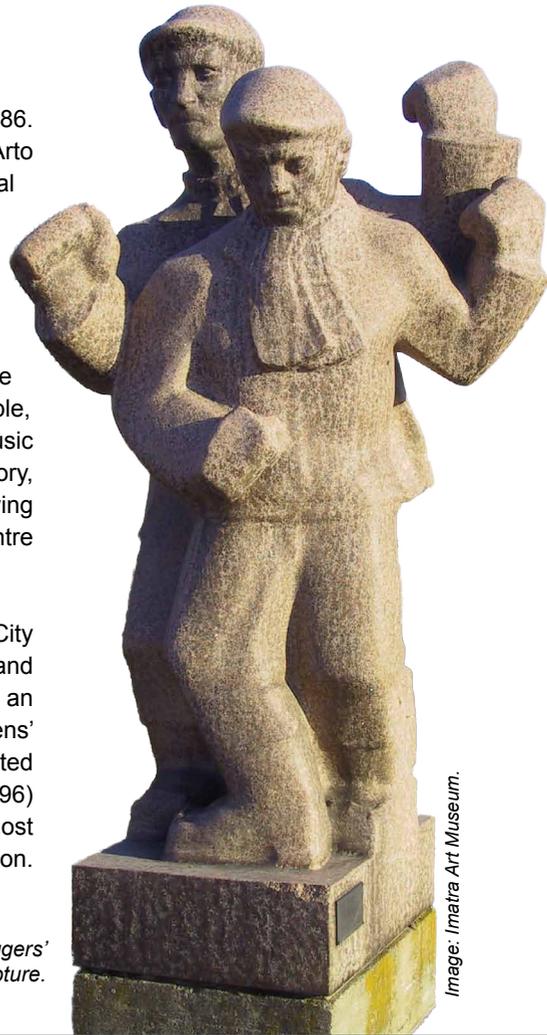


Image: Imatra Art Museum.



Image: Ari Ylähollo.

'Loggers' sculpture.

Architect Alvar Aalto and Imatra

Alvar Aalto designed the general plan for Imatra in 1953. His most important design in Imatra is the Vuoksenniska Church of Three Crosses, completed in 1959. The Church of Three Crosses is one of the key works of modern architecture in Finland, and belongs to Aalto's internationally recognized body of works. In summer, the church is part of the road-church network.

20. Pässiniemi



Linnankoski Power Plant.

Image: Imatra City Museum of Cultural History.

In Pässiniemi and on its shores – and even underwater – there is a wealth of hidden history from various periods. In the mid-16th century, King Gustav Vasa of Sweden erected a stronghold of logs, Bullerborg, on Linnasaari, on an island off Pässiniemi. There are also records of a salmon fishery under the same name. Today beneath the water, Linnasaari was submerged by the construction of the Imatrankoski hydroelectric dam. The mounds in Pässiniemi are the remains of a Russian garrison, established in the early 19th century, which included a set of four barrack buildings, as well as stables. Pässiniemi also



Traditional Karelian farmstead milieu; Hiljan piha.

features an open-air museum, 'Hiljan Piha', a typical farmstead entity composed of relocated old South Karelian log buildings, depicting peasant life along River Vuoksi in the mid-19th century.

South of Pässiniemi, at the bottom of River Vuoksi, there are the ruins of the Linnankoski hydroelectric power plant, which was in production in 1900. The power plant was an impressive wooden structure, 107 metres long and

Traditional Karelian farmstead milieu; Hiljan piha.

20 metres wide, equipped with penstock towers. The plant was decommissioned rather soon, after being made obsolete by the construction of the Imatra power plant. The ruins of the power plant are today a popular dive site.

Varpasaari, an island north of Pässiniemi, was the home base of 'The Vuoksi Fishing Club', established by British anglers in 1875. The club acted as host to many eminent fishermen from Europe and beyond. When a member, with or without guests, arrived at the club, the national flag was raised. Once the club was devoid of members and guests, a white standard was raised above the club's boathouse as a signal to the holders of the water rights that fishing was permitted. The club was closed in 1949. The present Vuoksi Fishing Park started operations in the early 1980s.

Pässiniemi today features Imatra's sports hall and indoor swimming pool, as well as other outdoor and recreational sites, such as a Frisbee golf course and places for ice swimming.



Staff of the English fishing club.

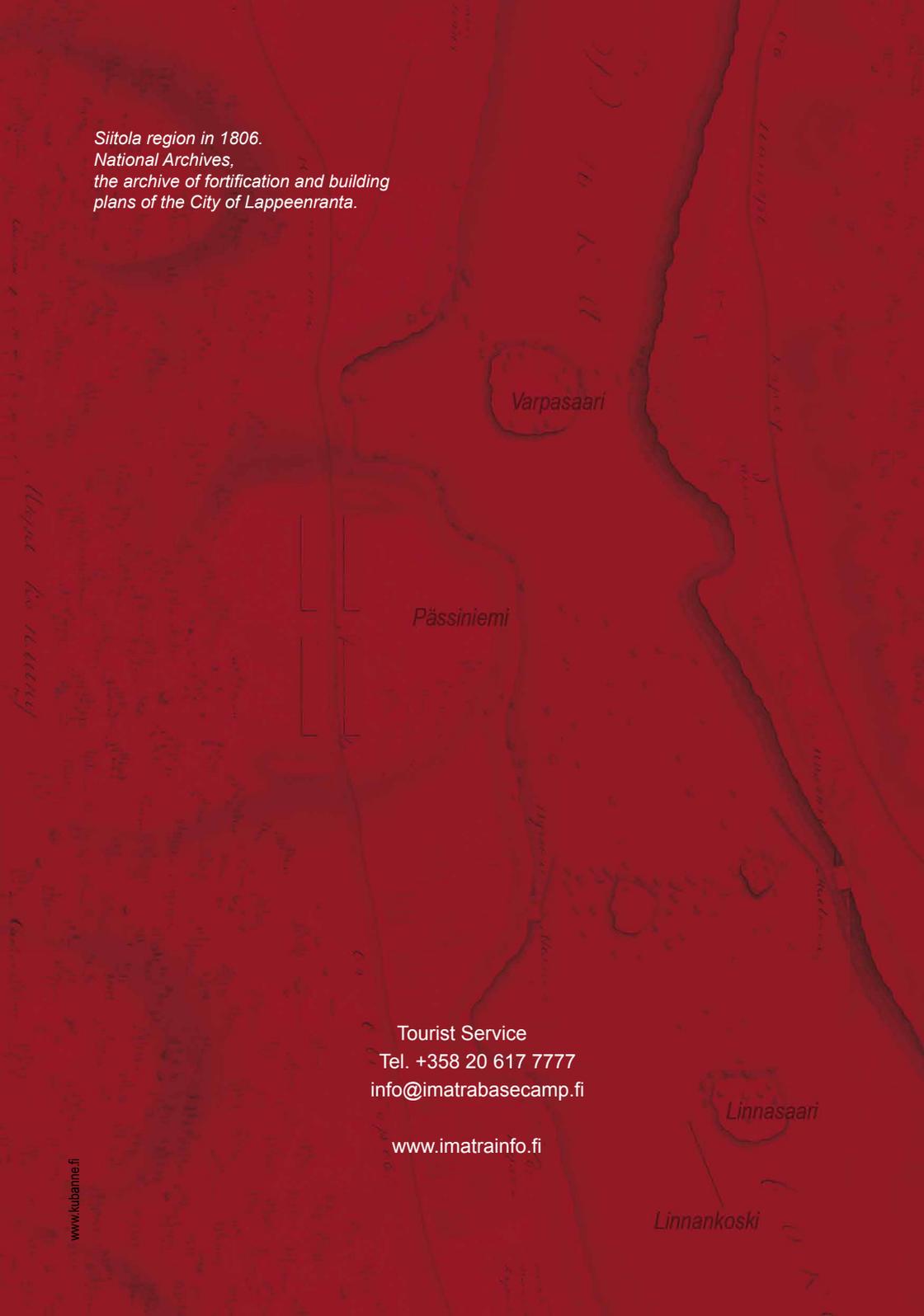
Photograph by Finland's National Board of Antiquities.

PÄSSINIEMI

1. The remains of Russian soldiers' barracks
2. Varpasaari
3. Hijian piha, a Karelian farm
4. Linnankoski power plant (under water)
5. Linnasaari (the location of the Bullerborg fortress, under water)



Siitola region in 1806.
National Archives,
the archive of fortification and building
plans of the City of Lappeenranta.



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