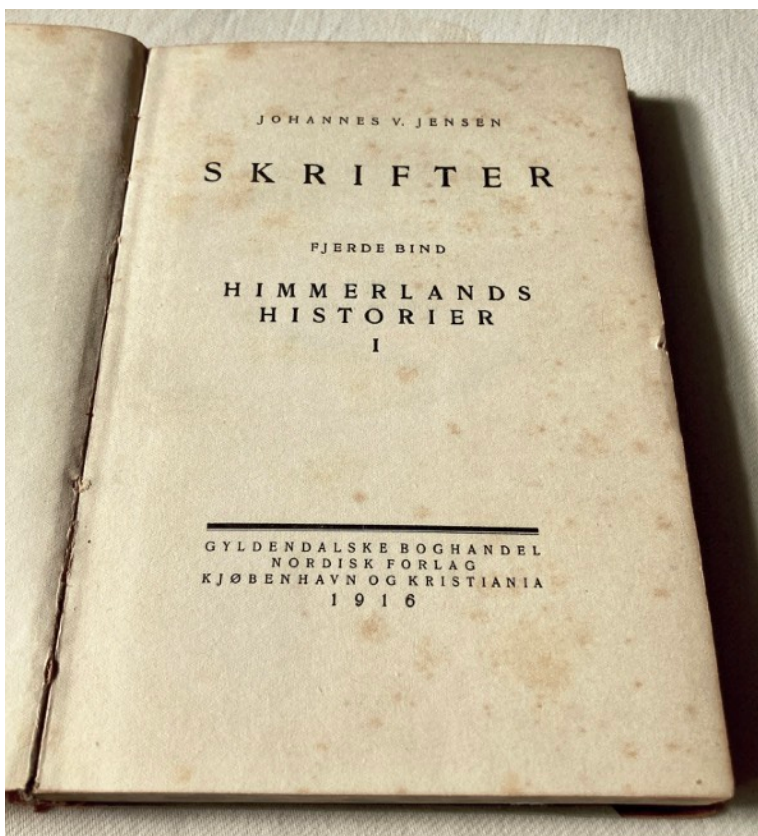
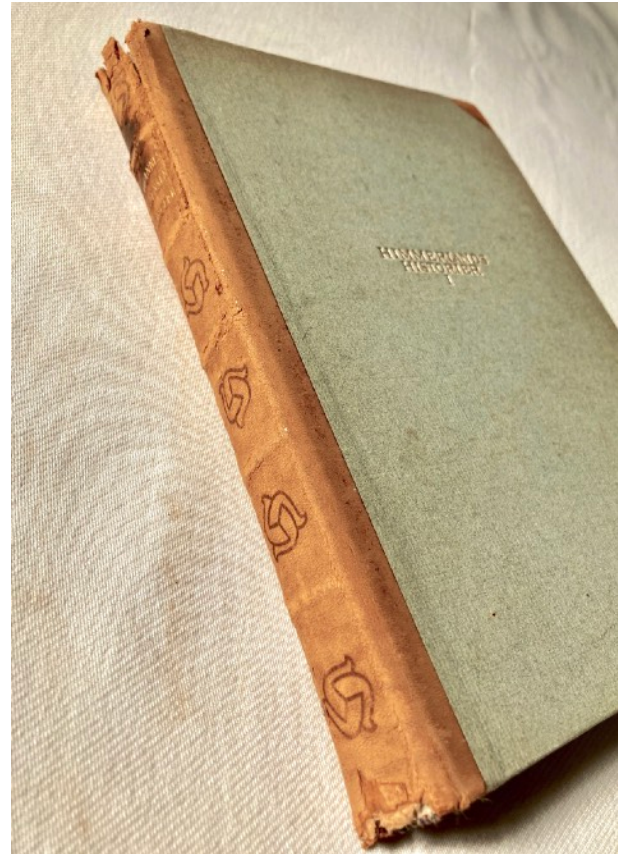
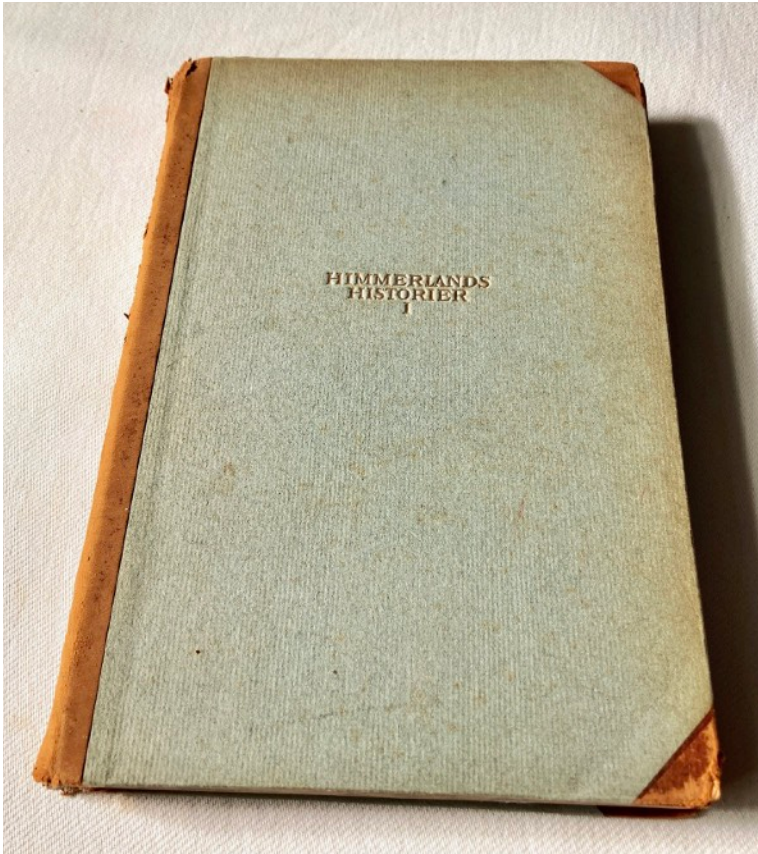


An Unusual Machine-bound Book

lecturer of basic course for book restoration Satoko Noro

In 2023, we did a practical exercise of dismantling old books as a part of our annual lesson. One book brought by student Murakami turned out to be a book with a unique binding method that had never been seen before.



The writings of Johannes V. Jensen
volume 4
The Stories of Himmerlands

Gyldendalske Bookstore
Nordisk Publishing
Copenhagen and Klistiania
1916

152mmx218mm
quarter leather binding
with sheepskin (probably)

Johannes Vilhelm Jensen (1873–1950)

Danish author and winner of the Nobel Prize in literature in 1944. His representative works include the historical novel "The Fall of the King," which depicts the tyrannical Danish king Christian II, and the collection of short stories on Himmerland. Himmerland is a place in the northeastern part of Denmark's Jutland Peninsula.

Gyldendalske Bookstore

Founded in 1770, it is the second oldest publishing house in Denmark. In 1903, it merged with rival company Nordisk Publishing. The company name at that time is listed on the title page of "The Stories of Himmerlands"

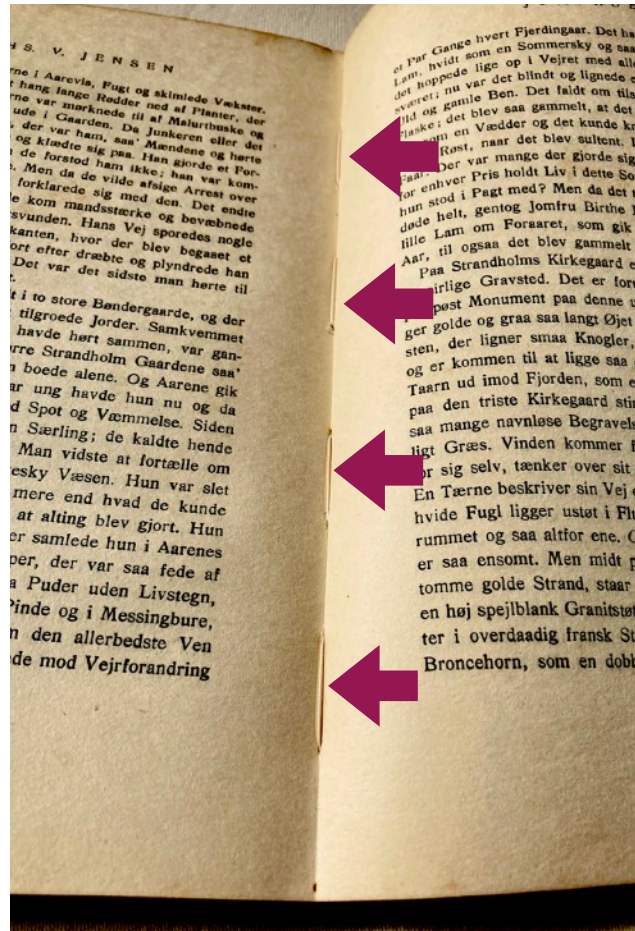
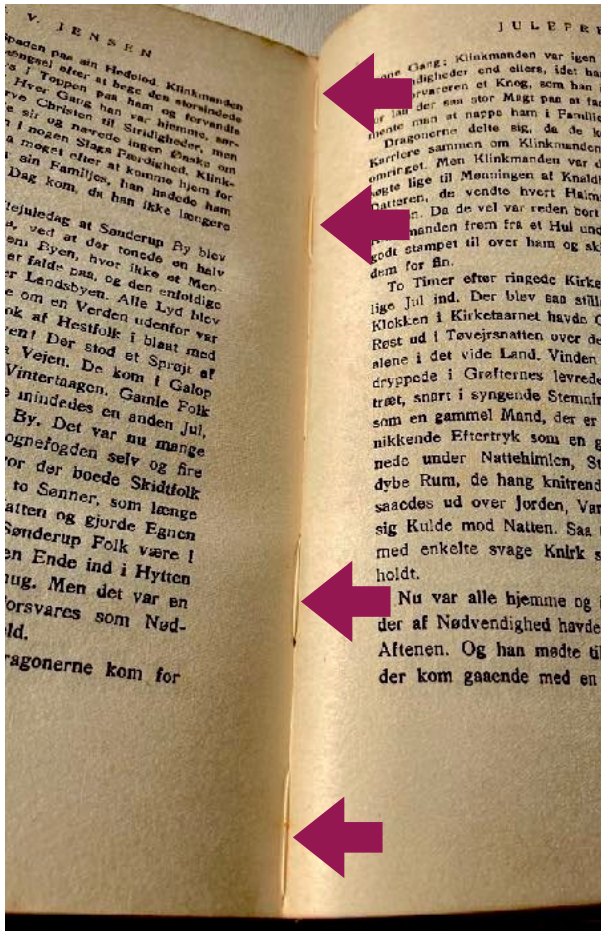
In 2007, the company absorbed Schultz Publishing, which was founded in 1661, making it the oldest surviving publishing house in Denmark.

The founder, Seelen Gyldendal (1742-1802), had started selling books when he was a university student and became a bookseller at the age of 28. He revolutionized the Danish book market by introducing a distribution system with permanent commission agents. He also took an interest in Danish literature and published famous Danish literary works under his own company. He was praised by literary figures of the time as a "national publisher" who contributed greatly to the development of society by "promoting science and popularizing reading."

Style of the Binding



- Four sheets per one signature
- Signatures are bound through the lining attached to the spine
- Except for the first and last ones, each signature has alternating threads, like a two-on binding
- In every signature, there are always two threads between each hole.
(That may seem like it, but the last signature may not be the case. Or the threads may have simply broken during the disassembly process)
- Given its age and unusual complexity, it is likely machine-bound

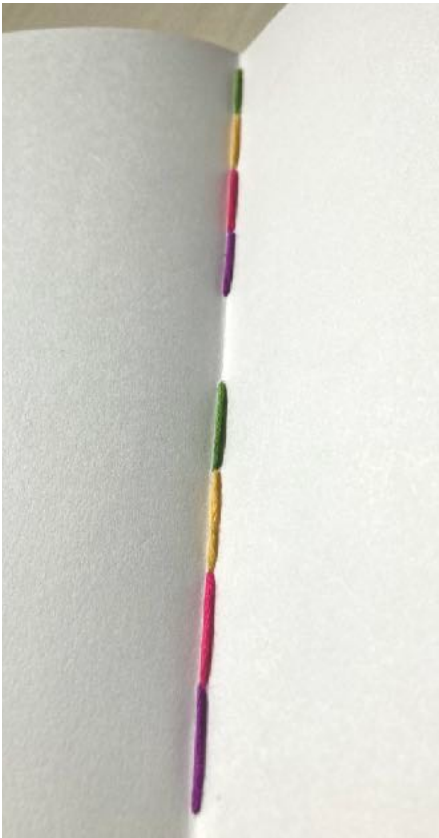


The position of the thread alternates for each signature



The binding structure was inferred from the position and connection of the binding threads, and I made a sample based on that.

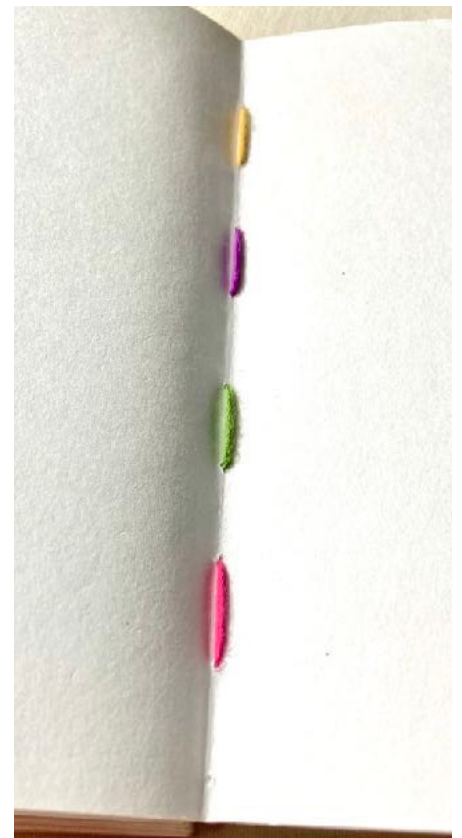
I omitted the spine lining and aimed only to reproduce the binding structure because it would have made the process too complicated.



1st signature



2nd



3rd

From then on, the same arrangement as the second and third folds continues alternatingly, and the final signature is the same as the first one.

There are four independent binding threads on the top side and four on the bottom side, and the threads on the top and bottom sides do not cross.

Later, lecturer Fujii introduced me to the following video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ls-UBLpos9c>

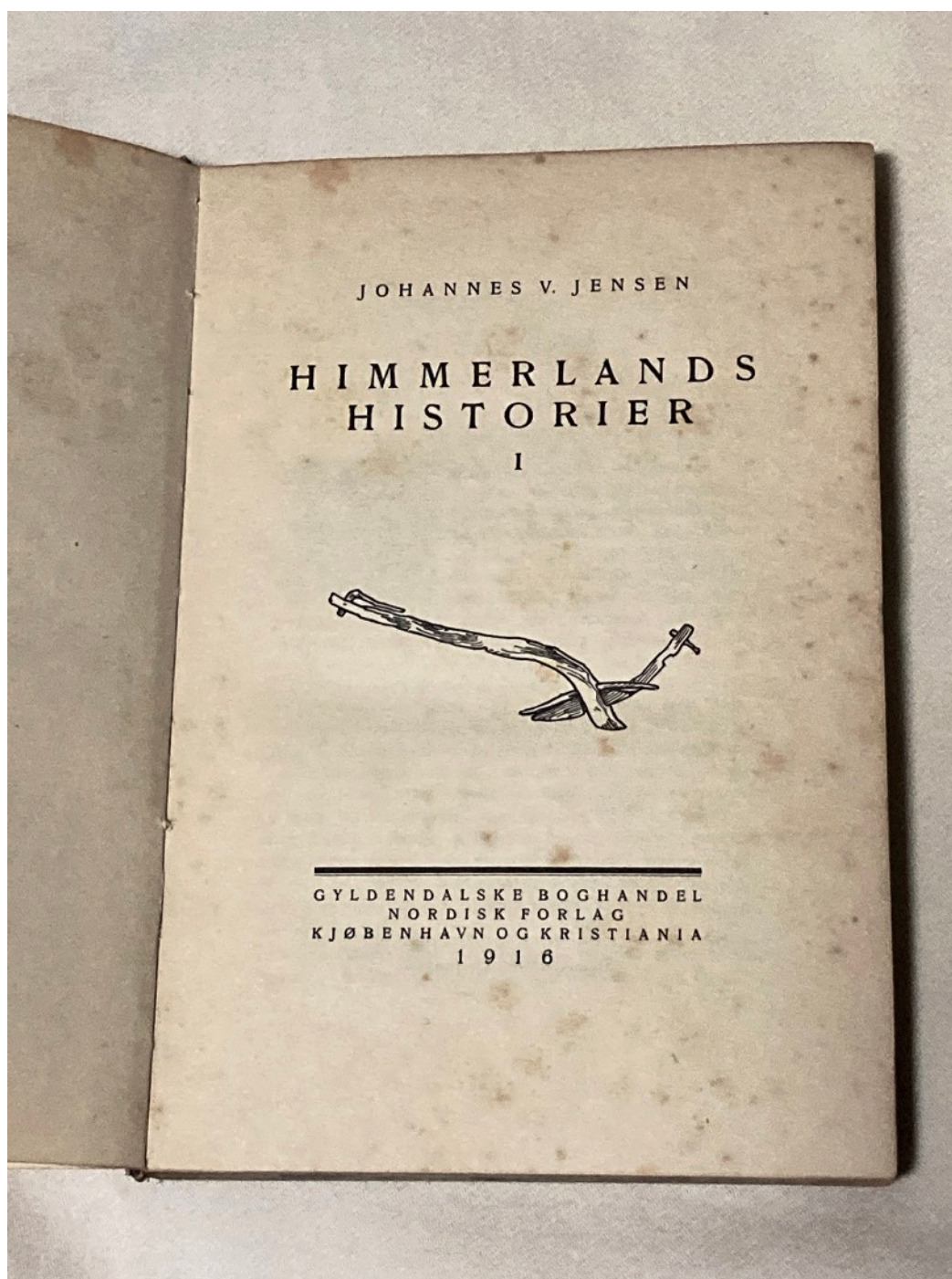
The binding machine appears at the beginning, from 2:55 to 3 minutes in.

Considering that the binding is done with spine lining sandwiched in between, that there are eight threads, and that the binding position seems to shift and return to its original position depending on the signature, it is likely that a binding machine similar to the one in this video was used for the "The Stories of Himmerlands".

The date of production of the binding machine and the area in which it was distributed are unknown, but since Gyldendal Bookstore is a major publishing company spanning Denmark and Norway, it is likely that a considerable number of books bound with similar binding machines were in circulation.

However, books bound in this way are not widely seen around the world, and the fact that books bound on, not under, the spine linings are fairly unusual, it was probably forced into retirement when more efficient binding machines eventually appeared.

It could be said that like German wire binding and other styles, it was a unique style that, although short-lived, made its mark on the history of bookbinding.



Turning over the title page reveals another one. There is a drawing of something that looks like woodwork, but I have no idea what it is.

I would appreciate anyone with any information to share about the drawing, along with details about the binding machine,