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*Did You know that
trade in goods on the Gulf of Finland has
been going on as long ago as prehistoric times,
reaching all the way to Arabia?*

The ancient trade in goods is suggested by silver hoards found in our soil. Present-day architecture is testimony to the bootleg spirits that enriched coastal folk in the early 20th century.

Tiesitkö, että kaupankäyntiä oli Suomenlahdella jo muinoin, ja kauppareitti ulottui Arabian niemimaalle asti?

Muinaisesta kaupankäynnistä kertoo maasta löytnyt hopeajauhe. Rantakansaa 1900-luvun alkupuolella vaurastuttaneesta alkoholin salakuljetuksesta kertoo nykyinen ranta-arkkitehtuuri.

Знаете ли вы, что торговля товарами по Финскому заливу шла уже в седой древности и товары отсюда добирались аж до арабских стран?

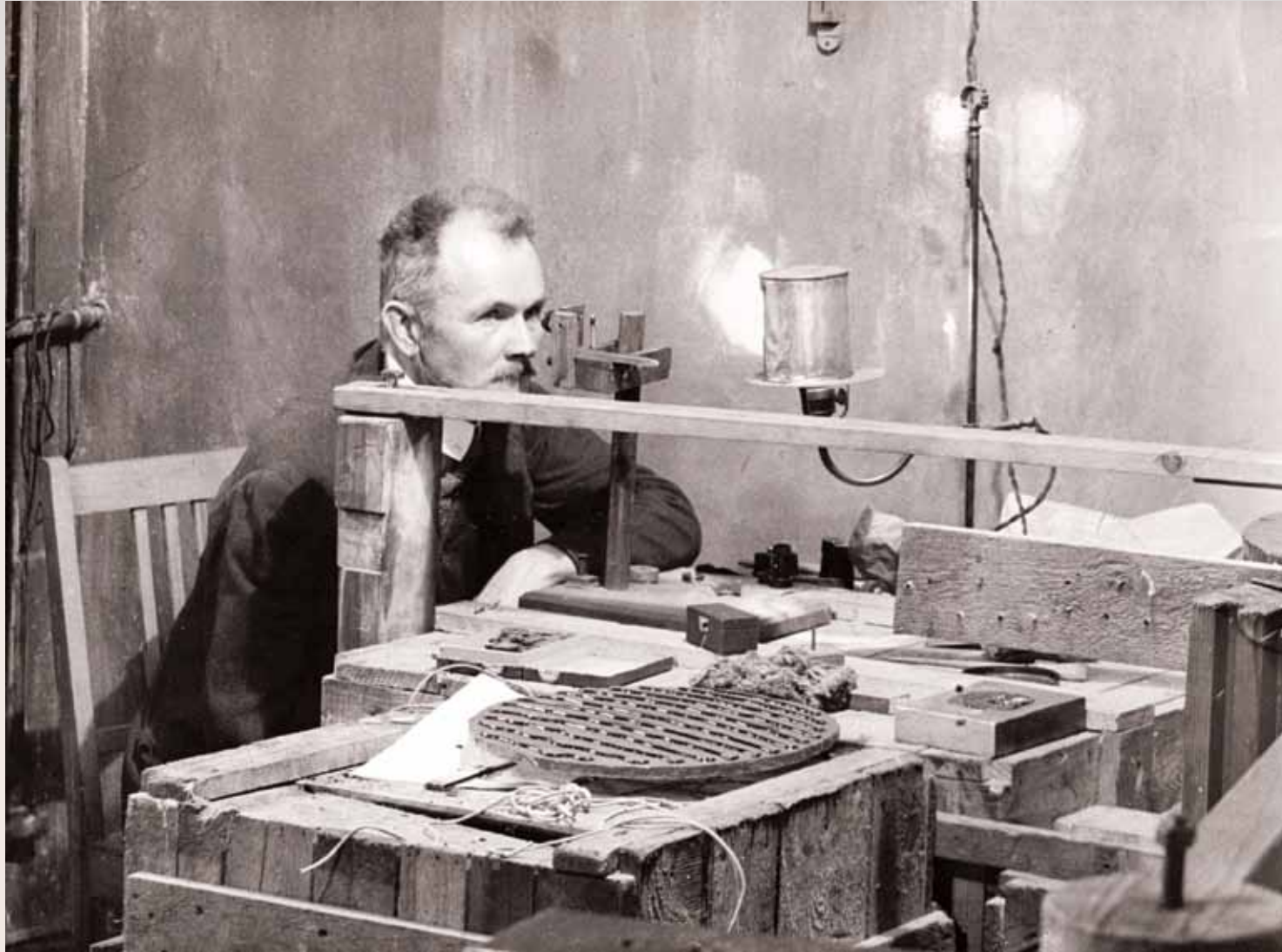
Об свидетельствуют найденные в земле серебряные монеты. О том, как обогащались жители нашего побережья в первой половине века XX за счет бутлегерства, свидетельствует современная прибрежная архитектура.

Kas teadsid, et kaubavahetus Soome lahel käis juba muinasajal ning ulatus otsapidi Araabiani?

Muistsest kaubavahetusest kõneleb meile maa seest leitud hõbevalge. Rannarahvast 20. sajandi esimesel poolel rikastanud salapiiritusest kõneleb tänane rannaarhitektuur.



In addition to the trade in goods, there was brisk fishing, and the population moved to either side of the Gulf of Finland in search of new places to live.



In terms of their enterprising spirit and industry, the inhabitants of small islands were particular stand-outs. For example, Estonia's first motor boat was built on Aksi Island and the world-famous optician Bernhard Schmidt was born on Naissaar.



Throughout the ages, young women from coastal villages have been famous for their ability, rowing like men by day and dancing like ladies at night.



Much profit was reaped by coastal folk from the summer-holiday culture that spread in the early 20th century, as it highlighted the charms of a holiday by the sea.



Spurred by Pietism, a wave of teetotalism swept the world in the late 19th century, as a result of which Finland enacted one of the strictest prohibition laws in Europe in 1919. Trade in bootleg spirits took off, and alcohol consumption by the Finns sky-rocketed 300%.



In the early 20th century, prohibition was in effect in Finland, the USSR, Iceland, Norway, Hungary and the United States. All those countries saw the trade of illegal alcohol flourish. The smuggling that spread on the Gulf of Finland resulted in an improvement in the standard of living for coastal folk in both Estonia and Finland.



Imported mainly from Germany, cheap tax-free alcohol was ferried by boat across the Gulf mostly in jerrycans, or they were assembled into large torpedoes of bootleg spirits that could accommodate up to 1,200 litres of spirits.



Bootleg spirits were hidden everywhere: underneath sheds, in basements and in shallow water off the shore. The border guards did not tire of fighting the bootleggers.



The major bootleg trade on the Gulf of Finland ended in 1932; however, a full stop to alcohol smuggling came with the annexation of Estonia in 1940, when the harsh Soviet border zone was enforced.



In addition to the bootleg barons, bootleg spirits also provided a good income for coastal folk: fancy farmhouses went up, and traces of former plenty may be sighted in the architecture of Estonia's coastal villages to this day.



You can learn about coastal folk, bootlegging, the border zone and much more at the Museum of Coastal Folk.