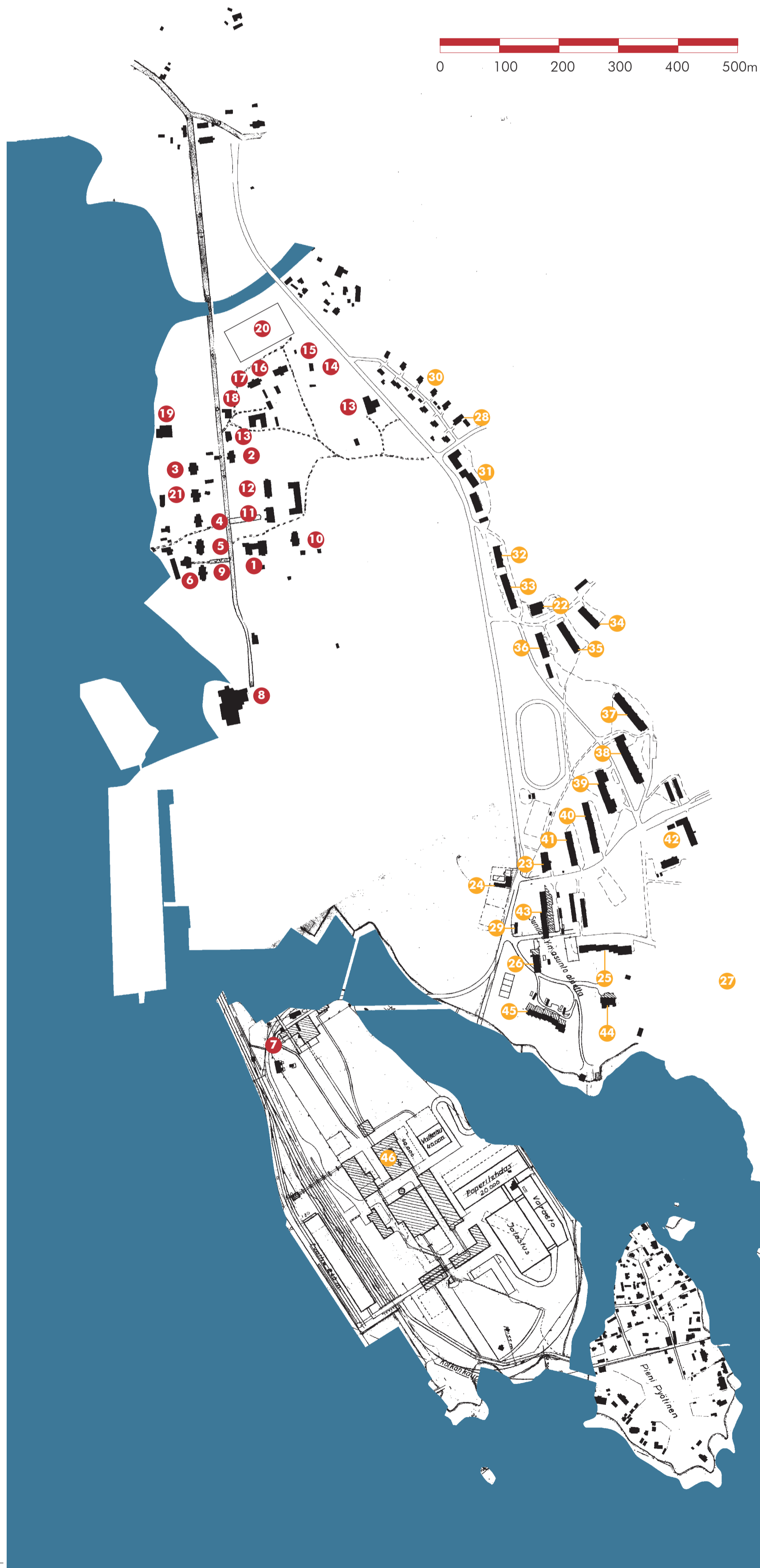
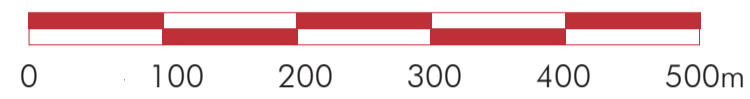


# THE GOLDEN ERA OF THE COMMUNITY

**W**hen the planning and building of the Sunila factory and the housing area linked with it began in 1936 it meant the birth of a whole community and a renewal of life in the area. Situated on an islet, Sunila was a separate area in itself and there was no attempt to link it to the rest of the municipality. This physical separation strengthened the patriarchal spirit endemic to the saw mill trade, which was reinforced in turn by the character of the managing director of the new factory, Lauri Kanto.



## THE BUILDINGS OF OLD SUNILA THAT HAVE BEEN IN COMMUNAL USE

- 1 The fire station, inaugurated in 1901.  
After being extended in 1938 it became the 'Pirtti' community building.
- 2 The sawmill office, later used as the 'children's house'.
- 3 The sawmill manager's house, later used as the bachelors' dormitory 'Shanghai', and most recently used as the officials' club.
- 4 The sawmill foremen's house, later used as the library.
- 5 The saw adjusters' house, later used as the foremen's club.
- 6 The primary school, later used as the Trade School.
- 7 'Väinölä', later workshop
- 8 Sahan konehuoneesta tehtiin ammattikoulun työpajat

## OTHER BUILDINGS OF OLD SUNILA

- 9 The sawmill machine-operators' house.
- 10 The "Pappila" apartment block.
- 11 The "Siperia" apartment block.
- 12 The "Rauhala" apartment block.
- 13 Fire equipment storage.
- 14 "Härkätorppa" men's dormitory.
- 15 "Onnela" or "Leskelä" apartment block.
- 16 "Koivula" apartment block.
- 17 "Mäntylä" apartment block.
- 18 Police station.
- 19 Sauna.
- 20 Sports field.
- 21 The sawmill accountant's house.

## THE COMMUNAL BUILDINGS OF NEW SUNILA

- 22 EKA heating plant and laundry, 1939, nowadays also in use as a sauna and "neighbourhood home", Alvar Aalto.
- 23 Valliniemi sauna, laundry and post-office, 1937, presently hotel "Aalto's cabin" and "Café Aino", Alvar Aalto.
- 24 Liitto Cooperative shop, 1937, SOK planning office.
- 25 Garages and fire station, 1942, Sunila Oy drawing office.
- 26 Valliniemi heating plant, 1937, Alvar Aalto.
- 27 Toukola club house, 1953, Alvar Aalto.
- 28 Neuvola household counselling building 1939, Alvar Aalto.
- 29 Bus station 1939, Alvar Aalto.

## OTHER BUILDINGS OF NEW SUNILA

- 30 The single-family housing area of Puistola 1939, Alvar Aalto.
- 31 Residential/commercial buildings, 1940s-1960s, Bertel Gripenberg, etc.
- 32 Stepped terraced house Karhu, 1939, Alvar Aalto.
- 33 Stepped terraced house Päivölä, 1939, Alvar Aalto.
- 34 Harjula apartment building, 1939, Alvar Aalto.
- 35 Kivelä apartment building, 1939, Alvar Aalto.
- 36 Kontio apartment building, 1939, Alvar Aalto.
- 37 Runkola apartment building, 1953, Alvar Aalto.
- 38 Juurela apartment building, 1953, Alvar Aalto.
- 39 Kuusela apartment building, 1953, Alvar Aalto.
- 40 Honkala apartment building, 1937, Alvar Aalto.
- 41 Mäntylä apartment building, 1937, Alvar Aalto.
- 42 Sunila primary school, 1950, Vilho Rikka.
- 43 Mäkelä terraced houses, 1937, Alvar Aalto.
- 44 Kantola, manager's residence, 1937, Alvar Aalto.
- 45 Rantala terraced houses, 1937, Alvar Aalto.
- 46 Sunila Oy factory, 1938-, Alvar Aalto, Bertel Gripenberg, etc.

► Generations change, life goes on:  
Ylinnä The brass band of the sawmill community, 1920s, and Sunila boys' brass band, 1950s. (Sunila Oy). Elementary school children of the sawmill community, 1920s. (Private collection of Pentti Kirjavainen) and Kindergarten, 1948 (Sunila Oy).





# SERVICES, EDUCATION, LEISURE-TIME

**S**unila was an active and self-reliant but closed and cliquish community, which offered work, services and leisure-time activities. Some of the large timber buildings in the old Sunila sawmill community were modernised for the use of the new community.

(The numbers refer to the map.)

- 1 The fire brigade building, inaugurated in 1901, was already an established place for meetings and festive occasions. Aalto designed the renewal and extension in accordance with the custom of the time, without trying to achieve a solution imitating the old. Pirtti, the Sunila community hall, was thus established, a place where the hobby and sports activities of Sunila were centred - truly a multipurpose building.
- 4 Library facilities have been housed in the renovated former foremen's building of the Sunila sawmill.
- 23 The small bathroom facilities in the workers' housing were complemented by the Valliniemi sauna that serviced the whole area.
- 22 There were two laundries, including rooms for mangling. The Valliniemi

laundry was extended in 1953 and the first electric washing machines were installed.

- 6 A trade school, situated in the former primary school building of the old Sunila sawmill community, prepared workers for the needs of local industry. Teaching was given in the departments of metalwork, woodwork, wood industry and glass industry.
- 42 Vilho Rikka designed the primary school already in 1939, but the war and financing problems delayed the work and it wasn't completed until 1950. The founding of a secondary school in Sunila came about through the parents' own activities. The school, designed by Osmo Sipari, opened in 1961 and the first generation of pupils completed their schooling in 1970.

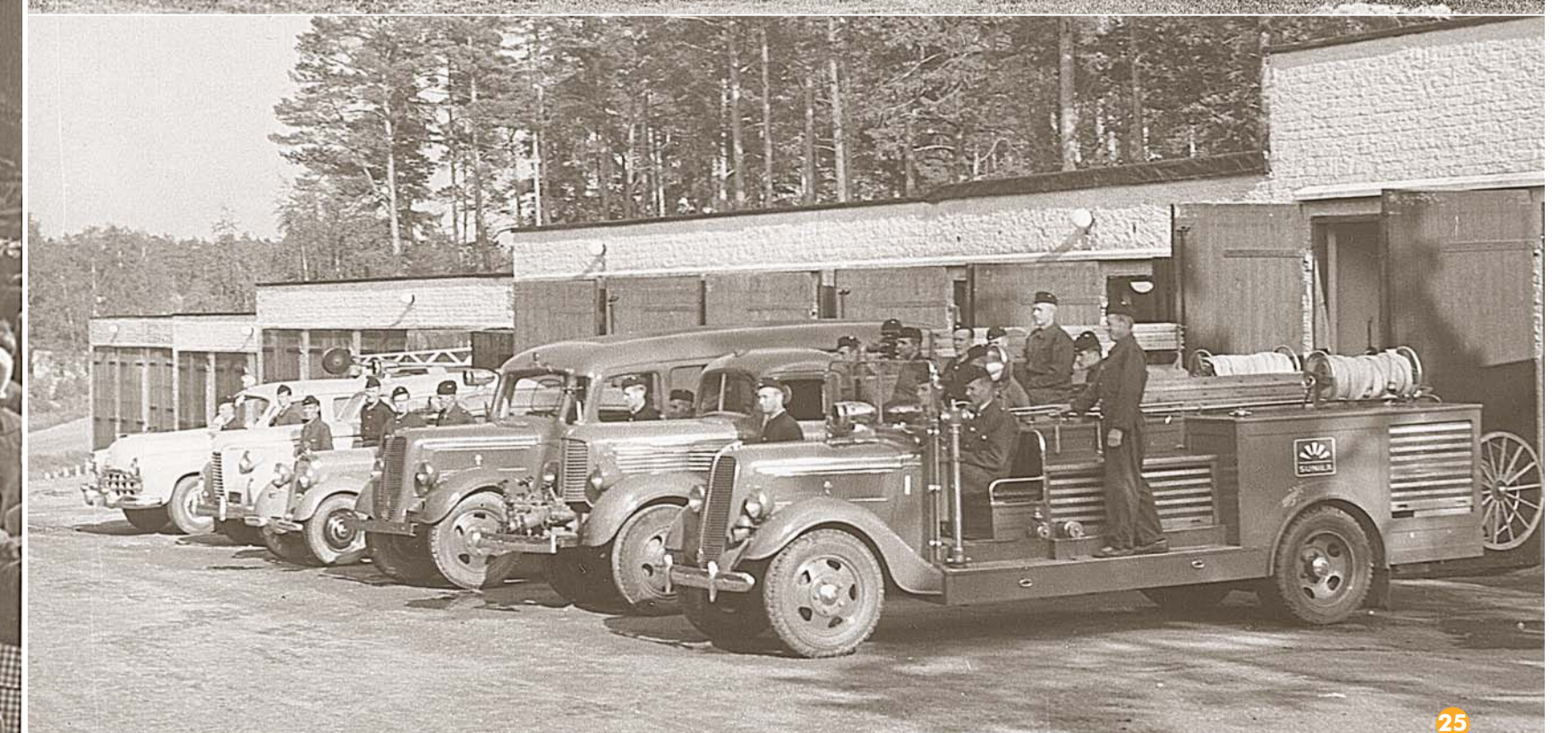
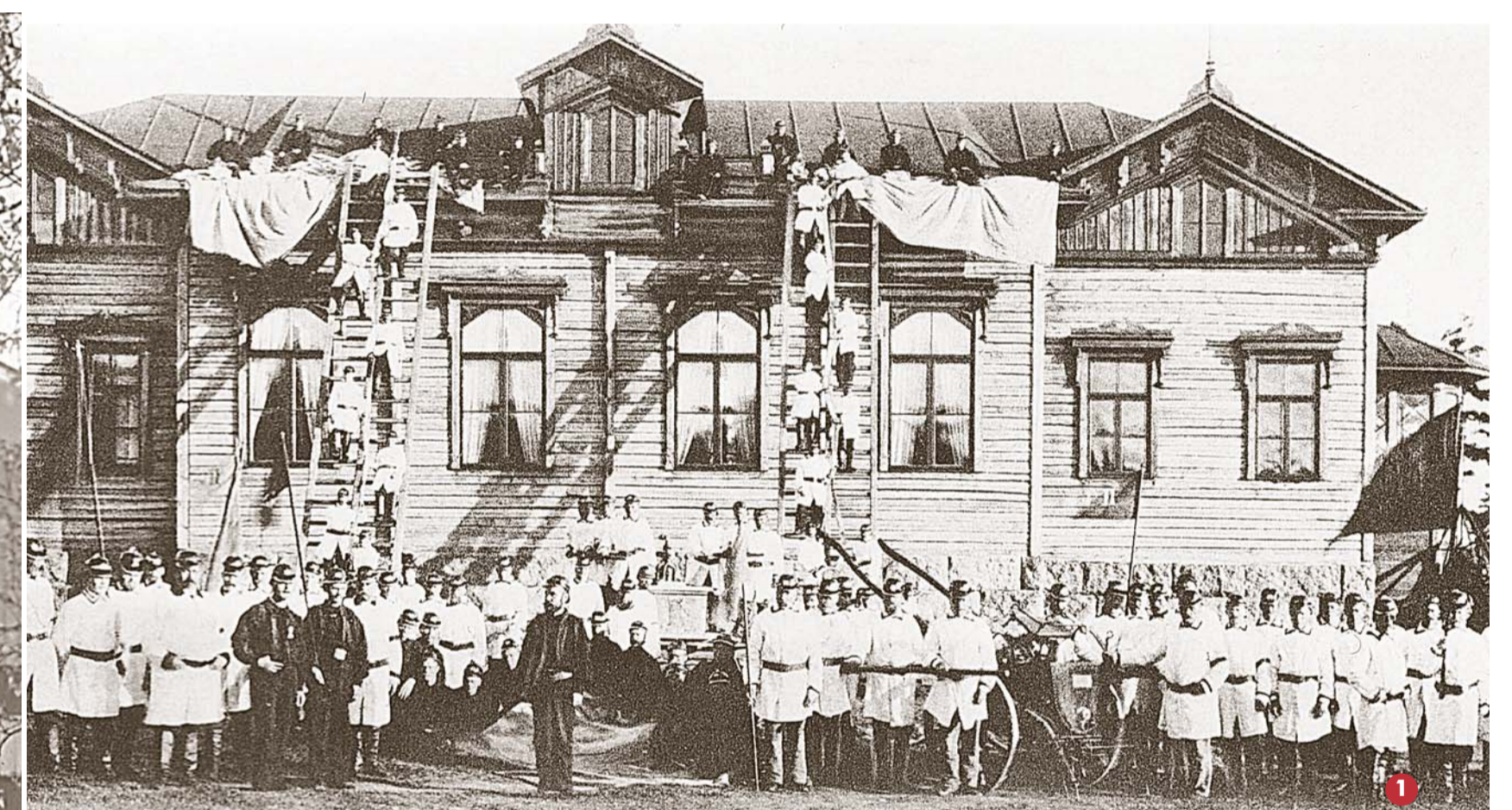
- 31 The number of commercial services was incomprehensibly large compared to the general level of the present day services in Sunila.
- 23 The post office operated in a purpose-built building situated next door to the Valliniemi sauna, there were several banks and grocers and specialty shops such as a pharmacist, a bookstore and a shoe shop.
- 24 There was a café-restaurant on the first floor of the trade union shop.
- 29 The bus station designed by Alvar Aalto housed a kiosk that operated in the summer, as well as staff facilities for the bus drivers and the conductors; the passengers waited outside on benches. When the sea was free from ice, a regular motor boat service was in operation transporting people in the Kotka direction. Otherwise, bicycles and kick sledges were used as transport. Motor traffic took over gradually from around the mid-1950s.



- 3 In 1937 Alvar Aalto designed the conversion of the former sawmill deputy manager's house into an officials' club, with Aino Aalto designing the interior.
- 5 The foremen's club was housed in the former saw adjuster's building.
- 27 The Toukola club house was completed in 1953 in Popinniemi near the Sunila housing area. The variety of activities taking place there was wide: a day care, youth clubs, study circles, a Sunday school and pensioners' meetings.
- 7 The company repaired a crafts workshop in Väinölä, an old timber building left standing on the factory

island, for "joiners and handymen". There was also a separate building reserved for boat making.

25 A fire brigade was of course a necessity among the facilities in every saw mill, but in Sunila it was much more than its name implied. Most officials and even engineers in the technical department belonged to it. The fire brigade practices that took place every Monday were undoubtedly visible in the life of the community. Fireman skills were practiced, maintenance work was carried out and finally they played some sports together. The fire brigade was also responsible for the ambulance service.









# CHANGE, VARIETY AND RECREATION

**T**o get out into freedom, to the sea, to the fresh air, were surely thoughts in the minds of many inhabitants in Sunila as spring came. The dwellings were after all constricted in relation to family size and the smoke coming from the factory flues was not as clean as it is today.

The company acquired in 1946 a shoreline plot where it founded a summer holiday resort for its employees. Nature, however, was the most important aspect. People spent the night in tents and cabins. The journey was made with the factory's regular service boat (though some had their own boat) with picnic lunches, cooking utensils and other camping gear along.

People swam, used the saunas, fished, played games and sports, danced on the open-air dance floors, and generally enjoyed summer. Sailing courses were arranged with two sailing boats called Sipi and Sotka, made available to all staff, and mid-summer feasts with bonfires and other traditions were arranged.

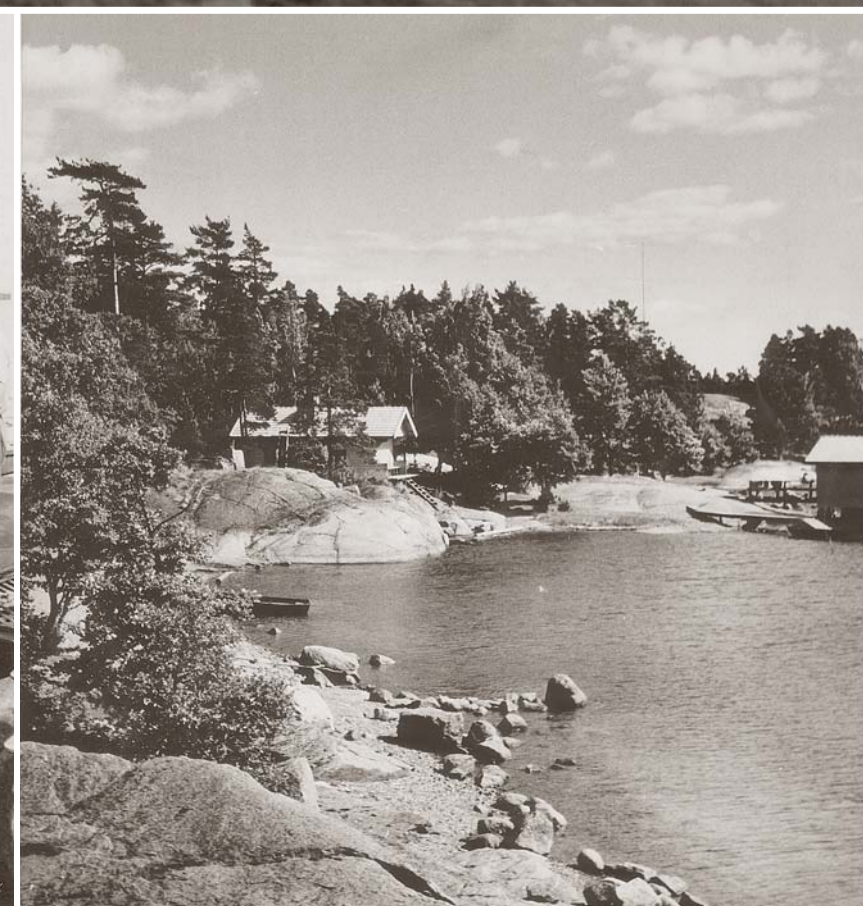


▲ An evening in Kesäniemi. In the background the Sunila and Enso-Gutzeit chimneys. (Sunila Oy.)  
▼ Camping. (Sunila Oy.)

▼ Hikers coming ashore from the company boat. (Sunila Oy.)

▼ The rocky shores of Kesäniemi. (Sunila Oy.)

▼ Rowing. (Sunila Oy.)





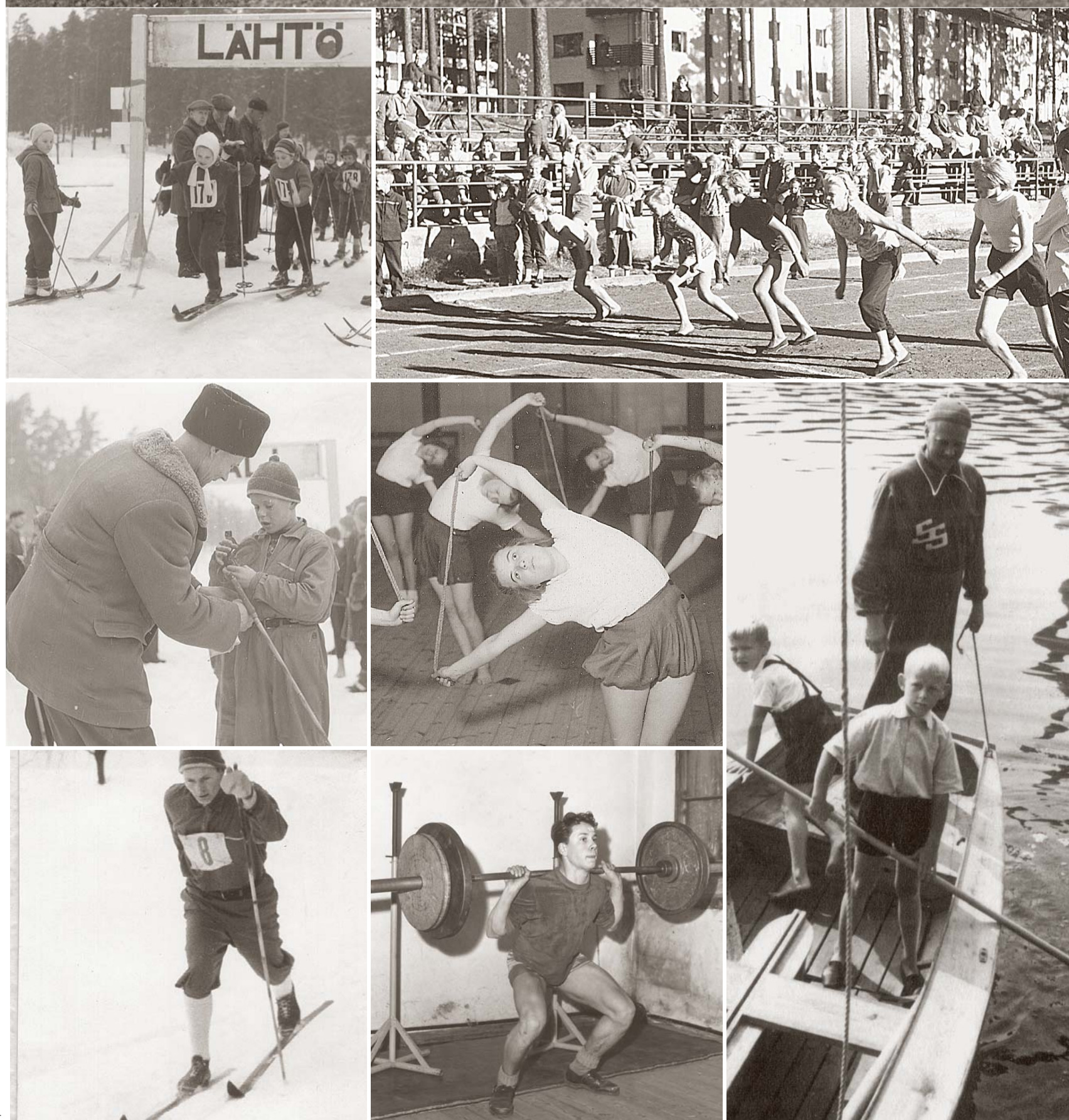
# SPORT



▲ Training on the parallel bars in Pirtti. (Sunila Oy.)



▲ The 15,92-metre winning throw in the Sunila summer games in 1959. (Sunila Oy.)



**S**port took place in Sunila both in the competitive sense as well as for recreation. The most popular sports were (in winter) skiing, and amongst young people also skating, ice-bandy and even ice-hockey. Skiing competitions with their many different classes, were the highlight of the winter and people actively took part in them; the usual number of participants for the Sunila winter sports event rose to over 300. In summer athletics, football and baseball were the most popular sports. Each summer in the "Sunila Olympics" there were some events, such as triathlon and middle-distance running, that attracted a couple of hundred participants. Orienteering became extremely popular and there was success in this sport even outside the Sunila area.

At its peak, the Pirtti community hall was in almost continuous use for different sports. There were practice times for women's, men's, girls' and boys' gymnastics groups, wrestling, weightlifting and boxing every week-day night.

The Sunila Sisu sports club was founded in 1937. Already the following year it was chosen to arrange the Finnish championships in apparatus gymnastics. After successfully hosting the event, the Sunila company hired the gymnastics instructor Esa Seeste, who had been successful in the championships, as a full-time sports instructor in Sunila. Sunila Sisu won the Finnish team championship in the discipline three times, in 1939, 1941 and 1945.

◀ Skiing competitions in the 1950s, gymnastics, weight lifting and sailing. (Sunila Oy, the Timo Hiillos Collection.)



▼ On the deck of the 'Sipi' sailing boat in 1959. (Sunila Oy.)