

Alfred Wegener's Final Greenland Expedition (1930)

Abstract

This 13-minute film documented the challenges faced by the renowned German geologist, polar researcher, and meteorologist Alfred Wegener during his final Greenland summer expeditions in 1929 and 1930. These journeys hauled equipment to the frigid midpoint of the island, where a research station gathered data on that landmass's meteorological conditions and the thickness of its ice sheet. The footage here, shot by cameraman Johannes Georgi, highlighted the human and horse-power required to haul sleds up the mountains that stretched along Greenland's rugged coastline, and then the human and dog-power that dragged those sleds across the flatter and much colder central ice shelf. Machine power played little visible role in these undertakings, with the men instead resorting to rope-and-pulley systems to transport supplies.

Only in 1939 did the *Reich Office for Educational Films* (RfdU) compile this footage into a documentary film, cobbling together shots from both the 1930/31 expedition and an earlier 1929 one. The RfdU then released the film in three parts, of which this is the second, for use in schools. Wegener himself died in November 1930, along with his Inuit companion and guide, Rasmus Villumsen, after attempting to resupply the Arctic station for the winter. This Arctic research notwithstanding, Alfred Wegener actually remains best known today for having originated the theory of continental drift eighteen years earlier.

Source

Source: German educational film: Alfred Wegener and The Greenland Expedition, 1930.

USHMM: RG-60.3650, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, gift of Steven Zabin

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