

GREENLAND

Who's Who, 1912-1925



A GUESTBOOK OF OLUF NIKOLAI WILLEMANN THRON (1870 - 1946), THE COLONIAL MANAGER IN SISIMIUT, GREENLAND

Gronlandsbogen 1912 [Title on the cover]
[Greenland Book 1912]

Højt skal man hædre den fremmede gæst [Title on the First Page]
[One should highly honour the Foreign Guest]

Greenland, various locations (mostly Sisimiut (Holsteinsborg) and Qeqertarsuaq
(Godhavn)): May 9, 1912- May 15, 1925.

Small Folio, 36,5 x 23,5 cm (14.4 x 9.25 inches), notebook with printed lines, 61 numbered pp. with entries in various handwritings in black ink and pencil, lines in red ink, rest of the notebook empty, contemporary three-quarter calf, marbled covers, paper label with hand-written title (binding with minor scuffing, tiny loss of paper to the label and binding, otherwise good with sporadic staining and age-toning)

Kept by Colonial Manager Oluf Nikolai Willemann Thron in Sisimiut, this guestbook evolved—almost by accident—into a who's who of early twentieth century Greenland. Signed by the leading explorers, administrators, scientists, missionaries, and travellers of the Arctic world, it preserves an extraordinary mosaic of personal impressions: candid, conflicted, admiring, prejudiced, lyrical, and raw. Few surviving documents capture the colonial Arctic with such immediacy. This volume stands as a rare and irreplaceable witness to the people who shaped Greenland at a moment of profound transformation.

48.000 EUR

In the early twentieth century, Greenland, under Danish rule, held an important place at the intersection of colonial administration, missionary work, scientific research, and Arctic exploration. It served both as a strategic base for surveying expeditions and geographical discovery, and as a site of sustained ethnographic, linguistic, medical, and natural-scientific inquiry.

Mission stations, schools, and administrative centres formed an institutional framework through which Danish authorities, clergy, physicians, and scholars engaged with Greenlandic society, while also contributing to the circulation of knowledge between Greenland and Europe. Yet these institutions also reinforced a highly stratified colonial order, in which Danes and Inuit lived in close proximity but remained socially, culturally, and often spatially segregated.

At the centre of these dynamics stood the Inuit population of Greenland, whose knowledge, language, and



ways of life were indispensable to both everyday survival and the production of knowledge about the Arctic. Indigenous expertise in travel, hunting, climate, and landscape shaped the work of explorers and scientists alike, while Greenlandic oral traditions, material culture, and social practices became important subjects of study for missionaries, linguists, ethnographers, and administrators. In this context, the Greenlandic language—Kalaallisut—held particular importance, not only as the primary medium of communication for much of the population, but also as a key vehicle of cultural continuity, local identity, and scholarly inquiry. Its documentation and study formed an important part of missionary and academic engagement with Greenland during this period.

Despite this deep reliance on Inuit knowledge, relations between Danes and Greenlanders were marked by pronounced asymmetries. Many Danes viewed the Inuit population through a paternalistic or openly hierarchical lens, perceiving differences in appearance, social customs, and material culture as signs of “inferiority.” Such attitudes shaped everyday interactions and informed the administrative structures that governed mobility, labour, and social life.

At the same time, other visitors and officials expressed a very different sensibility: they admired the Greenlandic way of life, found relief in its perceived closeness to nature, and contrasted its informality and directness with the more rigid social conventions of Denmark. These divergent perspectives—ranging from condescension to genuine admiration—coexisted within the same colonial framework.

Access to the island remained closely regulated by the Danish government. Travel to and from Greenland required official permission; visitors were subject to administrative oversight, and quarantine measures could be imposed both on arrival and departure. These controls reflected Greenland’s status as a carefully managed colonial space, in which mobility, residence, and social relations were structured by Danish authority within an environment still marked by clear hierarchies between Danish officials and the Indigenous population.

The Colonial Manager and His House

The Colonial Manager (also sometimes referred to as the Governor) occupied a central position in mediating between Greenland and the outside world. As the chief local representative of Danish authority, he oversaw the movement of visitors, trade, and official business, making his residence a principal point of contact within the colonial system.

In our case the office was held by Oluf Nikolai Willemann Thron (also recorded as Nicolaj or Nikolaj; 1870–1946), who lived in Sisimiut (then Holsteinsborg), an important port on Greenland’s southwestern coast. He resided there first with his wife Olga Marie Sophie, née Olsen (1867–?), and later with Juliane Marie Malene Thron.

During his years in West Greenland, Thron developed a profound interest in Inuit material culture. He undertook an extensive study of the design, terminology, and practical use of regional cooking vessels and lamps, documenting their forms and functions with notable care.

After retiring from service and returning to Copenhagen, he donated in 1932 a substantial and culturally invaluable collection of Inuit artefacts to the Danish National Museum (Nationalmuseet).



A contemporary article in *Geografisk Tidsskrift* (Vol. 36, 1933, pp. 1–2), titled “Nationalmuseets etnografiske Samling 1932,” reports on this significant accession and highlights the importance of Thron’s contribution to the museum’s ethnographic holdings:

“Among the latter must be emphasized a collection of Eskimo lamps and cooking pots, donated by former colonial administrator N. Thron, who during his activities in West Greenland threw itself particularly into the study of the Various Types, Names and Uses of Them the most important household for the Eskimos; for those still in Using the pieces of information that could be information was obtained about how long they had been in the family’s Own. This provides this collection, which includes more than 200 numbers, extremely valuable contributions to the The history of the cooking vessel that has not been able to be provided by the museum’s earlier, more scattered acquisitions. As The Museum received a result of the donor’s multifaceted interest also a number of archaeological objects from Greenland and a Number of Danish antiquities, the last of which were made available as Swap Material.”

The colonial manager’s residence served as a warm yet authoritative centre for politics, law, medicine, trade, and cultural exchange, where official duties and social hospitality often intersected. It was also a space where the colonial hierarchy became visible: Danish officials, missionaries, and visiting scholars gathered here, while Inuit residents were usually kept away from this circle.

The Colonial Manager’s House (Kolonibestyrerboligen, Niuertorutsip illua) in Sisimiut, sometimes called the Governor’s House, was built in 1846, although some sources suggest it may have been constructed in 1852. Today, it is preserved as part of the Sisimiut Museum and functions as a ticket office. This building is a rare physical testament to its historical context. It is situated at a prominent entrance to the town, adjacent to a unique gate made of whale jawbone, erected in 1933, and next to the historic Bethel Church—commonly known as the Blue Church—which dates back to 1775.

Thron moved to Qeqertarsuaq (Godhavn) in 1918.

Over the years, the household of Colonial Manager Thron and his wife received a remarkable succession of guests, many of whom signed the present volume. Intended at first as a private memento, the guestbook became, almost unintentionally, a unique register of the men and women who shaped Greenland’s administrative, scientific, and cultural life during a formative period of exploration and change.

The Guestbook

This guestbook preserved from the home of Governor Oluf Nikolai Willemann Thron (1870–1946)—containing **about two hundred entries** made between 1912 and 1925, mostly in Sisimiut but in later years also in other locations along the western coast—offers a rare and intimate record of Greenland’s civic, social, and intellectual life in the early twentieth century. Its pages document the movements and encounters of officials, missionaries, physicians (in 1916, only seven doctors served the entire western coast), traders, and visiting scholars whose work shaped the island’s administrative and cultural landscape.

Alongside these figures, the volume also preserves notes, remarks, and other entries by several of the most prominent explorers of Greenland, leaving behind traces of their routes, observations, and interactions. Among them are Alfred de Quervain, Peter Freuchen, Knud Rasmussen, and Johan Peter Koch.



The guestbook also reveals the range of Danish attitudes toward Greenland and its people. Some visitors expressed admiration for the landscape, the hospitality of the Thron household, and the perceived simplicity and naturalness of Greenlandic life. Others voiced discomfort, frustration, or openly hierarchical views of the Inuit population. These contrasting perspectives—affectionate, critical, curious, or dismissive—appear side by side, offering a vivid cross section of colonial mentalities during this period.

Men and women alike contributed to the guestbook. Many of the women accompanied their husbands—officials, missionaries, doctors, and researchers—while others travelled independently and appear in Greenlandic history with their own professional identities.

Danish was the most commonly used language, yet the entries also include passages in Kalaallisut (West Greenlandic), German, English, and other languages, reflecting the multilingual character of the visitors and the island’s expanding international connections.

The texts are often written in free poetic forms: some quote familiar lines, while many express original thoughts. Guests frequently remark on the comfort of the house, the warmth of the hearth, and the pleasure of the meals provided—small but meaningful luxuries in an otherwise harsh environment. While a few visitors express their dislike of Greenland, the majority praise the land as a unique and compelling place, one they enjoyed visiting or came to love while living there. Many of these appreciative voices belong to women who had initially arrived as companions but developed a deep affection for the island.

Throughout the entries, Mrs Thron appears as a constant and warmly regarded presence. She is repeatedly praised as a gracious hostess who created an atmosphere of hygge—a sense of comfort, warmth, and welcome that softened the rigours of Arctic life. Her hospitality shaped the social world of the governor’s home, and the guestbook stands as a testament to the encounters, conversations, and fleeting communities that formed under her roof.

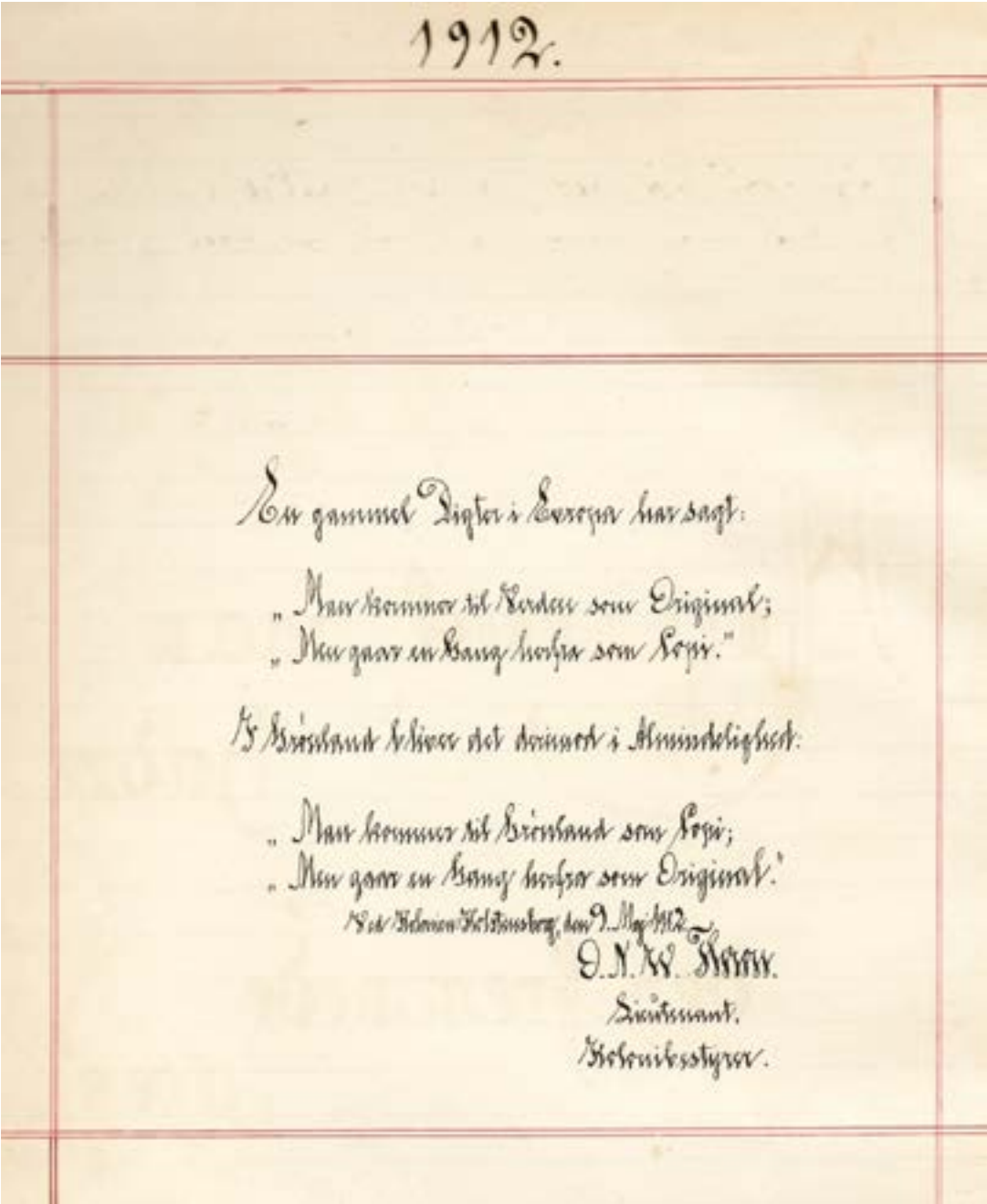
Page by Page

P. 2

The first entry is made by **Colonial Manager Oluf Nikolai Willemann Thron (Olsen)** (Nikolai also spelled as Nikolaj or Nicolaj, 1870–1946) himself and reads:

1912
En gammel Digter i Europa har sagt:
“Man kommer, til Verden som Original,
Men gaar en Gang hafra som Copi”

I Grónland deliver det derimod i Almindelighed
“Man kommer til Grónland som Copi,
Men gaar en Gang hafra som Original”
Ved Kolonien Holsteinsborg, den 9. May 1912
O.N.W Thron.
Lieutenant
Kolonibestyrer



[An old poet in Europe has said:
"You come into the world as a unique person,
But you leave as a copy of the others."

In Greenland it is generally said:
“You come to Greenland as a copy of the others,
But you leave as a unique person.”
At the colony Holsteinsborg [i.e. Sisimiut], May 9, 1912,
Oluf Nikolaj Willemann Thron
Lieutenant
Colonial Manager]

1912.

Im Anfang war das Wort.
 "Im Anfang war die That" variiert Faust.
 Dieses Beides unbedingt Eins werden zu lassen,
 erscheint so sehr als das Ideale Höchste, dass
 auch das Dritte klar wird: Καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος.

Sonderbar mag ein solcher Spruch auf seine mittel-
 baren resignierten Vorgänger folgen. Aber
 Euch alten realistischen und pessimistischen
 "Grönländern" musste ich doch einen idealisti-
 schen Spruch ins Stammbuch schreiben, weil
 Ihr trotz allem und trotz Euch selbst hier
 oben die Pioniere des Idealismus seid.
 Wir grüssen Euch alle mit Respekt und Anteil
 dreimal mit dem flatternden Schweizerkreuz.
 Und weil wir grade drau sind, zu schreiben
 wie uns zu mut ist: noch einen:

Dem Mensch ist nichts so eigen
 So wohl steht ihm nichts an
 Als dass er Freu erzeigen
 Und Freundschaft halten kann.

A. de Quervain
 Leiter d. Schweiz. Götter-Expedition
 1912

P. 3

On 18 May 1912, entries were made by a **district physician** (signature illegible) **stationed in Maniitsoq (Sukkertoppen)** and by **Valdemar Christoffer Theilgaard Frederiksen (1872–1943)**, Danish pastor and educator. Frederiksen served as first pastor in Holsteinsborg and Sukkertoppen from 1902 to 1923 and was a pioneer in introducing Danish instruction to Greenlandic schools. He was also a dedicated researcher of the Inuit language and a collector of ethnographic objects. Today, he is primarily remembered as the father of Svend Frederiksen (1906–1967), the renowned Greenlandic anthropologist and Inuitologist. Their entries reflect, with dry humour, on the profession of medicine.

On the same day, members of the **Swiss expedition to Greenland led by Alfred de Quervain (1879–1927)** also contributed inscriptions. In the months that followed, they completed the first documented west to east crossing of Greenland's ice cap, recording their journey in a trove of colour photographs. De Quervain later published an account of the expedition in *Quer durchs Grönlandeis* (1914).

Among the contributors was **August Stolberg (1864–1945)**, meteorologist and expedition photographer from Strasbourg, who expressed gratitude to the Thron family for their hospitality—recalling their earlier meeting during the 1909 expedition. The page concludes with a dedication by **Hans Hoessli (Hössli)**, Swiss physician and explorer, who served as the expedition's medical officer and conducted physiological studies of Greenland's Indigenous population.

P. 4

Alfred de Quervain contributed a longer inscription to the page in German (here in English translation)

"In the beginning was the Word."
 "In the beginning was the Deed," Faust varies.
 To make these two absolutely become one,
 seems so much like the highest of ideals, that
 the third also becomes clear: Καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος [And the Word was God].

It may seem strange for such a saying to follow its indirect,
 resigned predecessors. But
 for you old, realistic, and pessimistic
 "Greenlanders," I simply had to write an idealistic
 saying into this guest book (Stammbuch), because
 despite everything, and despite yourselves, up here
 you are the pioneers of idealism.
 We greet you all with respect and sympathy
 three times with the fluttering Swiss flag.
 And because we are currently in the mood to write
 exactly how we feel: here is one more:
 Nothing belongs to man so truly
 Nothing becomes him quite so well
 As that he shows loyalty fully
 And holds friendship like a spell.

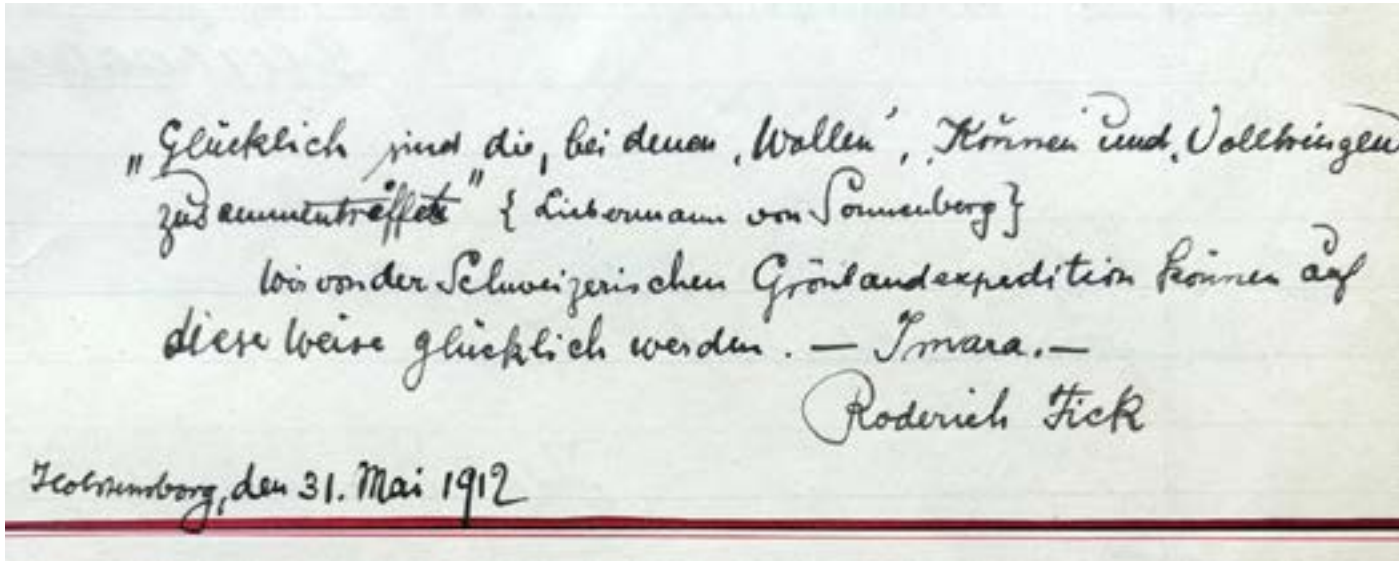
This is followed by an entry from **Paul Louis Mercanton (1876–1963)**, Swiss glaciologist and meteorologist, offering philosophical reflections on transience, spirit, and beauty.

P. 5

The inscriptions dated 31 May 1912 begin with a brief entry signed “**Stoklund**”, a captain or navigator of the steam yacht *S/S Fox*. The *Fox* is primarily known for its role in the privately funded expedition of 1857–1859 to the North American Arctic Archipelago, which sought to uncover clues about the fate of Franklin’s lost expedition. At the time this inscription was made, the *Fox* was in Danish possession and had recently delivered a Swiss expedition to Greenland. Unfortunately, it was wrecked off the coast of Godhavn Harbour (Qeqertarsuaq) in 1912.

A reflection follows by **Roderich Fick (1886–1955)**, the German architect responsible for surveying, cartographic drafting, and visual documentation during the Swiss expedition. Fick would later become known for his architectural work under the Nazi regime in Germany.

In this entry, Fick engages with the Greenlandic word “Imara” (alternatively Immaqa or Imaqa), which translates literally as “maybe” or “perhaps,” but in practice conveys a gesture of surrender to the Arctic’s rhythm—an acceptance of spontaneity, fluidity, and the absence of rigid planning in a landscape that resists control. Fick adapts this concept into two German sayings, linking Imara to the happiness experienced by explorers.



On the same day, further inscriptions were contributed by **Karl Gaule**, a Swiss engineer and member of the expedition, and by **Dr. Wilhelm Jost (1882–1964)**, likewise attached to the expedition and remembered as a pioneer of colour photography in the polar regions. Jost documented the undertaking in a remarkable series of colour photographs, which remain among the most vivid visual records of early Arctic exploration.

The following entry on the page, dated 18 June 1912, was written by **V. Thorsen**, captain of the *S/S Hans Egede*. He was later appointed Superintendent of the vessels of *Grønlands Styrelse*. The *Hans Egede* is also notable for having transported ninety seven sled dogs from Greenland to Antarctica for Roald Amundsen’s expedition.

P. 6

On 18 June 1912, the guestbook records three further entries. Among them is that of **Jens Daugaard Jensen (1871–1931)**, who scarcely a month later, on 13 July, was appointed Governor of Northern Greenland and Director of *Grønlands Styrelse* (*Styrelsen af Kolonierne i Grønland*), the central Danish administrative authority for the island. He remained in this post until his death, overseeing reforms that gradually redirected Greenland’s economy and food supply from hunting toward fishing. His name was later commemorated in two major geographical features: Daugaard Jensen Glacier on the southeastern coast of Greenland, and Daugaard Jensen Land, a large peninsula in the northwest.

Beneath his entry appears a quieter reflection by his wife, **Ida Louise Catharina Jensen (1875–1955)**, who wrote: “*I Grønland er der rart at være for én, som holder af Fred*” — “*In Greenland, it is a pleasant place to be for one who loves peace.*”

The same date also bears the inscription of **Alfred Bertelsen (1877–1950)**, a prominent Danish ornithologist, physician, and explorer, then travelling aboard the *S/S Hans Egede*, though more closely associated with Uummannaq, where he carried out much of his work.

An entry dated 1 July 1912 was contributed by **Anton Vilhelm Scheel (1864–1950)**, a Danish naval officer who at the time served as captain of the inspection vessel *Islands Falk*. Built for service in the North Atlantic, particularly around Iceland and the Faroe Islands, the ship also played a practical role in transporting mail, provisions, and personnel between Denmark, Iceland, and the expanding settlements of Greenland.

A final entry, dated 20 July 1912, was made by **Christian Zieler** of the Danish inspection ship *Islands Falk*, who chose to inscribe the celebrated line from Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*: “*To be or not to be, that is the question*” (“*At være eller ikke være, det er Spørgsmaalet!*”).

P. 7

On the same day as the final entry on the preceding page—20 July 1912—the guestbook received three further inscriptions from members of the inspection ship *Islands Falk*. One of these entries reflects warmly on the character of Greenland and its inhabitants, observing:

“*I Grønland har jeg truffet mange glade og tilfredse Mennesker – i Forhold flere end mange andre Steder. Paa Grund heraf drager jeg den Slutning, at Grønland er et af de lykkelige Lande, hvor Glæden og Tilfredsheden kan erhverves.*”

— “*In Greenland, I have met many happy and contented people—proportionally more than in many other places. From this I draw the conclusion that Greenland is one of those happy lands in which joy and contentment may be attained.*”

The final entry on the page was added the following day, 21 July, apparently by another member of the *Islands Falk* (**Th?**). He chose to inscribe another quotation from *Hamlet*:

“*Der er flere Ting mellem Himmel og Jord end der er drømt om i din Philosophia Horatio*” — “*There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy.*”

P. 8

Entries dated *14 August 1912* begin with the inscription of **C. C. Skytte** of the *S/S Hans Egede*. To the same occasion may probably be assigned an undated entry by Bregnhof—most likely **N. Bregnhof**, captain of the same vessel—who contributed a graceful poetic tribute to the hospitality he had encountered in Greenland. In translation, his verses read:

*“Where the midnight sun casts its glow
upon high mountain peaks,
I have found nothing but hospitality in the homes
scattered among the colonies.
Where the “Hat” rises above the house,
it is Holsteinsborg of which I write;
there I found three homes this year
for which I herewith give my thanks.”*

On *20 August 1912*, **R. Sörbö** of the *S/S Expedit* likewise testified to the warmth and hospitality of the place, adding with some satisfaction a complimentary mention of an excellently prepared steak.

By contrast, the tone darkens in the next entry, dated *30 September of the same year*, when the guestbook was signed by **Ole Bendixen (1869–1958)**, the Danish explorer and Royal Inspector of South Greenland from 1903 to 1914, who also published several books on Greenland. Bendixen’s contribution is strikingly brief and far less appreciative: he dismisses Holsteinsborg as a “rainy hellhole” (*Fanden til Regnhul!*). Whether this remark reflects unusual familiarity with Oluf Nikolai Willemann Thron or merely the mood of a final visit remains open to interpretation.

P. 9

The next entry, dated *31 September 1912*, is signed by **J. Nielsen**, possibly identifiable as the pioneering student of Greenlandic insect life who, together with Fritz Johansen, undertook some of the earliest entomological research in the region and later published the results in the article “*The Insects of the Denmark Expedition*.”

A cluster of further inscriptions follows under the date *2 November 1912*. One is signed by **W. Tjaller or Haller**, though the reading remains uncertain; another, apparently entered on the same occasion but without a date, bears the name **C. Andersen**.

Of particular note is the entry by **Anna Nielsen**. Her inscription speaks of the sadness of departing aboard the *S/S Godthaab*, the same vessel that had carried members of the Danish Expedition to Queen Louise Land in July 1912. The sequence concludes with two further names associated with that date or occasion: **N. Hoffmeyer**, whose entry is undated but likely contemporary, and **Hans Frederik Hansen**, a capitan.

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An entry dated **2 November 1912** bears the name **Harald Hansen**.

The following day, *3 November 1912*, the guestbook was signed by **Sister Maren**, most likely a nun.

A further inscription, dated *7 November 1912*, was made by **Olga Thron**, probably Olga Marie Sophie, née Olsen (1867–?), wife of Oluf Nikolai Willemann Thron, the owner of the volume.

The next entry, dated *26 December 1912*, is that of **Agnes E. Friedrichsen**, probably identifiable as Agnes Emonie Margrethe Ingeborg, née Theilgaard (1875–1945), wife of the Greenland based pastor Valdemar Christoffer Frederiksen (1872–1943) and mother of Svend Frederiksen (1906–1967), the later Danish Greenlandic American Inuitologist.

A final entry in this sequence, dated *4 January 1913*, was made by **Anna Petersen**.

P. 11

An entry dated *7 April 1913* contains a lengthy inscription by **Holger Sverdrup Kiær (1856–1928)**, a prominent Danish physician in Greenland, who had settled in Sisimiut the previous year. In it, he reflects on the relation between law and local conditions in Greenland, arguing that legislation cannot meaningfully be imposed without regard for the realities of the land itself. As he writes: “*With law shall the land be built—yes, perhaps. But first and foremost, it is the land that builds the law. In Greenland above all,*” he suggests, “*any attempt to legislate without such understanding risks producing not order, but unrest, confusion, and harm.*”

A further entry, dated *17 April 1913*, was made by **Yrsa Kjær**, née Yrsa Williamine Laurine Gunilla Segner Hansen (1884–?), the newly married wife of Holger Sverdrup Kiær (please see the previous entry). The couple had married on 30 March that year and returned to Denmark in 1914.

On *24 April 1913*, the guestbook was signed by **Valborg Petersen**, widow of District Physician Petersen, who left a brief and desolate note: “*I have lost everything I had, in Greenland.*” She later remarried, in 1917.

To the same occasion may probably be assigned an undated entry by **Julie Hastrup, née Gnatt (1888–?)**, who since 1908 had been the wife of Oluf Hastrup (1875–1933), sailor, merchant, and colonial official. Appointed Colonial Administrator of Maniitsoq in 1912 and later Acting Inspector of South Greenland from 1913 to 1915, he belonged to the administrative world closely reflected in the volume. Julie’s own contribution is strikingly lighter in tone: “*Yes! Short and sweet: Greenland, you are adorable!*” Her later correspondence with the explorer Peter Freuchen, written in 1940–41, is today preserved in the Danish Arctic Institute.

P. 12

An entry dated *24 April 1913* was made by **Peter Freuchen (1886–1957)**, the prominent Danish Arctic explorer most closely associated with the Thule Expeditions, undertaken in collaboration with Knud Rasmussen. In this lengthy inscription, he refers to his “*small private Greenlandic trading business*” and remarks on the good fortune of living in Greenland beyond the bounds of the Royal Danish trading monopoly. Freuchen lived in Greenland for more than a decade and was married to an Inuk woman until her death in 1921.

1913.

det der udsat for en hat-
aandrighed fra min lille private
grønlandske handelsbureauherred
en rammende oplysning og af den
ledende karakter og med sig alle
bedre end et citat en ytring af en
berømt landmandsind, siden jeg
velkommen, dygtig, taknemmelig, der er
sit liv 75 år med en oplyst
i stemmen forbyder:

naar man ikke har på sig
naar man ikke med sin egen
især skulder man jo om hvem
den store grønlandske mest, det
for vi jo alle
personer veri affektive vene,
men, men enig, og vil
men guds lov at jeg lever
grønland, men uden for det hyl's
område

Peter Jensen
24-4-1913.

Mette. Jeg brød: Lær, for
de lærer!

Fra den i Norden findes en masse stier og
den Profiter, som i Grønland, alle afsluttede
konstruktionsmaterier. Skikkelige mennesker, som
lignende i Danmark ikke har været indflydende, og kom-
mune. Litteratur eller Fortællinger, en lille gruppe af
et, på det mere end det grønlandske samfund brugt
og fejl, og den for den hvide del, hvor det
skulde gøre de Færøerne, som det er det
Løst og afgrænset, de, hvor der ikke er nogen,
og ingen som Grønlandene selv vidner på ledende
Bordet på Hjemmet af, hvor der kan føle

1913.

fra de rige Bred.

Til den, og det kommer det ikke, men
paa radikale eller konservative sympatiske, naar
det er frivilligt i landet er blevet af
en Mand og en ung, og det er den grønlandske
Sands. Om!

Holstenborg d. 25 April 1913.
Th. d. Rasmussen.

Her i den jeg kommer
hvor evige kommer.

Holstenborg den 25 April 1913.



Grønland er et stort land.
Grønlandene kendes sig ikke.

O. Petersen
Birkstøt Stovvælde.
25. Maj 1913.

Gode Hjerde led og bare os
Hjer led dit klare Ord
ogsaa her i Nord. 29-13
O. Jensen

Det der skal være ogsaa Grønlandene
som er en midt for en almindelig
Lid og Løst, der vil skænke dem de
evige Livværdier.

H. Hansen Tjorkiller
- Thovvælde - 29-5-13.

The entry was written only a few months after the completion of the First Thule Expedition of 1912, when Freuchen and Rasmussen, together with the Inughuit Ulloriaq and Inukitsoq, explored and mapped previously unsurveyed regions of Greenland.

PP. 12–13

An entry dated 25 April 1913 was made by **Knud Rasmussen (1879–1933)**, one of the most celebrated explorers of Greenland. Born in Greenland to missionary parents and later educated in Denmark, he possessed an unusually intimate understanding of both worlds. In this lengthy inscription, Rasmussen gives forceful expression to his frustration at the ease with which Danes, secure in their own comfort, presumed to debate and determine the future of Greenland and its people without any real knowledge of Inuit life or of the conditions under which it was lived.

The entry reads in English translation:

*“Motto: Book of Sirah: Learn before you speak!
Few places in the world have as many prophets, big and small, as Greenland—all infallible social reformers. Respectable people who, back home in Denmark, never showed the slightest hint of interest in or understanding of municipal affairs, immediately look upon arrival here to understand all the flaws and failures of Greenlandic society. From their armchairs, they lecture on everything that ought to be done to help, if only they had the power and the final say. Alas, how much talk there is up here, while the Greenlanders themselves live on as best they can, surviving on the crumbs that fall from the rich man’s table. In the end, it does not depend at all on radical or conservative viewpoints, as long as the fundamental essence of one’s character is driven by a manly and selfless love for the true well-being of the Greenlandic people!”*

P. 13

An entry dated 15 April 1913 was made by **M. Sørensen (?)**, whose surname is uncertain, and who notes that he came to Thron’s house every summer.

Further inscriptions, dated 25 May 1913, include one by **O. Petersen (?)**, likewise uncertain in its reading, a member of the bark *Thorvaldsen* of the Royal Greenland Trade, and another by **O. T. Jensen (?)**.

A final entry in this small sequence, dated 29 May 1913, was contributed by another member of the crew of the *Thorvaldsen*.

P. 14

Entries dated 12 June 1913 include the names of **Otto Mathiasen** and **Besser (?)**.

On the same day, the guestbook was also signed by **Helge Bojsen Møller (1874–1946)**, the prominent Danish architect whose work in Greenland included the church at Paamiut (1909), and who would later design Knud Rasmussen’s house at Hundested in Denmark (1916–1918).

Bojsen Møller’s inscription takes the form of a poetic reflection on the singularity of Greenland. In translation, the lines read:

*“No land of reality surpasses the land
inhabited by the fairy tale figures of childhood imagination.
This land — Greenland — is vast enough and
beautiful enough to be compared with it.
May this unpolished ‘jewel in the
Danish crown’ be preserved there forever
and escape the art of European jewellers.”*

A further entry, dated 19 June 1913, was made by **(Gudrun?) Stoklund**, though the reading of the first name remains uncertain.

P. 15

An entry dated 20 June 1913 was made by **Christian Jelstrup**.

On 9 July 1913, the guestbook was signed by **Alfred Tycho Hedegaard (?–1941)**, a Danish colonial administrator in Greenland, who from the following year was stationed at Angmagssalik.

A further entry, dated 15 July 1913, is that of **Louis Bobé (1867–1951)**, the Danish royal historiographer and archivist. Between 1912 and 1915 he travelled along the west coast of Greenland, from Upernavik to Cape Farewell, retracing the route of Hans Egede. He later published several works on Greenland, while the materials he gathered on these journeys laid part of the foundation for the regional archives in Qeqertarsuaq and Nuuk.

An undated inscription by **O. Kopster**, though uncertain in its reading, appears to belong to the same period.

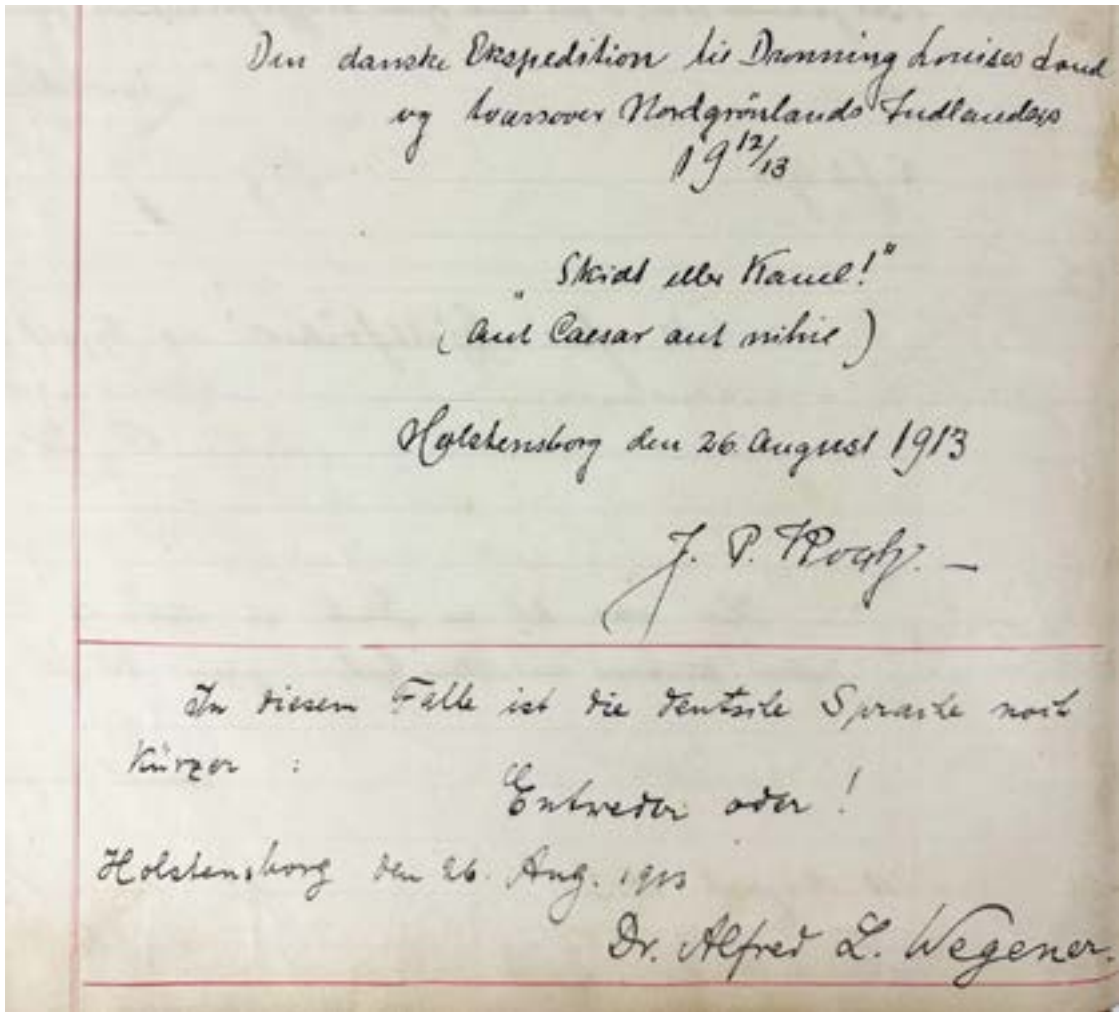
The sequence concludes with an entry of 10 August 1913 by **Ernst Jørgensen**, who notes, with some haste, that he was on his way to catch the *S/S Hans Egede* for the return journey.

P. 16

Entries dated 10 August 1913 include the names of **Christen Simonsen** and **Ernestine “Erna” Emma Lisette Sieh (1870–1934)**, wife of Louis Bobé, whose own entry appears on the preceding page.

Further inscriptions of the same date were made by **Astrid Müller, Johanne Marie Clausen, Paul B. Ryder, Ellen Groth**, and **Svend Jørgensen**. Of these, Ellen Groth is of particular note, having been identified in contemporary press as the first white woman to marry an Inuit man in Greenland.

An entry dated 26 August 1913 was made by **Johan Peter Koch (1870–1928)**, one of the most prominent Danish explorers of Greenland. In it, he commemorates the expedition to Queen Louise Land and the crossing of North Greenland’s inland ice in 1912–13 with the emphatic words:



“Den danske Ekspedition til Dronning Louises Land og tversover Nordgrønlands Indlandsis 1912/13 “Skidt eller Kanel!” (Aut Caesar aut nihil)”

(“The Danish Expedition to Queen Louise Land and across North Greenland’s Inland Ice 1912/13 “All or nothing” (Aut Caesar aut nihil)”)

Beneath Koch’s entry, and *on the same day*, appears a dedication in German by **Alfred Wegener (1880–1930)**, who had led the expedition to Queen Louise Land together with him. Wegener echoes Koch’s formulation with the succinct phrase:

“Entweder Oder!” — “Either–or!” — which may also be understood in this context as “All or nothing.” The phrase is moreover the German title of *Enten – Eller* (Either/Or), the first published and most celebrated work of the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard.

Wegener is remembered today above all as the originator of the continental drift hypothesis, first advanced in 1912, which proposed that the continents move slowly across the surface of the Earth.

P. 17

An entry dated **17 September 1913** was made by **J. F. Helweg**, probably identifiable as **Johannes Frederik Johnstrup Helweg**, the Danish geologist who in that year conducted research in and around Nuuk.

A further inscription, dated **25 September 1913**, was contributed by **P. M. Pedersen** of the *M/S Kap York*.

The sequence concludes with an entry of **21 October 1913** by First Officer (Styrmand) **A. Marcussen** of the *S/S Eclipse*. The auxiliary steam whaler *Eclipse*, built by Alexander Hall and Sons in 1867, had by then already had a varied career: after service under Norwegian ownership in Antarctic sealing, she was acquired in 1913 by the Imperial Russian Navy and, after the First World War, served as a supply ship for Soviet expeditions in the Arctic.

P. 18

An entry dated **22 October 1913** was made by **Nils A. Olsen**, Chief Engineer of the *S/S Eclipse*, who contrasts the relative pleasures of a mosquito ridden summer stay with his present irritation at what he considered an unnecessary quarantine.

An entry dated **20 April 1914** was contributed by **Peter Hansen**, who briefly mentions North Greenland.

A further entry, dated **23 April 1914**, is of particular importance as the first inscription in Kalaallisut, the Inuit language of Greenland, to appear in the guestbook. It was written by **Gustav Olsen (1878–1950)**, missionary and author, who recorded a local proverb:

“Nersunneq eqqaamallugu pinerpaitinak nukissarniarinak!”
(Kalaallit oqaluttuassaat)
— “Remember honour, but seek neither beauty nor power for yourself.”

Born in Greenland, Olsen was deeply acquainted with its language and culture, and both he and several of his siblings played notable roles in the island’s modern history. Through his friendship with Knud Rasmussen, he became the first missionary at Uummannaq (Dundas), then a region not yet fully Christianised, and devoted his career to missionary and linguistic work in North Greenland. The inscription was likely made during a return from his brief stay in Denmark, where he had been residing since 1913.

P. 19

An entry dated **25 April 1914** was made by **Anna Binger**, who notes that she was about to board the *S/S Hans Egede*, while expressing the hope of returning to visit Sisimiut on another occasion.

Further inscriptions, dated **27 May 1914**, include one by **A. J. Björn**, who remarks that this was his first journey aboard the *S/S Godthaab*, and another by **F. Knudson (?)**, though the reading of the name remains uncertain.

The sequence concludes with an entry of **28 May 1914** by **Henning Schuntze (?)**, whose surname, like sev-

eral others in this cluster, is uncertain in its reading.

P. 20

The month of June 1914 marks one of the most vivid sequences in the guestbook, capturing a moment of lively exchange among visitors to the governor’s home.

An entry dated **14 June 1914** was made by Colony Manager (Kolonibestyrer) **Karl Frederik Hannibal Anton Fencker**, son of Edgar Christian Fencker (1844–1904), the prominent Greenland inspector and ornithologist.

Further entries of the same date include one by **Laura Nymann**, who remarks on the great distance between Sisimiut and Ilulissat (Jakobshavn), as well as inscriptions by **Elisabeth Gullach Jensen** and **Ingeborg Ostermann**. These women appear to have belonged to the circle of officials’ and pastors’ families in Greenland and were perhaps awaiting onward passage by boat.

P. 21

The first entry written in English in the book appears on **14 June 1914**, composed by **Walter Thaxter**, who expressed his appreciation for the Thron family’s hospitality in a series of simple rhymes. On the same day, **Fritz Böttcher** added an inscription in German—a reminder of the multilingual character of the guestbook and the diversity of its guests. That date also records the signature of **Ragnhild Fencker** (née Cronfeldt), wife of Colony Manager Carl Thorleif Hannibal Fencker (see p. 20), whose presence reflects the close ties between administrative and domestic life in western Greenland.

The following day, **15 June**, **Sofie Baumann** (née Binzer, 1863–?) contributed a poetic note describing an unforgettable journey from Nasaasaaq (Kællingehætten) to the mountain Palasip Qaqqaa (Præstefjeld). Married to John Christian Gustav Baumann (1863–1938), Inspector for South Greenland, she evokes the landscape with a rare sense of wonder, blending travel narrative and personal reflection in a tone both lyrical and precise.

By the end of the month, the tone shifts. On **30 June**, **Margrethe Mortensen** offered one of the most candid remarks in the entire volume: “*Greenland is a terrible hole.*” Her words remind us that not every visitor was equally enchanted by the governor’s hospitality or the comfort of his well made bed. Immediately following her comment appears another, almost certainly written by her husband, **Hans Mortensen**, a Danish geologist, who replied with dry precision: “*I do not think so.*” Together, the two entries form a miniature domestic dialogue in ink—proof that even in Greenland, marital harmony could survive a difference of opinion about the local scenery.

P. 22

The closing days of June 1914 bring a series of entries that reflect both the diversity and refinement of the guestbook’s contributors. On **30 June**, **Johanne Marie Clausen** added her name to the register, marking the quiet conclusion of a month rich in voices and impressions.

Around the same time, **Frances Marie Olrik (née Heegaard, 1886–?)** recorded one of the most distinctive passages of the period. She quoted a line from Alfred de Quervain’s *Quer durchs Grönlandeis: Die schweizerische Grönland Expedition 1912/13*, published that same year, thus linking the domestic world of the governor’s home to the broader sphere of scientific exploration. In her note, she also mentioned that she was passing through on the *S/S Hans Egede*, a vessel emblematic of Greenland’s maritime connections and the rhythm of travel that shaped its social life.

Frances Olrik’s entry carries particular resonance within the history of Greenlandic exploration. Married to Harald Olrik (1883–1958)—grandson of the renowned Danish Greenlander Christian Søren Marcus Olrik (1815–1870), professor, zoologist, botanist, and Royal Inspector of North Greenland—she represented the last generation of a family deeply intertwined with the island’s scientific and administrative traditions. Harald Olrik continued this legacy from his post in Tasiilaq (Ammassalik), maintaining the family’s enduring connection to Greenland’s eastern coast.

A final entry from **June 1914** by **Alitta Mercedes Brum (?)** adds a note of farewell: she writes that she is leaving home after three years in Greenland. Her brief remark closes the month’s sequence with quiet poignancy—a reminder that behind the official titles and scientific endeavours lay the personal rhythms of arrival and departure, of belonging and return.

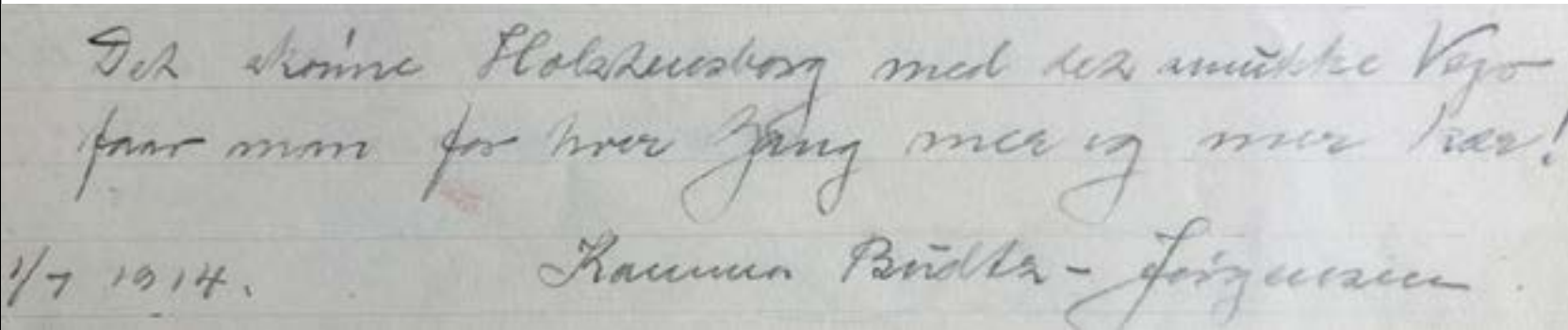
P. 23

The guestbook entries from July 1914 reveal a fascinating intersection of science, art, and everyday life in Greenland. On **1 July**, **C. Gemeinhardt** contributed a brief but intriguing remark: “*...when it comes to filming, the Eskimo and the Raven don’t stand in each other’s way.*” The line likely refers to the earliest surviving film footage of Greenland’s landscape, recorded that same year under the direction of William C. Thalbitzer (1873–1958), Danish philologist and professor of Greenlandic Inuit studies at the University of Copenhagen. The film, Southern Greenland 1914, remains accessible today and stands as a milestone in Arctic visual documentation.

On the same date, **Knud Fæster**, a Danish engineer who had spent several years in Greenland contributing to the development of local food supply systems, added his name to the register. His entry reflects the practical dimension of Greenland’s modernization—engineering and sustenance intertwined with exploration and governance.

Also on **1 July**, the guestbook was signed by **Kamma Budtz Jørgensen (Karen Margrethe Budtz Jørgensen, 1875–1942)**, a Danish dentist and the first person to hold a formal dental post in Greenland. Her work marked a milestone in Arctic medical history: she conducted pioneering studies on the teeth and oral health of Greenlandic Inuit, combining clinical practice with early anthropological observation.

She quotes a striking Arabic saying, rendered in English as: “*O God, protect me from my friends; as for my enemies, I will take care of them myself.*”



An undated entry by **S. Petersen**, identified as First Engineer of the *S/S Danmark*, adds a maritime note to the sequence, reminding us of the ships that sustained Greenland’s fragile connection to the outside world.

P. 24

Among the mid July entries, one undated note signed **Sendrup (?)** recalls his first journey to Greenland sixteen years earlier.

On **20 July**, the guestbook records the signature of **C. Falsen**, Intendant, followed by an entry from **Merten (?)**, whose presence, though less documented, adds to the mosaic of visitors passing through the governor’s home during that summer.

The following day, **21 July**, **Oskar Koch** inscribed his name.

P. 25

The final entries of July **1914** capture a moment of scientific and poetic reflection at the governor’s home. On **21 July**, **Sydney Hobart Ball (1877–1949)**, an American geologist and mining engineer conducting research in Greenland, added his name to the guestbook. His presence reflects the growing international interest in the island’s geological formations and mineral resources during the early twentieth century.

On the same day, **Amos D. Johnson** followed with a dedication written in English, echoing Ball’s tone and underscoring the cosmopolitan character of the guestbook, where scientific visitors from abroad mingled with Danish officials and explorers.

The following entry, dated **22 July**, belongs to **C. C. Jensen**, who composed in Danish a poem celebrating Greenland, its men and bright women, and their departure aboard the *HDMS Ingolf*—a schooner rigged steam gunboat built of iron and launched in 1876. The vessel played a significant role in hydrographic surveys off Greenland’s coast during the summers of 1895 and 1896, in what became known as the Ingolf Expedition. A fjord in northern Greenland was later named in its honour during the 1906–1908 Denmark Expedition led by Lauge Koch, which mapped the island’s northern coast.

Throughout its long service, the *HDMS Ingolf* undertook numerous voyages—northward to the Faroes, Iceland, and Greenland in summer, and southward to the Danish West Indies in winter—embodying the rhythm of exploration and connection that defined Denmark’s maritime presence in the North Atlantic.

P. 26

The guestbook continues with two poetic farewells to Greenland. On **22 July**, **S. Holck** contributed a lyrical entry bidding farewell to the island—a brief poem that captures the melancholy of departure and the lingering beauty of the Arctic landscape. His words echo the sentiments of many visitors who found in Greenland both isolation and inspiration.

On the same day, **P. Jensen** added his own note, again mentioning the *HDMS Ingolf*.

P. 27

On **6 August 1914**, **Morten Pedersen Porsild (1872–1953)** signed the guestbook. A Danish botanist whose career was profoundly tied to Greenland, Porsild had conducted fieldwork there since the late 1890s. He participated in expeditions in 1898 and 1902 with the physiologist August Krogh, and in 1906 founded the Arctic Station at Qeqertarsuaq, later incorporated into the University of Copenhagen. Supported by leading polar figures such as Knud Rasmussen, Mylius Erichsen, and Fridtjof Nansen, the station was initially financed privately, with its operating costs later assumed by the Danish state. Porsild directed the institution for four decades, undertaking further scientific expeditions—including one to Qeqertarsuatsiaq (Hare Island) in 1909—and was awarded the Hans Egede Medal in 1921. His entry in the guestbook stands as a quiet testament to the enduring scientific presence that shaped Greenland’s modern research tradition.

The following month, on **16 September 1914**, **Chr. A. Hansen**, captain of the steamer *Danmark*, added his signature, followed on **17 September** by another entry from **Hansen** of *S.S. Danmark*. These consecutive inscriptions mark the close of the summer season of 1914, when maritime traffic connected Greenland’s remote settlements with Denmark and the wider world. Together, they form a fitting conclusion to the year’s record—linking the scientific, administrative, and nautical threads that defined Greenland’s life at the threshold of modern exploration.

P. 28

The closing entries of 1914 continue the maritime thread that runs through the guestbook. On **17 September**, **W. Nielsen**, First Mate of the *S/S Danmark*, added his signature, followed by **M. Andersen**, likewise of the *Danmark*, and **Ge. V. Lindø**, whose name completes the sequence of officers associated with the vessel. Their inscriptions mark the final traces of the ship’s summer presence in Greenlandic waters—a reminder of the steady rhythm of arrivals and departures that shaped the island’s connection to Denmark.

A later entry, dated **4 October 1914**, belongs to **Frederik ‘Fale’ Olsen (1882–1969)**. Written in Kalaallisut (West Greenlandic), his inscription translates as: “*If there is a good relationship, then the community will improve.*” Olsen—known as Simon Jakob Frederik ‘Fale’ Olsen—was a Greenlandic politician and brother to missionaries Gustav Olsen (1878–1950) and Julius Olsen (1887–1972), as well as to Jakob Olsen (1890–1936), who served as translator on several expeditions. His words close the year’s record with quiet wisdom, expressing the enduring ideal of harmony and cooperation that underpinned Greenland’s evolving community life.

P. 29

The final entries of the guestbook trace the closing months of 1914 and the quiet transition into the following year. On **15 October 1914**, **P. Winther Jensen**, of the *S.S. Godthaab*, recorded his visit, representing the steady maritime link between Greenland and Denmark that sustained the island’s life and trade.

On **11 December 1914**, **Ellen Rössel** added an inscription in French—a graceful gesture that reflects the cosmopolitan tone of the guestbook and the cultural breadth of its contributors.

At the same period appears the entry of **David Ignatius Sivert “Dâverssuak” Olsen (1870–1944)**, written

1915.

K. Rasmussen tegner Grønlands polit og Profeten
Jeg for mig selv om det er frimærket Ketchikan
Ketchikan 18.6.15

Osian Egeberg



Tæt for
hans bemand
1/2 18.6.15

Osian Egeberg

1915.

Lige som du selv har jeg tænkt af at
vognvogn - Grønland er, hvordan man siger,
men har man got til at gøre det
p. 4. Egeberg 22. juni 1915
Hage Ridding

Jeg tænker det selv har vant i Grønland
Jeg mener man der at Rende til det
p. 4. 1/2. Rasmussen
J. Rasmussen

Und takk og skal takk vare,
baste Land Folk & Lyst
de grønlandske danske Hømmet lere!
Anna Jørn

Grønland er hertig
Hver Færdig bemanding!
J. Egeberg Rasmussen

2. 24/6 1915
Hver har blive hede
H. Rasmussen (in his 5 years)

in Kalaallisut. Olsen was an entrepreneurial Greenland, remembered as the first to own a private motor-boat in the country. His innovations modernised and commercialised local fishing, particularly salmon, and in the 1920s he entered Greenlandic politics. His presence in the guestbook bridges the world of traditional community life and the emerging modern economy of the island.

The sequence concludes with an entry dated **7 May 1915** by **Agnete Marie Christensen Thorborg (née Levinsen, 1861–1951)**, who quoted Matthew 8:23: “*Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him.*”

P. 30

9 May 1915

Among the most elaborate and fully illustrated contributions to the guestbook is the drawn map by **Ossian Elgström (1883–1950)**, the Swedish illustrator and artist who would later devote a substantial part of his career to Greenland through paintings, drawings, and books. This entry appears to record his first journey to the island—a subject to which he returned repeatedly and which became central to his artistic work. Extending across a full page and part of the facing leaf, the composition presents a humorous visual chronicle of Elgström’s voyage along the west coast of Greenland. At the top, a Swedish caption reads: “*K. Rasmusen thinks Greenland is full of prophets. I, for my part, think it has too many catechists.*” The sequence begins in Godthaab (Godthåb), introduced by the sardonic line “*In Godthaab I have fastened,*” above a scene of travellers lying intoxicated beneath a table. Elgström identifies himself throughout the drawing by means of a halo; in this first vignette he appears at the right.

The journey continues northward to Maniitsoq (Sukkertoppen), where he notes the sighting of a German flag—depicted as a war ensign and accompanied by the caption “*In Sukkertoppen I saw the German flag.*” The next stop is Sisimiut (Holsteinsborg), where the present entry was later made; here, Elgström’s heart is shown opening as he crosses the Arctic Circle.

The northernmost point reached is Egedesminde (Aasiaat), where the artist humorously complains of a sore throat. He portrays himself in a nightshirt, muffled in a scarf and carrying a chamber pot, seemingly in search of relief—a self caricature that blends wit with the fatigue of travel.

Elgström later revisited this journey in his illustrated volume *Moderna eskimåer: skildringar från en resa i Västgrönland sommaren 1915 (Modern Eskimos: Sketches from a Journey in West Greenland in the Summer of 1915)*, published in 1916. The guestbook drawing thus stands as an early and intimate precursor to his later work—an artistic record of discovery, humour, and self portraiture at the threshold of Greenland’s modern visual history.

P. 31

The entries from June 1915 continue the record of engineers, travellers, and visitors whose work shaped Greenland’s modern development. On **22 June**, **Aage Bretting (1888–1968)**, a Danish civil engineer active in Greenland from 1910 and later in Istanbul, contributed an entry in Danish. He notes that he was stationed in Egedesminde (Aasiaat) and includes the wry phrase “*Grønland er ‘uvartik imanguak’*”—“*Green-*

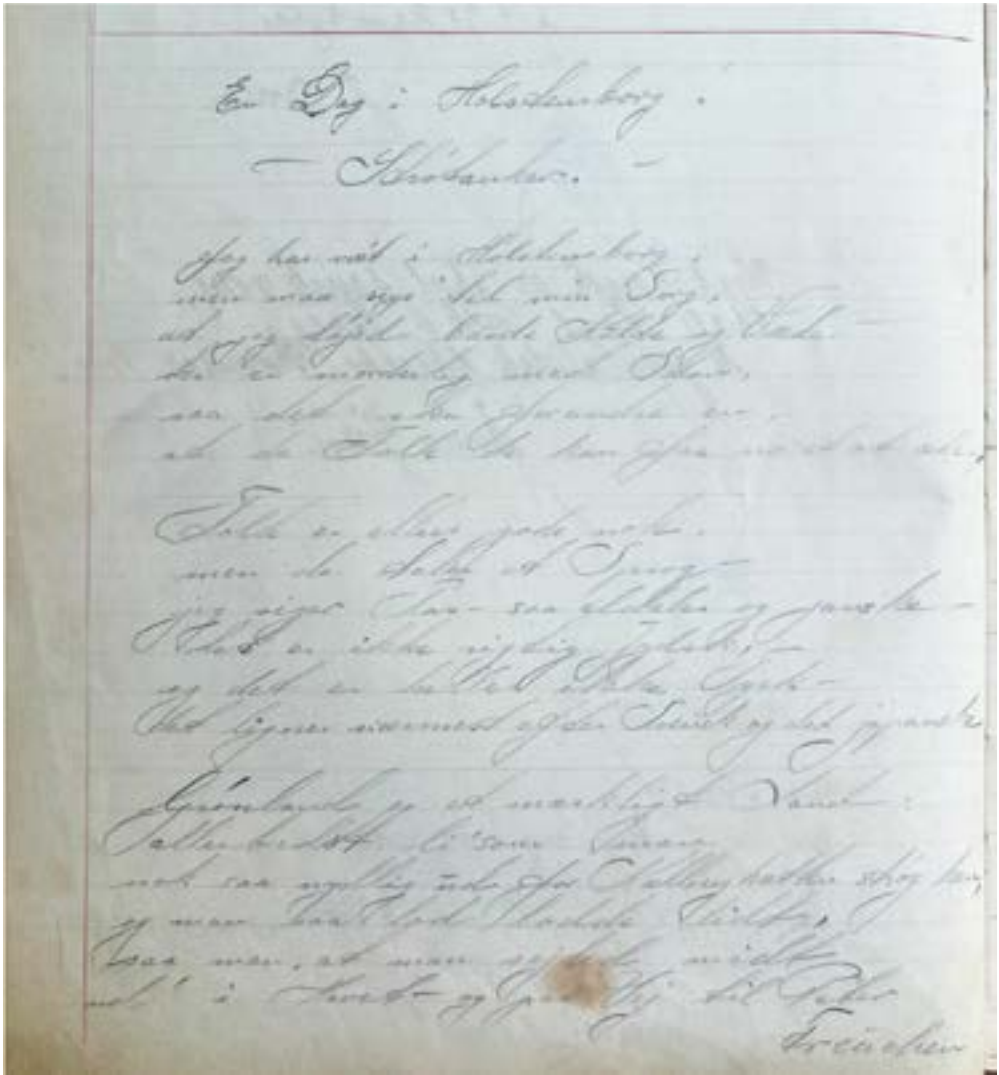
land is a bit troublesome”—yet concludes that it remains a good place to be. His words capture the mixture of hardship and affection that characterises many of the guestbook’s reflections.

Several undated inscriptions follow: **J. Balle (?)** of the S.S. *Hans Egede*; **Anna Jørn**, who glorifies the Danish colonies in her note; and **J. Fibiger Christensen**, whose brief signature adds to the record of Danish visitors connected with maritime and administrative service.

P. 32

The guestbook’s later pages from June 1915 bring together engineers, explorers, poets, and scholars whose lives were closely tied to Greenland. Among the undated entries appear the signatures of **Heinrich Møller**, Danish engineer, and **Carl Dahl**.

A particularly vivid contribution comes from **Peter Freuchen (1886–1957)**, the celebrated Danish explorer and writer. In a humorous poem composed in light hearted, colloquial Danish—richly mimicking a Jut-landic dialect—Freuchen offers a playful reflection on Greenland and its people. His first inscription in the guestbook dates to 24 April 1913, marking an early moment in his long association with the Arctic.



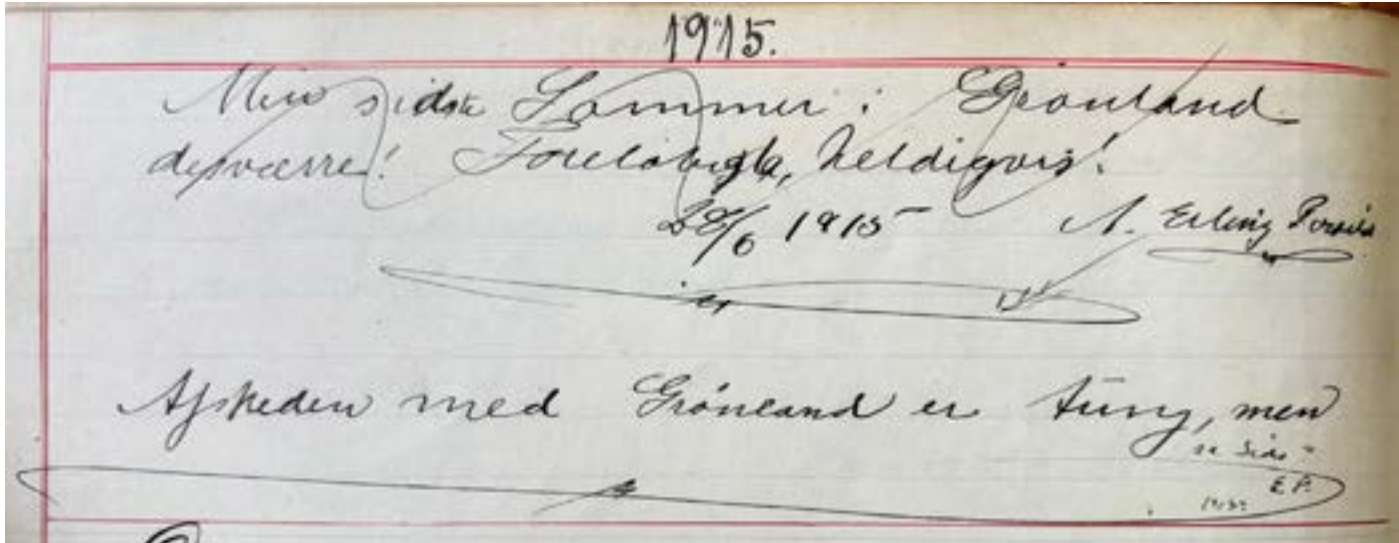
P. 33

On 25 June 1915, **Poul Rostgaard** of Qeqertarsuaq (Godhavn) added a longer poem dedicated to Greenland, continuing the tradition of literary expression that runs through the volume. An undated entry by **Richard “Dick” Jensen** follows, adding another voice to the circle of travellers and residents who passed through the governor’s home.

The sequence concludes with an entry dated 28 June 1915 by **Johanne Porsild (née Nielsen, 1870–1940)**, wife of the botanist Morten Pedersen Porsild (1872–1956). The couple spent most of their adult lives at the isolated Arctic Station in Qeqertarsuaq, the first permanent research station to operate above the Arctic Circle. They were the parents of Erling Porsild (1901–1977), the noted Danish Canadian botanist. From the station’s foundation in 1906, Johanne lived there for more than thirty years, apart from brief visits to Denmark, until her death on 5 August 1940. In her handwritten message, she refers to Greenland as “the land in the north that we love,” a phrase that encapsulates the devotion and endurance shared by those who made the Arctic their home.

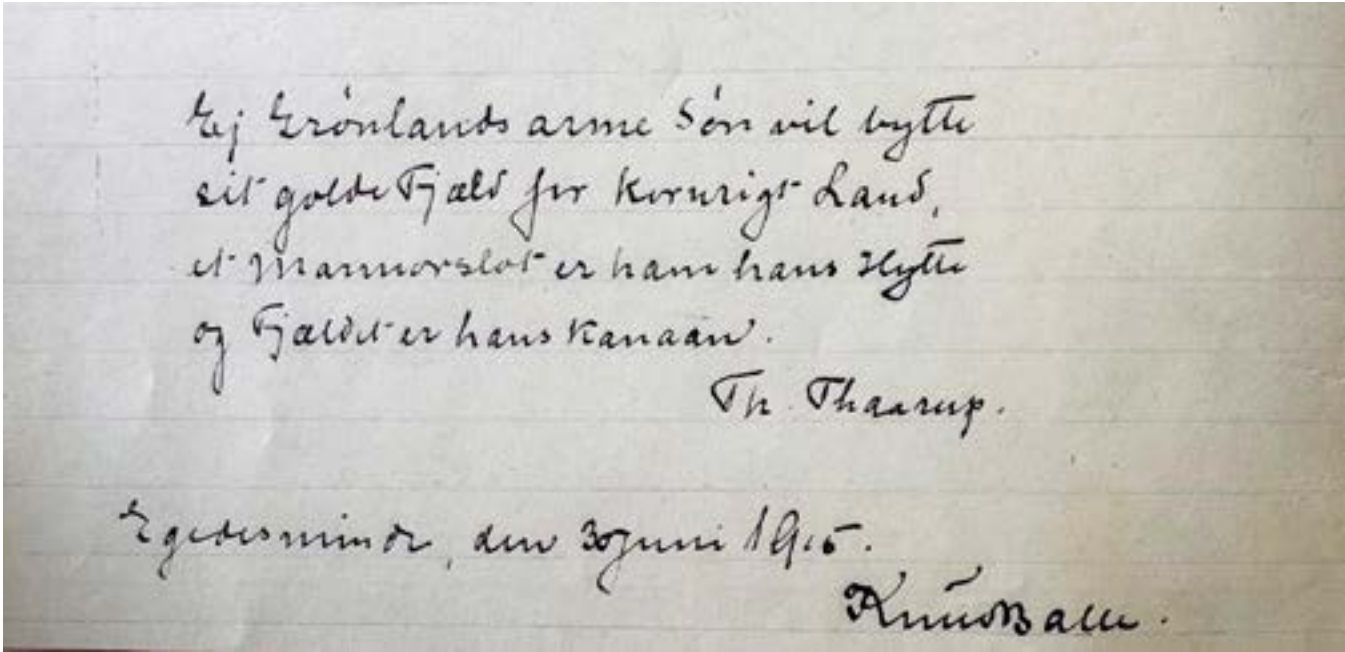
P. 34

The closing entries of June 1915 continue the record of Greenland’s residents and visitors whose lives were closely tied to its scientific and cultural development. On 28 June, **Alf Erling Porsild (1901–1977)**—later a distinguished Danish Canadian botanist—added his name to the guestbook. Only fourteen at the time, he had lived at the Arctic Station in Qeqertarsuaq since the age of five, having moved there with his parents, Morten Pedersen Porsild and Johanne Porsild. His note is poignant: he describes this as, for the time being, his last summer in Greenland and writes movingly of the difficulty of parting. He would later become one of the foremost specialists in the flora of Arctic and northern Canada.



Another entry from the same day, 28 June, was likely written by **Regnar Bentzen**, district medical doctor in Qeqertarsuaq (Godhavn), whose presence reflects the small but vital circle of professionals serving Greenland’s remote communities.

On 30 June, **Knud Balle (1877–1928)** of Egedesminde (Aasiaat)—a Greenlandic priest and writer—added his signature. Balle published articles in the West Greenlandic language and was among the early voices shaping Greenland’s literary and theological discourse.



Several undated entries follow: **Ellen Chemnitz (née Groth, 1882–1923)**, member of the influential Chemnitz family, and her husband **Karl Chemnitz (1884–1965)**, who wrote in Kalaallisut the word “ilumorneringnâk” (“with deepest sincerity”), also signing in Egedesminde (Aasiaat).

Together, these inscriptions form a gentle close to the summer of 1915—a sequence of youthful farewells, professional presences, and heartfelt affirmations that capture the enduring bond between Greenland’s people and the land they called home.

P. 35

On 2 July 1915, in Aasiaat (Egedesminde), **Harald Lindow**, Royal Inspector of North Greenland between 1913 and 1924, added his signature to the guestbook. His entry marks the presence of one of the key administrative figures of the period, whose tenure shaped the governance and infrastructure of northern Greenland.

A nearby inscription dated 19 June 1915 (though probably July) belongs to **Hjördis Dam**, whose brief note adds a personal touch to the sequence of official and professional visitors recorded that summer. After these entries, the guestbook falls silent for more than a year. When writing resumes, the inscriptions are no longer made in Sisimiut (Holsteinsborg) but in Uummannaq, reflecting a shift in the geographical focus of the record.

The next dated entry, from 11 September 1916, was written by **Elisa Kierulff Lange**, who expressed

sadness at leaving Greenland aboard the S.S. *Hans Egede*. Her farewell closes this section with quiet poignancy—a reminder of the emotional ties that bound many visitors to the island, and of the bittersweet departures that punctuated life in the Arctic.

P. 36

Two entries dated **11 September 1916** mark the closing moments of the Uummannaq sequence: **Ingeborg Bretting** and **Herdis Lindow** each added their names, continuing the thread of families and officials associated with Greenland’s northern administration. Their inscriptions, simple yet dignified, reflect the quiet rhythm of life in the settlement at the time.

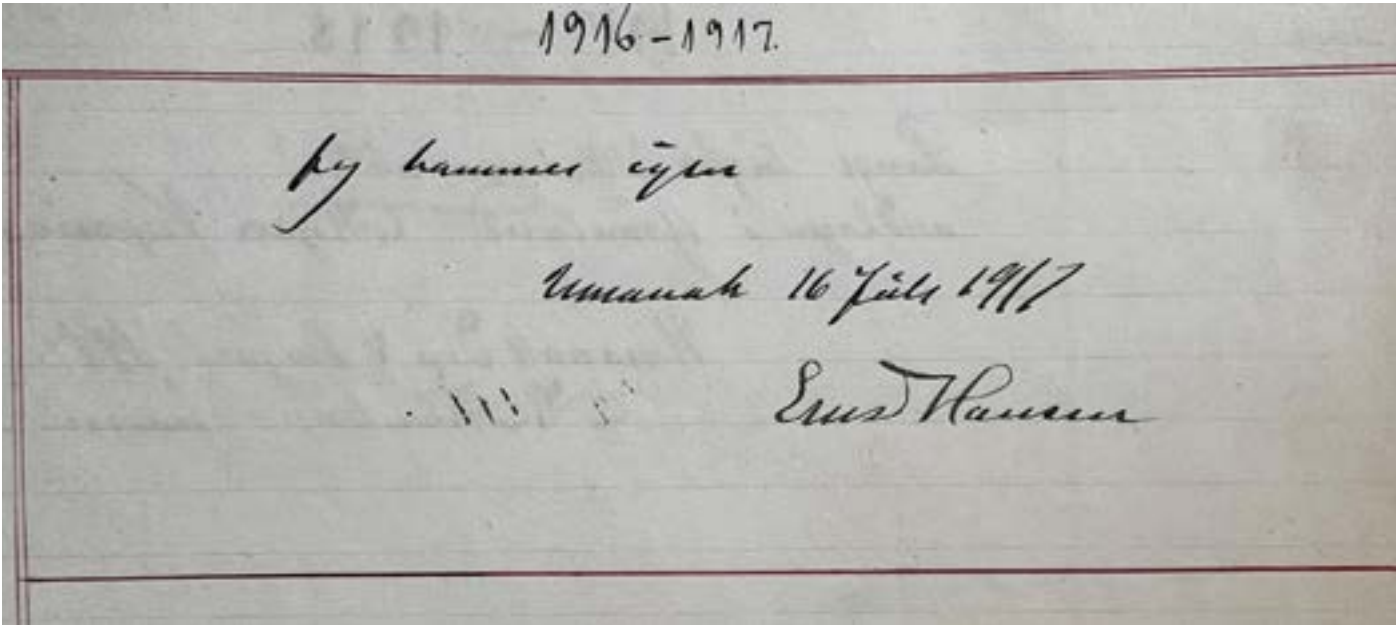
The next dated entry appears nearly a year later, on **21 May 1917**—one of the rare inscriptions written in English. It was contributed by **Edmund Otis Hovey (1862–1924)**, a prominent American geologist and curator of geology at the American Museum of Natural History in New York. His message reads:

“The long sledge journey southward along the Greenland coast from Etah has brought me into pleasant contact with many people, but none have been more hospitable and agreeable than those whom it has been a joy to meet, for all too short a visit, in Umanak.”

Two further entries dated **16 July 1917** follow: **Svend Aage Møller**, who also wrote in English, and **Aase Stilling Christensen**, whose signature completes the sequence.

P. 37

On **16 July 1917**, **Ernst Hansen (1892–1968)**, Danish painter, recorded his first visit to Greenland. This journey marked the beginning of his lifelong fascination with the Arctic landscape, which he would later revisit in 1930 as part of Knud Rasmussen’s *Thule Expedition*. Hansen’s early impressions of Greenland profoundly shaped his artistic vision, blending realism with the poetic austerity of the North.



An entry dated **31 July 1917**, signed **V. d....**, remains partly illegible, followed by two inscriptions from **6 September 1917**: **Ida Fleischer** and **Marie Bertelsen**, whose names appear together, suggesting shared travel or residence in the region.

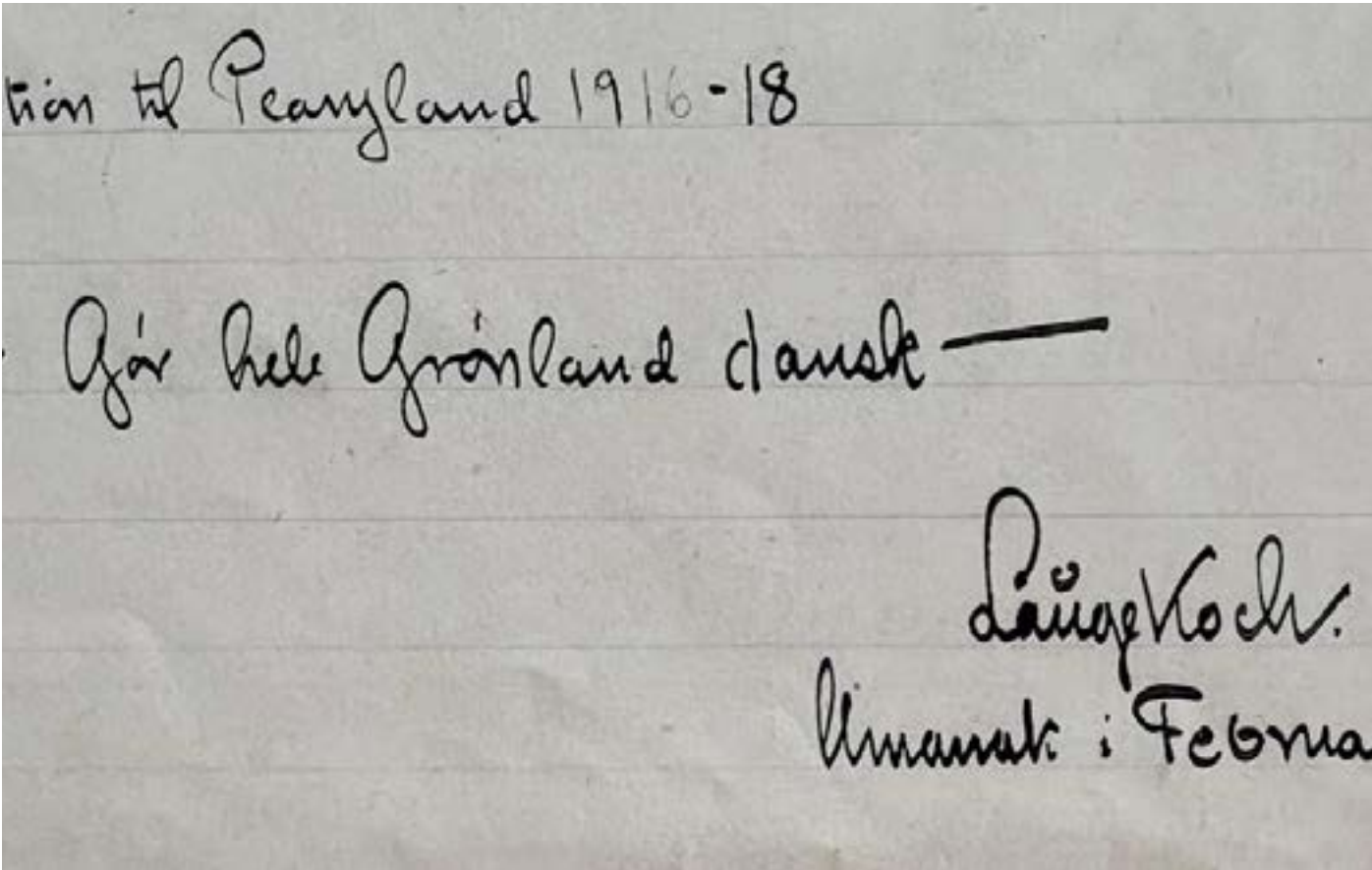
P. 38

Further entries include **8 August 1917**, signed by **H(ans) Klintrup Jensen**, and **8 September 1917**, by **J. Nielsen** and **Hans Jensen Bryder (1887–1971)**, a Danish medical doctor and author active in Upernavik from 1915 to 1920. Bryder’s inscription is distinctive: he wrote a phrase in Greek taken from Xenophon’s *Anabasis (The Expedition of Cyrus)*, translating to “*From there they travelled in ... stages.*” The classical quotation elegantly links ancient exploration with the modern spirit of Arctic discovery.

The sequence concludes with an entry from **February 1918** by **Lauge Koch (1892–1964)**, the eminent Danish geologist and explorer. His note commemorates the *Second Thule Expedition* to Peary Land (1916–1918), inscribed with the words:

“II Thule ekspedition til Peary Land 1916–18 — Gør hele Grønland dansk —”
“II Thule Expedition to Peary Land 1916–18 — Make all of Greenland Danish —”

Koch’s inscription stands as both a scientific milestone and a patriotic declaration, closing this section with the confident tone of Denmark’s early twentieth century Arctic ambition.

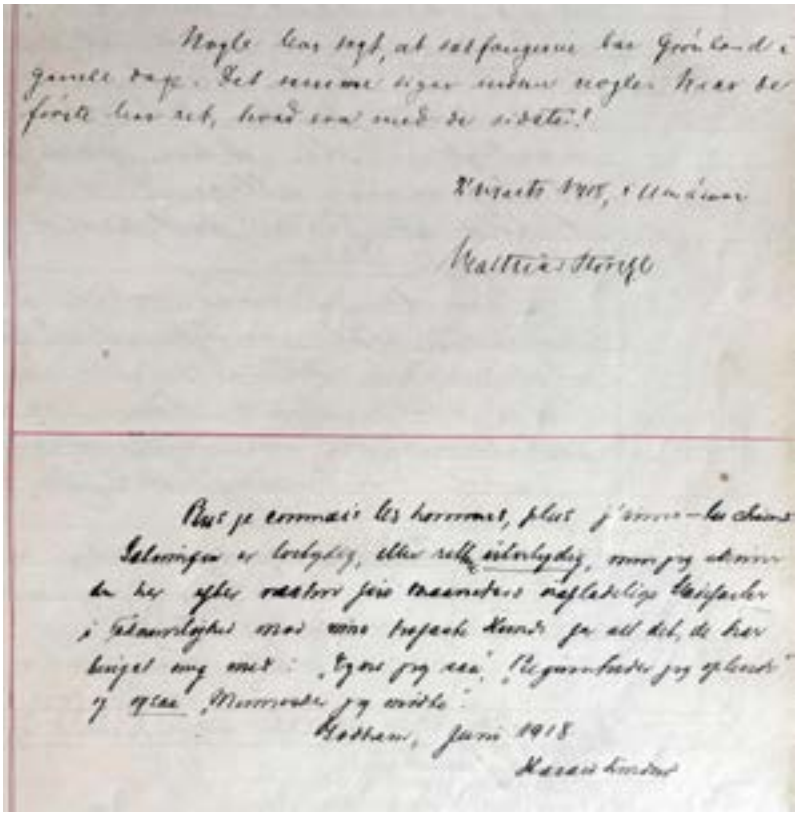


On **18 February 1918**, **Agnethe Knortson (?)** added her name to the guestbook, marking one of the final entries of that winter.

A few weeks later, on **2 March 1918**, **Matthias Storch (1883–1957)**—a highly influential figure in Greenlandic history—contributed a striking inscription. The son of a local trapper, Storch became the first Greenlandic priest of the Church of Greenland in 1910. Politically active, he championed education and Greenlandic nationalism. In 1914, he published Singnagtugaq (The Dream), the first novel written entirely in Greenlandic, translated into Danish the following year by Knud Rasmussen.

Known for his sharp social criticism, Storch’s entry reflects his characteristic wit and moral inquiry. His words, translated from Greenlandic, read:

“Some say Greenland was sustained by sealers in the past, and some still say so today. If that was true, then which one of them is right?”



In **June 1918**, the guestbook was signed once more by **Harald Lindow (1886–1972)**, a prominent Danish jurist who served as Royal Inspector for North Greenland from 1913 to 1924. He also took part in exploratory journeys across the region. Lindow had already signed the volume on 2 July 1915 and would do so again on 22 August 1920.

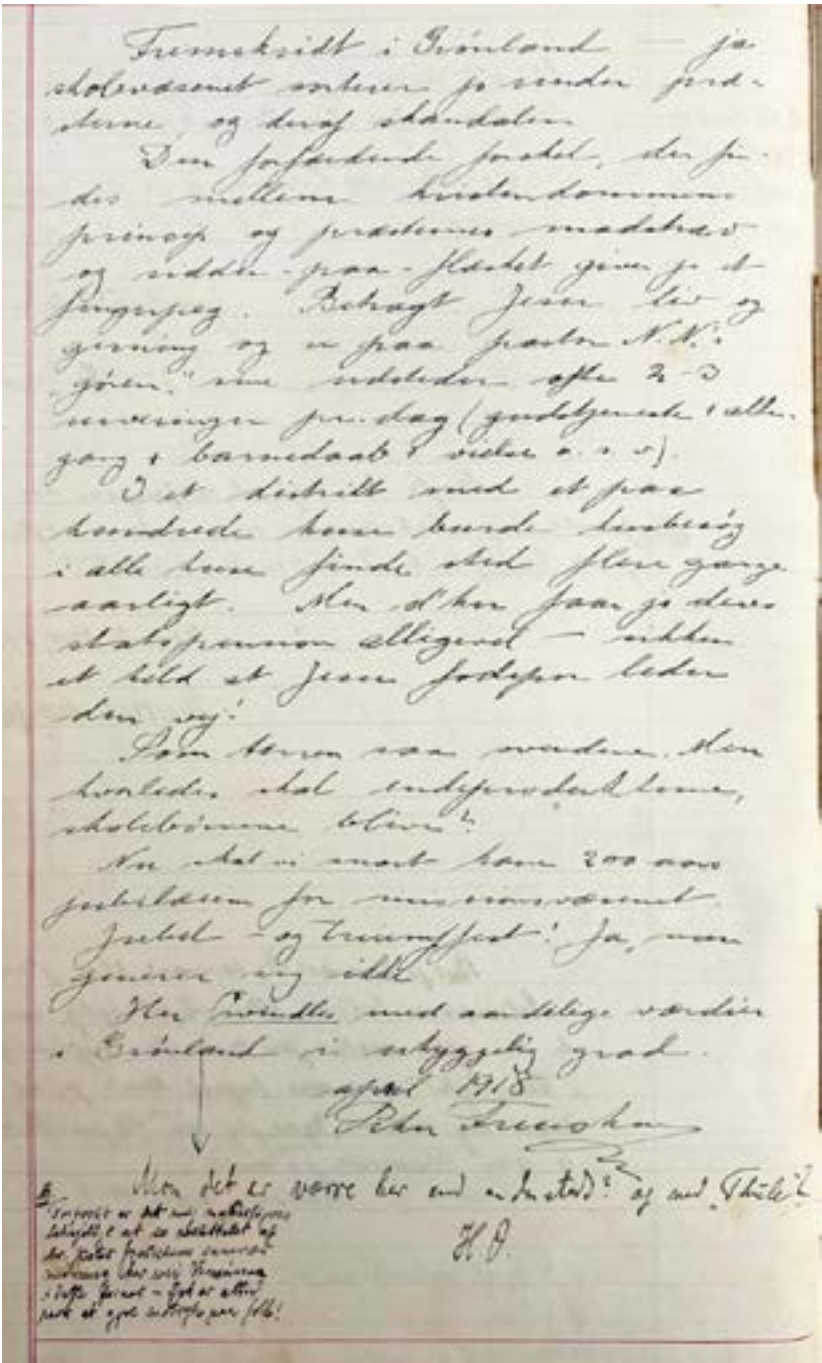
In this entry, he refers to the loyal dogs that accompanied him during an almost four-month sledging journey through Greenland. He opens with the timeless phrase:

"Plus je connais les hommes, plus j'aime les chiens." - "The more I know men, the more I love dogs."

In **April 1918**, **Peter Freuchen (1886–1957)**, the renowned Arctic explorer, signed the guestbook for the third time. In a lengthy note, he vented his frustration with the priests in Greenland, whom he accused of idleness and self interest, neglecting their duties and setting a poor example for schoolchildren, as the local schools were operated by the church. He concluded with the stark observation:

“Spiritual values are swindled here in Greenland to an appalling degree.”

Freuchen’s words stand as one of the most candid and provocative commentaries in the volume.



P. 41

On **8 April 1918**, **Hj(alte?) Borchersen**, acting district doctor in Uummannaq, added his signature to the guestbook. His presence reflects the essential role of medical officers in Greenland's remote communities, where health care and exploration often intersected under challenging Arctic conditions.

A week later, on **15 April 1918**, **Hother Ostermann (1876–1950)**, Danish pastor and historian, contributed an entry distinguished by scholarly reflection. Ostermann was known for his meticulous studies of historical documents concerning Greenland and for his efforts to preserve the written record of its colonial and ecclesiastical past. In this entry, he transcribed four historic quotations about Greenland, dating between 1777 and 1803, creating a bridge between eighteenth century perceptions of the island and the modern era of research and administration.

P. 42

On **15 April 1918**, **Johannes Krogh** recorded his entry, expressing a strong and candid opinion on the geopolitics of Greenland. His remarks reflect the growing awareness among Danish officials and scholars of Greenland's strategic and cultural significance within the Arctic sphere.

The following day, **16 April 1918**, **Ragnhild Galatius** added her signature, continuing the sequence of visitors whose presence marked the administrative and intellectual life of the northern settlements. Later that summer, on **19 July 1918**, **M. (?) Lundberg** wrote from Qaarsuarsuk, then an important coal mining site. His entry stands as a reminder of Greenland's early industrial ventures and the economic ambitions that accompanied exploration and governance in the early twentieth century.

P. 43

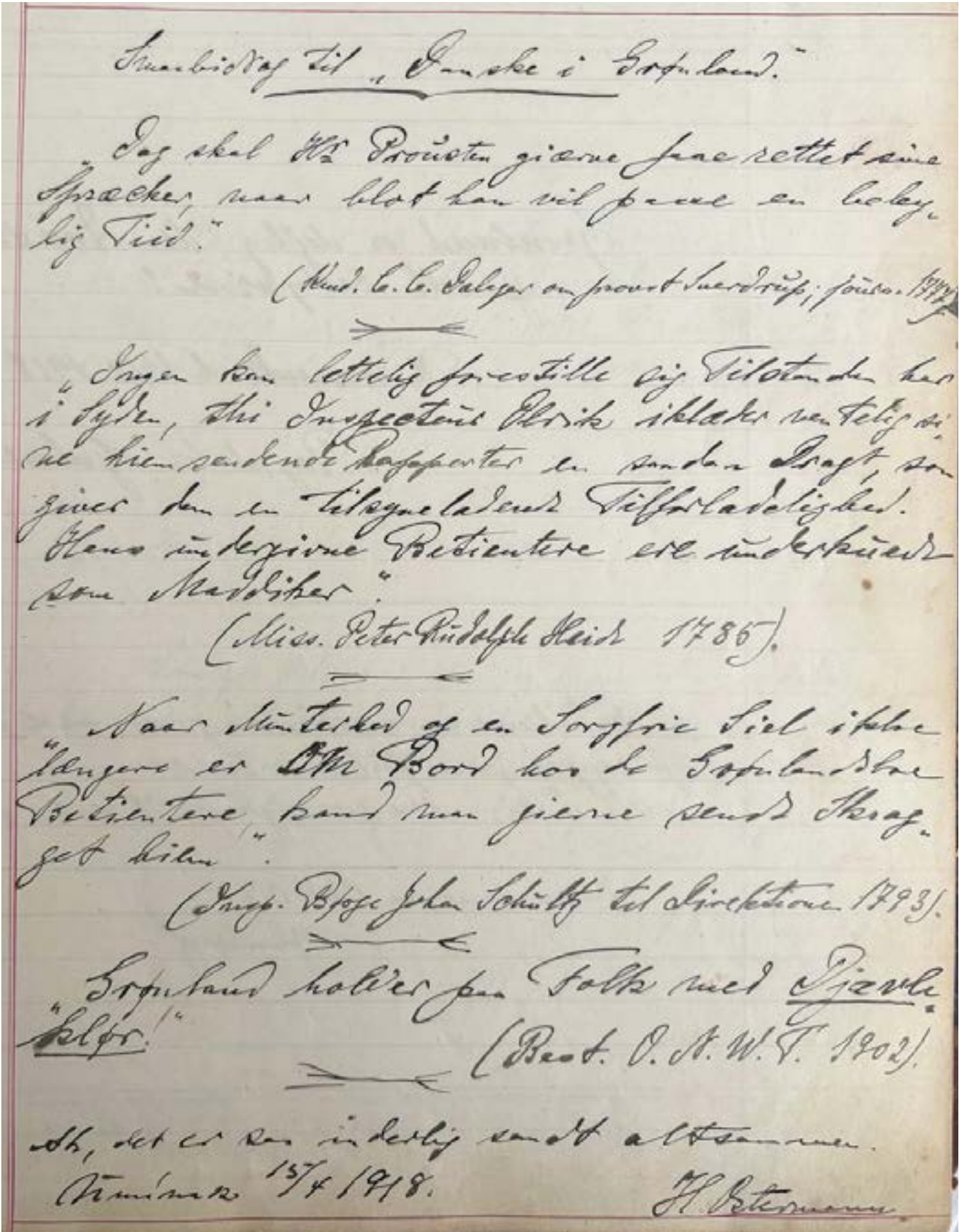
On **20 July 1918**, a visitor named **Majlund** added his signature to the guestbook, contributing one of the final entries of that summer. **The same date** also records the names of **Ingeborg Vinterberg** and **Axel Kristian Marius Vinterberg**, a distinguished Danish colonial official. After a decade of service in Greenland, the couple were preparing to return to Denmark. In his brief note, A. Vinterberg mentions their imminent departure aboard the S.S. *Godthaab*.

P. 44

On **2 August 1918**, **O. E. Olsen** added his name to the guestbook.

A week later, on **8 August**, a visitor signing as **Raf. ... (?)**, from the bark *Nordlyset*, contributed a brief reflection on Greenland's distance from the turmoil of Europe. He noted that the island remained untouched by the First World War—its remoteness shielding it from the conflict that engulfed so much of the world.

The final entry of the month appears on **17 August 1918**, signed simply **Bichsel**, closing the sequence of late summer visitors.

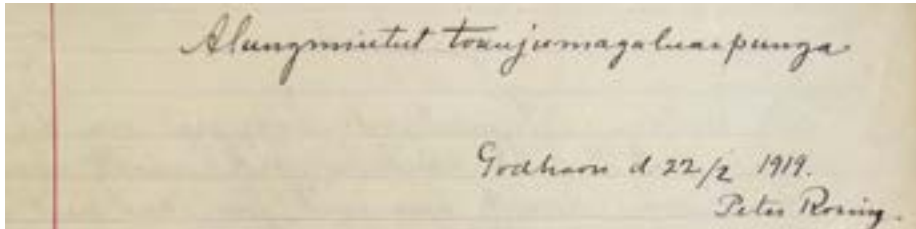


P. 45

On 12 September 1918, the guestbook records the signature of **O. Nordum**.

Ten days later, on 22 September 1918, **M. Kristensen** added his name, marking one of the final entries of that year.

The next inscription appears several months later, on 22 February 1919, written by **Peter Rosing (1892–1965)**, the noted Greenlandic painter and pastor. His contribution is made in Kalaallisut, reflecting both his cultural background and his role in the artistic and ecclesiastical life of early twentieth century Greenland.

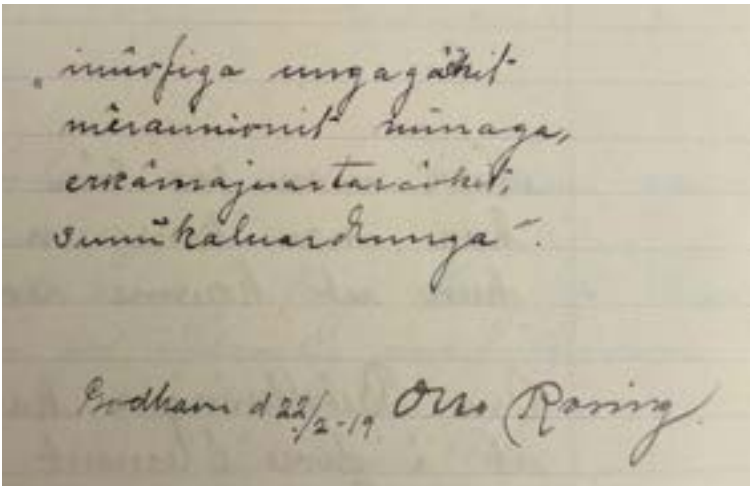


P. 46

On February 22, 1919, **Otto Rosing (1896–1965)** contributed a deeply personal inscription in Kalaallisut, expressing his enduring attachment to his birthplace. His brief lines may be rendered loosely into English as:

"I long for the place where I lived, the land of my childhood, I always remember you, even though I have made my home elsewhere."

Rosing, a nephew of the painter and pastor Peter Rosing, was himself a Greenlandic pastor, author, and artist. Born in Nuuk to Hans Christian Theodor Rosing (1866–1944), he spent a period in Denmark for further education—the likely context of this entry. He later returned permanently to Greenland, where he devoted his life to ecclesiastical and cultural work. Among his concerns was the repatriation of Greenlandic artifacts from Danish museums, so that future generations could learn directly from their own material heritage.



The next entry, dated June 6, 1919, is signed **Holan?**, who noted—somewhat tersely—that he was not particularly fond of Greenland.

P. 47

On May 8, 1919, Johan Olsen of the S/S Veslekari—a sealing vessel built in Denmark in 1918—recorded his visit in the guestbook.

A month later, on June 9, 1919, the whaler J. Sanne added his signature, reflecting the steady rhythm of maritime traffic along Greenland’s western coast.

The entry dated July 2, 1919 is by Else Smidt, who wrote warmly of her affection for Greenland. She was the wife of Aage Knudsen, assistant governor of a district in western Greenland, and her note conveys the deep attachment many accompanying spouses developed during their years in the North.

P. 48

On July 11, 1919, **Dina Ostermann (Marie Kirstine “Dina,” née Andersen, 1878–1945)**, wife of Hother Ostermann (1876–1950)—the Danish pastor and historian who had signed the guestbook the previous year on April 15, 1918—added her own thoughtful entry. Rather than romanticizing the Arctic landscape or lamenting its remoteness, she offered a measured, grounded reflection on colonial life. Happiness in Greenland, she observed, depended entirely on finding “den rette Maade”—the right way—to adapt to its distinctive rhythms and demands.

Two additional undated signatures appear beside hers.

Karl Lehmann (1897–1979), later a chief surgeon and cousin of the renowned seismologist Inge Lehmann (1888–1993), contributed a light hearted note praising the *franskbrød*—the soft, white French bread—served at the governor’s house, a small luxury that clearly delighted him.

Below his name stands the signature of his father, **Julius Lehmann (1861–1931)**, Instructor at the Royal Danish Opera in Copenhagen and likewise an uncle of Inge Lehmann. His text is striking for its carefully structured, rhyming parallelism. In it, he openly interrogates—and ultimately dismantles—his own inherited colonial assumptions. He admits arriving in Greenland with the belief that the Indigenous population were “*de smaa*” (“the little ones”) and mischievous “*Purkene*” (“rascals”). His experiences in the Arctic overturned these prejudices: he came to see the Greenlanders as possessing true wisdom (“*Kløgten*”) and moral clarity, while the European newcomers appeared instead as the “*Faarene*” (“blind sheep”) and even the “*Skurkene*” (“villains”). His entry stands out as one of the most self reflective critiques of colonial bias in the entire volume.

P. 49

The entry dated 17 July 1919 was made by **Godfred Hansen (1876–1937)**, a distinguished Danish naval officer and polar explorer, had just been appointed adjutant to the King in 1919 and would later be promoted to commander in 1927. In 1919–1920, when this text was written, he led the *Third Thule Expedition* to North Greenland.

His entry reads:

“Look at the Alanngorsuaq-dwellers! They do not sow, they do not reap, and they do not gather into barns, but the Danes in Greenland feed them”

The term “*Alanngorsuaq-dwellers*” refers to the inhabitants of Alanngorsuaq, a Kalaallisut place name meaning “a large north-facing place.” Since similar names occur in several parts of Greenland, Alanngor-suaq in this context may be understood as referring more broadly to Greenland itself

Hansen’s wording echoes Matthew 6:26 (*“Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them”*), transforming the biblical image into a pointed colonial observation.

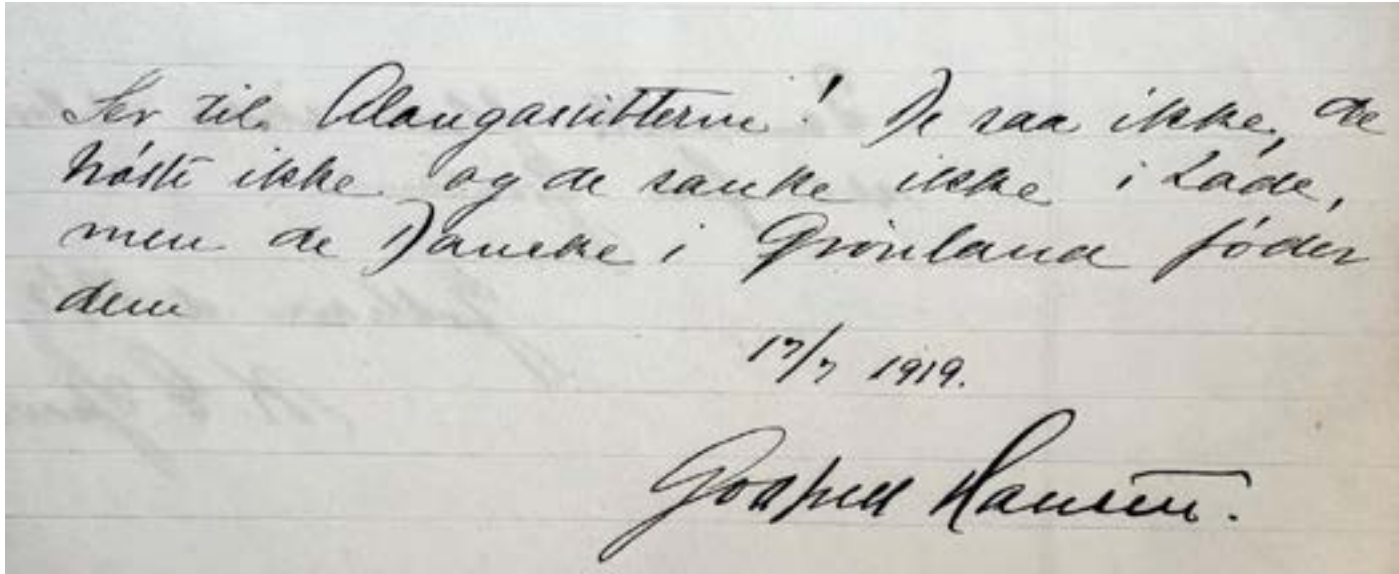
The same biblical passage had also been invoked by Fridtjof Nansen in *Eskimoliv* (1891), where it appears in a broader reflection on Greenlandic attitudes toward the future and life in general:

“On the whole, the Greenlander is a happy person; his mind is cheerful and light as a child’s. If he has a sor-row, he may take it intensely in the moment; but it is soon forgotten, and then he is just as radiant and content with existence as he usually is.

This joyful lightheartedness of his means that he gives little thought to the future; if he has enough food at the moment, he is happy and eats as long as there is anything left, even if he must suffer deprivation afterward—which unfortunately often happens now, and it becomes more common year by year.

This carelessness has often been reproached him in strong terms; the missionaries claim, and probably with justice, that it makes him unreceptive to civilization, and have attempted to exhort him to more prudence and thriftiness with his provisions. But they overlook that it is also written: ‘Take no thought for the morrow. Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them.’

This lightheartedness also has its bright side; indeed, in a way, it is his strength.”



On the same day, **Vibeke Hansen** added her signature. Ellen Vibeke was the daughter of Godfred Hansen’s first wife, Johanne Fibiger Plum, from her earlier marriage. Hansen adopted her as his own, and in 1919 brought her to Greenland as his secretary during the *Third Thule Expedition*.

A third entry, by **Ingeborg Spodsborg**, records only her name, contributing to the cluster of visitors who passed through the governor’s house in mid July.

P. 50

Two further signatures dated ***17 July 1919*** appear in the guestbook.

K. E. Spodsborg records his name, followed by an entry that seems to read “**Mouer?**”, though the hand-writing is uncertain.

On 28 July 1919, **Inger Illum (1896–1969)** added her signature. She was the daughter of Anton Carl Illum (née Petersen, 1863–1938), founder of the Danish department store *Illum*. She later married Bengt Berg (1885–1967), the pioneering Swedish field ornithologist, bird photographer, author, documentary filmmaker, and hunter whose work helped shape early twentieth century wildlife studies.

P. 51

On ***10 September 1919***, the guestbook records the signature of **Esther Lund**—though the surname remains somewhat uncertain due to the handwriting. Beneath her entry appears an undated notation followed by the signature of Lieutenant Wesenberg, who added his name without additional comment.

The following day, ***11 September 1919***, an entry from Egedesminde (Aasiaat) is signed by **Sigrid Hirsch (1871–1951)**, a music teacher. She was married to Svend Camel G. (1867–1949), head of the O.K. branch in Singapore. The couple later settled in Greenland and were the parents of Finn Gad (1911–1986), the distin-guished Greenlandic historian and author of several major works—including the monumental *A History of Greenland*.

P. 52

On ***11 September 1919***, in Aasiaat (Egedesminde), **Else Smidt** added her signature. She was the wife of Aage Knudsen, assistant governor of a district in western Greenland, and had already expressed her affec-tion for the country in an earlier entry dated 2 July 1919.

The next day, ***12 September 1919***, the guestbook records the name **S. Lange**.

Two days later, on ***14 September 1919***, also in Aasiaat, **B. Winther** signed the book.

On ***15 September 1919***, the entry of **Th. A. Strömberg**, of the *S/S Salen*, appears—marking the continued flow of maritime visitors passing through the settlement in early autumn.

P. 53

On 29 September 1919, **Henry Toke Munn (1864–1952)**, an English captain who spent much of his life in Canada, added an entry in English.

Beneath it appears an undated note followed by the signature of **John W. Murray**, shipmaster, who likewise wrote his inscription in English.

A further entry on the same page is signed by **Jørgen Hvam**, a medical doctor serving in Greenland. During his posting in Ilulissat (then Jakobshavn), he corresponded with the Greenlandic fisherman and author Peter Grundel; their letters were later published, offering valuable insight into daily life and cross cultural exchange in early twentieth century Greenland.

P. 54

On 22 August 1920, the guestbook includes an entry signed Lindow, almost certainly **Harald Lindow (1886–1972)**, the Danish lawyer, author, and later inspector in Greenland. His brief note conveys a bleak assessment of life in the colony, describing conditions in Greenland as decidedly miserable.

A few days later, an entry dated “Godhavn, 25 August 1920” appears under the name **Nielsen**, the wife of the captain of the expedition ship *Louise*.

P. 55

On 1 September 1920, **Hans Frederik Hansen**, captain of the *S/S Thorvaldsen*, added a long, reflective entry on the profound changes he believed had taken place in Greenland over the preceding decades. A renowned ship captain and expert navigator in Arctic waters, Hansen accompanied several prominent explorers on their journeys to Greenland. Written in Danish, his text conveys a tone of deep disillusionment. In translation, he writes:

“When one, in the year 1920, reviews the thoughts written down in this book, and compares them with the thoughts and statements made face to face, one is astonished by the change; for one sees that Greenland is no longer the historically happy land (which I have known for 32 years). No, now it contains only: ‘poor, dissatisfied outlaws.’ As far as I can see, this applies to both Greenlanders and Danes. May Greenland soon, once again, house satisfied and happy people.”

His entry stands out as one of the more somber assessments of the colony’s social climate in the early twentieth century.

Two additional signatures from the same day follow: **J. Borsch** and **O. P. Sørensen**, both of the *S/S Thorvaldsen*.

P. 56

On 29 October 1920, **Niels Jul Schierbeck (1892–1970)**, probably the Danish physician of that name, contributed an entry. With gentle irony, he reflects on the familiar paradox of Greenland’s name:

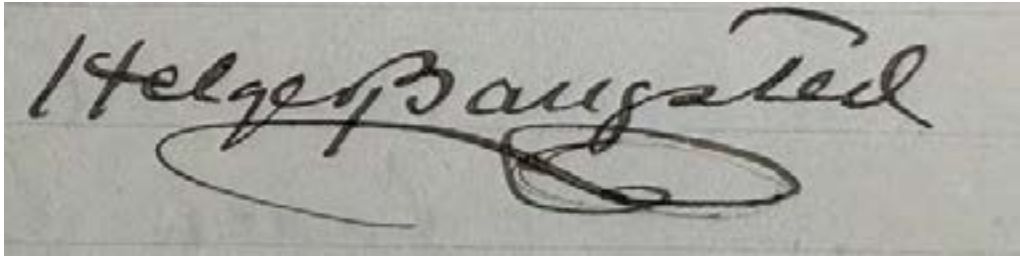
*“As yet, I have not seen anything green in Greenland.
But it is probably like not being able to see the forest
for the trees—
The colors of hope are probably found everywhere here in the country—
Yet one cannot see them just yet—
But one senses that there is a hope of
a great—perhaps brilliant—future for Greenland.”*

(Indeed, in late October it would have been nearly impossible to see anything green in Greenland.)

The entry dated 21 March 1921 is by **Helge Bangsted (1898–1974)**, the Danish journalist, Arctic explorer, author, and later politician. Shortly after his arrival in Greenland, Bangsted served as scientific assistant and secretary to Knud Rasmussen during the legendary *Fifth Thule Expedition* (1921–1924). He travelled by dogsled, gathered ethnographic and scientific data, and lived among the Polar Inuit.

His later life took a darker turn: in 1942 he became leader of the Danish Nazi Party (DNSAP) and, after the war, served four years in prison.

In this lengthy guestbook entry, Bangsted reflects on the profound differences between the Indigenous population—accustomed to the land’s harsh demands—and the Danes, whom he characterizes as colonial officials tied to their posts and far less attuned to the realities of Arctic life.

A photograph of a handwritten signature in dark ink on a light-colored, slightly textured paper. The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized script. The first part of the signature, 'Helge', is written in a more upright, blocky cursive, while the last part, 'Bangsted', is more fluid and slanted. The signature is centered horizontally on the page.

P. 57

Elisabeth “Lis” Spangsberg Schierbeck (1902–1987) added her signature on 23 March 1921. Newly married to Dr. Niels Jul Schierbeck, she had accompanied him to his medical post in Greenland shortly after their wedding in 1920. Her presence marks the beginning of the young couple’s life in the Arctic, a period later remembered with warmth in family recollections.

On 4 April 1921, an unreadable signature follows, accompanied by a brief, humorous Danish inscription addressed to the unmarried men of the settlement:

*“I want to direct a few words to the bachelors up here:
Go forth and marry — but make sure that your wife is musical!”*

P. 58

Agnes Rockstroh signed the guestbook on 21 June 1921, followed by **Theodora Jørgensen** on 30 June 1921. Their signatures indicate the steady influx of Danish visitors and residents to the settlement during the early summer months.

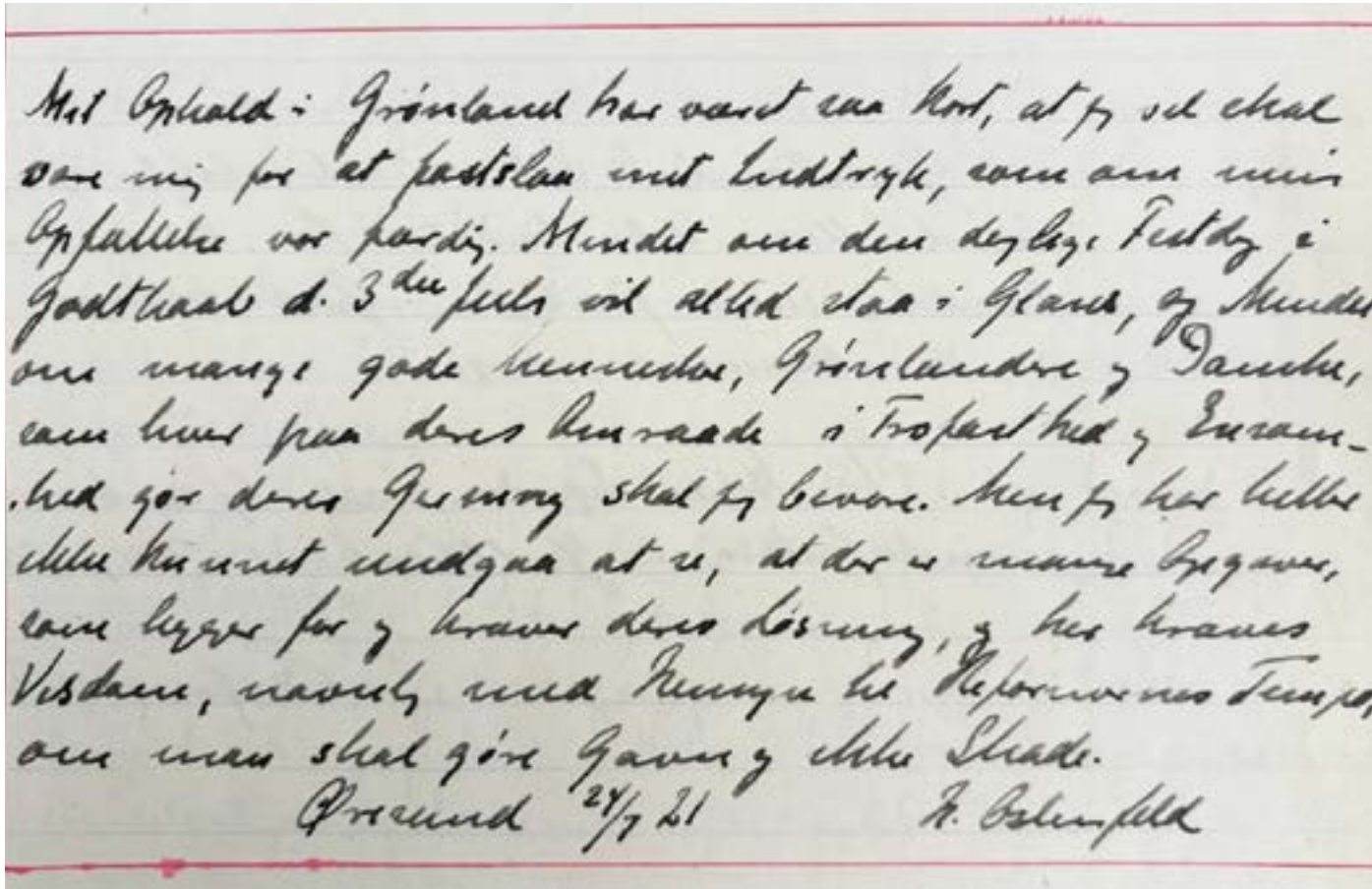
July 1921 marked the commemorative celebration of the **200th anniversary of Hans Egede’s arrival in Greenland**. Many distinguished guests travelled aboard the *S/S Hans Egede* for the festivities held in Godthaab (Nuuk) on 3 July 1921.

On 5 July 1921, **Niels Kjærulff**, a mechanic aboard the *S/S Hans Egede*, recorded his appreciation for the hospitality he had encountered throughout Greenland.

P. 59

A Sister [name illegible], a nun working among children in Greenland, added her signature on 24 July.

On the same day, **Harald Ostenfeld (1864–1934), Bishop of Zealand**, recorded a lengthy note. Ostenfeld had travelled aboard the *S/S Øresund* to attend the Hans Egede bicentenary celebrations. In his entry he remarks on his short stay in Greenland, offering measured reflections on the shared future of Denmark and Greenland. His tone is cautious and diplomatic.



Undated but evidently written on this occasion is an inscription by **Hans Nilsen Hauge (1853–1931)**, the Norwegian priest and politician. His presence among the signatories underscores the broader Scandinavian participation in the Egede jubilee and the long standing ecclesiastical ties between Norway and Greenland.

P. 60

Chr. S... (?), of the *S/S Hans Egede*, added a brief entry on **24 July**.

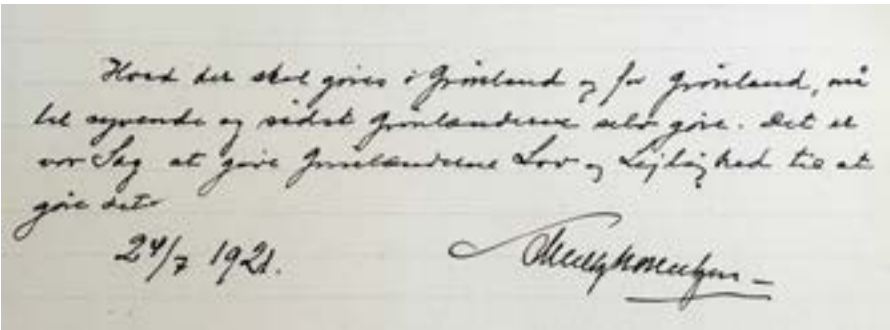
On the same day, **Christian Ludwigs (1877–1930)** recorded his entry. Ludwigs, who would later become the celebrated Bishop of Aalborg, was returning from the Egede anniversary aboard the *S/S Hans Egede*. From his youth, Greenland had held a special place in his life: beginning in 1906 he served as secretary and editor of the Greenlandic Church Affairs, and in 1909 he undertook a publicly supported study journey to the island. His 1921 visit for the Egede jubilee renewed this long standing connection. Ludwigs translated Greenlandic poetry and, in a gesture of deep personal commitment, adopted two Greenlandic boys, whom he raised in Denmark. His entry reflects this enduring attachment to Greenland and its people.

Also undated but evidently written on this occasion is the signature of **H. (Helmuth?) Dirckinck Holmfeld**, a member of the Danish noble family of the same name. A relative—also named Helmuth Dirckinck Holmfeld (1835–1912)—was a well known artist whose numerous drawings and paintings of the Arctic helped shape Danish visual culture of the North.

P. 61 — FINAL ENTRIES

On 24 July 1921, an entry was made by **Therkel Mathiassen (1892–1967)**, the Danish archaeologist, anthropologist, cartographer, and ethnographer who would become one of the most influential scientific figures of the Arctic in the early twentieth century. In 1921 he had just been appointed chief archaeologist and cartographer of the Fifth Thule Expedition (1921–1924), Knud Rasmussen’s monumental scientific venture across Arctic Canada and Greenland. His work on this expedition would later define the “Thule culture” as a distinct archaeological horizon and shape the modern understanding of Inuit prehistory.

Mathiassen’s entry in the guestbook is brief but striking in its clarity of purpose: “What must be done in Greenland and for Greenland must, in the end, be done by the Greenlanders themselves. It is our task to give the Greenlanders the right and the opportunity to do so.”



The final entry in the guestbook is by **Svenn Poulsen (1872–1937)**, a highly influential Danish journalist, lawyer, and newspaper editor, made on **15 May 1925**. Poulsen was deeply engaged in public debates on Greenlandic policy during the interwar years, and his long reflection here reads almost like a political manifesto. He writes:

“The future of Greenland — with all its great possibilities — depends on cooperation between the people of Denmark and the inhabitants of Greenland.

Danish farmers and fishermen must become the teachers of the Greenlanders and be enabled to work together with them in developing the country’s natural resources.

The fjords of South Greenland, from Godthaab to Cape Farewell, should be opened for the immigration of Danish farmers and fishermen who, together with and for the Greenlanders, under sensible agricultural and fisheries legislation, can make use of South Greenland’s rich pastures and excellent fisheries.

This Danish–Greenlandic colony should be organized as a self governing dominion after the English–Canadian model, under the Danish flag and under the Danish crown.

North Greenland and East Greenland may, for the time being, be preserved as closed reservations for those Greenlanders who wish to continue their traditional life as seal hunters and hunters, under a form of administration similar to the present one.

South Greenland, with a strong, self governing Danish–Greenlandic population of farmers and fishermen, will be the secure guarantee of Denmark’s continued possession of Greenland.

In 1921, I took part as correspondent in the unforgettable royal journey to our splendid polar colony with its admirable population of capable Greenlanders and self sacrificing Danes. The journey became, for me, a complete confirmation of the above considerations.”

Epilogue

This guestbook preserves a unique, first hand record of Greenland at a moment of profound change. Its pages capture the voices of explorers, officials, missionaries, scientists, sailors, and their families — each revealing, in their own way, the tensions and encounters that shaped colonial life. Admiration and prejudice, hardship and hospitality, curiosity, conflict, and genuine affection all stand side by side. Together, these entries form an intimate chronicle of how Danes and Greenlanders met, misunderstood, learned from, and lived alongside one another. As a whole, the volume offers an irreplaceable window into the human texture of Greenland’s early twentieth century history.

Paa Sammenhæng mellem Danmarks Befolkning og Grønlands Indbyggere beror det om Grønland med de store Fravæltelsesmuligheder skal vedblive at høre til Danmark.

Danske Landbrugere og Fiskere maa blive Grønlandernes Lærere og sætter istand til at arbejde sammen med dem paa Udviklingen af Landets Hjælpekilder.

Sydgrønlands Fjorde fra Godthaab til Kap Farewell bør aabnes for Indvandring af danske Landbrugere og Fiskere, der ~~sammen med Grønlanderne~~ under en fornuftig Landbrugs og Fiskerilovgivning kan udnytte Sydgrønlands rige Græsgange og glimrende Fiskerier. Denne dansk-grønlandiske Koloni bør organiseres som en selvstændig Dominion efter engelsk-kanadisk Mønster.

under det danske Flag og under den danske Krone,

Nordgrønland og Østgrønland kan indtil videre bevares som lukkede Reservationer for de Grønlandere, der ønsker at fortsætte Tilværelsen som Sælfangere og Jægere, under en lignende Skjelsesmaade som den nuværende.

Sydgrønland med en kraftig selvstændig dansk-grønlandisk Befolkning af Landbrugere og Fiskere vil være det sikre Værn for Danmarks fortsatte Besiddelse af Grønland.

--- I 1921 deltog jeg ^{som Korrespondent} den uforglemmelige Kongerjorte til vor herlige Polarcolonie med den størstedele Befolkning af dygtige Grønlandere og opofrende Danke. Rejsen blev for mig en fuldkommen Bekræftelse paa mine ovenstaaende Betragtninger.

15-5-25 Svenn Poulsen

A letter inserted into the book – much earlier in date, but important for the history of Greenland.

Søren EGEDE (Christian Søren Andreas EGEDE, 1833–1915).

Asassara katsorsaisson...
[My Dear Son, Doctor,...]

Igaliko: 28 Mai 1879.

Manuscript in brown ink on wove paper, [4 pp.], text on one page, the address (only the title of Mr. Doctor in Julianehaab) on the last page, two pages blank, 17,5 x 20,5 cm (6.9 x 8 inches), (soft folds, small losses of paper on the spot of the missing seal).

A rare 19th-century Inuit correspondence.

The letter was written by Søren Egede (Christian Søren Andreas Egede, 1833–1915), head of the Inuit settlement of Igaliku in southern Greenland. Composed in Kalaallisut, or West Greenlandic, the letter is addressed to his son, a medical doctor in Qaqortoq (Julianehåb) , and reflects the linguistic hybridity and familial intimacy of the period.

Søren Egede was the son of Povl Egede (also Poul Egede Anderson, 1799–1870), and a great-great-grandson of the Norwegian settler Anders Olsen (1718–1786), who founded the first farm in Igaliku in 1783 during the Danish-Norwegian colonial era. Olsen’s marriage to the Inuit woman Tuperna (1726–1789) marked the beginning of a generational tradition of intermarriage, which continued through the Egede line.

By 1857, Igaliku counted just 19 inhabitants (21 in 2020; 31 today), and was widely recognized as an Inuit Christian farming community. Its residents lived in stone houses built from the ruins of Garðar, the former Norse episcopal seat, and sustained themselves through subsistence farming, fishing, and hunting — practices that blended Norse agricultural knowledge with Inuit lifeways.

The letter was written by Søren Egede to his son, who worked as a medical doctor in the town of Qaqortoq (also known as Julianehåb or Julianehaab). This town was originally founded in 1775 by their ancestor Anders Olsen on behalf of the General Trading Company.

In flowing cursive script, conveys domestic updates and lists provisions sent to the son, including dried meat, tobacco, sewing materials, and tools. It closes with expressions of care and goodwill, underscoring the familial bonds and practical rhythms of life in colonial-era Igaliku.

The text could be translated to English with the following words:

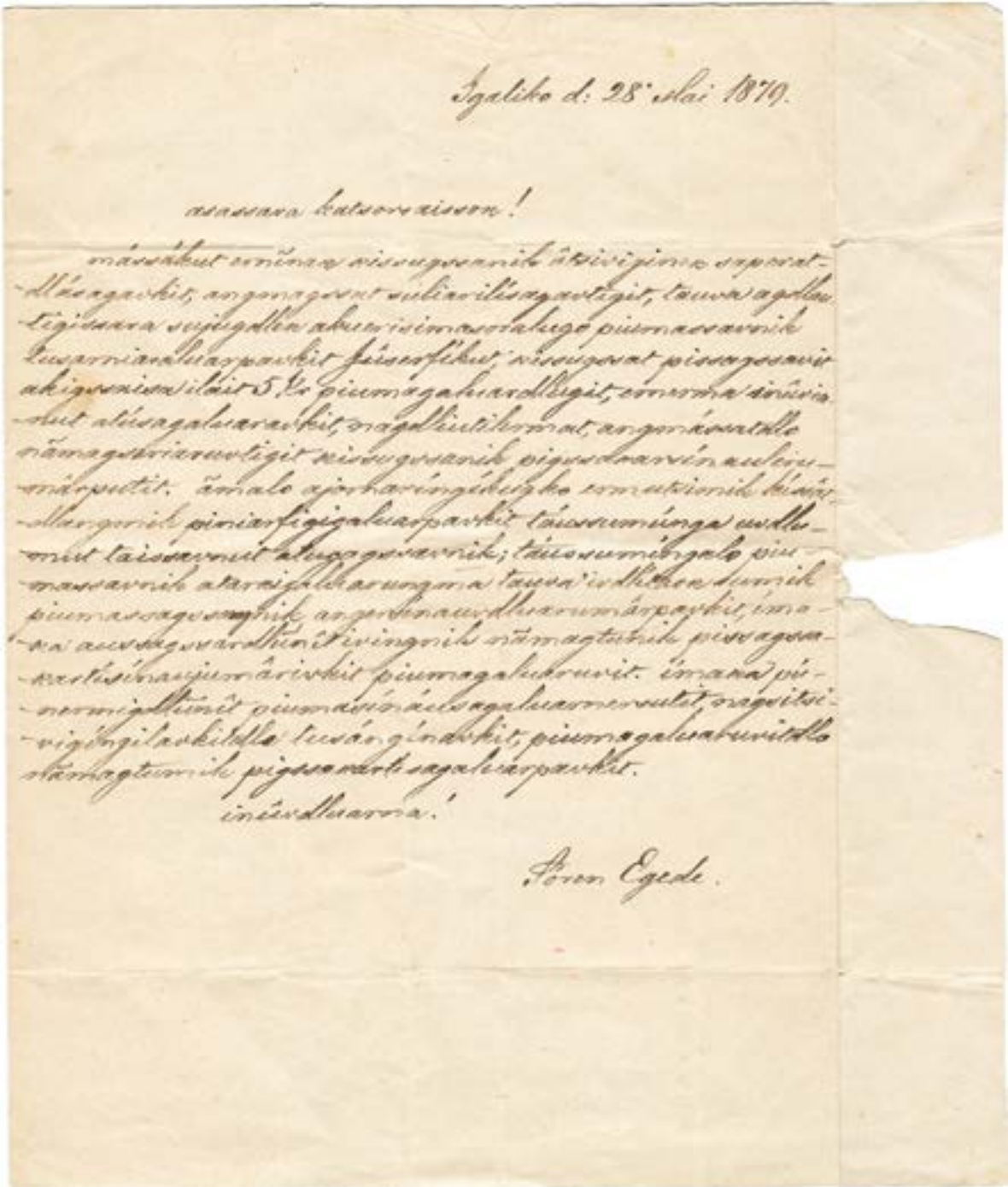
My Dear Son Doctor,

I am sending you these few words. Since you have been away for a long time, I am writing to you. Here every-

everything continues as usual.

I am sending you the things you asked for: some provisions, a little tobacco, and the items for sewing. There are also five small pieces of dried meat, as you wished. I have added needles, thread, and the small tools. Also the warm clothing, the boots, and the things to go with them. I send greetings, and the provisions again, and all the other things you asked for. These useful things are packed together, with the paper and the wrapping, and everything is placed in the basket. I hope they will reach you safely.

With affection



S. J.

Mr. Doctor ?

ved

Julianehaab.