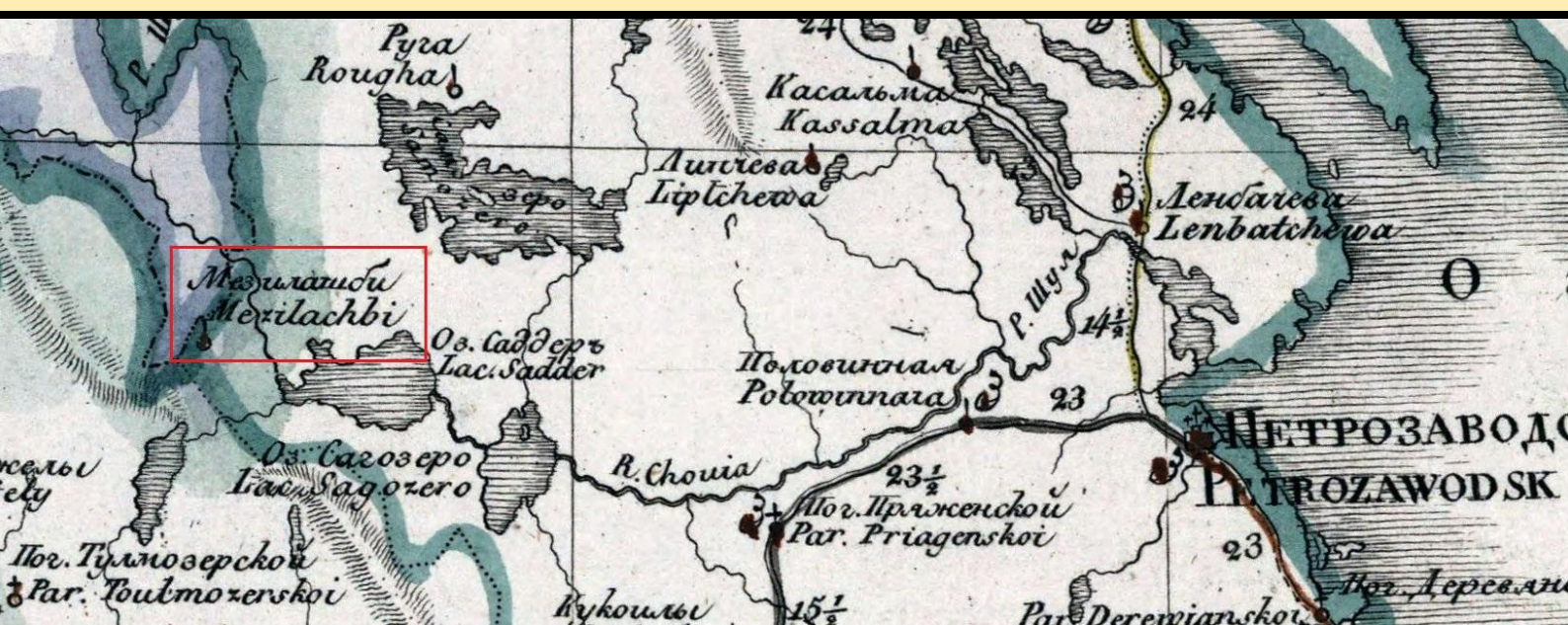


The Land of Honey

Mesilampi (Мезиламба) and Its Residents



Vasilii Petrovich Piadyshev's map from 1829 showing the tiny village of Mesilampi in Imperial Russia just over the border from Hyrsylän Mutka in the Grand Duchy of Finland

The Unique Karelian Village
over the Southern Border from Hyrsylän mutka

By Ted Leclair, MBA



Karjalan
Sivistysseura

*Tiny bee, thou honey-birdling,
Fly over there,
Over the seas nine,
Half a sea of a tenth,
Without sitting on a reed,
Without resting on a leaf,
To the island,
In the sea,
Bring from there honey,*

*From there enchanted honey,
That creates nine ointments,
eight salves!
There is an island in the sea,
With a honey pond (Mesilampi),
There is honey in it,
There is enchanted honey in it,
As salve for those who are sick,
As cure for injuries.*

- Ancient Incantations of the Finnish People (Suomen kansan muinaisia loitsurunoja), Helsinki, 1880

The tiny village of Mesilampi was located over the border in Russia, just to the south of Hyrsylän mutka in Finland, and was at its most populous around the year 1900, when it had about 30 inhabitants. The old route leading to Mesilampi from Hyrsylän mutka crossed the border just south of Balasenkoski rapids where the Suojoki river became the dividing line between Finland and Russia. For such a small and remote village it is interesting how often it gets recorded on maps. Vasili Petrovich Piadyshev's map of Eastern-Karelia produced in the late 1820's, clearly shows Mesilampi south of Hyrsylän mutka, but the map oddly does not show Veskelys, Yläjoki and other larger Russian villages around the area.¹ The population of Mesilampi at that time was about 15 people. It is actually quite astonishing that Piadyshev even knew Mesilampi existed. The village was intrinsically tied from its earliest days to the neighbouring villages in the south of Hyrsylän mutka, as shall be seen. When Mesilampi was liquidated in the spring of 1935 under orders from the Soviet-Russian Government, scattering its inhabitants to various corners of the Soviet-Russian expanse and ending the village's 150-year history, the residents of Hyrsylän mutka would have been troubled and saddened - the links between the two areas being now forever broken.

Early History

The earliest map showing the settlement of Mesilampi that the author has seen is the General Land Survey of Olonets Gubernia completed in 1788.² The name Mesilampi, one can assume comes from the small lake or pond on the shores of which the village was founded and which bore the same name. Mesilampi in English means honey pond, and probably got its name from the golden colour of the water. This golden colour may have been caused by water runoff from a nearby tar pit.³

When exactly Mesilampi was settled is not certain. A very early record prepared in 1745, evidently detailing peasants from Russian state factories that were included in the 1726 Vero (1st Tax Revision)⁴ but were now absent, shows an odd entry for an individual named Amos Isakinpoika, who was recorded as being aged 50 in 1726 and was now deceased.⁵ This Amos Isakinpoika is said to be living in a place called

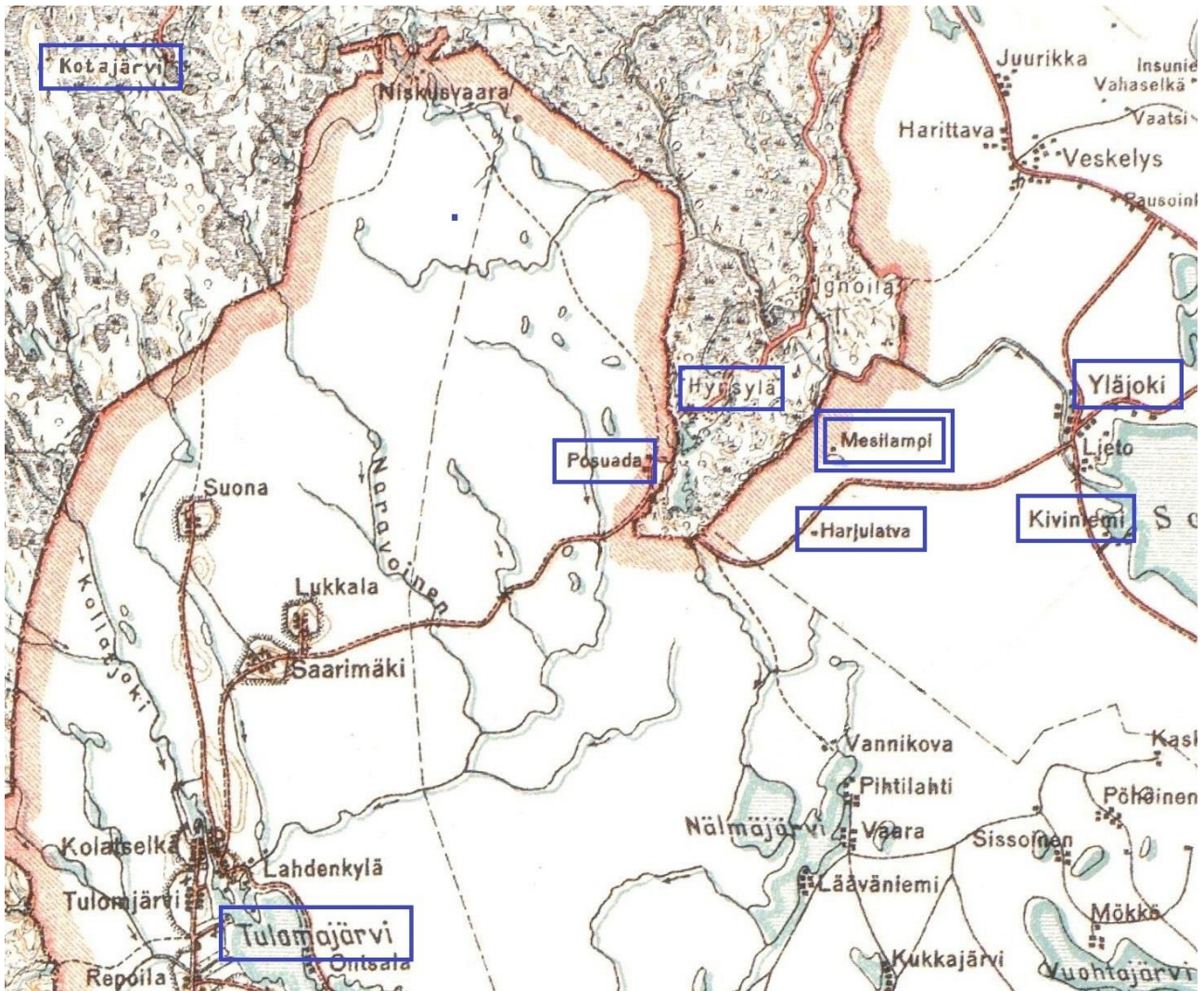
¹ Vasilii Petrovich Piadyshev, "Carte generale du gouvernement d'Olonetz", Voенно-topograficheskoe Depo., St. Petersburg, 1829

² General Land Survey (Generalnoe Mezhevanie) of Olonets Gubernia, 1788, RGADA (РГАДА) Russian State Archives

³ Veikko Happonen, "Mesilampi", Nimiarkisto, Suojärvi, 1968

⁴ Vero or tax revision lists were compiled periodically in the 18th and 19th centuries throughout the Russian Empire and detailed by village the residents and the change in their status (eg.died, born, moved) compared to the previous tax revision, most include both male and female residents but some, like the 1811 revision, only include male residents.

⁵ Census of State Peasants Assigned to the Petrovski Factories Absent after the First Revision – Salmenniska volost, fond 350, opis' 2, delo 2382, RGADA (РГАДА) Russian State Archives, transcribed and translated by Santeri Palviainen, 2019



Map of key villages (outlined in blue) in Finland and Russia referred to in the article. Source - Topographical Corps (Topografikunta), Finland, 1937

Mezilamskoi, Salmenniska parish⁶. Could this be Mesilampi? This is not certain and oddly this Amos Isakinpoika is not to be found in the 1726 Vero (1st Tax Revision) list for Salmenniska even though this document implies he should be.⁷ Additionally no mention of a village by the name of Mezilamskoi is listed in the 1726 Vero (1st Tax Revision) or for that matter in the 1748 Vero (2nd Tax Revision) for Salmenniska.⁸ A later assumed related entry from the Salmi municipality, Käkisalmi province⁹ of the Russian Empire, dated 1781, details a marriage between widower Vasili Andreinpoika¹⁰ of Hyrsylä village, and a woman named

⁶ For the sake of clarity, the term *parish* is being used to identify geographic areas within Russia, though these ecclesiastical parishes do not always align with governmental geographic administrative regions, which were evolving, particularly during the 20th century.

⁷ 1st Tax Revision 1726 – Salmenniska volost, fond 350, opis' 2, delo 2371, RGADA (РГАДА) Russian State Archives, transcribed and translated by Santeri Palviainen, 2019

⁸ 2nd Tax Revision 1748 – Salmenniska volost, fond 350, opis' 2, delo 2379, RGADA (РГАДА) Russian State Archives, transcribed and translated by Santeri Palviainen, 2019

⁹ Käkisalmi was the eastern most province of the Kingdom of Sweden and had been won from Russia in 1617 in the Treaty of Stolbovo. The southern part of Käkisalmi province was then re-conquered by Russia during the Great Northern War and officially again became part of the Russian Empire in 1721 in the Treaty of Nystad. This area was uniquely governed using the old laws of Sweden, and became a part of what was later known as Vanha Suomi (Old Finland), though officially named the Viipuri Governorate. The area called Hyrsylän Mutka was part of southern Käkisalmi province.

¹⁰ Later on the descendants of Vasili Andreinpoika would use the *Murto* surname.

Anna, the daughter of Anton Isakinpoika, from *Mezilabi* village.¹¹ It can probably be assumed that Anton Isakinpoika and the previously mentioned Amos Isakinpoika are the same person and the name has been transcribed incorrectly in either the 1745 absent list or the 1781 marriage, or a possible alternative is that they were brothers. Oddly this Anna Antonintytär does not show up in any of the 1780 – 1800 period Hyrsylä village church attendance registers, and Vasili Andreinpoika of Hyrsylä village is listed with a wife of a different name. This could be explained if Anna Antonintytär died shortly after their marriage, but no death record has been found, though this is not surprising given the incomplete nature of late 18th century metrical records in this area, nonetheless her absence seems odd. Further complicating the situation is that no further references to either Amos or Anton Isakinpoika or Anna Antonintytär, is to be found in any other governmental or church records – in either Russia or Finland.

These early mentions of the village of Mezilamskoi and Mezilabi are most probably a settlement in the same area that later would become known as Mesilampi. This settlement was possibly short lived and abandoned, but at a minimum no confirmed descendants of these individuals remained there in the second half of the 18th century. Though a name similar to Mesilampi appeared in these earlier governmental and church records it was not used consistently suggesting that the village was only more solidly established in the latter part of the 18th century. This theory is further supported by the fact that the village is identified in the church attendance registers for 1794 and 1797 as *Novaja Zazhivka*, or *New Settlement*.¹² The first use of the village name Mesilampi in the church attendance registers is in 1801.

Other early references found where the name Mesilampi was used include the 1782 Vero (4th Tax Revision) for the neighbouring Säämäjärvi parish, where it states that Paraskeva Kirilintytär, the wife of peasant Prokopei Borisanpoika, came from Salmenniska parish, *Mozi lampy* village, most certainly meaning Mesilampi.¹³ The 1782 Vero record also states that Paraskeva and Prokopei have two sons, Zaharei born 1769 and Foka born 1779. This implies that Paraskeva and Prokopei were married prior to 1769, and may suggest that Mesilampi had been settled before that date, even though in other governmental and church records from the same period for Salmenniska parish there is no mention of Mesilampi to be found. The corresponding entry in the 1782 Vero for Salmenniska parish in fact lists Paraskeva with her parents and siblings as living in the village of Kiviniemi, stating that she had left the village and married peasant Prokopei Borisanpoika of Prokkoila, Säämäjärvi parish.¹⁴ Another 18th century mention of the village is in the orthodox church registers from Suojärvi municipality in the Käkisalme province of the Russian Empire for the year 1793, where the marriage of a daughter, Pelagia Amosantytär, from the village of Mesilampi to a man, Prokopei Fadeinpoika, from Kotajärvi village, Suojärvi municipality is recorded, and the village name of Mesilampi is clearly written. The two mentions above are related to the later families of Mesilampi from the second half of the 18th century and whose descendants populated the village in the 19th century and beyond. While they do not allow us to pinpoint an exact year that Mesilampi was settled by these families, they do suggest that by the second half of the 18th century a village by the name of Mesilampi clearly existed. Though its use within governmental & church records of the 18th century was still unreliable and often contained conflicting data.

Another village, just south of Mesilampi, that would be called Harjulatva appears to have been founded around the same time, and in fact Mesilampi appears to have been considered for taxation

¹¹ Pietarin kaupungin historiallisessa arkisto (TsGIA SPb), opis' 111, delo 676a, Salmin metrikat 1781, transcribed and translated by Santeri Palviainen, 2025

¹² Russian Orthodox Church, Olonets Consistory, Salmenniska rippikirjat 1794 – 1865 (familysearch.org)

¹³ Säämäjärvi verorevisiot 1782 – 1858, The National Archive of the Republic of Karelia, Petrozavodsk (familysearch.org), 2024

¹⁴ Salmenniska verorevisiot 1782 – 1858, The National Archive of the Republic of Karelia, Petrozavodsk (familysearch.org), 2024

purposes a northern settlement of Harjulatva.¹⁵ The 1795 Vero (5th Tax Revision) is the first instance where Harjulatva is listed and indicates that the village was settled mainly by residents from the larger nearby village of Kiviniemi, located to the east on the shores of Sotjärvi lake. It also states that a man named Aleksi Kirilinpoika and his uncle Terentei Taraseinpoika have moved from Kiviniemi with their families to the newly founded Harjulatva village and have declared that they will be taxed there.¹⁶ This note appears to be an attempt by the governmental authorities to update their records to reflect where people are actually living, though this update appears to be over a decade behind the times when compared to the 1782 Vero record referred to above where Aleksi Kirilinpoika's sister Paraskeva Kirilintytär is said to hail from Mesilampi.



Niskusvaara village, Tulemajärvi parish, circa 1920's – an example of a small Russian border village about the same size as Mesilampi. Niskusvaara was located just south-east of Kotajärvi village in Finland. *Source - Kansallisarkisto Maatalousneuvoja Eino Markku Eskelisen kokoelmat*

Analysis of early governmental and church records show that two families had established themselves in the village of Mesilampi by the latter half of the 18th century. The 1795 Vero (5th Tax Revision) as previously noted does not show Mesilampi, but the two families that settled their can be found within the document – one in the above mentioned Harjulatva (though originally from Kiviniemi) and the other in their original home village of Yläjoki, to the east of Mesilampi. For taxation purposes these families continue over time to be listed in the two villages noted above. Why an official change to Mesilampi for taxation purposes was never done is unknown, but one can assume the government was still collecting their taxes, which was probably their primary concern.

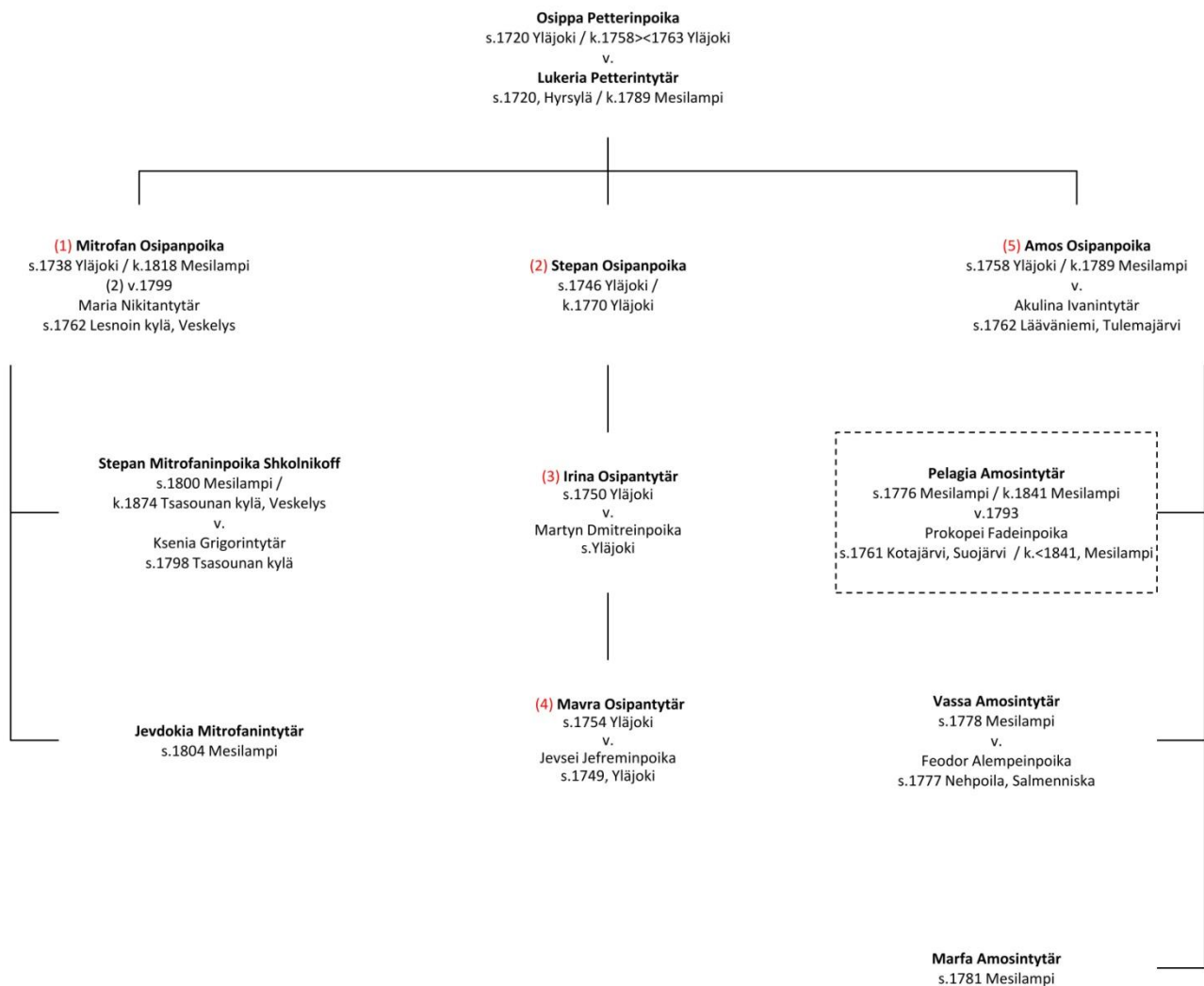
The two families established in Mesilampi at the end of the 18th century were that of Osip Petterinpoika and his wife Lukeria Petterintytär, originally from the village of Yläjoki, and that of Kiril Taraseinpoika and his wife Anastasia Kuismantytär, originally from the village of Kiviniemi.

¹⁵ Certain records and documents in fact treat the villages of Mesilampi and Harjulatva as one village, such as the *Olonets Governate List of Populated Places 1873 from the Central Statistical Committee of the Ministry of Internal Affairs*, edited by E. Ogorodnikov; *and* Iivo Härkönen's, translated from the Russian, *Luettelo rajantakaisen Karjalan kylistä* from 1905.

¹⁶ Salmenniska verorevisiot 1782 – 1858, The National Archive of the Republic of Karelia, Petrozavodsk (familysearch.org), 2024

There appears to have been a fair amount of movement of peoples in the Salmenniska parish towards the end of the 1700's. When comparing the 1782 Vero (4th Tax Revision) and the following 1795 Vero (5th Tax Revision) for Salmenniska parish, it can be seen that three settlements were abandoned within that timeframe and six new settlements founded, indicating considerable movement of peoples during that 13 year period. The late 1780's saw another war between Sweden and Russia with small skirmishes in Sortavala on the north shore of Lake Ladoga, an area 150 km to the southwest, and it is hard to believe this would have caused much upheaval in the areas further north from Lake Ladoga. The reason for the movements during this period may simply have been a result of overcrowded villages lacking fertile grounds to support the local populations, leading to residents leaving to settle new lands. Population movements were also happening during the same time period in other nearby areas, with two families from the village of Hyrsylä in Salmi municipality, Käkisalmi province, moving north to settle what would become the village of Ignoila.

The family of Osip Petterinpoika from Yläjoki



It is probable that Osip Petterinpoika never settled in Mesilampi given that he died sometime between 1758 and 1763 according the 1782 Vero (4th Tax Revision)¹⁷. It appears that his widow, Lukeria

¹⁷ Salmenniska verorevisiot 1782 – 1858, The National Archive of the Republic of Karelia, Petrozavodsk (familysearch.org), 2024 – Osip's youngest child is listed as born in 1758 and Osip is listed as deceased according to the 1763 Vero (3rd Tax Revision) as reported in the 1782 Vero (4th Tax Revision)

Petterintytär, originally from the village of Hyrsylä in Salmi municipality, and their two sons Mitrofan and Amos with their respective families came to Mesilampi. Mitrofan had one son Stepan, who after Mitrofan's death in 1818 left Mesilampi with his widowed mother and settled in Tsasouna village, Veskelys parish.¹⁸ The fate of Mitrofan's only daughter Jevdokia, is unknown. Amos died in 1789 a short time after arriving in Mesilampi, leaving his widow, Akulina Ivanintytär, and several young daughters.¹⁹ In 1793, Amos and Akulina's daughter Pelagia married Prokopei Fadeinpoika from Kotajärvi village, Suojärvi municipality, Käkisalmi province²⁰, and Prokopei came to Mesilampi as a koti-vävy.²¹ A second daughter, Vassa, married Feodor Alempeinpoika of Nehpoila village, Salmenniska parish and moved there. The fate of the third daughter Marfa is unknown.

Of interest is Osip Petterinpoika's use of the name Amos for one of his sons. Osip can be found in the 1726 Vero (1st Tax Revision) listed as the son of Petter Prokopeinpoika, born around 1721, and listed as living in the village of Yläjoki.²² Amos was Osip's youngest child and was born in 1758, probably in Yläjoki, but there is a possibility that they had already relocated to Mesilampi. The use of the less common name Amos may perhaps indicate a connection between Osip, or even his father, to the Amos Isakinpoika from above who was listed in 1745 as being from Mezilamskoi. This could be a familial connection, or a communal trade connection or even a koti-vävy relationship, unfortunately the scarcity of records from the early to mid-18th century period make knowing the truth impossible.



Yläjoki village, part of the Salmenniska parish in East-Karelia – one of the original settlers of Mesilampi came from Yläjoki and there were many connections between these two villages over the years. *Source – Photographer Boris Karppela (formerly Karpoff), Karjalan Sivistysseura*

¹⁸ Russian Orthodox Church, Olonets Consistory, Veskelys rippikirjat 1795 – 1865 (familysearch.org)

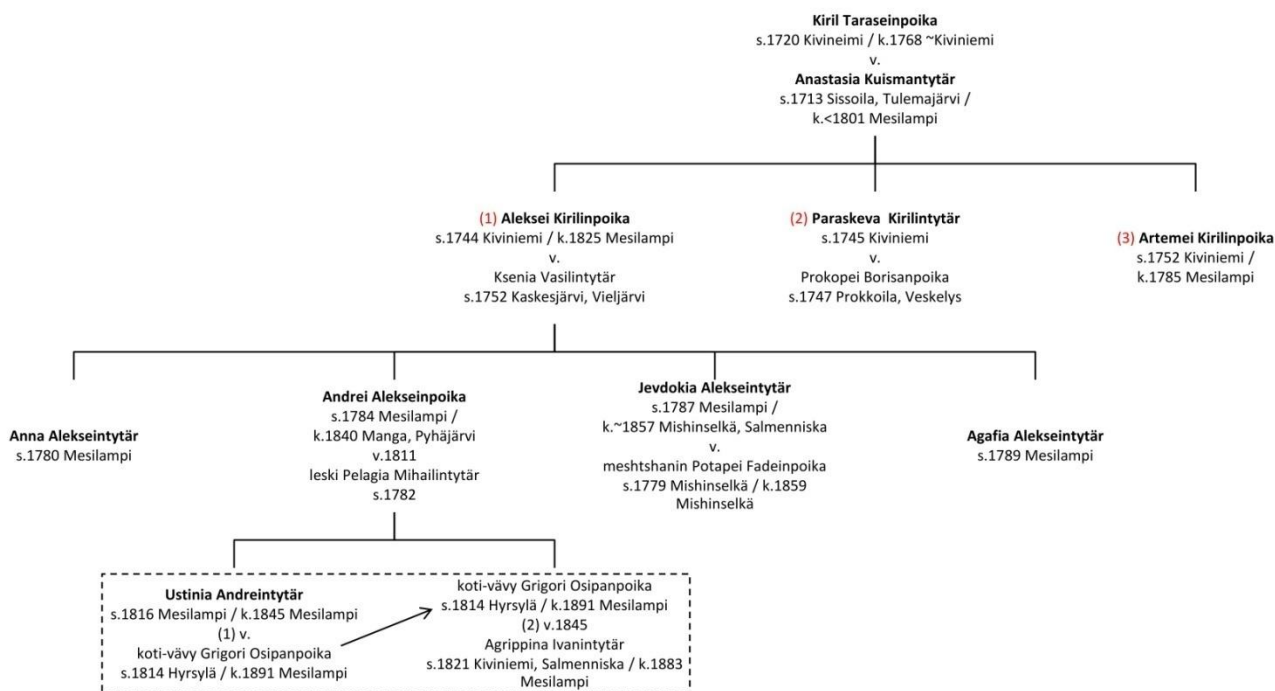
¹⁹ Salmenniska verorevisiot 1782 – 1858, The National Archive of the Republic of Karelia, Petrozavodsk (familysearch.org), 2024

²⁰ Pietarin kaupungin historiallisessa arkisto (TsGIA SPb), opis' 111, delo 681, Suojärven metrikat 1793, transcribed and translated by Santeri Palviainen, 2016

²¹ Koti-vävy, literally home-son-in-law, is a term in Finnish used to describe a man who married and moved to his wife's family property. The occurrence of this phenomenon is often precipitated by a family only having daughters and no sons to take over the family property, and hence the husband of a daughter moves to his wife's family property becoming a surrogate son.

²² 1st Tax Revision 1726 – Salmenniska volost, fond 350, opis' 2, delo 2371, RGADA (РГАДА) Russian State Archives, transcribed and translated by Santeri Palviainen, 2019

The family of Kiril Taraseinpoika from Kiviniemi



It is uncertain if Kiril Taraseinpoika settled in Mesilampi given that he died in 1768.²³ In all likelihood coming to Mesilampi was Kiril's widow, Anastasia Kuismantytär, and their two sons Aleksi and Artemei. There was a daughter Paraskeva, and as mentioned earlier she married a man from Prokkoila, Säämäjärvi parish either before or possibly shortly after the family came to Mesilampi. Artemei died in 1785 appearing not to have married, leaving his brother Aleksi as the sole male descendant of the family. Aleksi had married around the time the family moved to Mesilampi, and he was the father of one son and several daughters. His son, Andrei Aleksinpoika, in 1811 married the widow Pelagia Mihailintytär, whose origins are unknown and they became the parents of a daughter Ustinia born around 1816. Ustinia would marry Grigori Osipanpoika from Hyrsylä village in the Grand Duchy of Finland around 1834, and Grigori would arrive in the village as another koti-vävy. Of Aleksi Kirilinpoika's daughters, the fate of only one is known. His daughter Jevdokia Aleksintytär married around 1806 petit burgher Potapei Fadeinpoika from Mishinselkä village, Salmenniska parish. There is evidence in the records indicating that Kiril's brother Terentei Taraseinpoika also came to Mesilampi.²⁴ Nonetheless, Terentei only had one daughter who married a man from Yläjoki village located to the east of Mesilampi.²⁵

Subject of Finland but Living in Russia

The familial dynamics of these two families would lead to an odd situation – a village located on the Russian side of the border being nearly completely occupied by subjects of what had become the Grand Duchy of Finland. Notwithstanding that nearly all these subjects were born in the village of Mesilampi itself. This was the result of the two women of the village marrying men from the villages of Kotajärvi and Hyrsylä, who then came to live as koti-vävy in Mesilampi. Kotajärvi in the Suojärvi municipality and Hyrsylä in the

²³ Salmenniska verorevisiot 1782 – 1858, The National Archive of the Republic of Karelia, Petrozavodsk (familysearch.org), 2024, - death year stated in 1782 Vero (4th Tax Revision)

²⁴ Salmenniska verorevisiot 1782 – 1858, The National Archive of the Republic of Karelia, Petrozavodsk (familysearch.org), 2024

²⁵ ibid.

Salmi municipality, while in the late 18th century were part of the Käkisalme province of the Russian Empire, had by 1812 been joined to the Grand Duchy of Finland by order of Emperor Alexander I, and by virtue Kotajärvi and Hyrsylä villages were now part of Finland.²⁶

The joining of Vanha Suomi to the Grand Duchy of Finland in 1812 resulted in the residents of that area becoming subjects²⁷ of the Grand Duchy. This would also appear to have been retroactively applied to some individuals who had been born in the areas that now constituted the Grand Duchy but who now resided in Russia proper.²⁸ The new administrative situation did not change the fact that all individuals living in the Russian Empire, including the Grand Duchy of Finland, were equally subjects of the reigning Tsar, but it did mean that different laws would be applied depending on which geographical administrative area you were a subject of. One tangible result of these changes was that a travel passport was now needed to travel and move between those areas that had been attached to the Grand Duchy in 1812 and Russia, whereas previously none was needed.²⁹

In Mesilampi this meant that Prokopei Foteinpoika born in Kotajärvi, who had married Pelagia Amosantytär in 1793 and had come to the village as a koti-vävy was now considered a subject of the Grand Duchy. Likewise, Grigori Osipanpoika from Hyrsylä who had married Ustinia Andreintytär around 1834, after the creation of the Grand Duchy, and had come to Mesilampi as a koti-vävy, continued to be a subject of Finland, despite permanently residing in Russia proper. In legal terms both would be considered subjects of the Grand Duchy of Finland living in Russia. In these early years there would have been very little impact on the daily lives of these individuals, especially in remote isolated areas, and requirements for passports and other legal documents would not have been enforced, especially for those who had been living in areas of Russia proper prior to 1812. Though ultimately things would change in 1848.

Essentially to deal with poor relief measures but also to deal with population statistics, regulations were put in place in 1848 regarding church and population reporting, and that obligated Finnish subjects living in Russia to pay a poor relief tax to parishes in Finland. These Finnish subjects also retained their right of residence in the Grand Duchy if they so wished to return. In 1850, a further regulation was issued which confirmed that children born in Russia to subjects of the Grand Duchy would inherit the status of their parents. So unless an official request to transfer your subjugation from Finland to Russia was made, the status would be passed down from generation to generation.³⁰ This resulted in individuals who were subjects of the Grand Duchy of Finland but in fact had never set foot in the Grand Duchy itself, and their connection to Finland could be several generations back.

The complexities of the situation become clearly evident when reviewing the various governmental (tax revision lists) and church (metrical entries and attendance registers) sources. It appears that in the Russian Vero (Tax Revision) lists, subjects of Finland are not recorded, so aside from the early settlers in Mesilampi none of the descendants of Pelagia Amosantytär and her husband Prokopei Foteinpoika are mentioned, neither are any of the descendants of Ustinia Andreintytär and her husband Grigori

²⁶ In 1809 the Finnish War, as it was called, ended between Sweden and Russia, with Russia winning the eastern third of the Kingdom of Sweden in the Treaty of Fredrikshamn. This resulted in the establishment of the autonomous Grand Duchy of Finland within the Russian Empire. In 1812 the area known as Vanha Suomi, areas that Russia had previously conquered from Sweden in 1721 and 1743 were joined to the Grand Duchy of Finland, and were now part of what was called Viipuri province.

²⁷ For lack of a better alternative the word "subject" is being utilised, as the concept of citizenship in the Grand Duchy of Finland was not yet fully developed, nonetheless the area had been guaranteed religious freedoms, property rights, and the ability to be governed under old Swedish laws, and hence operated administratively in a different manner than neighbouring communities located in Russia proper.

²⁸ Max Engman, "Suomalaiset Venäjällä Lähdeopas", 2004, Kansallisarkisto, Helsinki, pg 34

²⁹ For a summary analysis of the intricacies of how citizenship and residency were affected by the creation of the Grand Duchy of Finland see Max Engman, "Suomalaiset Venäjällä Lähdeopas", 2004, Kansallisarkisto, Helsinki

³⁰ Max Engman, "Suomalaiset Venäjällä Lähdeopas", 2004, Kansallisarkisto, Helsinki, pg 20

Osipanpoika. As the older generation dies off the Russian tax revision lists become less informative to the point that in the 1850 Vero (9th Tax Revision) the only name mentioned is Andre Aleksinpoika, stating that he died in 1840. This in spite of the known fact that Mesilampi was at that time a vibrant little village. A second name is found, that of Sozon Vassanpoika Bogdanoff along with his wife, Sozon being a grandson of Pelagia Amosantytär and Prokopei Foteinpoika, but the only reason Sozon is recorded is because he had officially transferred from being a subject of Finland to being a subject of Russia in 1848.³¹ One wonders if this change was prompted by the new regulations that were put in place that year concerning Finnish subjects living in Russia as discussed above. The physical location of the person seemed to have less to do with whether you were recorded in the Russian tax revision list or the equivalent Finnish spirit books, with the driving factor appearing to be what country you were a subject of. The Finnish spirit books for these earlier years do in fact show some of the individuals who lived in Mesilampi on the Russian side.

What enables us to know with certainty that the individuals are residing in Mesilampi are the Orthodox Church records. The Salmenniska metrical birth, marriage and death records clearly state Mesilampi on many of the entries, though other times Hyrsylä is mentioned. In some instances the location of Mesilampi itself becomes a challenge to the priests recording the events. There are multiple instances where Mesilampi is listed as in fact being in Finland, with the metrical entry clearly stating that, and others where Mesilampi is listed as part of the Salmenniska parish in Russia, where it was actually located. We know with certainty that the village of Mesilampi did not physically move locations. Things become even further complicated when reviewing the Orthodox Church attendance registers for Russia and Finland. Here the residents of Mesilampi show up in both sets of ledgers, sometimes in Russia, sometimes in Finland and occasionally in a given year in both countries. It is known that the church attendance registers can be somewhat unreliable and that the church priests were lax at times with their record keeping, but nonetheless having residents of Mesilampi appear in the attendance registers and then vanish from the attendance registers only to reappear a decade later clearly demonstrates the challenges of how and where to record the inhabitants of the village of Mesilampi.

A further complication solely in terms of research, is that in the latter half of the 1800's, many of the metrical events recorded for Mesilampi are not to be found in the Salmenniska parish records but in the neighbouring Veskelys parish. The priests from Veskelys recorded over 90% of the metrical events for the villages of Hyrsylä and Ignoila in the Grand Duchy of Finland prior to Finnish independence in 1917. This was mainly the result of the close distance and ease of access to the area by the priests of Veskelys, as opposed to the priests of Salmi parish, whose jurisdiction covered the area that included Hyrsylä and Ignoila. The priests from Salmi would have had to travel nearly 75 kilometres to reach these villages, whereas the priests from Veskelys were just 10 km away. Mesilampi being just south of the border from Hyrsylä and Ignoila, would be an easy stop for the priests from Veskelys visiting the area, so this may partly explain this inconsistency in the record keeping.

Physical burials, which generally give an indication where an event happened, do not give any further clarity to the situation in Mesilampi, with the burials of the residents of the village taking place in the cemeteries of Harjulatva to the south, Yläjoki to the east, and in the Posuada (Russian Hyrsylä) cemetery across the lake from Hyrsylä village in Finland.^{32,33}

³¹ Salmenniska verorevisiot 1850, The National Archive of the Republic of Karelia, Petrozavodsk (familysearch.org), 2024

³² Russian Orthodox Church, Olonets Consistory, Salmenniska, Veskelys ja Tulemajärvi metrikat 1793 – 1919 (familysearch.org)

³³ The cemetery at Posuada surrounded the local tsasouna (chapel) and was shared by the villagers on both the Russian and Finnish side of the border.



Hyrskylä village just over the border in Finland, formerly the Grand Duchy of Finland, had strong familial connections to Mesilampi village with relatives from multiple different families living on both sides of the border. *Source – Photographer Valde Näsi, Rajan Turva No. 10, 01/10-1931*

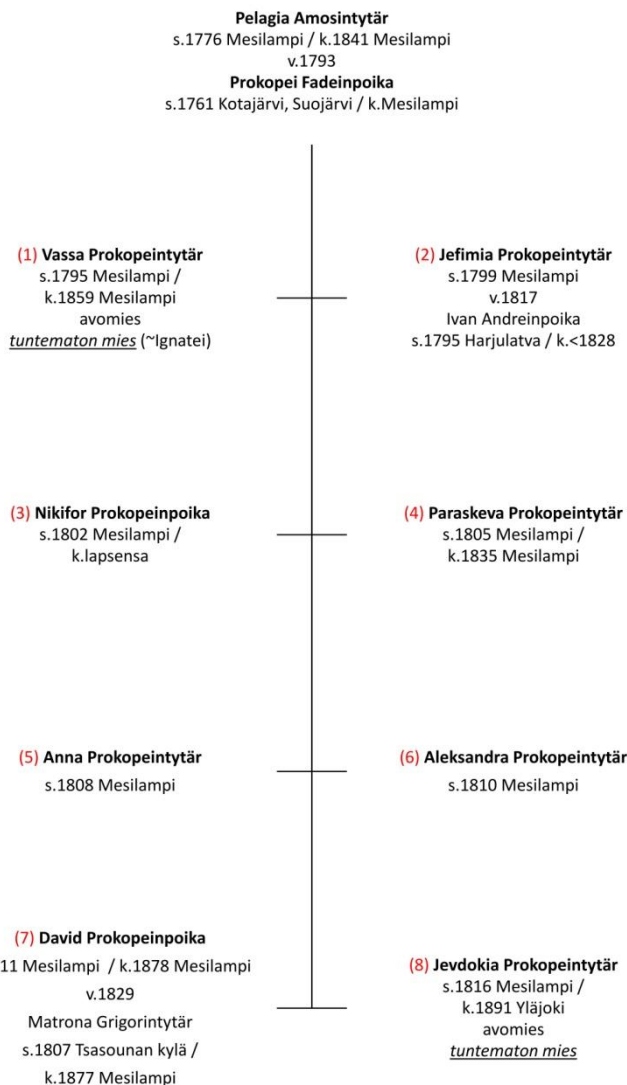
Development of the Village Families

Pelagia and Prokopei

As was stated earlier, Amos Osipanpoika died shortly after arriving in Mesilampi, and his eldest daughter Pelagia married Prokopei Fadeinpoika from Kotajärvi, Suojärvi municipality, in 1793. Pelagia, and

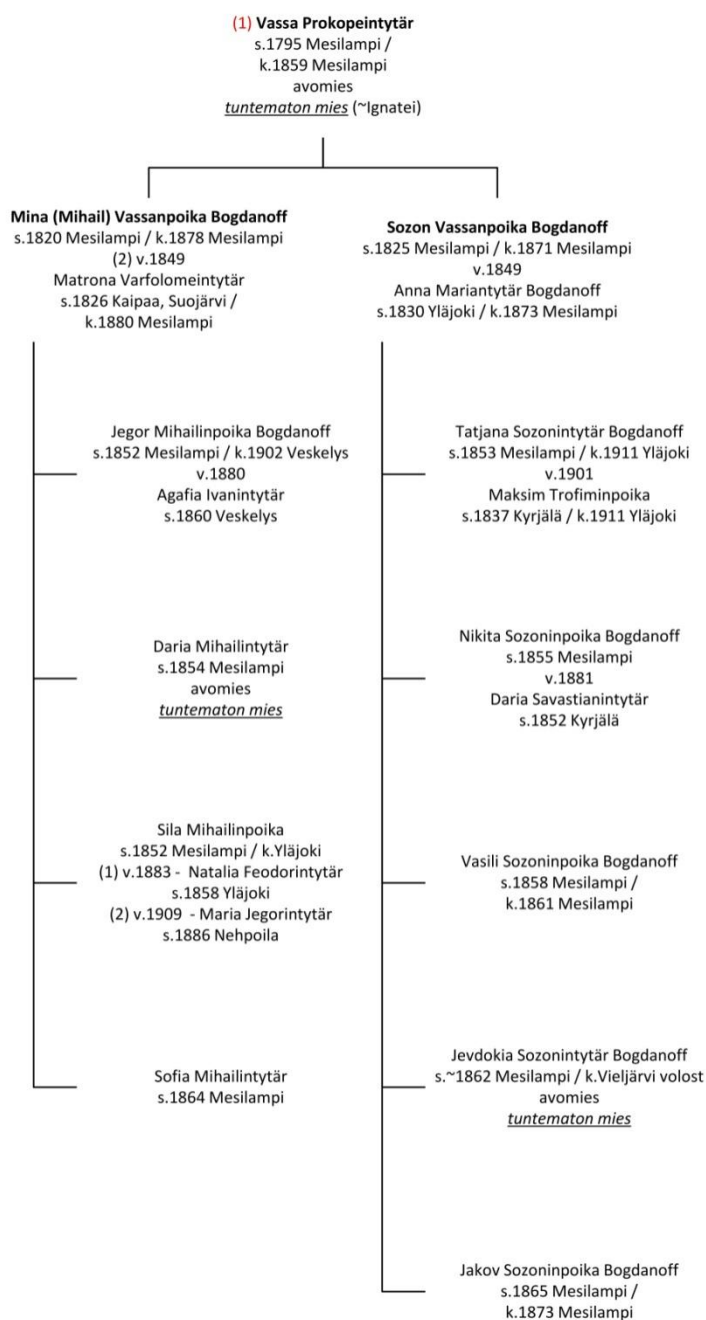
Prokopei who had come to Mesilampi as a koti-vävy, were the parents of 8 known children – several died as infants and the fate of some others is unknown. One daughter, Jefimia Prokopeintytär, married soldier Ivan Andreinpoika of the neighbouring village of Harjulatva in 1817. Pelagia and Prokopei's only son to grow to adulthood, David Prokopeinpoika, married in 1829 to Matriona Grigorintytär from Tsasouna village, Veskelys parish. It is worth asking if David's choice of bride was somehow related to his mother Pelagia's cousin Stepan Mitrofaninpoika's move to Tsasouna village from Mesilampi around 1818. David and Matriona had no children but continued to live in Mesilampi their entire lives, Matriona dying in 1877 and David in 1878, both of them being buried in the cemetery in Harjulatva. David never undertook any formal transfer from Finland to Russia, so died a Finnish subject.³⁴

Pelagia and Prokopei's oldest daughter Vassa and youngest daughter Jevdokia both contributed to the growth of the village through their children, but in a non traditional way. Vassa and Jevdokia both became the mother of two children, with all four children being born illegitimate.



³⁴ Russian Orthodox Church, Olonets Consistory, Salmenniska metrikat 1793 – 1917 (familysearch.org)

Interestingly, this pattern was repeated often in the descendants of these two women. Because Vassa and Jevdokia's father Prokopei Fadeinpoika was born in Finland and never officially transferred from being a subject of Finland to a subject of Russia,³⁵ they were both considered subjects of Finland, and given their children were born illegitimate that status was also passed down to them.³⁶



Vassa Prokopeintytär became the mother of two sons Mina (Mihail) and Sozon. There are no clear indications who the father could be and normal techniques such as analysing the godparents of the child have not shone any light on the mystery. There are only two baptismal entries from 1892 and 1895 that give any indication. Within these two entries Sozon is identified as Sozon Ignateinpoika. Often for illegitimate children later in life they may use the patronymic name of their actual father, which is probably known to them, as they lived with them or at least near them. In official records they are normally identified as Bogdanoff³⁷, expressing either a patronymic or surname, but at times, especially in the late 1800's and early 1900's, for church records when they are a godparent, or even sometimes the parent for a birth or marriage, the patronymic of their actual father is used. One can assume they gave it verbally to the priest writing the details of the event down. In the case of Sozon at least, but quite probably his brother Mina also, their father is someone named Ignatei. There are no obvious candidates in the village of Mesilampi at the time of their births, so Ignatei must have come from further afield.³⁸ Vassa died in Mesilampi in 1859 and was buried in the Posuada (Russian Hyrsylä) cemetery.³⁹

Mina Vassanpoika was married twice, his first wife Anna Arhipintytär from Yläjoki village, died childless, and his second wife

³⁵ For reasons of brevity future references to changes in subjugation will just reference a transfer from Finland to Russia

³⁶ Russian Orthodox Church, Olonets Consistory, Salmenniska metrikat 1793 – 1917 (familysearch.org)

³⁷ The use of the patronymic or surname of Bogdanoff for illegitimate children has been used in the Russian orthodox church for many years and means "gift of God" or "God given".

³⁸ Analysis of data from Hyrsylä and Posuada (Russian Hyrsylä) only puts forward one potential candidate, Ignatei Gerasiminpoika from Posuada, born in 1804, and who died in 1825.

³⁹ Russian Orthodox Church, Olonets Consistory, Salmenniska metrikat 1793 – 1917 (familysearch.org)

Matrona Varfolomeintytär from Kaipaa village, Suojärvi municipality, was the mother of four children. Mina died in 1878 and Matrona in 1880, and they were both buried in Harjulatva cemetery.⁴⁰

Mina and Matrona's eldest son Jegor was married in 1880 to Agafia Ivanintytär from Veskelys village, Veskelys parish, and it appears left Mesilampi and moved to Veskelys village as a koti-vävy for in his 1898 official transfer documents from Finland to Russia he is listed as living in Veskelys.⁴¹ Jegor and Agafia's only child to grow to adulthood, Paraskeva, married in 1899, Finnish subject Petter Stafeinpoika Sharin (formerly Sarkkinen) who was living in Veskelys village but whose family hailed from Jaakonvaara village, Pielisjärvi municipality in Finland, creating a union with Finnish ancestry on both sides.⁴² Mina and Matrona's next child, a daughter Daria, had an illegitimate child in 1880. The child died in 1882 and was buried in Mesilampi and the fate of Daria after that is unknown. The third child of Mina and Matrona was a son Sila. Sila married twice, his first wife being widow Natalia Feodorintytär, and his second wife being Maria Jegorintytär from Nehpoila village, Salmenniska parish. The first wife Natalia was from Yläjoki, and was the widow of Foma Isakinpoika Konttinen who was originally from Hyrsylä, Salmi municipality, Finland, but who had moved as a koti-vävy and officially transferred to Yläjoki village, Salmenniska parish on the Russian side.⁴³ Sila and Natalia were the parents of seven children. Sila and Maria were the parents of two children. It would appear that when Sila married Natalia he moved as koti-vävy to Yläjoki, as several of his children who died as infants are indicated as buried there. Sila officially transferred from Finland to Russia in 1898 like his brother Jegor.⁴⁴ In these documents Sila is listed as living in Yläjoki. The descendants of Sila Minanpoika adopted the surname Siilin. The fourth child of Mina and Matrona, a daughter Sofia, nothing is known about her fate. By the turn of the century no one was left in Mesilampi from the family of Mina Vassanpoika.⁴⁵

Mina's brother, Sozon Vassanpoika, married Anna Bogdanoff from Yläjoki village, and was the father of five children. As stated earlier Sozon officially transferred from Finland to Russia in 1848, being the first to do so from Mesilampi, and making his descendants officially subjects of Russia, and no longer foreigners from the Grand Duchy of Finland. Sozon died in 1871 and Anna in 1873 and both were buried in Harjulatva cemetery. Two of Sozon and Anna's children died as infants, their son married and had a large family, while their two daughters continued the non-traditional way of creating families by having illegitimate children.⁴⁶

Sozon and Anna's son Nikita Sozoninpoika married Daria Savastianintytär from the nearby village of Kyrjälä, Salmenniska parish, and were the parents of seven children. Two of their daughters married men from Hyrsylä in Finland and moved there. Anastasia Nikitantytär married in 1919, Kuisma Petterinpoika Juudin (formerly Kiriloff), originally from Kotajärvi, Suojärvi municipality, but who had moved to Hyrsylä with his family in his youth. Anastasia had been living in Hyrsylä since about 1900, and had 8 children out of wedlock with Kuisma before they were married. Two more children were born after their marriage. Tatjana Nikitantytär married in 1917 Ivan Jevseinpoika Näre from Hyrsylä, and they were the parents of seven children.⁴⁷ While not implicitly relevant to the history of Mesilampi, Ivan Näre's disappearance across the Soviet-Russian border in January 1933 is noteworthy. It was said by the Detective Central Police Unit of the State Police (EK-Valpo) that he was a GPU (State Political Directorate of Russia) agent and later in 1935 and 1936 it was noted that his eldest son may have been in contact with him in secret.⁴⁸ Another

⁴⁰ Russian Orthodox Church, Olonets Consistory, Salmenniska metrikat 1793 – 1917 (familysearch.org)

⁴¹ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Kenraalikuvernöörinkanslian arkisto, Fa:1750 Yleiset aktit, 18-19 (1898)

⁴² Russian Orthodox Church, Olonets Consistory, Veskelys metrikat 1793 – 1919 (familysearch.org)

⁴³ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Kenraalikuvernöörinkanslian arkisto, Fa:1454 Yleiset aktit, 16-19 (1880)

⁴⁴ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Kenraalikuvernöörinkanslian arkisto, Fa:1727 Yleiset aktit, 16-18, II osa (1897)

⁴⁵ Russian Orthodox Church, Olonets Consistory, Salmenniska metrikat 1793 – 1917 (familysearch.org)

⁴⁶ *ibid.*

⁴⁷ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Annantehtaan ortodoksisen seurakunnan metrikat 1899 - 1945

⁴⁸ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Valtiollisen poliisin henkilökorttiarkisto, Pääosaston henkilökortit 1919-1948, L:80.1

daughter Marfa Nikitantytär married in 1914 Feodor Jegorinpoika Sisojeff, who was born in Kotajärvi, Suojärvi municipality, but was then living in Lukkala village, Kolatsekä parish, Russia. Nikita and Daria's daughter Jefimia Nikitantytär married in 1912 Nikolai Ivaninpoika Bogdanoff from Kleshoila village, Vieljärvi parish. Nothing has been discovered about the fate of Nikita and Daria's fifth daughter Fevronia Nikitantytär.⁴⁹ Nikita and Daria's, two sons Ilja and Aleksi, remained with their parents in Mesilampi. Ilja married Maria Stepanintytär from Kolatsekä, Tulemajärvi parish, while it is unknown if Aleksi married or not.



Jegor Moiseinpoika Sozonoff - his grandmother Tatjana Sozonintytär was born in Mesilampi but appears to have moved to Yläjoki where she had a series of illegitimate children, including Jegor's father Moisei. Source – *pamyat-naroda.ru*

It would appear that Sozon and Anna's eldest daughter Tatjana at one point moved to Yläjoki village, possibly working as a servant girl. In 1876 Tatjana would give birth to an illegitimate son, and over the next 20 years would give birth to seven more illegitimate children. The father of these children appears to be Maksim Trofiminpoika. Maksim was born in Kyrjälä village, but in 1866 married the widow Agafia Nikonintytär of Yläjoki. Maksim then moved to Yläjoki. Maksim and Agafia had no children, and it seems that a unique situation arose, possibly with Agafia's consent, whereby Tatjana became the instrument for Maksim to produce a family.⁵⁰ The structure of such an arrangement would seem out of place and it has to be believed that the Orthodox Church would have frowned upon it. Nonetheless, the baptisms of Tatjana's children are found in the Salmenniska Orthodox Church registers, and in multiple instances the godparent is Maksim's nephew, his brother's son. Agafia Nikonintytär died in Yläjoki on 14 January 1901 of old age and was buried there, and two weeks later on 28 January 1901, the widower Maksim Trofiminpoika married Tatjana. He was 17 years her senior, being now 63 years of age. Tatjana died on 12 February 1911 and was buried in Yläjoki; Maksim died two days later on 14 February 1911 and was buried at his birth village of Kyrjälä. Some of their children died young, others married locally to other villagers from Yläjoki, and one son even for a period lived in Petroskoi where one of his children was born. The patronymic name of Maksiminpoika and a surname Trofimoff (in some instances)⁵¹ are seen in later years being used by Tatjana's children, further supporting the assumption that they were the children of Maksim Trofiminpoika.⁵²

Sozon and Anna's youngest daughter Jevdokia became the mother of two illegitimate children whose birth records appear in the metrical books of the Vieljärvi parish.⁵³ The godparents to these two children are from Vallittu village, Tulemajärvi parish, giving some credence to the notion that Jevdokia was living in that area at the time of the birth of her children, most probably with their father, though unmarried to him. Jevdokia's daughter Matrona Jevdokiantytär married in 1907, Matfei Fomanpoika of Pannila village,

⁴⁹ Russian Orthodox Church, Olonets Consistory, Salmenniska ja Vieljärvi metrikat 1793 – 1917 (familysearch.org)

⁵⁰ The presented scenario about Tatjana and her children is only an opinion based on the available information, and other scenarios may have occurred including an adoption of Tatjana's children after the death of Maksim's wife.

⁵¹ The surname Trofimoff is seen in some instances, but in later years the majority of the Tatjana's descendants adopt the surname Sozonoff

⁵² Russian Orthodox Church, Olonets Consistory, Salmenniska metrikat 1793 – 1917 (familysearch.org)

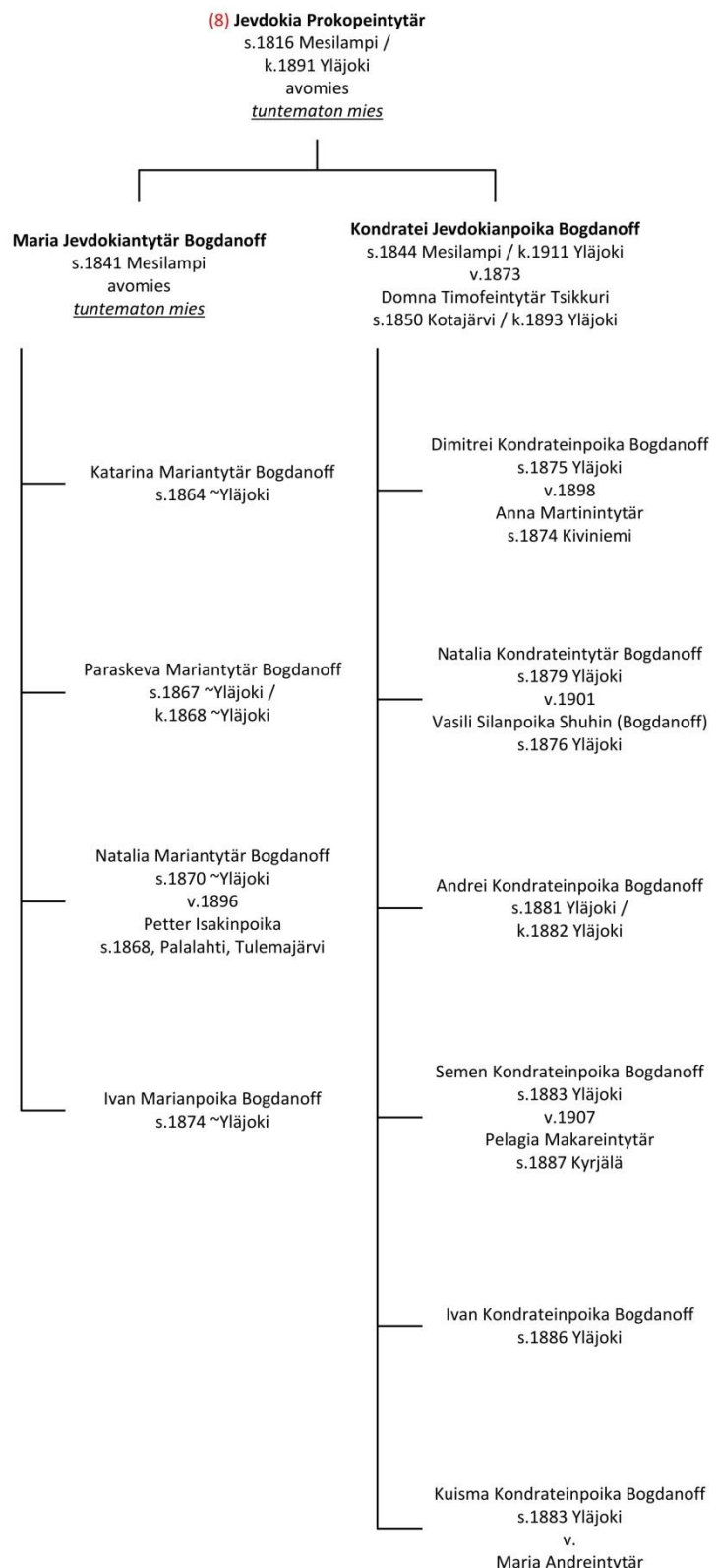
⁵³ Russian Orthodox Church, Olonets Consistory, Vieljärvi metrikat 1793 – 1917 (familysearch.org)

Vieljärvi parish.⁵⁴ Vieljärvi and Tulemajärvi were neighbouring parishes located to the south-west of Salmenniska parish.

Jevdokia, the youngest daughter of Pelagia and Prokopei, like her eldest sister Vassa, was the mother of two illegitimate children – Maria and Kondratei. As mentioned earlier, because Jevdokia's father was born in Finland, Jevdokia and her children were also considered officially as subjects of Finland, and in the records are listed as such. There are no hints within the records that allow us to suggest who the father of these two children might be, but there are some indications in the data that Jevdokia might have resided in Yläjoki, the nearby village to the east, but this is not certain. Jevdokia died in 1891 and was buried in Yläjoki. Her death record lists her as a widow though no marriage record has been found.⁵⁵

Like her mother, Jevdokia's daughter Maria's children were born illegitimate. There is no indication of who the father may be of the four children, but one child that died young was buried in Kyrjälä village, the village next to Yläjoki, so another indication that the family may be in that area.⁵⁶ The fate of Maria and her children is uncertain aside from one daughter Natalia Mariantytär Bogdanoff who married in 1896 Petter Isakinpoika from Palalahti village, Tulemajärvi parish.⁵⁷

Jevdokia's son Kondratei Jevdokianpoika married Domna Timofeintytär from Kotajärvi, Suojärvi municipality, and together they were the parents of six children. One child died young and the fate of one son is unknown. Records would indicate that Kondratei and his family moved to Yläjoki no later than the late 1880's, if he had not already been living there since birth. Kondratei died in



⁵⁴ Russian Orthodox Church, Olonets Consistory, Vieljärvi metrikat 1793 – 1917 (familysearch.org)

⁵⁵ Russian Orthodox Church, Olonets Consistory, Salmenniska metrikat 1793 – 1917 (familysearch.org)

⁵⁶ ibid.

⁵⁷ Russian Orthodox Church, Olonets Consistory, Tulemajärvi metrikat 1793 – 1917 (familysearch.org)

1911 and Domna died in 1893, and both were buried in Yläjoki cemetery.⁵⁸ Kondratei remained a Finnish subject until his death.

Kondratei and Domna's eldest son Dimitrei Kondrateinpoika married Anna Martinintytär from Kiviniemi village, Salmenniska parish, and it would appear he moved to Kiviniemi as a koti-vävy. The second son Semen Kondrateinpoika married Pelagia Makareintytär of Kyrjälä village, Salmenniska parish, and several of Semen and Pelagia's children that died as infants are buried in Yläjoki and Kyrjälä reinforcing the belief that Kondratei and Domna's family were living in that area. Kondratei and Domna's daughter Natalia Kondrateintytär married in 1901 Vasili Bogdanoff (later known as Vasili Silanpoika Shuhin) from Yläjoki, Salmenniska parish.⁵⁹ The youngest son of the family, Kuisma Kondrateinpoika, was a bit more adventurous. Kuisma initiated an official transfer from Finland to Russia in 1914, and moved sometime prior to 1917 to Petroskoi.⁶⁰ Kuisma married Maria Andreintytär and their daughter Klaudia Kuismantytär Bogdanoff was born in Petroskoi in 1917. As final proof of the family connection to Yläjoki, the metrical birth entry in Petroskoi lists Kuisma as from Yläjoki.⁶¹

It is worth noting that when looking at the descendants of Prokopei Foteinpoika, that the majority of their marriages to Finnish subjects were actually to individuals who hailed from Kotajärvi, Prokopei's birth village, demonstrating that connections to his home village remained strong, long after his 1793 marriage.



Posuada (Russian Hyrsylä) village as seen across Hyrsylänjärvi lake from Hyrsylä village in Finland. On the right, the shared orthodox tsasouna (chapel) around which the burial ground was located. Several residents of Mesilampi were buried there. After 1918 the residents of Hyrsylä in Finland were no longer able to visit the tsasouna or burial ground. The tsasouna and most of the village houses were destroyed in the spring of 1938. *Source – Ted Leclair archives*

⁵⁸ Russian Orthodox Church, Olonets Consistory, Salmenniska metrikat 1793 – 1917 (familysearch.org)

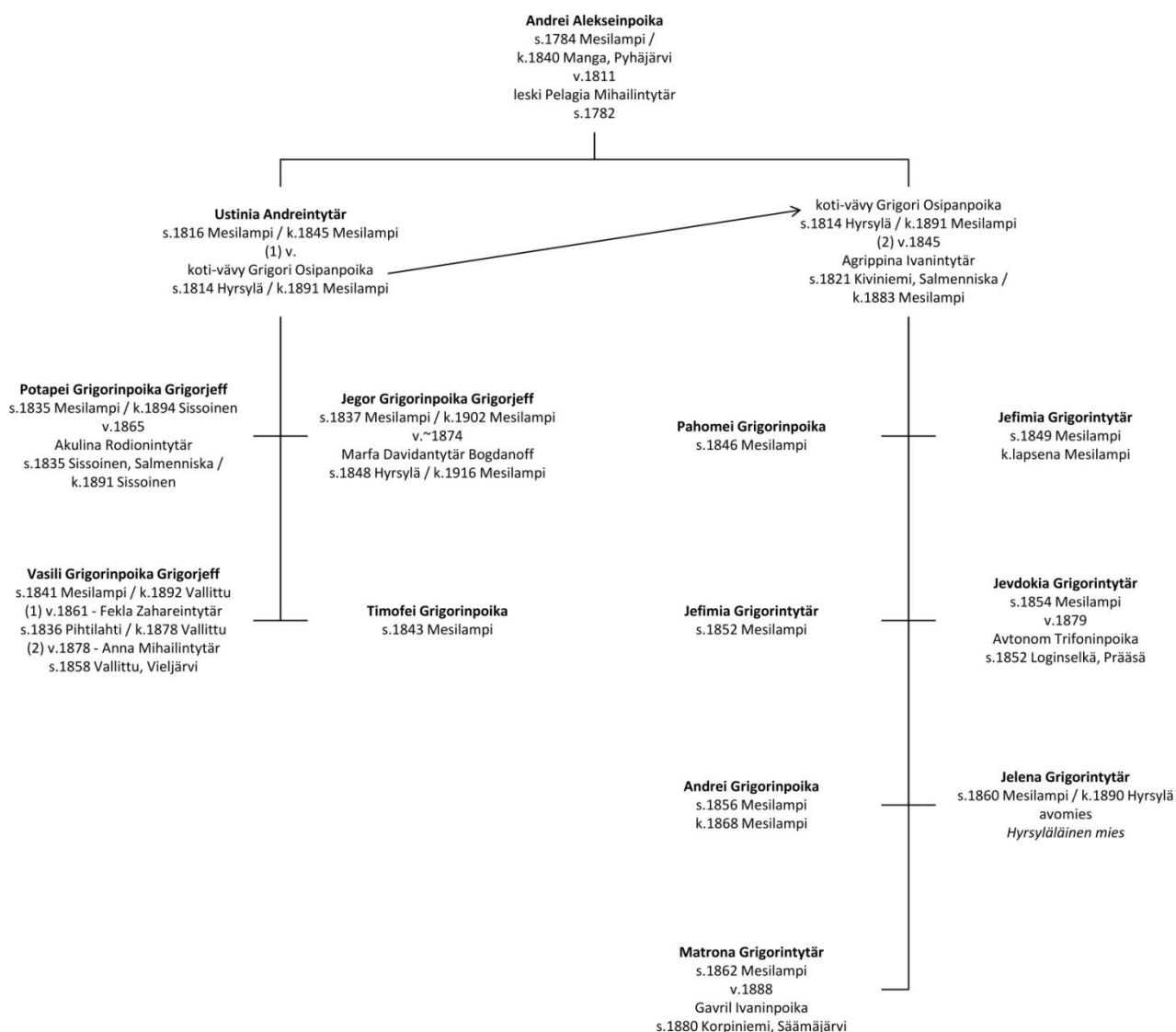
⁵⁹ *ibid.*

⁶⁰ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Kenraalikuvernöörinkanslian arkisto, Fb:970 II osaston aktit, 21/53-28 (1914)

⁶¹ Russian Orthodox Church, Olonets Consistory, Bogodelennoi (Petroskoi) metrikat 1793 – 1919

(familysearch.org)

Ustinia and Grigori



Ustinia Andreintytär and Grigori Osipanpoika become the parents of four sons, Potapei, Jegor, Vasili and Timofei, of whom at least three are known to have married. Ustinia died a few years after the birth of her last son in 1845 from consumption, and Grigori remarried shortly after to Agrippina Ivanintytär from nearby Kiviniemi village, Salmenniska parish. Grigori and Agrippina were the parents of seven children. Agrippina died in 1883 and was buried at Yläjoki, and Grigori died in 1891 and was buried at Posuada (Russian Hyrsylä).

Ustinia and Grigori's son Potapei married in 1865 to Akulina Rodionintytär, and went as a koti-vävy to her home village of Sissoinen, Tulemajärvi parish. He undertook an official transfer from being a subject of Finland to a subject of Russia around that time.⁶² The son Jegor ultimately married and continued to live in Mesilampi. Initially, Jegor and his future wife, Marfa Pelagianantytär Bogdanoff from Hyrsylä,⁶³ lived out of wedlock and had three illegitimate children before being married and having six more. One of Jegor's son's

⁶² Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Kenraalikuvernööriarkiston arkisto, Fa:1129 Yleiset aktit, 23-24 (1860)

⁶³ Marfa Pelagianantytär Bogdanoff was born in 1848, and would later use the patronymic Davidantytär, implying a father named Davida; analysis of records for the period put forward just one option for the father, Davida Alekseinoika Davidoff, from Ignoila, Salmi (later Suojärvi) municipality. Marfa appears to have arrived in Mesilampi around 1866, but one suspects after official inquiries about her presence there obtained a Grand Duchy of Finland passport and was officially listed as living in Russia working as a servant-girl (piga) in 1870.

Feodor Jegorinpoika married Jefimia Jefimintytär Perälä of Hyrsylä. After Jefimia Perälä's death Feodor Jegorinpoika married a second time and is known to have had one son with his second wife, who is believed to be Matrona Petterintytär Juudin from Hyrsylä who died in 1910.⁶⁴ After the death of his second wife, Feodor married a local widow from Mesilampi and was known to still be living in the village in the early 1920's.⁶⁵ Jegor's family is last seen in the Finnish Henkikirjat in 1918. The final son to marry was Vasili Grigorinpoika. Vasili married Fekla Zahareintytär who was from Pihtilahti village, Tulemajärvi parish. Records seem to indicate that Vasili, perhaps even prior to marrying Fekla, had left Mesilampi and was living in Vallittu village, Tulemajärvi parish. The majority of Vasili and Fekla's children's birth records are listed in the Tulemajärvi parish metrical books, and Fekla's death in 1878 is recorded in the Vieljärvi parish metrical books, Vieljärvi being the parish located to the south of Tulemajärvi parish.⁶⁶ Shortly after the death of his wife, Vasili remarried Anna Mihailintytär from Vallittu and in the 1886 metrical record for the birth of his son Ivan, it is recorded that Vasili lives in Vallittu and is a barge hauler.⁶⁷ While Vasili died in 1892, still an official subject of Finland, one of his sons does apply for an official transfer from Finland to Russia in 1894.⁶⁸

Of Grigori and Agrippina seven children, four are believed to have died young. Their daughter Jevdokia Grigorintytär married in 1879, Avtonom Trifoninpoika from Loginselkä village, Prääsä parish, and their youngest daughter Matrona Grigorintytär married in 1888, Gavril Ivaninpoika from Korpiniemi village, Säämäjärvi parish. Grigori and Agrippina's daughter Jelena Grigorintytär followed the trend of having children out of wedlock, giving birth to a son Dimitrei in 1885. There is no indication who the father is. It is believed that Jelena was living in Hyrsylä village in Finland when Dimitrei was born, perhaps indicating that the father hailed from there. Jelena died in 1890, having never married and was buried in the cemetery at Posuada (Russian Hyrsylä). Her son Dimitrei, who was a Finnish subject, was living in Hyrsylä village when he married in 1907, Melania Andreintytär Vasiljeff from Posuada, and moved as a koti-vävy to her family home.⁶⁹ Ultimately Dimitrei and Melania returned with their children to Hyrsylä around the time of Finnish independence in 1917.⁷⁰



Left to right - Katariina Minantytär Juudin, Akulina Dimitreintytär Juudin (os. Bogdanoff), and Maria Minantytär Juudin. Akulina was the daughter of Dimitrei Jelenanpoika Bogdanoff whose mother had been born in Mesilampi. Dimitrei had been born illegitimate like many of those from Mesilampi and his father is unknown. *Source – Eeva Marjatta Tuomoja (os. Laurinen) family archives*

⁶⁴ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Viipurin läänin henkikirjat 1818 – 1914, Vi:1 – 378 *and* Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Salmin ortodoksisen seurakunnan arkisto, Rippikirjat - I Aa:28 A

⁶⁵ Russian Orthodox Church, Olonets Consistory, Salmenniska metrikat 1793 – 1917 (familysearch.org)

⁶⁶ It would appear that the village of Vallittu was transferred administratively from the Tulemajärvi parish to the Vieljärvi parish sometime in the mid-1870's.

⁶⁷ Russian Orthodox Church, Olonets Consistory, Tulemajärvi ja Vieljärvi ortodoksisen metrikat 1793 – 1917 (familysearch.org)

⁶⁸ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Kenraalikuvernöörinkanslian arkisto, Fa:1670 Yleiset aktit, 15, III osa-18 (1894)

⁶⁹ Russian Orthodox Church, Olonets Consistory, Salmenniska ja Veskelys metrikat 1793 – 1919 (familysearch.org)

⁷⁰ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Suomen passiviraston arkisto, Bad:20 Passinhaltijain kortisto (1904 – 1918)

It appears that by 1920 only one branch of Ustinia and Grigori's family was still living in Mesilampi. This family appeared to adopt the surname Grigorjeff in the early 1900's, and oddly later the surname Petroff was recorded.⁷¹

As can be seen above, by the second half of the 1800's many of the descendants of the two original settler families no longer lived in Mesilampi and the village population was estimated to be less than 10 people. While metrical records continue to list births, marriages and deaths as Mesilampi, it is known that many of these took place in Yläjoki and villages further afield. The trend of illegitimate children resulted in unknown fathers but records of the descendants allow us to locate where they were living. The village of Mesilampi would need some new souls if it was to continue to be viable.

Briefly returning to the topic of transferring one's subjugation from Finland to Russia, an interesting dynamic emerges when looking at the individuals from Mesilampi who underwent the process. Nearly all those that requested the change are individuals who moved from Mesilampi to another village, sometimes as a *koti-vävy* and other times just as a village move. It suggests that the person in question most likely requested to become a Russian subject as a result of relocating from Mesilampi to another village.

The process of changing one's subjugation was not simple and paperwork had to be filled out and submitted by the government of the Grand Duchy of Finland, which would necessitate a visit to the passport office in St Petersburg. Requests had to be made by the Minister of the Secretary of State for Finland to local officials in both countries to see if there were any obstacles to the individual becoming a Russian subject. Once this was confirmed then a formal application to the Imperial Government of Russia was made on behalf of the individual. Each applicant's transfer file in the archives typically has 8–14 pages of documentation.⁷² Because of the complicated process involved and the fact that Finnish subjects living in Russia, in most cases, enjoyed the same rights as Russian subjects, the process appears to have been undertaken only when necessary.⁷³ For those living in Mesilampi that inherited their status as a Finnish subject there appears to be little motivation to in fact change that status.

When moving within the countryside the consent of the local village council where one planned to relocate was needed. The village council was the local governing body and performed administrative, tax and police functions in its locality, and made decisions on land allocation, sowing, and harvesting for the area owned by the peasant community. Normally when accepted into a local peasant community one only needed a passport (either local or foreign) to verify various conditions, including that the person had no outstanding tax obligations.⁷⁴ This implies that being a Finnish subject should not have been a hindrance to such moves for people from Mesilampi, but as was seen many of the locals from Mesilampi who moved to another village underwent a change in subjugation. When moving from one village to another there may have been considerations around the ability to fully participate in village life, how you paid your taxes, and various responsibilities to the Grand Duchy of Finland, including compulsory military service, that made it more attractive to be a Russian subject as opposed to a Finnish subject.

The Arrival of the Hyykky Family

The Hyykky family were to arrive in Mesilampi around 1882, which would correspond with the decline of the village in terms of population. Why the Hyykky family choose to come to Mesilampi or if they

⁷¹ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Valtion pakolaisavustuskeskuksen Aunuksen pakolaisten avustuskomitean sekä Sortavalan ja Salmin asioimistojen arkisto, Bb Jakeluluettelot (1920-1932)

⁷² Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Kenraalikuvernöörinkanslian arkisto, Fa: Yleiset aktit (1809 – 1900) ja Fb Osastojen aktit (1900 - 1918)

⁷³ Max Engman, "Suomalaiset Venäjällä Lähdeopas", 2004, Kansallisarkisto, Helsinki, pg 47

⁷⁴ Alexander Osipov, "Migration from Finland to Aunus Governorate 1880 – early 20th Century", Before and Now: History Newsletters, 02/2024, page 8

occupied one of the homesteads of an earlier family is unknown. The head of the family, Vasili Anastasianpoika Hyykky was an illegitimate child, and one would be tempted to suggest that had something to do with it given the history of the village. A further point in that direction may be related to an individual Fedot Bogdanoff of Kiviniemi, Salmenniska parish, who would appear to be of some importance to the Hyykky family but whose connection to the family has not been discovered. Fedot's mother is known, and records indicate who his father might be, and neither have any connection to the Hyykky family that has been established. Nonetheless this Fedot Bogdanoff is multiple times a witness at marriages and baptisms relating to members of the Hyykky family. Perhaps this man from Kiviniemi, the village where one of the original founding families of Mesilampi hailed from, played some role in the Hyykky family's arrival in Mesilampi.

The Hyykky family hail from much further away but like the families of Mesilampi, appear to adopt a less traditional way of creating families with nearly all the female descendants of the first half of the 1800's having illegitimate children. The Hyykky family originate from Mudrozero⁷⁵, a very small village in the northern part of the Veskelys parish, north of the larger settlement of Kangasjärvi. The village was later renamed Hyypiä in the second half of the 1800's.^{76,77} The village was settled around the mid-18th century by a family from Kangasjärvi, namely Mihail Danilanpoika and his two sons Naum and Martyn. Martyn's son Aleksi was to have two daughters Anastasia and Pelagia, who would both have illegitimate children. Anastasia would have two sons – Vasili and Petter; and Pelagia would have three children that grew to adulthood – Jegor, Irina and Agrippina. While the fathers of these children are unknown, in several later records Anastasia's son Vasili would use the patronymic Varfolomeinpoika, perhaps indicating the name of his father, but who this Varfolomei is remains a mystery. Anastasia's son Petter would be recruited to military service in 1852 and nothing more is known about him. Pelagia's son Jegor would marry in 1862 Anna Osipantytär from Potkuselkä, Veskelys parish and move to that village as a koti-vävy. The fate of Pelagia's two daughters is unknown.⁷⁸

This leaves us with Vasili Anastasianpoika, who mentioned above would become the patriarch of the Hyykky family of Mesilampi. While officially the family of Vasili Anastasianpoika would be known by the surname Bogdanoff because of his illegitimate birth, it will be seen that the family identified with the surname Hyykky for many years. The earliest reference to the surname is found in a metrical entry from 1873 where the surname Gyuku is seen, in another metrical record from 1910 the surname Hyukkyu is recorded, and while both these records could be considered mistakes and should have been recorded as Bogdanoff, they do allow us to see that the Hyykky name was not a more recent invention.

Hyykky is not a patronymic surname, so what could its origin be? Its origins are surely related to the village name of Hyypiä. While maps and directories list the village of Mudrozero as Hyypiä only in the latter half of the 1800's, it has been found recorded as Hyypiä in metrical entries as early as 1842. This would imply that the usage of the village name Hyypiä by local residents is much older than its adoption by cartographers and government officials. The village was located on the shores of a lake that was identified

⁷⁵ Russian tax revision lists show the name officially as *U Mudryh ozero*, though some metrical entries list it as *Mudrozero*, which is the form adopted for this paper.

⁷⁶ Anastasia Alekseevna Afanasjeva, "Evolution of the Oikonymic System of Säämäjärvi Region", Scientific Notes of Petroskoi State University – Linguistics, T. 42. № 7, 2020, pg 68

⁷⁷ Analysis of maps, directories of populated place, tax revision lists and church records also indicate that the village of Mudrozero was later named Hyypiä. Notwithstanding this conclusion it is noted that some confusion and lack of consistency exists in church metrical and attendance records when reviewing individuals from this village.

⁷⁸ Veskelys verorevisiot 1782 – 1858, The National Archive of the Republic of Karelia, Petrozavodsk (familysearch.org) *and* Russian Orthodox Church, Olonets Consistory, Veskelys metrikat 1793 – 1919 (familysearch.org)

as Martynova at one point⁷⁹, perhaps implying the name is related to Martyn Mihailinpoika, an original settler, which could suggest that the early settlers are likewise connected to the Hyypiä name. Hyypiä one can assume is derived from hyypie or hyybie, the Karelian name for the eagle-owl (Latin: *bubo bubo* / Finnish: *huuhkaja*). One line of descendants from the original settlers are later recorded with the surname Hyypijeff (Russian: *Gjubijeff*), that clearly is a direct use of the village name as a surname meaning *from* or *relating to*. How might have the original settlers identified with the eagle-owl? Several options exist. The figurative meaning of hyypie is a person leading a secluded or lonely life⁸⁰, and this could be tied to the original settlers who founded the village of Mudrozero (Hyypiä) in a remote and isolated area 25 kilometres north of Kangasjärvi, where they originally came from. It has also been surmised that hyykky could represent the hoot sound that the eagle-owl makes (Karelian: *hyyккеä*), perhaps implying a sound of a voice.⁸¹ Alternatively, it could be as simple as the fact that the original settlers occupied an area where there was a sizable eagle-owl population, and the owls' hoots could be heard plainly. The Hyykky and Hyypijeff surnames are derived from the village name of Hyypiä, or reversely the village is named after how the original settlers identified themselves. The origins of the village name and surnames are not certain, but at a minimum it can be assumed that the names for whatever reason – location, physical traits, sound of voices, etc. – are identified with the eagle-owl.

It is quite certain that Aleksi Martyninpoika was born in Mudrozero but it is a mystery whether his daughters were born there. Aleksi was born around 1780 and married Melania Ivanintytär. As stated earlier he was the father of two daughters, Anastasia born around 1806 and Pelagia born around 1809. Aleksi died in 1841, and while his death record states he is from the Veskelys parish, the entry is located in the Tulemajärvi parish metrical books indicating that he was buried somewhere in Tulemajärvi though no exact location is given. While no records of birth for Anastasia's two sons have been found, the birth records for her sister Pelagia's children have been. Pelagia's children's baptismal records are all located in the Tulemajärvi parish metrical books, and like the death record of her father, Pelagia is listed as being from Veskelys parish but no specific town is given, except one instance where Hyypiä village is listed. Interestingly, the godparents of the children all hail from the village of Saarimäki in Tulemajärvi parish, perhaps indicating that Pelagia was living there. Pelagia died in 1859 and was buried in the cemetery at Kirjavala village.⁸² Kirjavala was a small village on the north side of lake Tulemajärvi located in the Tulemajärvi parish. Saarimäki village was located not too far north from Kirjavala, again giving an indication that Pelagia and her family were living in this area. As will be seen below, Anastasia's son Vasili also appears to have been living in the Kirjavala area. The above facts would lead one to believe that perhaps Aleksi and his wife Melania and his two daughters either left Mudrozero at one point moving to Tulemajärvi parish, or alternatively Aleksi left Mudrozero himself coming to Tulemajärvi as a bachelor where he met Melania and married and had two daughters. Unless further data from this early period can be found this question may remain unanswered.

It should be noted that a further challenge to determining where the various individuals were physically living is similar to the challenges related to being a subject of Finland but living in Russia that was discussed earlier. Many of the same processes holds true when looking at individuals within Russia itself.

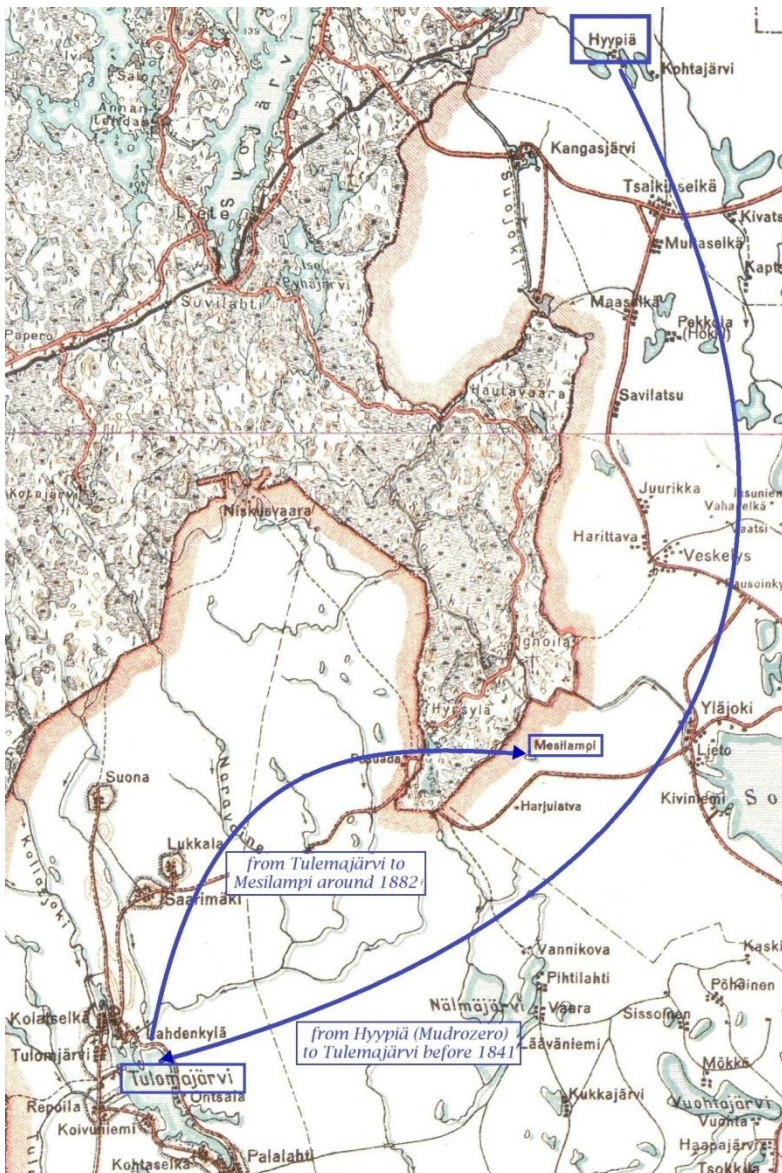
⁷⁹ Fyodor Fyodorovich Schubert, "Special map of the Western Part of the Russian Empire", Saint Petersburg, 1832, plate VIII

⁸⁰ Denis Viktorovich Kuzmin, "Man and His Name in Oikonymy and Microtoponymy of South Karelia", Institute of Language, Literature and History, Karelian Research Centre of the RAS, 18/03-2023, pg 65 *and* Anastasia Alekseevna Kongoeva, "The Legacy of the Karelian Non-Calenderic Onomasticon in the Toponymy of the Syamozerye Region", Finno-Ugric World, Vol. 17 No. 1, 2025, pg 63

⁸¹ Santeri Palviainen, e-mail correspondence 02/10-2023 and 09/04-2025

⁸² Veskelys ja Tulemajärvi verorevisiot 1782 – 1858, The National Archive of the Republic of Karelia, Petrozavodsk (familysearch.org), 2024, *and* Russian Orthodox Church, Olonets Consistory, Veskelys ja Tulemajärvi metrikat 1793 – 1919 (familysearch.org)

Aleksi, his wife and daughters and grandchildren continue to be listed in the Vero (Russian Tax Revision) lists as being in Mudrozero, and as seen above the birth and death records continue to list the individuals as being from the Veskelys parish, but the location of the records in the Tulemajärvi parish metrical books and the physical location of burials in Kirjavalu village would indicate to us that in fact physically the family is living in the Tulemajärvi parish area despite still being registered in Mudrozero which was over 75 km away.⁸³ An individual would have to request a change to where they were registered when they moved from one parish to another but in many instances it would seem that if it did not affect their local daily life the required paperwork was never completed, or stated in another way – a change in their physical location for some reason did not warrant a change in where they were registered.



Map showing Hyypiä (formerly Mudrozero) village to the north of Hirsylän mutka in relation to Tulemajärvi and Mesilampi to the south. The Hyyky family of Mesilampi originally came from this village but migrated sometime in the early 19th century to the Tulemajärvi lake region and then around 1882 to Mesilampi. *Source – Topographical Corps, Finland, 1937*

Returning back to Vasili Anastasianpoika Hyyky – he was born around 1830, most probably in the Tulemajärvi parish, but at the very least it can be assumed that he was residing in Tulemajärvi parish when his grandfather passed away in 1841. In 1855 Vasili married Maria Feodorintytär, who hailed from Kolatselkä, Tulemajärvi parish.⁸⁴ In the marriage record Vasili is listed as a mining peasant (*gornozavodskij krest'janin*), meaning that he was registered as a member of the mining office and not a state peasant. Mining factory peasants consisted of individuals who were taken from other peasant groups and allocated to factories that had labour shortages.⁸⁵ Prior to 1863, which would cover the

period in which Vasili was listed as a mining peasant, participation in this category of peasants was not voluntary. It is most likely that Vasili worked for the Olonets Mining District Plants, a state run enterprise that operated in the Karelia district, and which by 1850 owned over 50,000 mining peasants, mainly in the

⁸³ Veskelys verorevisiot 1782 – 1858, The National Archive of the Republic of Karelia, Petrozavodsk (familysearch.org), 2024

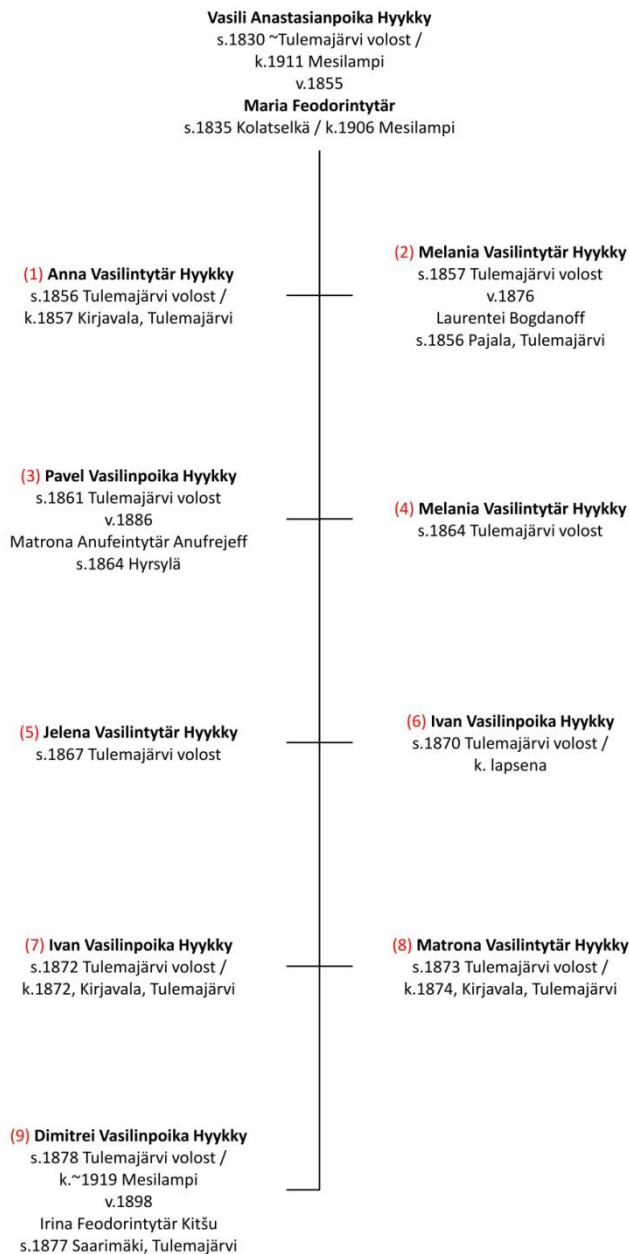
⁸⁴ Russian Orthodox Church, Olonets Consistory, Tulemajärvi metrikat 1793 – 1917 (familysearch.org)

⁸⁵ Paul van Dijk, "A Land to Call Their Own - Russian peasants, the question of modern citizenship and land disputes in the Ufa governorate, 1861 – 1917", 2018, pg 110

Petroskoi district which included Tulemajärvi.⁸⁶ The enterprise also controlled more than 10,000 km² of land in the Olonets province and the Grand Duchy of Finland. Luckily the 1861 Manifesto on the Abolition of Serfdom in Russia, also triggered a change in how the mining population of state run factories were handled and by 1863 all compulsory labour at mining factories was converted to free labour.⁸⁷ One wonders if Vasili's grandfather, Aleksi Martyninpoika may have come to Tulemajärvi parish from Mudrozero himself as a mining peasant, as it is probable that the profession was passed down through the generations.

The burial of three of Vasili and Maria's children which occurred in 1856, 1872 and 1874, give us an indication of where the family may have lived in Tulemajärvi parish.⁸⁸ The burials took place in the village of Kirjavaala that was mentioned earlier, and where Vasili's spinster aunt, Pelagia Aleksintytär was buried in 1859. There was mining activities in this part of Tulemajärvi including haematite mines in the area around Kolatselkä.⁸⁹ As well, Lake Tulemajärvi had ore mined from the bottom of the lake. This ore was then cast at local foundries into ingots that were then delivered to Petroskoi and Kentjärvi.⁹⁰ How long Vasili continued to work in the mining industry is uncertain but after 1863 he was now free to leave if he wished.

Vasili Anastasianpoika Hyykky and his wife Maria Feodorintytär were the parents of nine known children. Four died as infants, two daughters their fate is unknown, and the remaining three children are known to have married. All the births for these children are recorded in the Tulemajärvi metrical books between 1856 and 1878, implying that the family's move to Mesilampi in the Salmenniska parish happened after 1878. By the time Vasili and Maria's eldest son was married in 1886, it appears the family had relocated to Mesilampi, allowing us to estimate the family's arrival in Mesilampi as sometime between 1878 and 1886. Vasili died in 1911 and was listed as buried in



⁸⁶ Wikimedia Foundation, "Олонецкие горные заводы (Olonets Mining Plants)", 20/09-2024, https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Олонецкие_горные_заводы#XIX_век

⁸⁷ "Manifesto of the Emperor Alexander Emancipating the Serfs in his Dominions" (Крестьянская реформа 1861 года), 19/02-1861, *and* "The Regulation on the Mining Population of State-owned Mining Plants of the Ministry of Finance" (Положение о горно-заводском населении казённых горных заводов ведомства Министерства финансов), 08/03-1861

⁸⁸ Russian Orthodox Church, Olonets Consistory, Tulemajärvi metrikat 1793 – 1917 (familysearch.org)

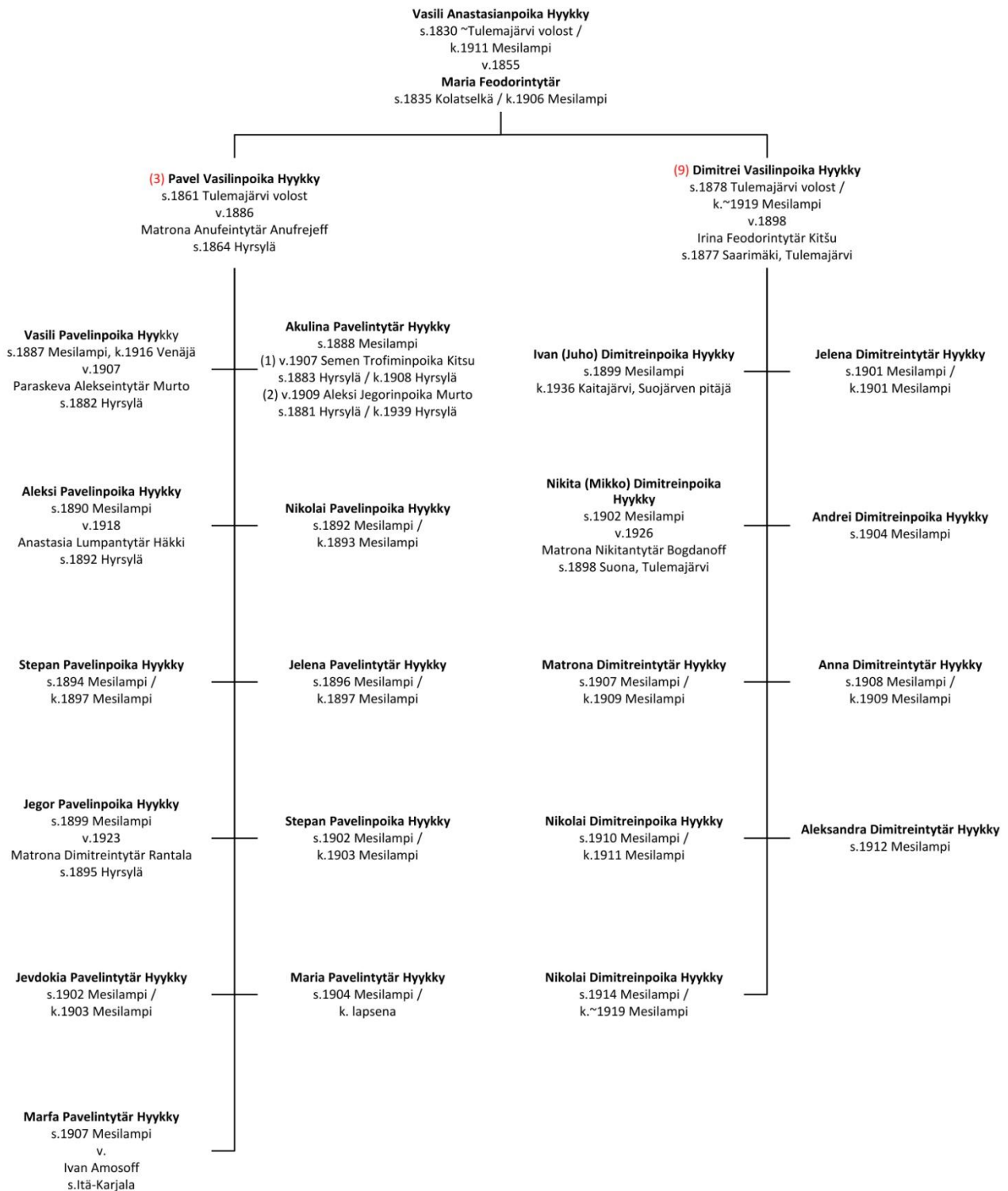
⁸⁹ T. Lindholm, et. al. "Finnish botanists in the mires of Olonets region during WW2", Mires and Peat, Volume 24, 2019, pg 4

⁹⁰ "Villages in the South and West of Säämäjärvi", Olonets Governmental Official Gazette, No. 24, 1866

Posuada (Russian Hyrsylä) and Maria died in 1906 and was buried in Harjulatva.⁹¹

Vasili and Maria's eldest daughter Melania married Lauretei Bogdanoff of Paljala village, Tulemajärvi parish in 1876, and most likely never resided in Mesilampi.⁹²

As mentioned, Vasili and Maria's eldest son Pavel married in 1886, his wife was Matrona Anufreintytär Anufrejeff from Hyrsylä, Salmi municipality in Finland. This marriage would be the first of many connections to the Hyrsylä village for the Hyykky family.



⁹¹ Russian Orthodox Church, Olonets Consistory, Tulemajärvi ja Salmenniska metrikat 1793 – 1917 (familysearch.org)

⁹² Russian Orthodox Church, Olonets Consistory, Tulemajärvi metrikat 1793 – 1917 (familysearch.org)

Pavel Vasilinpoika Hyykky and his wife Matrona would be the parents of eleven children. Six of those children would die as infants and of the 5 remaining children four would marry individuals from Hyrsylä. Their eldest son Vasili Pavelinpoika Hyykky married in 1907, Paraskeva Aleksintytär Murto from Hyrsylä; their eldest daughter Akulina Pavelintytär Hyykky would marry firstly Semen Trofiminpoika Kitšu in 1907, and following Semen's death would marry Aleksi Jegorinpoika Murto in 1909, both husbands were from Hyrsylä. Their second son, Aleksi Pavelinpoika Hyykky married in 1918, Anastasia Lumpantytär Häkki, also from Hyrsylä. Finally, Pavel and Matrona's son Jegor, would move to Hyrsylä around 1921 after the takeover of East-Karelia by the Bolsheviks, and would marry Matrona Dimitreintytär Rantala in 1923. Matrona Rantala was born in Hyrsylä and was the widow of Feodor Pakkanen (formerly Morosoff), from Harjulatva, Salmenniska parish.⁹³ Pavel and Matrona's only child who would not marry an individual from Hyrsylä would be their youngest daughter Marfa, known as Martta, who married Ivan Amosoff from Prääsä, East-Karelia, and the reason for this might be as simple as she had no option to marry someone from Hyrsylä as she was born in 1907 and by the time she would be of marrying age the border between Finland and Russia would be closed.⁹⁴

Dimitrei, the youngest son of Vasili and Maria, would marry in 1898, to Irina Feodorintytär Kitšu, who was born in Saarimäki, Tulemajärvi parish but her father, Feodor Kitšu, had been born in Hyrsylä, thereby creating another connection to the village. Feodor Kitšu never underwent a change in subjugation and remained a subject of the Grand Duchy of Finland, and hence his daughter Irina was also a subject of the Grand Duchy of Finland, albeit born in Russia. Dimitrei and Irina were the parents to nine children with four dying as infants. Three of Dimitrei's sons would come to Finland as a result of the Bolshevik takeover of East-Karelia. Dimitrei and Irina's youngest son and youngest daughter would remain in Mesilampi.⁹⁵

Other People

An odd entry appears in the Salmenniska parish metrical books for the year 1839.⁹⁶ It is the birth of a son named Manuil, born as the illegitimate child of Ksenia Pavelintytär, the entry stating she is from the Sortavala county in Finland but is living in Mesilampi. The godparents for the child are Jemelian Ivaninpoika from Harjulatva, Salmenniska parish, and Grigori Osipanpoika's wife Ustinia Andreintytär from Mesilampi. An investigation of the church attendance registers for Finland reveals to us that Ksenia is the daughter of Pavel Gavrilanpoika of Hautavaara, the village located at the north end of Hyrsylän mutka, in Suojärvi municipality. Pavel's descendants would later use the surname Malja. Why was this young girl living in Mesilampi? No obvious family connections to the residents of Mesilampi at that time can be found, and the periodic habit of the godparents of illegitimate children being related to the father of the child would only allow us to speculate that the father may be related to Jemelian Ivaninpoika of Harjulatva, as there are no relations of Ustinia's that would work unless the father was a relation of her husband Grigori Osipanpoika's family from Hyrsylä. No further information on Ksenia or her child's fate has been found and her brief appearance in Mesilampi remains a mystery.⁹⁷

⁹³ Russian Orthodox Church, Olonets Consistory, Salmenniska ja Veskelys metrikat 1793 – 1919 (familysearch.org)

⁹⁴ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Valtiollisen poliisin henkilökorttiarkisto, Pääosaston henkilökortit (1919 – 1948), L:71.22 Henkilökortit

⁹⁵ Russian Orthodox Church, Olonets Consistory, Salmenniska metrikat 1793 – 1919 (familysearch.org)

⁹⁶ *ibid.*

⁹⁷ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Suojärven ortodoksisen seurakunnan metrikat 1793 – 1945 – the Hautavaara metrical books for 1858 contain a death record for a Ksenia Pavelintytär, born circa 1813, she is the unmarried daughter of a village peasant, and it is possible that she is the Ksenia Pavelintytär who briefly resided in Mesilampi.

Life in Mesilampi

In the late 1700's – early 1800's life in Mesilampi would have been similar to the surrounding communities. As a newly founded settlement of the mid to late 1700's the settlers would have had to slash and burn to clear the land, and harvested logs to establish homesteads. It was a primitive existence that was based on self-reliance. As the village grew and developed contacts with neighbouring villages there would have been communal trade. Advances in farming and agriculture would have reached the village as the 19th century went on, but they would have taken longer to arrive because of its remote location and small population, and historical customs in farming and everyday life would have continued to be in use until the early 20th century.

No description of life in Mesilampi in the 19th century has been found, but detailed descriptions of some of the neighbouring villages written in 1866 does exist. From these descriptions we can get a sense of what life might have been like in Mesilampi. The area of Salmenniska parish where Mesilampi was located was said to be poorer than other parts of the parish, the houses were described as small and most were smoke huts⁹⁸. During the spring and summer months the various villages became very isolated as a result of the dense forests and marshes being flooded with water, making paths and any roads nearly impossible to traverse. Most trade and business dealings with areas outside of your own village happened in the winter months when the frozen ground and lakes could be traversed by horse and sleigh.⁹⁹ Winter was also when timber harvesting was undertaken for various timber merchants in Petroskoi and other larger town centres in Karelia - the main source of income for most households.¹⁰⁰ It was noted that many peasants in Salmenniska parish had well made and strong, green coloured, two-wheeled horse carts made in Finland. Unfortunately, smallpox was widespread and regular outbreaks occurred, again because of the remoteness of the villages making it difficult for vaccinators to reach the local population. Religious life was nearly completely based on learnt traditions, with the ability to see a priest a rare occurrence.¹⁰¹

Old folk beliefs and superstitions were still prevalent in these smaller outback communities. According to one belief a new home should not be built on an existing or long-abandoned road or path because it was thought that evil spirits still continued to travel along these old routes. In Yläjoki village, a house had supposedly been built on a "*karu path*" (*тропинке кару*), the path of an evil spirit. It was said that on the second floor could be heard singing and dancing every night. When someone went up to investigate the source of the noise everything fell silent. Finally the local tietäjä (*mystic seer*) named Sozonoff was called to rid the house of the evil spirit. The tietäjä read his spells and fired a gun into the corners of the house. It was said that the haunting ended for a period but when the house was resold it returned, and ultimately no one lived for long in this house.¹⁰² Analysis of local records leads us to believe with some confidence that the tietäjä Sozonoff was in fact Nikita Sozoninpoika of Mesilampi, born in 1855.

Despite the harshness of life in this part of Salmenniska parish, the local population did find time for entertainment and fun. During most weeks there was some sort of evening event with singing, dancing, drinking, storytelling and jokes, normally held in one of the larger, cleaner houses. Despite the odd chance for impropriety or violence to take place at these or other events, in more general terms the morals of the residents of Salmenniska parish showed a certain kindness and gentleness. They were hospitable, religious, most families lived in harmony, and major crime rarely occurred. The primary language of communication

⁹⁸ A smoke hut or in Finnish savupirtti, was a house with a central fireplace with no chimney, the smoke from the fireplace came directly into the house, conducting the heat and ultimately rising to the top of the rooms, after a period of time a flap in the roof would be opened to let the smoke escape leaving the heat in the room.

⁹⁹ "Villages in the South and West of Säämäjärvi", Olonets Governmental Official Gazette, No. 24, 1866

¹⁰⁰ "The Village of Yläjoki", Olonets Governmental Official Gazette, No. 93, 98 and 99, 1901

¹⁰¹ "Villages in the South and West of Säämäjärvi", Olonets Governmental Official Gazette, No. 24, 1866

¹⁰² Konstantin K. Loginov, "Material Culture, Industrial and Everyday Magic (of the Säämäjärvi Karelians)", Petroskoi, 2008, pg. 215

was Livvi Karelian, and only a very small percentage of people knew more than a few basic words of Russian. Most people of the area could not read or write.¹⁰³

In the late 1800's a large coal mine and plant was established by Steel and Co. (*Сталь и Ко*) in Yläjoki, that brought much needed employment to the area, and it is quite probable that some men from Mesilampi may have been employed there. The plant closed in 1899.¹⁰⁴

20th Century - the Time of Revolution and Change

The first part of the 20th century would be a time of change and turmoil for the village of Mesilampi, and the fate of the villagers would be sealed by the mid-1930's. The dawning years of the 20th century would see little change in the village. A few descendants of the original settler families remained and the Hyykky family was now well established in the village. The population of the village around 1910 is estimated to be around 20 people living in 3 or 4 homesteads.

Russia entered the Great War in 1914, and there are details about two individuals from Mesilampi being conscripted to the military around this time. Vasili Pavelinpoika Hyykky would have been 27 years of age in 1914, and was the father of two children. The birth of his third child in April 1916 would imply that the earliest he could have entered military service would have been in the late summer or autumn of 1915. After receiving his conscription notice, Vasili would have travelled to a local muster point, in this case probably Petroskoi, and after being interviewed would have been assigned to a regiment. In Vasili's case he was assigned to the 3rd Siberian Rifle Regiment, a part of the 1st Siberian Rifle Division of the 1st Siberian Army Corps. While complete lists of members of this Regiment have not been found, records concerning the regiment's losses and wounded do confirm that Vasili was not the only member of the Regiment from this area of Karelia. At least 4 other men from local villages like Prokkoila and Miinala in the nearby Veskelys parish also served in the Regiment at the same time as Vasili did.¹⁰⁵

After being assigned as a rifleman in the regiment, Vasili Hyykky and the other Karelians would have gone to training in preparation to join what was called the Eastern Front, though in reality the western borders of the Russian Empire. The early days of the 3rd Siberian Rifle Regiment during the war have not been investigated but by the summer of 1916 the Regiment was stationed along the Eastern Front, in the north-western part of what is today Belarus, just south of Lithuania, but then a part of the Russian Empire.¹⁰⁶ The 1st Siberian Army Corps was stationed around Lake Naroch and also at the city of Smorgon, in the Minsk Oblast. The Battle of Smorgon had started in the autumn of 1915 with German and Russian forces battling over positions around the local area, and by 1916 it had evolved into intense trench warfare between the two sides with small gains and losses being achieved but very little change in the front lines. The Germans also employed gas warfare during this gruelling period.^{107,108} The 1st Siberian Army Corps was involved in intense battles in March 1916 that resulted in heavy casualties. This may have been Vasili Hyykky's first baptism of fire. The Corps was withdrawn to the rear in the second half of March, and billeted first at the village of Starinki and later at the village of Cheremshitsy both to the south of Lake Naroch.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰³ "Villages in the South and West of Säämäjärvi", Olonets Governmental Official Gazette, No. 24, 1866

¹⁰⁴ "The Village of Yläjoki", Olonets Governmental Official Gazette, No. 93, 98 and 99, 1901

¹⁰⁵ 3rd Siberian Rifle Regiment, № 747, Lists of losses of soldiers, gwar.mil.ru

¹⁰⁶ 3rd Siberian Rifle Regiment, № 116 Extract from the journal of military operations from March 1, 1916 to April 30, 1916, gwar.mil.ru

¹⁰⁷ Alexey Vladimirovich Oleynikov, "Battle of Naroch 1916", 13/06-2022, btgv.ru

¹⁰⁸ Wikimedia Foundation, "Lake Naroch Offensive" *and* "Battle of Smorgon", accessed 18/03-2025, en.wikipedia.org

¹⁰⁹ 3rd Siberian Rifle Regiment, № 116 *and* № 117 Extract from the journal of military operations from March 1, 1916 to June 30, 1916, gwar.mil.ru



Siberian Rifle Regiment riflemen on the Eastern Front in World War I, 1916. *Source – Photographer Ivan Prokopyevich Tsiklinsky, Novosibirsk State Museum of Local History (Новосибирский государственный краеведческий музей)*

In early July 1916 the 1st Siberian Army Corps received orders to move south to join what would become known as the Brusilov Offensive. On 12 July 1916 the 3rd Siberian Rifle Regiment under the command of Colonel Georgy Nikolaevich Khvoshchinsky left the Smorgon area, and travelling partly by train and partly by foot, arrived on 23 July in the Volhynia Oblast of Russia, 500 km to the south in a region neighbouring the Austrian-Hungarian Empire (today a part of north-western Ukraine).¹¹⁰ Vasili Hyykky and his Regiment were now part of the Southern theatre of the Eastern Front.

The 3rd Siberian Rifle Regiment quickly took up positions at the north end of the Kovel-Lemberg (Lviv) battle line¹¹¹, on the left bank (west side) of the Stokhid River, near the village of Zarechye. According to the Regimental war diaries the German and Austrian enemy trenches were only 300 – 600 paces away. The Stokhid River broke into multiple branches in this area causing the terrain to be very marshy, hindering movements, but also the use of artillery shells as they failed to explode when they landed on the soft terrain.¹¹² Across this marshy terrain each side faced ground that was littered with debris and covered in treacherous barbed wire.

The 3rd Siberian Rifle Regiment was quickly thrown into battle and over the next few days experienced heavy enemy artillery, machine gun and sniper fire. Russian and German-Austrian forces took turns on the offensive but neither gained any ground. At one point in the battles the Regiment had advanced far enough towards the German defences that they were able to breach their trenches. Bayonet

¹¹⁰ 3rd Siberian Rifle Regiment, № 118 Extract from the journal of military operations from July 1, 1916 to August 31, 1916, gwar.mil.ru

¹¹¹ "Russians Smash 280 Mile Front", Patterson Weekly News, 17/08-1916, page 6

¹¹² 3rd Siberian Rifle Regiment, № 118 Extract from the journal of military operations from July 1, 1916 to August 31, 1916, gwar.mil.ru

and hand grenade fights ensued but ultimately the Regiment forces had to withdraw. German Air Force fighter planes also periodically passed overhead raining machine gun fire down on the riflemen of the Regiment.¹¹³

Direct assaults by either side ceased on 28 July, and over the next days the 3rd Siberian Rifle Regiment fortified their positions near the village of Zarechye, while building a causeway across a tributary of the Stokhid River under intense enemy artillery bombardment. For the period 24 July to 3 August the Regiment lost 14 officers and 1,281 riflemen.¹¹⁴

On 4 August the 3rd Siberian Rifle Regiment was relieved and retreated to the forest area behind the battle lines, and billeted near the village of Nova-Ruda. After a few days, on 7 August they were ordered back to retake up positions on the western bank of the Stokhid River. The next day they crossed the river and met up with the 4th Finnish Rifle Artillery Division¹¹⁵, who were occupying former Austrian Army trenches that had been won in battles that took place earlier in July. From 8 to 11 August the Regiment worked with the Finnish Division to fortify and secure these trenches.¹¹⁶

On 11 August the 3rd Siberian Rifle Regiment was ordered to replace the Cossack Brigade in the combat sector between their sister regiments the 1st and 4th Siberian Rifles. There were several rotations of the battalions within the Regiment over the next few days, with each taking turns on the flanks and spending time in reserve at headquarters behind the lines. There was continuous artillery fire by the Germans and at night rifle skirmishes broke out.¹¹⁷

Do not cry, I will die for the Faith, the Tsar and the Fatherland¹¹⁸

Orders arrived on the evening of 14 August for the 2nd Battalion of the 3rd Siberian Rifle Regiment to take up positions in the former Austrian Army trenches near the village of Toboly, north of Zarechye on the west bank of the Stokhid River. Suddenly in the early morning of 15 August the Germans opened intense and heavy artillery fire aimed at the village of Toboly where another sister regiment, the 2nd Siberian Rifles, was stationed. The artillery fire gradually increased, inflicting heavy losses on the 2nd Siberian Rifle Regiment and the nearby 4th Siberian Rifle Regiment. Both regiments were also hit with asphyxiating gases. Because of heavy losses and the risk of a German breakthrough, orders were received by the 2nd Battalion of the 3rd Siberian Rifle Regiment to move into the village of Toboly to reinforce the 2nd Siberian Rifle Regiment who were slowly being worn down by the German bombardment. The Germans, noticing the movement of the 2nd Battalion out of the former Austrian Army trenches, quickly redirected artillery fire against the riflemen as they moved towards Toboly, inflicting heavy losses. Nonetheless the 2nd Battalion riflemen were able to successfully move across the open and heavily bombed area to join the remnants of the 2nd Siberian Rifle Regiment.¹¹⁹

¹¹³ 3rd Siberian Rifle Regiment, № 118 Extract from the journal of military operations from July 1, 1916 to August 31, 1916, gwar.mil.ru

¹¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹¹⁵ The 4th Finnish Rifle Artillery Division was a division of the Russian Imperial Army based in the Grand Duchy of Finland, the majority of its members were Russian subjects living in the Grand Duchy.

¹¹⁶ 3rd Siberian Rifle Regiment, № 118 Extract from the journal of military operations from July 1, 1916 to August 31, 1916, gwar.mil.ru

¹¹⁷ *ibid.*

¹¹⁸ M. Golubev, "Battles in the Kovel Direction in 1916 – Life Guards Izmailovsky Regiment", Military Historical Bulletin, No. 19, 1962, pg 21 (source btgv.ru) – quote from a letter found on a non-commissioned officer killed in the attack of 26 July 1916, in the Kovel area, Volhynia Oblast, just south of where the 3rd Siberian Rifle Regiment was stationed.

¹¹⁹ 3rd Siberian Rifle Regiment, № 118 Extract from the journal of military operations from July 1, 1916 to August 31, 1916, gwar.mil.ru

When the 2nd Battalion of the 3rd Siberian Rifle Regiment reached Toboly the trenches had been completely destroyed by the constant artillery bombardment, barbed wire barriers had been broken, communication passages were blocked, and the village itself, because of the constant bombardment, was ablaze in many places. The resulting smoke made movement around the area very difficult, nonetheless the riflemen of the 2nd Battalion were able to fill the gaps in the battle line and successfully repulsed the German advances with direct rifle fire.

The Germans attempted several other advances against Toboly but all were unsuccessful. Around 7pm on 15 August the battle for Toboly started to subside and afterwards only the occasional exchange of rifle fire took place. At 4am on the morning of 16 August the 3rd Siberian Rifle Regiment was relieved of its positions and moved to the rear. Throughout the day there was sporadic German artillery fire, but no more frontal advances. Over the next few days the Regiment worked hard to restore the destroyed trenches, clear the communication passages and to remove the wounded and dead from the area. The recorded losses from the battle were 2 officers killed, 3 wounded and 1 doctor shell-shocked; and 71 riflemen killed, 256 wounded and shell shocked, and 34 missing in action.¹²⁰ It was reported that Vasili Pavelinpoika Hyykky (officially known as Bogdanoff) was amongst those riflemen killed on 15 August 1916.¹²¹ The same day Semen Dimitreinpoika Rodionoff was also declared dead, and Ivan Ivaninpoika Tikshaeff was declared wounded, both men being from the same area of Karelia as Vasili.¹²² Vasili Hyykky died over 1,500 km away from his home in Karelia, in a land unknown to him. He left behind his wife, and three young children including his youngest daughter who would never know her father.

The behaviour of the officers and riflemen of the 2nd Battalion of the 3rd Siberian Rifle Regiment was noted to be beyond all praise for their actions that day. The exact Battalion of the Regiment that Vasili Hyykky was part of is not known but his death on 15 August suggests he may have been part of the 2nd Battalion.

The Brusilov Offensive is considered the Imperial Russian Army's greatest feat of World War I, and its success led to an upsurge in morale of the Russian troops. It relieved pressure on French and British forces in the west, and Italian forces in the south as the Central Powers (the German Empire, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire, and Bulgaria) were forced to redirect troops and military equipment and resources to combat the Offensive. At its end in September 1916, the Offensive had inflicted immense losses on the Austro-Hungarian Army and large swathes of territory had been captured, though it had been achieved at a great cost in terms of Imperial Russian Army casualties, including Vasili Hyykky.¹²³

Also conscripted from Mesilampi was Aleksi Nikitanpoika Sozonoff (officially known as Bogdanoff), a descendant of one of the original settler families. Aleksi was 20 years of age when he entered military service with the Russian Imperial Forces in 1915. It is not known which regiment he was attached to but Aleksi stated in late 1919 that he had served in a work company for about two years on the Romanian Front, leaving active service in the summer of 1917.¹²⁴ The Romanian Front ran through Moldavia in what was then the eastern part of Romania and was used as a bulk head to protect the Western parts of the then province of Ukraine.

Aside from Vasili Pavelinpoika Hyykky and Aleksi Nikitanpoika Sozonoff, no other information has been found of any other individual from Mesilampi participating in the war. When Hyrsylän resident Stepan

¹²⁰ 3rd Siberian Rifle Regiment, № 118 Extract from the journal of military operations from July 1, 1916 to August 31, 1916, gwar.mil.ru

¹²¹ 3rd Siberian Rifle Regiment, № 172157 List of casualties, 04/10-1916, gwar.mil.ru *and* Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Kansalaisuushakemus Jegor Pavelinpoika Hyykky, KD. No. 387/52 36 – 13/08-36, 01/06-1936 – stated that his brother Vasili died during the war on the Eastern Front

¹²² 3rd Siberian Rifle Regiment, № 172157 List of casualties, 04/10-1916, gwar.mil.ru

¹²³ Wikimedia Foundation, "Brusilov Offensive", en.wikipedia.org

¹²⁴ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Etsivä keskuspoliisi – Valtiollinen poliisi (EK-Valpo), pöytäkirjaan 17/12-1919

Feodorinpoika Kitšu was arrested in 1929 for secretly crossing the border into Soviet-Russia, he claimed that his sister Irina Feodorintytär Hyykky's husband Dimitrei Hyykky had died as a soldier during the war.¹²⁵ There is doubt to this claim as will be seen later, but additionally Dimitrei was 38 years of age and unlikely to have volunteered and also unlikely to have been conscripted given his age and the many available exemptions from military service.

Life in Mesilampi would not have been greatly affected by the war, aside from the absence of Vasili Hyykky and Aleksi Sozonoff. While peasant communities' attitudes towards the war have been analysed by researchers, no research has looked at a village so small and so close to the Finnish border like Mesilampi. Research has found that peasant village opinion about the war was largely impacted by letters sent home from conscripted soldiers and followed a path of initial patriotic fervour to one of frustration and ending with exhaustion, hostility towards military leaders, and hopes for peace.¹²⁶ Whether Vasili Hyykky or Aleksi Sozonoff wrote letters home to their families in Mesilampi is unknown, it is not even known if either of them could write. For an isolated village like Mesilampi, in a very remote region of the Empire, it is hard to gauge what the sentiment would be but one can assume there could be anything from muted support to indifference. The village's strong connection to Finland may have also played into feelings of indifference. The Grand Duchy of Finland did not participate in the war and no Finnish troops were conscripted into the Russian army, so little would have been happening just over the "border" concerning the war.

Periods of Upheaval

For Mesilampi, the end of the war in early 1918 did not bring peace but the start of several years of turmoil. The Bolshevik revolution that started in the spring of 1917 would bring domestic change to Mesilampi eventually but initially life continued as it had for the last 140 years. An event that would have much more local impact was Finland's declaration of independence at the end of 1917 and the ensuing civil war. While Mesilampi was not directly involved in either of these events, being so close to the border meant that events in Finland could easily impact the village. The close connections between Mesilampi and the lower villages of Hyrsylän mutka in Finland would be severed. While prior to Finnish independence the border existed on paper only, now a formal border would exist and with time border guards of both realms would be posted to the area restricting the movement of local people across the border, though illegal covert crossings in both directions would continue until the late-1920's.

The Finnish Civil War was not fought in Border Karelia north of Lake Ladoga, the closest battle was 150 km away in Värtsilä in February of 1918, and this battle lasted only a few hours. While sentiment in Hyrsylän mutka was said to be supportive of the White (Capitalist) cause,¹²⁷ there were most likely some people sympathetic to the Red (Communist) cause in the area, though there is no record of anyone acting on those sympathies. During the civil war Bolsheviks from further afield in Russia who sympathised with the Red cause in Finland, crossed the border at Hyrsylän mutka multiple times hoping to assist their communist brothers-in-arms but also to incite revolution in the northern regions of Finland.¹²⁸ These border attacks and incursions continued after the end of the civil war into early 1919 prompting the creation of the voluntary White Guard organisations in Ignoila and Hyrsylä villages. The Bolsheviks from Russia would have been moving around the border areas before and after these attacks against Hyrsylän mutka, and would have expected support or at least no hindrance from the border villages of Mesilampi

¹²⁵ Suomen Kansalliskirkasto, Etsivä keskuspoliisi – Valtiollinen poliisi (EK-Valpo), pöytäkirjaan Akp No. 271/29, 08/11-1929

¹²⁶ John Bushnel, "Russian Peasants and Soldiers during World War I: Home and Front Interacting", *Russian Studies in History*, No. 56:2, 26/09-2017, pgs 69-70

¹²⁷ Suomen Kansalliskirjasto, "Paikallisesikuntien raportteja N:o 43", Suojärvi, 04/04-1918

¹²⁸ Matti Pajunen, "Rajalevottomuuksien kaksikymmenvuotismuistoja", *Rajan Turva*, No. 1, 01-1939, pg 3

and Posuada (Russian Hyrsylä). There are no reports of anyone from Mesilampi taking part in these incursions and attacks, but the residents of the village had to be aware of what was happening. Equally, there are no reports of the villagers of Mesilampi trying to halt these incursions and attacks, though this does not necessarily mean the villagers condoned them. The residents of these border villages could have easily been coerced, forced or threatened by these Bolsheviks to support their cause or alternatively some may have actually sympathised with the cause. The truth of the situation during this period is unknown, but it is important to remember that there were numerous familial relationships between the villages on both sides of the border, and as a result, during these raids, the Bolsheviks were actually attacking relatives of people from Mesilampi and Posuada.

It is worth noting that while reporting in Finland by the press and governmental sources tell of Bolsheviks crossing the border and harassing the villages of Hyrsylän mutka, Russian sources tell of White Finns crossing the border in the opposite direction and likewise harassing border villages in the newly proclaimed Soviet-Russia. Military Commander Grigorjeff, deployed to the Säämäjärvi parish, wrote in January 1919 to the Olonets Provincial Military Commissariat concerning raids by White Finnish “gangs” into the local border villages, highlighting in his report Mesilampi, Harjulatva, Posuada (Russian Hyrsylä), and Yläjoki, amongst others. Commander Grigorjeff called attention to the lack of Bolshevik military personnel and firepower, and noted that the White Finnish gangs were well-armed and carried-out frequent raids, stole public property and were conducting intensive espionage in these villages. Interestingly, Commander Grigorjeff also highlights the problem with the local kulak population (the peasant land owning and merchant class which emerged after the end of Russian serfdom in 1861), which he notes are many in Säämäjärvi and the surrounding parishes. It is implied that the local kulak class was supporting in some way these raids by White Finnish gangs.¹²⁹ Commander Grigorjeff’s report, clearly supporting the idea that both sides were at least partly responsible for the area’s unrest, may also lead us to believe that the local Russian border population was more sympathetic to the White cause as opposed to the Bolshevik Red.

At the end of the Finnish civil war, the Russian Bolsheviks were joined by Finnish Reds who started to flee to Russia once it was evident that the White cause would prevail. Finnish Reds in the north of the country had an easier opportunity to escape as the White forces were occupied dealing with the Reds in the south, who would ultimately pay the price for what was termed their “treasonous” revolt. The borders at Hyrsylän mutka saw Finnish Reds crossing through the late spring and early summer of 1918, and hence the border villages, including Mesilampi, would have been forced to receive them as they crossed. One can assume that these Finnish Reds, exhausted from the hasty escape from Finland, may have at times sought out shelter and food at homes in Mesilampi and beyond. With time the ruling Bolsheviks in East-Karelia would include a fair number of Finnish Reds amongst their ranks.¹³⁰

Aunus Expedition

The middle of April 1919 brought the official start of the Aunus Expedition, an armed effort by paramilitary groups in Finland to unite the Aunus area of East-Karelia to Finland, however the “liberation” of the border villages around Hyrsylän mutka started earlier on 31 March 1919. Under the leadership of partisan warfare chief Pekka Sokoloff, from Manssila, Salmi municipality, himself only 24 years of age, a

¹²⁹ Central State Archives of the Karelia ASSR, fonds 573, opus 1, delo 361, pp. 71-72 (www.karelia-media.ru)

¹³⁰ Irina Takala, “Border Locked!” Special Aspects of State Terror in the Karelian Border Region of the 1920s - First Half of the 1930s”, *Revue D’Histoire Nordique* N° 19, pgs 103 – 127, 2014 - though Finns accounted only for 3.2 per cent of the whole population in the region, they held prominent offices in the Soviet and state bodies, they were heads of large enterprises, establishments, organizations, and worked in the spheres of culture, education and science (the so-called Finnish period in the history of Karelia, 1920-1935)

group of men from Hyrsylän mutka attacked the Bolsheviks in the Posuada and Mesilampi areas, driving them out of the villages.¹³¹ The eldest member of the group from Hyrsylän mutka was Ivan Stepaninpoika Burtsoff of Ignoila, who was aged 40.¹³² It must be questioned if these villages genuinely desired liberation or if the socialist principles that the Bolsheviks were promoting appealed to some.

Various stories have been recounted and handed down about the “*liberation*” of Mesilampi. It has been told that when the group of men arrived from Hyrsylän mutka at Mesilampi, they were not completely welcomed by all villagers. When the liberators went to the Hyykky homestead and demanded to know where the sons of the house were, perhaps believing that they were aiding the Bolshevik aggressors, and the head of the household, Dimitrei Vasilinpoika Hyykky, replied that he did not know, it was said that a member of the Hyrsylän mutka group shot him in the head and killed him. This action horrified a number of men from the Hyrsylän mutka group, and resulted in Ivan Stepaninpoika Burtsoff throwing down his rifle in disgust and stating that this is not what “*liberation*” was about, and afterwards he left the group and returned to his home in Ignoila.¹³³ It is implied in the story that perhaps Dimitrei Hyykky was not sympathetic to the arriving liberators, though whether this is true or not is unknown. The metrical records of Salmenniska parish for 1919 are not publicly available so no death record has been found for Dimitrei though later in 1919 his wife Irina Hyykky is noted to be a widow. Another story from this troubled time recounts how a Bolshevik shot and killed the young son of Dimitrei Vasilinpoika Hyykky while he held him in his arms.¹³⁴ If this story is true the child would have been Nikolai Dimitreinpoika Hyykky, who was born in 1914 and while no death record has been found, he is known to have died sometime around 1918 – 1919. While these stories are family folklore, the known facts do not contradict them, and the tensions and violence in the border areas during this period of change make them plausible.

It is unknown how many locals from Mesilampi actively participated in the Aunus Expedition but the actions of one resident of the village, Jegor Pavelinpoika Hyykky are known. Jegor was a high-spirited and passionate 20 year old and was said to be very supportive of the White cause and strongly anti-Bolshevik. Jegor joined the Aunus Expedition soon after it started in April 1919. Jegor was part of Jaeger sergeant-major Toivo Mustonen’s company. Toivo Mustonen was a platoon leader and company commander in the 3rd Company of the IV Battalion and participated in the initial battles over the border from Hyrsylän mutka at Veskelys moving onwards towards Petroskoi.¹³⁵ Jegor fought against the Bolshevik forces from the Prääsä region all the way to the outskirts of Petroskoi where the Expedition forces were halted by the Bolsheviks. When the Aunus Expedition failed and the forces retreated back to Finland, Jegor moved north and joined the remnants of what had been called the Murmansk Legion, continuing in battles against the Bolsheviks.¹³⁶

During the four months when the Aunus Expedition forces held a large part of Aunus under their control things would have returned to a level of normalcy in Mesilampi. Initially at the start of the effort in late April there would have been an ongoing stream of soldiers crossing through the area towards Aunus, though as the Aunus Expedition forces pushed the Bolsheviks further east things would have quieted down. Re-supply lines and reserve forces would have trickled through during the late spring and early summer months. For the residents of Mesilampi crossing the border and visiting family in Hyrsylän mutka would have been as simple as it was prior to Finnish independence.

¹³¹ “Alikersantti Sokolov”, Laatokka, No. 80, 21/07-1927, pg 2

¹³² “Sk. toiminnan alkuvaiheita Ignoilassa”, Rajan Turva, No.9, 01/09-1932, pg 214

¹³³ Aleksandra Viskari (maiden name Burtsoff), daughter of Ivan Stepaninpoika Burtsoff, interviewed by Ted LeClaire, 2016

¹³⁴ Ulla Korkatsu, “Hyrsylää koluttu ristiin rastiin” (haastattelu Taru-Tuija Hyykky), OMA Suojärvi, No. 3, 2023

¹³⁵ Wikimedia Foundation, “Luettelo jääkäreistä M – Toivo Mustonen”, fi.wikipedia.org

¹³⁶ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Kansalaisuushakemus – Jegor Pavelinpoika Hyykky, KD. No. 387/52 36 – 13/08-36, 01/06-1936

Escape to Finland

The failure of the Aunus Expedition to free East-Karelia from the grips of the new Bolshevik government would lead to new turmoil in the area. In August 1919 as the Aunus Expedition forces were retreating back to Finland, many locals from the border villages and further afield in Aunus also headed over the border to Finland, fearing reprisals from the advancing Bolshevik Red Army forces. Some residents of Mesilampi fled, others stayed. Those who helped or supported the Aunus Expedition probably had the most to fear, though locals who perhaps had sheltered at one point soldiers from the Expedition or simply offered them food were probably also uncertain of what the future would hold for them. Additionally the Aunus Expedition had disrupted historical supply chains within Russia, used valuable local resources and had left the area in confusion, prompting many to flee for reasons other than fear of the Bolsheviks.

Fleeing to Finland from Mesilampi around this time were – Feodor Jegorinpoika Petroff (Grigorjeff), a descendant of one of the original settler families, and his wife Maria Stepanintytär, the widow of Ilja Nikitanpoika Sozonoff who was also a descendant of one of the original settler families. Feodor and Maria had married after the deaths of their previous spouses. Coming with Feodor and Maria were Aleksi Feodorinpoika (Feodor's son from his previous marriage), Vladimir Iljanpoika Sozonoff (Maria's son from her previous marriage), and their own daughter Jelena Feodorintytär.¹³⁷ Interestingly from this blended family, Feodor and his son Aleksi and his daughter Jelena might still be considered as Finnish subjects (citizens) as Feodor had not undertaken any official transfer from Finland to Russia, though perhaps since Finnish independence these rights had been changed in law. Nonetheless, Feodor and his family were listed as refugees from Soviet-Russia. While Feodor's stepson Vladimir Sozonoff was a Russian citizen, he did have strong connections to the village of Hyrsylä with two of his late father's sisters having married men from that village.

Also arriving in Finland around the same time was Dimitrei Hyykky's widow Irina Feodorintytär Hyykky and her three youngest children Nikita, Andrei and Alexandra.¹³⁸ Irina, though born in Saarimäki, Tulemajärvi parish, also had strong connections to Hyrsylä, her father Feodor Ivaninpoika Kitšu having been born there as detailed earlier. Irina's mother's family also hailed from Hyrsylä.

Remaining in Mesilampi were the aged Nikita Sozoninpoika Bogdanoff and his wife Daria Savastianintytär, their youngest son Aleksi, and their grandson Kuisma Iljanpoika Sozonoff. Their daughter-in-law Maria Stepanintytär had fled to Finland with her son (their grandson), along with her second husband as noted above.

Also remaining were Pavel Hyykky and his wife Matriona, and their young daughter Marfa, as well as their daughter-in-law Paraskeva Aleksintytär, the widow of Vasili Pavelinpoika Hyykky who had died during the First World War, and her three children Feodor, Jelena and Irina. Additionally there was their son Aleksi Pavelinpoika Hyykky and his wife Anastasia Lumpantytär (maiden name Häkki), who was originally from Hyrsylä, and their young daughter Matriona.

Juho Dimitreinpoika Hyykky had also remained in Mesilampi despite his mother and younger siblings fleeing to Finland, perhaps to keep watch over the family property as uncertainty remained about what would happen now that the Bolsheviks had taken control again.

Mesilampi was now about two-thirds its size with 9 residents having fled, 1 resident, Jegor Pavelinpoika Hyykky absent and fighting the Bolsheviks in the north, and 15 residents remaining. The choice to remain cannot be simply attributed to support for the Bolshevik cause, though that cannot be ruled out, but nevertheless there were multiple reasons to remain. These were their homes and to

¹³⁷ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Valtion pakolaisavustuskeskuksen Aunuksen pakolaisten avustuskomitean sekä Sortavalan ja Salmin asioimistojen arkisto, Ba Pakolaisluettelot (1918-1933)

¹³⁸ *ibid.*

abandon them could mean to lose them; the more aged like Nikita and Daria Bogdanoff, and Pavel and Matriona Hyykky may have felt it impossible to flee; and what the future would hold was unknown and perhaps life in Mesilampi would ultimately continue as it always had. The choice to flee was never an easy decision, just as the choice to remain held unknown risks.

Those that fled were now refugees in a foreign country but luckily for some they had family to rely on. It is not certain exactly where the Mesilampi refugees who had fled to Finland lived, but records of other refugees from Posuada show that many of them in fact resided in Hyrsylä village. As previously told Feodor Jegorinpoika Petroff's wife had two sister-in-laws from her first marriage living in Hyrsylä, and Irina Feodorintytär Hyykky was related to the Kitšu family of Hyrsylä, so both these families may have stayed in Hyrsylä. The familiarity of the area and close proximity to their homes in Mesilampi may have given them some comfort during this trying time. Living with relations in Hyrsylä did not imply that the refugees were completely dependent on them for support. The Finnish Government had set up programmes to assist the influx of refugees that arrived from Aunus and other areas during this time. Refugees were encouraged to work if they could but many were single woman with children who needed assistance. Though complete information is not available regarding the period of time that the families from Mesilampi remained in Finland, some information allows us a glimpse of the state support that was offered. In February 1920, Feodor Petroff's family of five was given a grant of 400 mk (Finnish marks), while Irina Hyykky's family of four was given a grant of 320 mk. The next month the grants were 100 mk and 75 mk respectively.¹³⁹ When comparing this to the average monthly wage of 900 mk earned by male individuals who were members of trade-unions in Finland around the same time period, it can be seen that the government support was helpful but probably not enough to support a large family and a job earning income or the help of family in Finland was probably needed.¹⁴⁰ Food and milk rations were also given by the government support agencies with a list from June 1921 showing that Irina Hyykky received 1 ½ food rations but no milk rations. What the food rations consisted of is unknown. One could assume that life as a refugee in Finland was not easy but bearable.

More Arrivals and Departures

For younger able bodied men who had remained in Aunus the return of the Bolsheviks to power meant the risk of being conscripted to the Red Army. Aleksi Nikitanpoika Sozonoff, aged 24 years and who had remain in Mesilampi with his parents at the end of the Aunus Expedition, was conscripted to military service with the Red Army in November 1919. He was transported with men from other local villages to Petroskoi to begin military training. Aleksi claimed that after a short period in Petroskoi he had been given leave to return home with the instructions that after his leave he return to Petroskoi at his own cost. What reason he gave to request leave is unknown but perhaps he was able to justify the need to return to Mesilampi because of his aged parents, and he being their only living son. Instead of returning home Aleksi made his way towards the north part of Hyrsylän mutka and crossed the border into Finland at Hautavaara on 8 December 1919.¹⁴¹ Another resident of Mesilampi was now a refugee or perhaps more accurately a defector in Finland.

By the autumn of 1919 the Murmansk Expedition had ended and Allied forces (British and American) had left northern Russia, though White members of the Murmansk Legion continued battles against the Bolsheviks. As noted earlier, Jegor Pavelinpoika Hyykky had joined the Murmansk Legion after the Aunus

¹³⁹ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Valtion pakolaisavustuskeskuksen Aunuksen pakolaisten avustuskomitean sekä Sortavalan ja Salmin asiointojen arkisto, Bb Jakeluluettelot (1920-1932)

¹⁴⁰ US Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Average Hourly Wages of Trade-Unionists in Finland 1921", Monthly Labor Review, Volume XVII, Number 3, September 1923, pg 93

¹⁴¹ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Salmin Rajavartioston Esikunta, pöytäkirja 17/12-1919

Expedition had failed, and claimed to have participated in battles against Bolshevik forces in Karhumäki and Soutjärvi. By late 1919 hope faded that the White forces would achieve anything in East-Karelia, and Jegor crossed the border at Porajärvi parish in Russia into Suojärvi municipality in Finland.¹⁴² Yet again another resident of Mesilampi was now a refugee (defector) in Finland.

As 1920 progressed a level of fragile calm returned to the area. Bolshevik raids into Hyrsylän mutka randomly continued, but life in the border villages on the Russian side again slowly returned to a sort of normalcy, albeit with a Red Army presence.¹⁴³ The Bolsheviks, it seems, were more focused on terrorising the residents of Hyrsylän mutka than elderly farmers and women on their own side of the border.¹⁴⁴ While no official amnesty programme like the one that would be implemented by the Soviet-Russian government in 1923 existed, it appears that refugees from East-Karelia that wished to return to their homes, in what was now Soviet-Russia, were able to do so. By the summer of 1920 the flow of refugees returning to Soviet-Russia increased with individual men, but also families, returning. The official route back to Soviet-Russia was at the border crossing at Kaksinainen along the northern border of Suojärvi municipality and Porajärvi parish on the Soviet-Russian side. In early October 1920 Feodor Jegorinpoika Petroff and his wife and their three children crossed back over the border and returned to their home in Mesilampi.¹⁴⁵ Little is known about the process of return on the Soviet-Russian side at this early juncture of refugees from Finland returning home. Several years later the process involved applying to return, and once in Soviet-Russia there was a registration process and a series of interrogations undertaken before you were allowed to return to your home, but in these early days it appears the process was much easier as local administrative infrastructure was not yet set up and the local and national governments in Soviet-Russia had more on-going pressing concerns to deal with. After crossing at Kaksinainen to the Soviet-Russian side, Jegor and his family would have to work their way around Hyrsylän mutka to Yläjoki village, and then onward to their home village of Mesilampi.

Also in October 1920, coming in the opposite direction, Juho Dimitreinpoika Hyykky crossed the border and came to Finland.¹⁴⁶ No information has been found on why he came or what his motivations were, but given his age of 21 years it may have been related to being conscripted into the Red Army, similar to Aleksi Sozonoff as previously told. Juho's mother and three younger siblings were residing in Finland at that time, so it is assumed he would have joined them. Juho had been separated from his family for nearly a year.

As one family left Finland to return to Mesilampi, another resident left the village heading to Finland, demonstrating that upheaval in the small village continued.

On 10 June 1921, Irina Hyykky crossed the border with her youngest daughter at Kaksinainen, returning to her home in Mesilampi.¹⁴⁷ Her three sons remained in Suojärvi municipality, Finland. It can be assumed that they continued to fear being conscripted to service in the Bolshevik Red Army.

¹⁴² Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Kansalaisuushakemus – Jegor Pavelinpoika Hyykky, KD. No. 387/52 36 – 13/08-36, 01/06-1936

¹⁴³ "Karjalan kansannousun vaiheet. Erään karjalaisen opettajan esitelma Itä-Karjalan asiasta Käkisalmissa 10.01.1922", Karjala, No. 39, 16/02-1922 – the author states the villages of Mesilampi and Harjulutva were housing a company of Red Army soldiers.

¹⁴⁴ "Bolshevikit ryöstöretkellä Suojärvellä. Tunkeutuuete Ignoilan kylään, jossa ampuneet erään paikallisen talollisen...", Karjala, No. 100, 01/05-1920, pg 3

¹⁴⁵ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Valtion pakolaisavustuskeskuksen Aunuksen pakolaisten avustuskomitean sekä Sortavalan ja Salmin asioimistojen arkisto, Ba Pakolaisluettelot (1918-1933)

¹⁴⁶ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Valtion pakolaisavustuskeskuksen Aunuksen pakolaisten avustuskomitean sekä Sortavalan ja Salmin asioimistojen arkisto, Ba8 Pakolaisluettelot (1918-1933)

¹⁴⁷ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Valtion pakolaisavustuskeskuksen Aunuksen pakolaisten avustuskomitean sekä Sortavalan ja Salmin asioimistojen arkisto, Ba Pakolaisluettelot (1918-1933)



Official border crossing at Kaksinainen, Suojärvi municipality, showing border guards accompanying refugees who are returning to Soviet-Karelia from Finland, circa early 1920's. Descendants of the original settlers and members of the Hyykky family used this border crossing to return home to Mesilampi after arriving in Finland as refugees following the ill-fated Aunus Expedition. *Source – Pohjois-Karjalan museo*

At the dawn of the 1920's Mesilampi was now a smaller village with 19 residents, consisting of 8 men and 11 women. Of the men, 2 were elderly, 4 under the age of 15, leaving just 2 men in their prime working years. Rural Karelian traditions of the time allocated many tasks of running the homestead to the women of a house, so aside from the home duties of cooking and cleaning, the women would also take care of the cattle and other livestock and participate in planting and harvesting. So despite the imbalance between men and women in the village, the households probably functioned well enough. Five able bodied men – Aleksi Sozonoff, Jegor Hyykky and brothers Juho, Nikita and Andrei Hyykky remained on the Finnish side.

The ongoing connections between Mesilampi and Hyrsylä are clearly demonstrated by the arrest of Ivan Jevseinpoika Näre of Hyrsylä on 26 March 1921, when he was caught by the Finnish (Salmi Division) Border Guard coming back across the border from Soviet-Russia. When interrogated, Ivan said that he had crossed the border on the morning of 26 March and gone to see his wife's family in Mesilampi. Ivan as previously told was married to Tatjana, the daughter of Nikita and Daria Sozonoff. Ivan claimed he had only stayed for about an hour at Tatjana's family home in Mesilampi and then had returned to Finland bringing with him 15 kg of turnips. Ivan did not give any details of why he brought home the turnips or if he had

traded something for them, but did claim that he had not smuggled anything into Russia from Finland. Ivan may have also been conveying news of Nikita and Daria's son Aleksi, who had escaped to Finland a little over a year earlier. Sadly Ivan's trip was in vain as the turnips were confiscated by the Border Guard, though he was released as officials saw no evidence of any serious crime.¹⁴⁸

Those That Remained in Finland

The lives of the 5 men from Mesilampi who had stayed in Finland are worth looking at to see how they fared. The ultimate fate of Aleksi Sozonoff is unknown. After crossing over into Finland in late 1919, no further record of him can be found. There is a possibility that he returned secretly to Mesilampi shortly after he had arrived. Refugees who arrived in Finland were supposed to officially leave the country back to Soviet-Russia, though it is known that many did not follow official protocols and simply went secretly over the border back to their homes. There was no co-ordination between officials from either country concerning what residents of Soviet-Russia had arrived in Finland as refugees, hence if an individual secretly returned back across the border soon after arriving in Finland, it would be very simple for someone in Soviet-Russia, if questioned, to claim that the individual had been away hunting, on a trip to Petroskoi, etc., thereby avoiding any suspicions, especially for single men. The ever watchful eye of the communist state had not yet fully established itself in Soviet-Russia. The ledgers used to track refugees living in Suojärvi during this time period occasionally include sections where groups of single men are removed from the ledgers as no longer residing in Suojärvi. The way these groups of men are presented leads one to assume these were likely periodic checks and removals of names of individuals who could no longer be found living in Suojärvi, with the assumption being that in most cases they had secretly returned to Soviet-Russia. This as opposed to a single event where 20 single men on a given day officially crossed the border into Soviet-Russia.¹⁴⁹

The young Jegor Pavelinpoika Hyykky took some time to find his place in Finland. After leaving Soviet-Russia in late 1919, disillusioned with the outcome of the Aunus Expedition and other attempts to fight the Bolsheviks, Jegor settled for a short time in Suojärvi, initially working for a month in Kaitajärvi village doing odd jobs and then in Jehkilä village for a month, also doing odd jobs. Jegor then moved to Korpiselkä municipality working for Ivan Miinalainen for about a year, after which he then moved to Pitkäranta in Impilahti municipality when he got a job working at the Diesen Wood Company sawmill. Jegor's wandering around to various jobs is consistent with the experience of many other single refugee men who arrived in Finland around this time period. It seemed to be indicative that it was not easy to find stable longer term employment.¹⁵⁰ After working four months in Pitkäranta, Jegor moved in the autumn of 1921 to Hyrsylä, also working for the Diesen Wood Company but now at their Litsma sawmill located on the west side of Ignoila village. Jegor may have inquired about work at the Litsma sawmill when he was in Pitkäranta, as he had family in Hyrsylä and he would be much closer to his home village of Mesilampi. Jegor when he arrived in Hyrsylä would have stayed with his sister Akulina, who as previously told was married to Aleksi Murto. Akulina and Aleksi had five young children at home at that time. A few years later in the summer of 1923 Jegor would marry Matrona Dimitreintytär Rantala from Hyrsylä. Matrona had previously been married to Feodor Pakkanen (formerly Morosoff) from Harjulatva, the village just to the south of Mesilampi, so it is quite certain that Jegor had known Feodor Pakkanen and probably even Matrona when she lived there.

¹⁴⁸ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Etsivä keskuspoliisi – Valtiollinen poliisi (EK-Valpo), pöytäkirjaan Akp No. 26/21, 09/04-1921

¹⁴⁹ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Valtion pakolaisavustuskeskuksen Aunuksen pakolaisten avustuskomitean sekä Sortavalan ja Salmin asiointien arkisto, Ba8 Pakolaisluettelot (1918-1933)

¹⁵⁰ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Etsivä keskuspoliisi – Valtiollinen poliisi (EK-Valpo) - see similar experiences of Ivan Jelisejeff, pöytäkirjaan Akp No. 171/38, 08/06-1938 *and* Juho Karpoff, pöytäkirjaan Akp No. 518/26, 15/12-1926

Feodor Pakkanen had died in 1919 during the Aunus Expedition fighting against the Bolsheviks¹⁵¹, and Matrona had returned to her home village with their young son shortly after. Jegor would settle down into family life and would have four children with Matrona. Jegor and Matrona farmed her inherited property in Hyrsylä and constructed a house thereon. Jegor continued to work at Litsma sawmill till its closure in the late 1930's.



The family of Jegor Hyykky of Hyrsylä village - (back row) Veera and Olli (Aleksi) Hyykky, (front row) Niilo Hyykky, Vaasa Rantala (maiden name Trubotschkin – Matrona Hyykky's mother), Martti Hyykky, Matrona Hyykky (formerly Morosoff, maiden name Rantala), and Jegor Pavelinpoika Hyykky. Jegor was born in Mesilampi but escaped to Finland in 1921 after participating in the Aunus Expedition and other efforts to fight the Bolsheviks. Regretfully, a young 20 year old Olli Hyykky would die on 4 July 1944 during the Finnish Continuation War against Soviet-Russia. *Source - Eeva Marjatta Tuomoja (os. Laurinen) family archives*

Less is known about the three sons that Irina Hyykky left in Finland when she returned to Soviet-Russia in 1921. The eldest son Juho stayed in Suojärvi. He does not appear to have married and by 1936 was working as a hired hand for shopkeeper Nikolai Martiskainen in Kaitajärvi village.¹⁵² Juho died in 1936 in Kaitajärvi from epilepsy.¹⁵³

Nikita Dimitreinpoika Hyykky, who went by the name Mikko, also remained in Suojärvi for a period. It appears that while initially in Suojärvi, he at one point moved to Salmi municipality where he married Matrona Nikitantlytär Bogdanoff in 1926 at Tulemajoki. How long Mikko remained in Salmi municipality is unknown but by 1929 he was living in Sortavala municipality and working at the Kiviniemi sawmill.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Sotasurmasampo 1914–1922 - Suomen sisällis- ja heimosotiin..., sotasurmat.narc.fi

¹⁵² Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Etsivä keskuspoliisi – Valtiollinen poliisi (EK-Valpo), Sortavalan.Ilmoitus.REK.N:o 1237, 26/10-1936

¹⁵³ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Suojärven ortodoksisen seurakunnan metrikat 1793 – 1945

¹⁵⁴ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Etsivä keskuspoliisi – Valtiollinen poliisi (EK-Valpo), Sortavalan alaosaston puhelinkysely No. 617, 26/11-1929

Sometime in the first half of the 1930's Mikko and his wife moved back to Suojärvi, living at Välikylä, an area where many Eastern-Karelian refugees lived. Mikko and his wife both worked at the Wiborg Wood Company sawmill located nearby, and were said to be earning good money and living well. An incident in the summer of 1936 seems to have caused Mikko and Matrona to leave Suojärvi.

The Välikylä Workers' House held an election event for the Social Democratic party on June 7th. The event was well attended and it was reported that the membership of the Worker's House enjoyed the presentations. The event was also attended by nine members of the student branch of the Patriotic People's Movement, a fascist leaning, anti-communist organisation. At the presentation the members of this group tried to entice members of the Social Democratic party and Worker's House to their ways of thinking but were not well received, though no violence appears to have occurred. After the event the opposing parties took their arguments to the street in front of the Worker's House and continued to banter with each other, but again no violence arose.¹⁵⁵ Local police investigator Hannes Paananen looking into the events of that night interviewed various locals and it was reported that Mikko Hyykky and his wife Matrona Hyykky had been present that evening and that they were, in investigator Paananen's words, "*among the most ardent communists, ranting at the student members of the Patriotic People's Movement. (Mikko) Hyykky had been shaking his fist and, like other communists, shouting obscene language and threats at the students...*".¹⁵⁶ Investigator Paananen continued in his report – "*Since Hyykky's behaviour as a refugee is inappropriate and sets an example for other refugees, among whom leftism seems to be on the rise, I suggest that measures be taken to expel such a red-Russian, at least from the border region, as soon as possible.*"¹⁵⁷ The harsh recommendation by Investigator Paananen does not seem to be justified by the actions of Mikko Hyykky, as the Patriotic People's Movement was well known for riling left leaning individuals with its rhetoric, but nonetheless Mikko Hyykky and his wife Matrona voluntarily left Suojärvi. Whether Mikko had heard rumours of Investigator Paananen's recommendation is unknown.

Mikko quit his job at Wiborg Wood and with his wife Matrona sold most of their belongings at an auction on 21 June and left the next day by bus at 11:15 in the morning heading to Pitkäranta, Impilahti municipality. Mikko had told acquaintances in Välikylä that he would get a better job in Pitkäranta. Mikko also claimed that he had resigned from the Wiborg Wood Company because his wife had been fired from her job there.¹⁵⁸ Mikko worked for a period of time in Pitkäranta at the Diesen Wood sawmill ferry yards, but late in the autumn of 1936 moved again, this time to Elisenvaara in Kurkijoki municipality, and by early 1937 was said to be living in Ruokolahti municipality. Just prior to the winter war in November 1939, Mikko and Matrona were living in Käkisalmen town.¹⁵⁹ Mikko's frequent moves may have nothing to do with his political leanings, but nonetheless he and his wife moved around quite a bit and whether this was for work or personal motives is not known. It does not appear that Mikko and Matrona had any children.

Little is known about Andrei Dimitreinpoika Hyykky, the youngest son of Irina Hyykky. As there is no record of him in Finland after his initial arrival with his mother in 1919. It is suspected that he probably returned secretly to Mesilampi sometime after his mother and younger sister returned there in June 1921.

¹⁵⁵ "Erinomaisen onnistunut valistusjuhla Välikylän työväentalossa viime sunnuntaina.", Kansa Voima, No. 62, 09/06-1936, pg 2

¹⁵⁶ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Etsivä keskuspoliisi – Valtiollinen poliisi (EK-Valpo), Sortavalan alaosaston So.ILM.REK. No. 732 (Hannes Paananen), 10/06-1936

¹⁵⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Etsivä keskuspoliisi – Valtiollinen poliisi (EK-Valpo), Sortavalan alaosaston So.ILM.REK. No. 803 (Hannes Paananen), 23/06-1936

¹⁵⁹ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Valtiokonttorin valtiovarainministeriön korvausasiainosaston arkisto, Fba:1221 Korvaushakemukset ja -päätökset, Käkisalmen kaup. 19/179-19/200

Back Home

According to the Karelian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic's Statistical Office in 1926 Mesilampi had 3 houses with 3 men and 6 women, for a total 9 people, all Karelian.¹⁶⁰ The decline in the size of the village can be partly explained by the various male members of the village that decided to stay in Finland and also partly due to families leaving the village. It would appear that sometime prior to 1926 Aleksí Pavelinpoika Hyykky and his family left Mesilampi and moved to the village of Harjulátva to the south, leaving his parents and sister-in-law and her family in Mesilampi.¹⁶¹ Aleksí may have been "adopted" by a childless couple in the village or possibly joined a collective farm there.¹⁶² It is believed that Feodor Jegorinpoika Petroff and his family also left the village, possibly relocating to Yläjoki. What houses and who these nine residents of Mesilampi were can be guessed with some certainty. The three houses are most probably the Sozonoff house, and two Hyykky houses. It is known that Paraskeva Hyykky, the widow of Vasili Hyykky and her three children Feodor, Jelena, and Irina were living in the village at that time.¹⁶³ The two remaining men are two of the following – the aged Nikita Sozonoff, his son Aleksí Sozonoff, his grandson Kuisma Iljanpoika Sozonoff, the aged Pavel Hyykky, or Andrei Dimitreinpoika Hyykky. There is a possibility that both Aleksí Sozonoff and Andrei Hyykky may have both been conscripted to the Red Army upon their return to Mesilampi and one of the two elderly men plus Kuisma Sozonoff may have been those that remained in the village in 1926. Of the remaining three woman, a similar situation exists, two aged women Daria Sozonoff and Matrona Hyykky, and Irina Hyykky and her daughter Aleksandra. It is conceivable that one of the aged women had died leaving the second aged woman and Irina Hyykky and her young daughter Aleksandra. Additionally, based on later information from the 1930's, it is possible that Pavel Hyykky and his wife Matrona had also moved to Harjulátva with their son Aleksí, which would remove their names off the list above.¹⁶⁴

1930's

By the early 1930's the Soviet government system of collectivization was widespread and state control over many aspects of life was firmly entrenched.¹⁶⁵ Mesilampi was of such a small size that it is doubtful that a collective farm existed there, though the three homesteads from the village may have been part of a larger collective farm from a nearby village such as Harjulátva or Yläjoki. Despite very little information being available about Mesilampi during this period of collectivization and state control, two events give us a little insight into life in the village and surrounding area.

In August of 1930 the Finnish (Salmi Division) Border Guard arrested in Hyrsylä village, Matrona (Martta) Aleksintytär Hyykky for having come secretly across the border from Soviet-Russia. Martta and her family were then living in Harjulátva village just south of Mesilampi but her father, Aleksí Pavelinpoika Hyykky, had been born in Mesilampi. Aleksí's wife was from Hyrsylä, and he also had two siblings living in

¹⁶⁰ "Karjalan A.S.N.T:n asuttujen paikkojen luettelo", Karjalan autonominen sosialistinen neuvostotasavalta Tilastohalliton, Tilastohallinto, Petroskoi, 1928

¹⁶¹ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Etsivä keskuspoliisi – Valtiollinen poliisi (EK-Valpo), pöytäkirjaan Akp No. 210/30, 11/08-1930

¹⁶² The process of "adopting" a grown man and his family by a childless couple or widow with a homestead was not uncommon in this region, while not an official adoption in the modern sense, the adopted man was now seen as the heir to the property.

¹⁶³ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Etsivä keskuspoliisi – Valtiollinen poliisi (EK-Valpo), pöytäkirjaan Akp No. 381/32, 29/06-1932

¹⁶⁴ In 1930, Aleksí's daughter Matrona reported that there were nine members in their family home, and this could be construed to be her parents Aleksí and Anastasia, herself plus 4 siblings, plus Aleksí's parents, Pavel and Matrona.

¹⁶⁵ "Collectivization - Agricultural policy", The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, www.britannica.com

Hyrskylä – Akulina Murto (maiden name Hyykky), and Jegor Hyykky, and additionally his mother was also originally from Hyrskylä. Martta was 11 years of age and the eldest of five sisters. She had no brothers. Martta during her interrogation said she had never been to school and could not read or write – which gives some indication of the life in these small remote border villages as there was in place a system of universal compulsory education for children across Soviet-Russia. Martta claimed that life had become more and more difficult in Soviet-Russia due to the lack of food. She stated that only 8 kg of rye flour and 1 kg of wheat flour was being delivered to her family home per month and this was expected to feed nine people, and hence they had to mix in oat flour to make it last. These statements about the delivery of flour lend some credence to the idea that Alekski and his family had moved from Mesilampi to a collective farm in Harjulatva. Martta also claimed that her mother beat her and told her that she should go out and earn something to help pay for her food. Additionally, Martta had also heard rumours about other young girls from nearby Posuada (Russian Hyrskylä) village who had secretly gone across the border to Hyrskylä. Martta left her family home with a few items and having stolen some money from her father – 7 roubles and 55 kopeks, took the road towards Posuada but diverted at one point and crossed the border into Finland, arriving at the home of Vasili Möttönen in Taivasselmä in Hyrskylä village. She was arrested shortly after.¹⁶⁶

Apparently there had been numerous younger girls crossing the border into Hyrskylä around this time, and the question was quickly raised by Detective Central Police in Sortavala about whether these single young girls should be allowed to stay in Finland. The concerns being about what were the motivations for these trips across the border and whether with time they would just secretly return to their families in Soviet-Russia.¹⁶⁷

Martta's story would take an odd twist that would put her staying in Finland at risk. After being arrested and then interrogated in Suvilahti, Suojärvi municipality, Martta was released and accompanied by her uncle Jegor Hyykky back to Hyrskylä. She went to live with her mother's brother, Ivan Lumpanpoika Häkki. Ivan and his wife had a young family of two children at that point and one can assume that Martta would be able to help around the house and with the children. Two incidents raised alarms at the Detective Central Police in Sortavala indicating that perhaps Martta Hyykky had been sent by Soviet-Russian intelligence to gather information in Finland. Firstly, in a rare occurrence, on 19 September the Soviet-Russian Border Commission made an inquiry to the Finnish (Salmi Division) Border Guard, asking if Martta Hyykky had crossed the border into Finland, and if yes, requesting that she should be sent back. The Soviet-Russian Border Commission stated that she should have had on her person 40 roubles, 8 headscarves and 14 metres of fabric. It could be assumed that her parents had reported her missing and had also stated that the above items were missing, and presumably taken by Martta. The Detective Central Police were somewhat perplexed as Martta had only had 7 roubles, 2 headscarves including the one she had been wearing when arrested, and 3 dresses, and this did not match what the Soviet-Russian Border Commission was claiming she should have had.¹⁶⁸ The Detective Central Police were undecided on how to handle the case and whether or not Martta Hyykky should be returned to Soviet-Russia.

The second incident involved information that refugee Aleksander Ivaninpoika Makarjeff claimed to have been told by Martta Hyykky the day she was arrested in Hyrskylä. Aleksander Makarjeff recounted that he had been in Hyrskylä on that day and had been told by Vasili Rantala, the husband of Martta's aunt, Maria Lumpantytär Rantala (maiden name Häkki), that a young girl had crossed the border that day from Soviet-Russia. Aleksander went to the Border Guard Station in Hyrskylä and met the young girl – his reason for doing this is not known. He asked Martta whether she had seen any Soviet-Russian soldiers on her trip

¹⁶⁶ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Etsivä keskuspoliisi – Valtiollinen poliisi (EK-Valpo), pöytäkirjaan Akp No. 210/30, 11/08-1930

¹⁶⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Etsivä keskuspoliisi – Valtiollinen poliisi (EK-Valpo), pöytäkirjaan Akp No. 252/30, KD. No. 422/709 1930 – 24/09-1930

from Harjulatva to Posuada. Martta had explained to him that she had seen two by the side of the road, and then later on had seen two more, and that she had inquired of the second two men about the correct road to Posuada. Aleksander claimed Martta said that the soldiers had asked her if she was planning to cross the border to Finland, and had said to her *“please come back sometime”*. According to Aleksander, Martta then claimed that she crossed over the border in plain sight of the soldiers and that they did nothing to hinder her. Aleksander also stated that he then lied to her, claiming that he had been arrested as well and would attempt to return to Soviet-Russia and that Martta had replied *“wait a bit, and I’ll come with you after I’ve had a few days to observe things here”*.¹⁶⁹ The claims that Aleksander Makarjeff made seem somewhat dubious, and he may have recounted these stories for reasons other than trying to be helpful, nonetheless the Detective Central Police were now in a quandary about what to believe. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was consulted on the matter and in a letter dated 23 September 1930 stated that they had no objection to Martta Hyykky being sent back to Soviet-Russia. It appears though that the commander of the Finnish (Salmi Division) Border Guard, Lieutenant Colonel Veikko Räsänen would not send her back without an official order from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.¹⁷⁰



Lieutenant Colonel Veikko Räsänen, Commander of the Finnish (Salmi Division) Border Guard – refused to send refugee Martta Hyykky back to Soviet-Russia in 1930. *Source - SA-Kuva*

While further details on what was finally discovered about Aleksander Makarjeff’s information and whether any of it was true, or what was communicated to the Soviet-Russian Border Commission, has not been found, ultimately Martta Hyykky was allowed to stay in Finland. She resided in Hyrsylä with her uncle for a time, and in 1938 married Johannes Ivaninpoika Maho from Kaitajärvi village, Suojärvi municipality.

A few years later in May 1932 two more young girls were arrested in Hyrsylä after crossing the border from Soviet-Russia – Irja (Irina) Vasilintytär Hyykky from Mesilampi and Olga Feodorintytär Määttänen from Yläjoki. Their fate would be somewhat different from that of Martta Hyykky.

Both girls arrived secretly from Soviet-Russia on the morning of 16 May. Following their arrival in Finland, the two girls were walking along a roadway when a woman they met asked them who they were. After finding out that one of the girls was Irja Hyykky, the woman took them to Matti Murto’s house, Irja’s uncle and brother of her mother. The girls had not stayed there long and had then been taken by the same woman to the Border Guard Station, where they reported themselves as refugees. They were arrested and

interrogated at the Border Guard Station in Hyrsylä. Irja who claimed to be about 14 years of age was in fact 16. Irja also said that she had never been to school and could not read or write, again demonstrating that even as late as 1932 compulsory universal education had still not reached these remote small villages in Soviet-Russia. Irja claimed that her mother Paraskeva Hyykky (maiden name Murto), originally from Hyrsylä, and her brother Feodor Hyykky, had both been arrested in January 1932 and were now imprisoned

¹⁶⁹ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Etsivä keskuspoliisi – Valtiollinen poliisi (EK-Valpo), pöytäkirjaan Akp No. 252/30, Liittyy pöytäkirjaan No. 46/1930 – 22/09-1930

¹⁷⁰ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Etsivä keskuspoliisi – Valtiollinen poliisi (EK-Valpo), pöytäkirjaan Akp No. 252/30, Liittyy KD No. 400/53-30 – 09/10-1930

in Petroskoi, and that only her sister Lena (Jelena), aged 20, was living at their home in Mesilampi. According to Irja, her brother Feodor, who was working hauling logs from forests around Yläjoki to the soldier's barracks there, had left as usual on the morning of 26 January 1932 for his work. Irja stated that later that day a soldier came on horseback to their house in Mesilampi and arrested her mother and took her away to Yläjoki. Irja did not know why her mother had been arrested, but later learned from someone in Mesilampi that her brother had been arrested when he had arrived for work in Yläjoki that morning. She learnt a few days later from people in Yläjoki that her mother and brother had been taken to Petroskoi. Irja said she later received a letter from her mother saying that she had not seen her son Feodor since the two of them had arrived in Petroskoi.¹⁷¹

Because of the arrest of her mother and brother, Irja had decided that she wanted to leave Soviet-Russia and live in Finland. Her companion Olga Määtänen, aged 17, claimed that she had been doing log running along the Suojoki river through Finland in the summer of 1931 and had seen that life in Finland seemed better, that people had nice houses and appeared to have good incomes. In mid-May Irja and Olga decided that they would try and cross the border a few days later. Olga was able to get a "probuskan" (permission slip) from a Red Army officer at the Yläjoki Border Guard Station to bring her family's sheep to a pasture near Mesilampi, and there she had met Irja and they took the old road from Mesilampi that lead to the border with Finland just south of Ignoila. During her interrogation Irja asked to remain in Finland as a refugee and said that once she was released she hoped to go and live with one of her mother's relatives in Hyrsylä. Irja's mother had told her that she had brothers and sisters (aunts and uncles to Irja) in Hyrsylä, though Irja could not remember any of their names or exactly where they lived. She also knew that her father, who had died in the First World War when she was only two months old, also had siblings that lived in Hyrsylä.¹⁷²

It appears that the Finnish Border Guard and Detective Central Police had some concerns about letting these two young girls stay in Finland. The reason for this is not clear, though there were some inconsistencies in the young girls' stories. How much information the Detective Central Police had on the current situation in Mesilampi and its environs is unknown, but referencing information that would have been available at that time shows that Olga Määtänen was in fact Akulina Mättönen. The spelling of her last name is inconsequential but why she changed her first name may have raised some concerns. The Detective Central Police would have been able to access the permits for Soviet-Russian citizens who were running logs through Finland in the early 1930's and seen that Olga was listed as Akulina.¹⁷³ Additionally, Olga's brother Vasili had been arrested in 1923 coming across the border with his wife and the protocol for that interrogation would have also confirmed Olga's name.¹⁷⁴ Was Akulina using the name Olga to hide something is not known, though the majority of the information she gave about her family corresponds to the information that her older brother gave in 1923. The Detective Central Police probably would have been unable to confirm or deny the information Irja Hyykky gave about her mother and brother. Later information does confirm that Feodor Hyykky had been arrested on 20 March 1932 being charged under Soviet-Russian Penal Code Article 58-6 of espionage and was sentenced later that year to five years imprisonment and was sent to a gulag in Komi in northern Russia.¹⁷⁵ No information has been found about the arrest of Irja's mother, Paraskeva Hyykky. It is probable that when Paraskeva and Feodor were

¹⁷¹ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Etsivä keskuspoliisi – Valtiollinen poliisi (EK-Valpo), pöytäkirjaan Akp No. 381/32, 26/06-1932

¹⁷² *ibid.*

¹⁷³ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Suojärven nimismiespiirin arkisto (1907-1940), Uittomiehien jotta tulevat matkustamaan yli Suomen rajani Suojun jokea myöten Hautavaaran losissa..., 05/08-1931

¹⁷⁴ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Etsivä keskuspoliisi – Valtiollinen poliisi (EK-Valpo), pöytäkirjaan Akp No. 674/23, 28/11-1923

¹⁷⁵ Book of Memory of the Republic of Karelia, ru.openlist.wiki, accessed 14/10-2024

detained in January 1932, as per Irja, they may have not been officially arrested and Feodor's official arrest only happened two months later after questioning. Also no information has been found to indicate that there was any communications between the Finnish and Soviet-Russian border authorities concerning these two young girls. Nonetheless, it seems a very quick decision was made to send the girls back to Soviet-Russia.

Did none of Irja's family want to take her on as a burden during the early 1930's at the height of the Great Depression; did the Border Guard or Detective Central Police have information indicating that the young girls had been sent over to gather intelligence; or was it simply a case of not wanting to deal with more single young girls crossing the border? The answer is not evident but the Detective Central Police quickly decided to gain as much as they could from this incident and over two days interrogated Olga (otherwise known as Akulina) Määttänen about the situation in Soviet-Russia. Irja Hyykky does not seem to have been interrogated any further.

Olga's description of life in Yläjoki is probably quite similar to the life being experienced by those who still lived in Mesilampi. Yläjoki had a collective farm, where about 40% of the houses in Yläjoki had joined, though whether voluntarily or not is unknown. According to Olga, being in the collective farm appeared to give you easier access to the necessities of life. Olga's family home was not part of the collective farm. Olga stated that sugar, tea and coffee were regularly available for purchase to those houses that were part of the collective farm, however, while it was permissible for those who were not part of the collective farm to purchase these items, they were rarely made available to them. All able bodied men and women were expected to take up winter and summer jobs in the forestry sector by order of the local government, and if you disobeyed the order, Red Army soldiers would arrive to take you away. Olga also explained that even when forced to work in these forestry jobs, getting paid for the work did not always come easily, with Olga stating that she had still not been paid for working during the winter at a forestry site in Kiviniemi, Salmenniska parish, despite asking multiple times. Olga said that nearly every week an evening programme was held in Yläjoki where patriotic speeches were given, after which dancing was allowed. The school in Yläjoki was taught by a woman from Finland and the language of instruction was Finnish. Olga also relayed information about Red Army soldiers and the Border Guard in Yläjoki.¹⁷⁶ Olga must have felt it beneficial to give as much information about what she knew about life and the military in Soviet-Russia, surely hoping that it would help her cause to stay in Finland.

After this interrogation by the Detective Central Police the two young girls were transferred back to the Border Guards at Hyrsylä and the following day, 19 May, they were handed back to the Soviet-Russian Border Guard at Posuada (Russian Hyrsylä). Their fate after that is unknown.

Olga's description of life in Yläjoki at this time would imply that these border villages, while clearly under the yoke of the Soviet-Russian system, were also still mainly living their usual lives on their small farms and homesteads. Irja's lack of education would imply that small isolated villages like Mesilampi were still not taken into account when dealing with efforts to raise the peasant class, or perhaps it was just not seen as a priority for girls.

These events of the early 1930's give us a glimpse of life in Mesilampi, and may also reveal the communist inclinations of some residents. These inclinations could alternatively be seen as acceptance of a system that one could not change, and a belief that compliance kept one safe. Ideals that may have held in good stead as the decade progressed.

With the border closed and Border Guard watches more vigilant, visiting relatives in Hyrsylän mutka became next to impossible, yet one option existed that let some individuals from Mesilampi visit Finland legally. Log runners were needed annually to move logs harvested in the northern areas of Soviet-Russia –

¹⁷⁶ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Etsivä keskuspoliisi – Valtiollinen poliisi (EK-Valpo), pöytäkirjaan Akp No. 381/32, 26/06-1932

Porajärvi and Repola parishes and beyond, along the river systems to Petroskoi and other sawmill centres in Aunus. One important route was to float the harvested logs along the Suojoki river that entered Finland from Soviet-Russia at Hautavaara in the north of Hyrsylän mutka. The logs passed through the area and the centre of Ignoila village before returning to Soviet-Russia at the south end of Hyrsylän mutka. The logger lists from 1929 to 1933 show multiple names associated with Mesilampi including Ivan Silanpoika Siilin, Moisei Maksiminpoika Sozonoff, Ivan Moseinpoika Sozonoff, Feodor Moseinpoika Sozonoff, Fedot Jegorinpoika Sozonoff, Timofei Maksiminpoika Sozonoff, Kuisma Iljanpoika Sozonoff, and Grigori Dimitreinpoika Bogdanoff.¹⁷⁷ It is unknown if there was any contact between the locals in Hyrsylän mutka as the workers moved the logs along the river but at a minimum the workers got to view the surroundings in Finland. When Olga Määttänen ran logs through Hyrsylän mutka, as was previously mentioned, she thought the houses looked nice and the residents lived well. No individuals from Mesilampi are recorded on the logger lists after 1933.



Logs from Soviet-Russia floating along the Suojoki river in Hyrsylän mutka – multiple people connected to Mesilampi worked at running logs along the Suojoki river in the late 1920's – early 1930's. Source – Photographer Mikko Kolehmäinen, *Enson kokoelma, Lusto - Suomen Metsämuseo*



Ivan Moiseinpoika Sozonoff – his grandmother Tatjana Sozonintytär was born in Mesilampi but appears to have moved to Yläjoki where she had a series of illegitimate children, including Ivan's father Moisei. Ivan was a log runner in the early 1930's. Source – www.moypolk.ru



According to the Karelian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic's list of inhabited places issued in 1935, but based on the census records of 1933, Mesilampi had 2 male and 6 female residents. The age groups of the individuals are not given. Mesilampi was part of the Yläjoki Village Council, and was the smallest of the 8 villages that the Council was comprised of.¹⁷⁸ The neighbouring village of Harjulatva had 13 residents, 6 male and 7 female, and it is assumed still included Alekski Pavelinpoika Hyykky and his family who had moved there from Mesilampi some years earlier.

¹⁷⁷ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Suojärven nimismiespiirin arkisto (1907-1940), Uittomiehistön jotka tulevat matkustamaan yli Suomen rajani Suojun jokea myöten Hautavaaran losissa..., 1929 - 1933

¹⁷⁸ "Karjalan Autonominen Sosialistinen Neuvosto Tasavalta Asuttujen Paikkojen Luettelo - Vuoden 1933 väenlaskun ainehiston mukaan", Julkaisija KASNT:n KTLN, Petroskoi, 1935

Liquidation of the Village

In February 1935 the Central Executive Committee of the Karelian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic issued a decree which ordered the formation of a special "border zone" that should be cleared of its inhabitants. By 1935 Karelian nationalism, irrelevant even if promoted by ardent communists, could be seen as nothing but negative to the ruling authorities in Soviet-Russia. Joseph Stalin during his speech to the 17th Congress of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) in early 1934 derided any deviation towards nationalism, whether towards a Greater-Russia or towards regional nationalism in the country. Stalin stressed that it would undermine the Soviet system as it would be a departure from Leninist internationalism – the goal of which was world revolution.¹⁷⁹ Dealing with Karelian nationalism would take a multi pronged approach including the removal of the ruling elite in Karelia, who were mainly Finnish communists who had fled Finland at the end of the civil war in 1918, and the deporting of nationalist elements of the local population. One could argue that the local Karelian population, mostly peasants who had now been living under communist rule for over 15 years, was hardly a seething hotbed of nationalist sentiment, and getting food on their table and meeting the goals of Stalin's Five Year Plan probably occupied most of their time. Though perhaps for the border population, their daily exposure to Finland and its "*corrupt capitalist ideals*" may have been seen as a threat. Additionally many of the residents of these border regions had resisted collectivisation and were considered by the authorities to be the remnants of the kulak class. It is also conceivable that having a not so populated border area would make life a little simpler for the local Soviet-Russian Border Guard. Hence in early 1935 a "border zone" was created by local Karelian government authorities and rubber stamped by the NKVD (National People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs) on 4 May 1935.¹⁸⁰ The word rubber stamped is used intentionally here as much of the resulting actions caused by the creation of this border zone had already been undertaken in April of 1935.

It is believed that the village of Mesilampi was probably liquidated of its inhabitants on the same day as Posuada (Russian Hirsylä), or very near that day, which occurred according to eyewitness reports on Easter Monday, 22 April 1935.¹⁸¹ The details provided of the liquidation of Posuada convey an idea of how the process was undertaken by the Soviet-Russian authorities. In the very early morning OGPU (Joint State Political Directorate) officials surrounded the village and the inhabitants were told they had a few hours to pack up whatever belongings they could carry, they were also told to bring food for up to 2 months. The residents of Posuada, estimated to be about 40 – 50 people, were then loaded onto horse drawn wagons and taken away. Witnesses quoted in *Koti (Home)* magazine claimed that "*desperate weeping, lamentations, and groaning could be heard everywhere. The elderly prayed aloud to God in their distress, not caring even if they were shot. One of the residents tried to escape, but was shot near the Finnish border, at the edge of the old cemetery*". It was said that the inhabitants were transferred to a temporary concentration camp in Säämäjärvi parish.¹⁸² Further reporting claimed that the inhabitants were later transported to Siberia, though it is uncertain if every person was sent there, and later governmental documents and newspaper reporting show some inhabitants of the liquidated villages of Posuada and Mesilampi living in East-Karelian villages like Yläjoki, Prääsä, etc. The inhabitants may have been sent initially to Siberia but it appears that some of them were able to return to the area, though their home villages remained deserted.

¹⁷⁹ Joseph V. Stalin, "Report to the Seventeenth Party Congress on the Work of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U.(B.)", 26/01-1934, Marxists Internet Archive - www.marxists.org

¹⁸⁰ Irina Takala, "Border Locked!" Special Aspects of State Terror in the Karelian Border Region of the 1920s - First Half of the 1930s", *Revue D'Histoire Nordique* N° 19, pgs 103 – 127, 2014

¹⁸¹ "Karjalan Karkoitukset - Kotien Hävitystä", *Koti*, Heinäkuu-Elokuu, 1935, No. 7-8, pg 210

¹⁸² "Karjalaisten karkoituksia jatketaan järjestelmällisesti.", *Uusi Suomi*, 18/05-1935, pg 1

During the liquidation of Posuada and Mesilampi and other near border villages, evictions of select residents from other villages nearby also occurred. It was reported that during the same time period in April 1935, Harjulatva and Yläjoki had nearly two-thirds of their inhabitants deported.¹⁸³ It would appear that many of the selected individuals from these other villages were taken to Siberia, as attested to by Zoja Feodorintytär Mämmijeff, from Essoila village, Säämäjärvi parish, who was 11 years of age when her family was deported to Siberia. According to Zoja, only two families from Essoila were selected for deportation with no reason being given. As noted earlier, individuals who had once been part of the kulak class were targeted for eviction, and Zoja's father had at one time owned a bakery in the village. Zoja described how they were initially sent with other families scheduled for deportation, to a church in Säämäjärvi village where they remained for a week. Zoja remembered that a woman gave birth at the church during that time. They were then sent by bus under armed escort to Petroskoi, and from there they left by train and travelling over many days they finally arrived at the mining city of Stalinsk in the Kemerovo oblast, Siberia. Zoja recalled how many Karelians died along the route to Stalinsk, the bodies being left each evening when the train stopped to be resupplied. Also how many perished that first year in Stalinsk because they were unaccustomed to the cold weather and nature of mining work, as most of them had been rural farmers back in Karelia.¹⁸⁴

News of the mass evictions and deportations travelled quickly around the neighbouring villages and area. Jefim Stepaninpoika Popoff, who had just travelled from Petroskoi to his home in Säämäjärvi village, Säämäjärvi parish on 20 April 1935, was told by his wife about the "*mass arrests of peasants*" around the area, and that it had been rumoured that their family has been ordered deported.¹⁸⁵ It is clear that the events caused a great deal of anxiety and unrest in the area, and left many people wondering if they might be next.

After the border villages were liquidated it was predicted by those in Finland that Russians, meaning non-Karelians, would now be moved into the empty homes and unused farms. This did not appear to happen. In Posuada, that could be clearly seen from Hyrsylä on the Finnish side, the Border Guard and military continued with various activities, but no new residents moved into the village and many of the houses and barns fell into disrepair. Mesilampi was not visible from Finland but a telegram outlining a Soviet-Russian Border Guard report from 1936 gives us a clue of what was probably happening in the village. It was reported that on 9 December 1936 at 15:00 hours near border signs No. 439 – 440, that are opposite the village of Mesilampi, two shots from an automatic weapon were fired from Finland towards the Soviet-Russian Border Guard unit stationed there. It was claimed that the bullets flew directly near the head of border guard soldier Galyuk, and after the shots, two men could be heard talking in Finnish.¹⁸⁶ Finnish authorities admitted that a shot had been fired but claimed that it was just a local peasant, that he was shooting at least 300 meters from the border, and moreover, was shooting along the border, not in the direction of the border.¹⁸⁷ It would appear that Mesilampi was now occupied by the Soviet-Russian Border Guard.

No further mention of Mesilampi has been found in governmental documents, newspaper reporting or other contemporary source after 1936.

¹⁸³ "Itä-Karjalaa uhkaa tuho", Itä-Karjala Vienen- ja Aunuksenkarjalainen Aikakauslehti, 01/11-1935, pg 5

¹⁸⁴ Zoja Mämmijeff, "The story of my life from the day of birth", 2020 – www.syamozero.ru

¹⁸⁵ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Etsivä keskuspoliisi – Valtion poliisi (EK-Valpo), pöytäkirjaan Akp No. 351/35, 30/04-1935

¹⁸⁶ "Telegram from the Deputy People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs of the USSR to the Plenipotentiary Representative of the USSR in Finland, E.A. Asmus 17/12-1936", Russian Historical Society, Documents of the Foreign Policy of the USSR, Vol XIX, Moscow, 1974

¹⁸⁷ Igor V. Pykhalov, "Stalin's Revenge. Return Russian lands! (Реванш Сталина. Вернуть русские земли!)", 2013

Later Years

While no further mentions of Mesilampi have been found, some information on the later lives of a few residents does exist.

At the height of Joseph Stalin's years of persecution two individuals related to Mesilampi were caught up in the terror of that period. On 27 October 1937, Timofei Maksiminpoika Sozonoff and Maria Dementeyntytär, wife of Timofei's brother Jegor, were put to death by firing squad near Petroskoi.¹⁸⁸ Timofei and Jegor were descendants of one of the original settler families of Mesilampi. Timofei and Maria were both accused of espionage, undermining state industry, and anti-Soviet and counter-revolutionary propaganda and agitation, and found guilty on 23 October 1937. That they were found guilty on the same day could indicate that their cases were related. Maria had been arrested first on 10 October, with Timofei being arrested five days later on 15 October; this could lead one to believe that under duress Maria had exposed Timofei as an accomplice to her supposed crimes. Interestingly, Timofei was a private farmer, and Maria, and it can be assumed her husband Jegor, were part of a collective farm, both in Yläjoki. As previously mentioned, there seemed to be some animosity between those who still owned private farms and those who joined and worked on the collective farms. Furthermore, in the middle of the 1930s, the Yläjoki collective farm and village council continued to face criticism for their performance and ability to meet Soviet-Russian State goals, which likely exacerbated any hostility between private and collective farms.¹⁸⁹ Another interesting twist on this story is that Maria's husband, Jegor Maksiminpoika Sozonoff, was stated to be a GPU (State Political Directorate of Russia) agent in the early 1920's.¹⁹⁰ Later on when Jegor applied in 1929 to work as a logger running logs along the Suojoki river through Hyrsylän mutka to Soviet-Karelia, and his name was sent by the Soviet-Russian authorities to the Finnish authorities for approval, his name was rejected because he was classified as a GPU agent.¹⁹¹ Whether Jegor's past actions somehow entangled his wife and brother into the web of Soviet espionage and deceit, and caused their untimely deaths is not known.

Conclusion

The little village of Mesilampi was unique in many ways; the majority of its residents being Finnish subjects until the late 1800's being one of them. When one reviews the final years of the passport files for the Grand Duchy of Finland, it is amazing to see a card for Mihail Vasilinpoika Grigorjeff, born in 1866 in Vallittu, Vieljärvi parish, but now living in Pyhäjärvi parish, far from the Finnish border. Mihail's grandfather had come from Finland in 1834 to Mesilampi, where Mihail's father was born, and here over eighty years later in 1917, Mihail continued to renew yearly his Finnish passport.¹⁹² Why had he not changed his subjugation? It's quite likely that he had not visited Finland in a long time, if at all, and possibly his only trips there would have been when he was younger, and when visiting family in Mesilampi had crossed the border to Hyrsylä to see relatives or for the local prasniekka (church festival). What was his attachment to Finland? The right of return to Finland that Finnish Subjects held may have been considered important. Nonetheless world events shortly after would extinguish those attachments, and Mihail would become a subject of Soviet-Russia.

¹⁸⁸ Book of Memory of the Republic of Karelia, ru.openlist.wiki, accessed 14/10-2024

¹⁸⁹ "Prääsän piirissä vauhtia kohotettava", Punainan Karjala, Petroskoi, 16/06-1935, pg 3

¹⁹⁰ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Etsivä keskuspoliisi – Valtiollinen poliisi (EK-Valpo), pöytäkirjaan Akp No. 563/23, 10/10-1923

¹⁹¹ Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Suojärven nimismiespiirin arkisto (1907-1940), Uittotyöläisistä...Suojun jojella Karellesiin uitolla, 28/04-1929

¹⁹² Suomen Kansallisarkisto, Suomen passiviraston arkisto, Bad:20 Passinhaltijain kortisto (1904 – 1918)



Mihail Vasilinpoika Grigorjeff's Finnish passport record – Mihail's grandfather had come to Mesilampi in 1834 from the then Grand Duchy of Finland, now over 80 years later Mihail continued to be a subject of the Grand Duchy. Source - Suomen Kansallisarkisto

Another unique aspect of Mesilampi was the habit to produce offspring in a less than traditional way. Why was official marriage shunned? If local colloquial surnames had not come into use nearly all the residents of the village would have had a single surname – Bogdanoff. Could there be any reason why Mesilampi attracted persons with that background or status of being illegitimate? Could it be a conscience decision to pass Finnish subjugation to descendants via their mother? Or was there a religious element to it?

Most of these questions will probably remain unanswered but add to the uniqueness of this little village and hopefully inspire further research into its past.

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