

Orgelsdorfer Eulenspiegel no. 7 New Year 1919

Page 1) "Sylvesternacht" [New Year's Eve] [not translated]

Page 2) linocut by L. Schlimbach "Neujahrswlinsche" entitled New Year greetings

Pages 3 & 4) "Funf Weihnachten" [Five Times Christmas] [a remembrance of Christmas times from 1915 to 1919]

It was a mean December. On the snow-covered chalk hills of the Champagne region, there was a battle, and thousands of shells tore the land to pieces and hurled death and ruin.

They wanted to force the victory, wanted to break our iron wall in the first year of war and liberate their beloved France. And their belief in their cause [sense of righteousness] inspired them to do marvelous things. But we stood. Not a foot towards the enemies was the order. And we had the same belief. Despite our victory, a shadow lay over the sad days before Christmas for we had to bury our dead comrades. [some of the passage not translated]

It was the night from the 20th to the 21st of December. Our love for our homeland gave us the most beautiful and unforgettable Christmas of our life. In the very early dawn, our busy drivers advanced. On the 24th, our Hessian Home Guards really looked like Father Christmas with their long beards and partly gray hair. Despite mortal danger, one van after another untiringly brought letters from home and love gifts, ham, sausages, and Christmas trees, gigantic bags filled with nuts and apples and a thousand marvelous things. And even if the canons crashed outside, we, the home guard gunners, celebrated an unforgettable and beautiful Christmas inside the shelter.

December 1915! Captured in France! Lonely and abandoned on a far island in the ocean, far away from everything that touched our hearts. Unconscious, passive, - worthless! And at that time, quite a few people in similar situation would have been crushed to death if they hadn't the love for their home. It gave us everything we needed to stay strong, home was Father Christmas who helped the unhappiest of all war fellows, those captured in the battle, get over the worst of their ordeal. Homesickness planted in me a longing and an uncontrollable yearning for liberty and an aching in my heart.

And then, in 1916, I had liberty when Christmas came. But my yearning was unfulfilled and not even the love for my home could fill up the emptiness. How could then the "freest of all countries" help me, what do I do with big city New York and its millions of strangers? Home seemed more far away than ever. Not a single kind word found its way to me and with a sad heart, idle, joyless, and completely lonely, I thought of former times.

And in 1917? It was just around Christmas when we were full of hope, a hope for peace. I had been overtaken once again by destiny; I was sitting captured on Ellis Island. Christmas was all around us but not within my dear German comrades. And they were, after all, my only piece of home. But joy and cheerfulness could rule only because everyone believed in victory and going home.

Today, we celebrate Christmas in Oglethorpe. The big death outside is over. Peace is ruling on earth again. For innumerable people, this time is a pleasure. But Christmas for us is a burning and digging [at our hearts]. We want to go out, go home. We, the disinherited, always looking on, are longing for liberty and love. But there is one thing that we all feel in our boundless longing; that the day will come soon, a time of action is close. The past is buried and forgotten today. Our thoughts, plans, hopes, and work belong to the future, to the New Year. Let us enter this New Year with a heart full of faith and confidence and a vow of fidelity. Wilhelm Steinforth

Page 5) woodcut of camp

Pages 6 & 7) "Rio Grande de Orgelsdorf" [Rio Grande of Oglethorpe] a river that flows through Oglethorpe

Page 8) "Mein Freund, der Hund" [my friend the dog]

Page 9) woodcut of P. O. W. no. 535 Zenneck

Page 10) "Lagerangelegenheiten" [camp matters]

The picture on the opposite page represents Professor Jonathan Zenneck, the well-known physicist who made a great contribution to the construction of the wireless station in Sayville. He was born in 1871 in Wuerttemberg/Germany and, until his departure to the U. S., he was a professor of physics at the Technological University of Munich.

[The next paragraphs were not translated. They concerned a Christmas concert and theater performance]
The linocut on page 6 is by M. V. Recklinghausen and represents the hospital.

Pages 11, 12, and part of 13) "Amerikana" [not translated, concerns a world exhibition in San Francisco]

Page 13) "Lieber Eulenspiegel" [dear Eulenspiegel, not translated, in old German]

Page 14, 16, 17, & 18) "Allerlei Reisebekanntschaften" [a lot of acquaintances made while travelling, also pokes fun at privy counsel]

Page 15) woodcut by A. Schneider Text, caption reads:

Bigler: Go away, otherwise I'll land a blow on the back of your neck/

Struve: I have mistaken you!

(Erich Franke and Willy Bezkoeka in "Stein unter Steinen" presented by the "Deutsche Buerne" association in Oglethorpe, Ga. On December 14th, 1918.)