

A house in Nanortalik

As a government official I visited Greenland's southernmost town, Nanortalik, in November 2006. Nanortalik means 'the place where the polar bears go'. Nanortalik is located on a small island (also called Nanortalik) on the shores of the Labrador Sea, roughly 100 km north of Uummannarsuaq, the southern tip of Greenland.

During my visit, I had enough time to explore the small town. There are many impressions, but I like the "you have plenty of time" state of mind you begin to feel in the soul of the settlement.

I photographed several of the small but beautiful, old houses. After my return to my hometown Nuuk, one of my photos caused a special interest. It was a photography of one of the small, old houses in Nanortalik. I began to get curious: Who lives in that house? The house may have a history, and I wrote to the executive chief of the Municipality of Nanortalik.

The response came immediately and I got the story of one of the former residents of the house. The house had for many years belonged to Inge Sanne, who was a Norwegian radio operator. Inge Sanne had been employed on many of the deserted stations on the east coast of Greenland.

When I took my photograph, Inge Sanne had been dead for a month, and the house had been acquired by a local worker. According to what people said the price of the house was 1,050 Danish Kroner.

There are many good stories about Inge Sanne. He was a remarkable personality. It is said that when the month of October approached, then Inge Sanne usually announced that he had talked enough for this year. Then he closed up like a clam until the beginning of the next year.

Inge Sanne had left his mark for posterity. In 1987 the largest Danish publisher, Gyldendal, published his book, *The Paradise Valley* (in Danish 'Paradisdalen').

After getting an insight into the man who had lived in the house on my photograph, of course I should read his book. It is a very exciting book that reflects an author with a great fantasy: A young man lives as a hermit in the arctic wilderness in harmony with nature and wildlife. Animals and mountains are humanized, and the reader is caught in the mysterious universe of the book.



The house of Inge Sanne, November 2006