

## The Turunkorva estate in Sotkamo, the ancient residence of the Meriläinens

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Our ancestor Heikki Meriläinen (1686-1757) was born in Siikajoki on the coast of the Bothnian Bay, some 60 kilometers south from the town of Oulu. Heikki and his wife Kristiina (born 1689) got six children, Heikki (b. 1716), Reeta (1722), Anna (1723), Johannes (1724), Matti (1727) and Kristiina (1729).

Heikki's wife Kristiina died early, in April 1731. Next January, Heikki got married to Elina Kärnätär in Oulu, and soon after that, in 1732, the family moved to Eastern Finland, the Sotkamo municipality, far from the home and the culture of the western part of the country. The eldest son Heikki (1716) with his family came to Sotkamo somewhat later, in the late-1730s. Johannes (1724) did not follow the family, he stayed at his home in his native region.

The estate the family settled down was called Turunkorva. It was one of the biggest farms in the whole Kainuu territory. The old-style "slash and burn" agriculture was still in wide use in the Kainuu territory, but in the Turunkorva estate the cultivation of bread cereals was based on the cultivation of the field, i.e. modern-style agriculture that Heikki Meriläinen had practiced in his earlier living region in Siikajoki. The moving to Turunkorva was successful. In 1757, there were 32 persons living in Turunkorva, although two of the daughters, Reeta and Kristiina, had their families elsewhere. A couple of decades later, this rich mansion had a bit more than fifty inhabitants. The price of the mansion was as much as 2,200 *Swedish riksdaler*, while the value of the parsonage in Sotkamo remained below 600.

The daughter of Bergroth, the parson in Sotkamo, told later in the 1860s that as a child she managed to visit "this wonderful house" with her father. *"I saw a large meeting room with luxurious ceiling made of solid beams, narrow but high windows, and the whole floor was covered by colored carpets. The well-known chests were placed close to the walls and the great seats. Candles were shining in a copper chandelier. - - Marvelous ryas were set on the seats and tables. All men were proud, tall and dark-haired. To me they seemed to be aristocrats."*