



Trade and seafaring

PORT OF TURKU 860 YEARS

The prerequisites for the natural port in Turku date back at least 65 million years when large fractures appeared in the ancient Finnish bedrock. At sea the fractures resulted in deep yet sheltered fairways between islands, such as Airisto off Turku. The rising of the crust formed the channel of the River Aura, and settlement began to appear by the river.

Settlement attracted traders to the banks of the River Aura which were known as a lively trading post as early as the Iron Age. Ships sailed to the river from all over the Baltic Sea, and deals were made using a number of languages as well as hand signs. Finnish furs were in high demand in the export market, and goods were traded especially with the Balts, Swedes and Novgorodians.



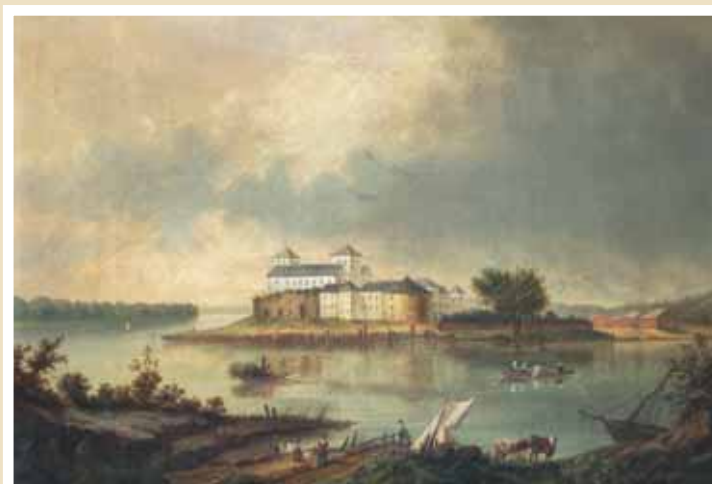


Part of a map drawn up in the early 18th century, with a movable customs barrier, port warehouse and a small customs house drawn between the city and the castle. The Museum Centre of Turku

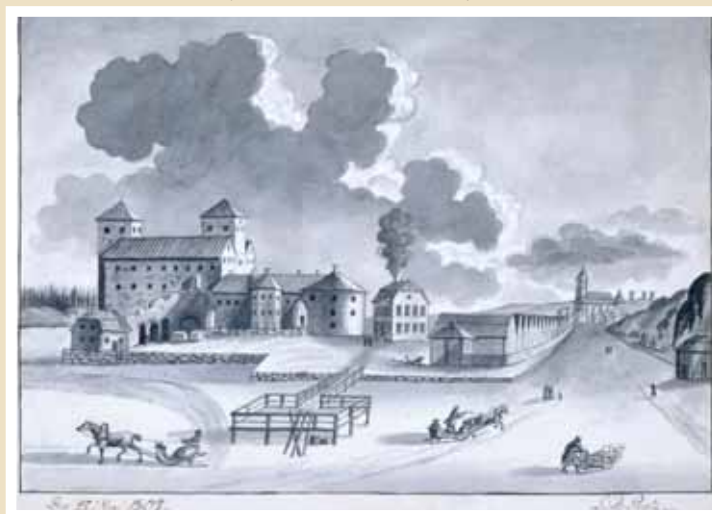
1000 – 1300

At the beginning of the era the Port of Turku was known as far as the Mediterranean countries. For that we are to thank the Arab Al-Idris who drew the port under the name Abuwa in his map in 1154. Internationalisation was speeded up by the Hanseatic League; the German trade organised by them concentrated on the river harbour built around the Unikankare area in the late 13th century.

The river harbour was formed by the storehouses of the burghers. The cogs of the Hanseatic traders moored in their berths and dominated the cityscape together with the square, the cathedral and bourgeois houses. Thanks to lively international connections Turku developed naturally into the capital of Finland.



Thomas Legler's painting from the mid 19th century: Turku Castle in the 17th century. The Museum Centre of Turku



A wash drawing made according to A.F. Skiöldenbrand in 1807, L. A. Prytz. On the 28th of February in 1808 the squadron's ships and warehouses were burnt by the permission of Gustav IV Adolf as the Russians attacked Finland. The Museum Centre of Turku

1300 – 1600

Turku's position as the centre of Finland's foreign trade strengthened. Ships sailed to and from all key ports of the Baltic Sea. Through Turku the Baltic herring and dried fish found their way to the European tables. On their way back the ships carried e.g. salt and wines to spice up the life of Finns.

Magnus Eriksson's law of the realm granted Turku a free right of sailing while other Finns only had the permission to sail to Turku or Stockholm. At first the main sailing destination from Turku was Lübeck, but in the early 15th century Danzig became the most important destination port. In the 16th century, around half of the ships departing from Turku headed to Danzig, a quarter to Stockholm and the rest e.g. to Lübeck, Tallinn, Narva and Riga.



A painting by Bernhard Reinhold, 1872. View of the mouth of the River Aura, with no signs of the modern port yet. The first real tourists arrived in Turku in the 1830s. The Museum Centre of Turku

1600 – 1800

As the European courts battled with each other, tar was shipped from Turku for the preparation of warships. Tar trade and the related sailing to Holland extended Turku's trading connections to the North Sea. Men were also transported to the battlefields, as Finnish warcraft was needed e.g. in the Thirty Years' War.

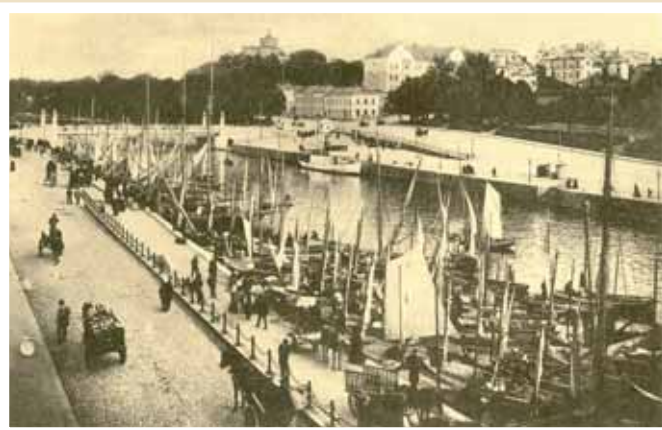
Riverside storehouses and loading berths remained by the River Aura. As the river became shallower, large ships were forced to stay on the Linnanaukko roads where they were loaded from barges. The rising of the ground and the sludge carried by the River Aura made the river and the Linnanaukko area even shallower, and hence regular dredging was begun in the area between Pikisaari and the Great Square in 1793.

The decreased sailing operations in Turku recovered in the 1730s. At the end of the next decade Turku had 12 deep sea sailing ships that carried timber, tar and iron all the way to the Mediterranean and brought back salt, tobacco, sugar and wine.

1800 – 1900

In the early 19th century, Turku was still the leading port in Finland. Most of the connections were on the Baltic Sea, but sailing on the North Sea, the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean increased. In the mid-1800s, ships arrived in Turku from as far away as Argentina. The city's merchant fleet included, for example, large salt ships that carried cargo on the oceans at wintertime.

The role of the Port of Turku also as the bridge from Finland to Scandinavia for travellers was emphasised by the regular steamship traffic. The first steamship, paddle wheel schooner Stockholm began to operate between Turku and Stockholm in 1821. In the 1830s, regular steamship traffic was operated to Stockholm, St Petersburg and Helsinki.



Baltic herring market in the early 20th century, downstream from the Aura Bridge. The autumn market was arranged regularly at least from 1636 onwards. The Museum Centre of Turku



Imported cars in the port of Turku in 1936.



Workers waiting for the division of tasks on a beautiful August day in 1936. The Museum Centre of Turku



The tip of Otkantti in late 1950s. Svea Regina on the left, SHO's Wellamo on the right.

1900 – 2000

The arrival of the railway in the port and the building of the Kanavaniemi quays made the traffic in the port considerably livelier. Steamships carried two thirds of the cargo. The regular wintertime traffic between Turku and Stockholm operated by Bore was transferred to Kanavaniemi in 1901, and it was possible to continue from there by train, tram or horse-driven carriage.

In the 1930s, an oil harbour was built in Pansio and it became an important import and distribution harbour for oil products. Butter became one of the key export products, and the exports were concentrated to the butter warehouse built in 1934. The Linnanaukko quay was completed in 1955, followed a few years later by the west quay. In the 1960s, Turku became a major port for car imports.

In the second half of the 20th century, passenger and cargo traffic became more efficient thanks to new types of car ferries. The first ferry to operate between Turku and Stockholm was Silja's Skandia in 1961. Viking Line started ferry operations in 1973. Today, there are four daily departures from Turku to Stockholm that carry cruise and car passengers as well as lorries.





The port of Turku in the early 1970s.



A view of the shipyard and the River Aura in the 1960s.



Passengers getting aboard the car ferry Nordia in the early 1970s.



2000 –

The Port of Turku is Finland's leading port and distribution centre for Scandinavian traffic. In passenger traffic the customers are served by modern ships designed for comfortable travelling. The logistics needs of businesses are served by frequent connections to Baltic Sea ports and by extremely efficient logistics hubs. The basis for developing the Port lies in the customers' needs and attention to the environment.

TEXT BY Sanakari/Kari Ahonen PHOTO Jan Engblom

Five decades as a shipowner



Honorary Maritime Counsellor Kaj Engblom has made a long and respectable career in the Finnish shipping industry. He was drawn to the business by his roots in Nagu, as his grandfather Karl-Johan Engblom built his first ship already in 1890. Kaj Engblom became a shipowner in his twenties as he acquired a share in a ship in 1956.

”My grandfather transported mostly quicklime which he bought from Pargas and took to ports in the Gulf of Bothnia all the way to Tornio. He returned from these ports with a shipload of scrap iron to Dalsbruk. Transporting quicklime was quite efficient, as its volume could be increased tenfold in the place of destination by adding water, thereby creating hydrated lime. A small vessel could thus be used to transport a huge amount of quicklime, but water was something to be careful with. I am sure everyone understands what would have happened to the vessel if the volume of the cargo would have suddenly increased tenfold at sea,” **Kaj Engblom** describes the early phases of his family’s history in maritime cargo transports.

Having sailed at sea already as a young boy, Kaj Engblom’s own career as a sailor began in the early 1950s. With his own galleass, his father Georg took on the archipelago and coastal traffic started by his father, and young Kaj was ready to join in when he turned 15.

”After the war a large part of the cargo was transported by small vessels between the ports because there were only few lorries. Also our galleass chugged often along the coast from the Gulf of Bothnia all the way to the bottom of the Gulf of Finland. My father’s galleass still had its sails left, but mostly we relied on engine power. Besides higher velocity, engines made it easier to manoeuvre the vessel through the confusing network of narrow fairways in the archipelago,” Kaj Engblom says.

From archipelago ships to modern cargo vessels

In the mid 1950s, the galleass *Apostol av Nagu* owned by the family became too small, and it was time to move on to larger vessels. The vessel of 130 DWT purchased in 1956 was the first ship Kaj Engblom partially owned. After six years the ship size almost

The three-mast schooner Linden will also participate in the Tall Ships' Races to be organised in Turku in July.



doubled as the previous ship was replaced with a vessel of 230 DWT.

"During the following period of ten years, the ship size continued to grow, and finally in 1973 me and my late brother Kurt founded Rederi Ab Engship. The size of the ships in our shipping company grew rapidly, and in 1976 we finally operated two ships at the same time. After that we bought new ships every year and also sold old ships to others. According to my calculations, I have bought or built 26 ships and sold 15 during my career," Kaj Engblom says.

Of the business meetings held over the years, one has been especially memorable. One of Engship's vessels had been sold to a Swedish buyer. The vessel had been docked at a repair yard by the River Aura where a large and rather prestigious group of people was waiting for the buyer for an official transfer of the ship.

"Also present at the shipyard was the Norwegian consul, as the ship was going to be transferred under the Norwegian flag. The master of the vessel and the crew were also ready to welcome their employer who was supposed to arrive in the morning on a ferry from Stockholm. The ferry arrived, but the owner was missing. Finally the phone rang in my pocket. The Swedish buyer called to inform that he had over-slept on the ferry and was currently somewhere near Pikisaari on his way back to Stockholm. The transfer of the vessel was postponed until the next day which, fortunately, was not the Seven Sleepers Day," Mr Engblom jokes.

From a master of a ship to running a shipping company

After over 30 years at sea, Kaj Engblom finally stayed ashore in 1982. Over the last ten years he had been the master of several ships, and now he took responsibility for running the business operations of the company which had become one

of the most significant shipping companies in Finland. He continued in this position until 2001 when it was time for well-earned retirement.

In 2006, Rederi Ab Engship was sold in excellent condition to Rettig Group Oy Ab Bore which had the prestige required to buy Rederi Ab Engship. The acquisition made Bore a major shipping company capable of providing a wide variety of maritime transport services in accordance with market requirements.

In the same year, however, Kaj Engblom became a shipowner once again and re-cued a piece of Finnish sailing ship culture. Together with Bror Husell from Mariehamn he became the owner of the schooner Linden, the largest passenger sailing ship in Finland.

"The biggest reason for buying Linden was that we did not want the fine ship to be sold abroad. The ship is a replica of a three-mast schooner by the same name which sailed in Finnish waters from 1920–1940. Today, Linden serves as a fully-equipped charter vessel based in Kasnäs. In July next summer it will also participate in the Tall Ships' Races in Turku. We have reserved the ship for own use for one day at the event, and I will probably not be able resist grabbing the wheel myself," Kaj Engblom says, already looking forward to the summer.

FROM HARD TACK TO LABSKAUS

— seamen's food in its most genuine form

In the era of sailing ships, food was one of the most important causes of protest among seamen, and for a good reason. In practice, main meals consisted of meat or bean soup and porridge. Breakfast consisted of potatoes and leftover pieces of meat from the soup, served with a brown sauce, which was supposed to get the men through the day's work. As a snack they had plenty of coffee and crisp bread or hard tack, also referred to as "sheet iron" or "nutcrackers".

To improve seafarers' diet, a food instruction was issued in 1874 with the purpose of making meals on ships more versatile. According to the instruction, seamen's weekly diet was supposed to include bread and butter, beef or pork, either fresh or salted fish, lard, pearl barley and rice, wheat flour, coffee, tea, sugar and syrup. In addition, food provisions normally included potatoes, carrots, cabbage, swedes and onions. These basic ingredients also make up the traditional seamen's food labskaus. Originally called lobscouse in the port city of Liverpool, labskaus is known in other countries by the names lapskojs, lapskoussi, labskous and lobskouse.

Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!

For ages, rum has been considered a seamen's drink, with origins probably in the English navy. In 1655, the sailors in the English navy were issued a ration of rum instead of beer. According to the order, the sailors were given 28 cl of 80% rum before noon, and a double portion in the afternoon and evening as a reward for the day's work. Converted into the strength of rum today, British sailors in the 17th century were given a daily ration of two litres of rum!

Labskaus

Ingredients:

- 750 g shoulder of beef
- 750 g shoulder of pork
- 500 g lamb
- 3 onions
- 2 carrots
- a piece of swede
- 20 white peppers
- 20 allspice berries
- 2-3 l water
- 1 tbsp salt
- 3 kg potatoes.

Preparation:

Cut the meat into smaller pieces and peel the vegetables. Put the meat, spices and vegetables into a bag made of gauze and boil the bag in a kettle for four hours. Once cooked, detach the meat from the bones and tear the meat into as small pieces as possible. Mash the carrots and the swede. Cook the potatoes in the broth. Pour out the water and mash the potatoes. Mix the ingredients into smooth paste and dilute with gravy until the purée is soft. Add salt and pepper if necessary. Serve the labskaus as a hot pile on a plate. Make a hollow on top of the pile and drop in a knob of butter.

