

In Finland the **natural water system** has always been of great importance. Already in the stone age there were canoes carved from logs. Before the development of the road network, lakes and rivers formed the main means of transportation.

In the beginning of the 20th century roads were partly only suitable for pedestrian use. Freight was carried by boats or ships and in the winter on horse sledges along the icy lakes and swamps. In the spring and in the late autumn it was almost impossible to travel.

Lakes were also used as landing strips for aeroplanes in the hilly and stony terrain.



I.V.L. Hansa in 1924. This plane was one of the first industrialised models to be manufactured in Finland. It could also be equipped with skis.

Behind the plane there are two boat houses.

I.V.L. = Ilmailuvoimien Lentokonetehtäas

The **water system** was not constructed until 1940. Until this time water for households had to be carried from the common wells. Many young girls earned their first money by washing neighbours clothes in laundry houses near to the water.



Schoolkids having fun on lake Pielinen.

The **Kicksled** is still commonly used both by children and adults. It is a safe vehicle on the slippery ground in the winter and is very convenient and practical when transporting either shopping or small children.



Massive granite stones were needed to construct the bridges. The transportation carriages were designed with very low decks to facilitate ease of loading and unloading.

The railway bed in the lake is visible behind the laundry house. The railway was built from Joensuu (south) to Nurmes during 1911. In 1927 the work was finished and the route to Kajaani (in the north) opened. Because the steam engines needed plentiful supplies of water, railways were usually routed alongside nearby lakes and rivers.

The big light coloured house in the background of the picture is the town hall. In the horizon you can see the parish hall on the left, the roof of the lyceum in the middle and the Church built in 1896.

The railway was a big step forward for this region. The post and - what was most important - corn could be delivered the whole year through. From this time there were no more years of famine in Nurmes.