

The Building Heritage of Kaustinen

From Shipbuilders to Master Builders

Kaustinen's building tradition forms part of the centuries-old timber-building heritage of Ostrobothnia. From the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, the Ostrobothnian coast was one of the most important shipbuilding regions in the Kingdom of Sweden. Shipyards in Kokkola, Jakobstad and Kronoby employed many farmers from the river valleys, who supplied timber, produced tar and took part in building ships.

The skills learned in the shipyards gradually found their way into other forms of construction. The same master carpenters built houses, mills, bridges, churches and bell towers. This rich tradition of craftsmanship also gave rise to the renowned Kuorikoski family of church builders from Kaustinen, whose work became widely known.

Builders at Home and Abroad

Building activity was already thriving in Kaustinen during the early nineteenth century. Old buildings were dismantled and sold, making way for new ones. Local carpenters and joiners also worked on the Kuorikoski family's building projects throughout Finland. Later in the nineteenth century, many people from Kaustinen travelled for extended periods to construction sites in St Petersburg and even as far as Warsaw. This practice was known locally as *poistöissä*—working away from home. Seasonal work far from the village brought livelihoods, new ideas and valuable building skills back to Kaustinen.

The Houses and Farmsteads of Kaustinen

The traditional landscape of Kaustinen was dominated by one-and-a-half-storey log houses with moulded eaves and walls that flared slightly outwards towards the top. Fully two-storey houses were less common, but examples still survive, including those at Korkiahuntus and the Lautamies House in Puumala.

Kaustinen was also home to many **sivukamaritupa** houses, a characteristic feature of Central Ostrobothnian vernacular architecture. Around twenty examples are known from the parish, several of which have survived or been relocated to museum sites.

A Built Cultural Landscape

A traditional Kaustinen farmstead usually consisted of numerous buildings, including granaries, lofted storehouses, stables, cowsheds and other farm buildings. Many were masterful examples of woodworking and carpentry. Today, the best-preserved historic building ensembles can be found in the Kappeli–Pajalanmäki area of the church village and in the village of Järvelä. They

recall a time when building was one of the parish's most important livelihoods and a defining part of its identity.

A Living Building Heritage

The building heritage of Kaustinen reflects centuries of expertise shaped by shipbuilding, forests and woodworking. Its legacy lives on in the area's historic houses, farmsteads, churches and enduring craft traditions. These buildings stand as lasting reminders of how the builders of Kaustinen left their mark both on their home region and on construction sites far beyond it.

Caption:

Santeri's Café, early 20th century, when the building housed the local cooperative store.

The Mäkilä side-chamber house in Salonkylä.

A row of houses in Puumala.

The Functionalist-style KPO building.