



THE AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF GERMANS FROM RUSSIA LINCOLN CHAPTER

VOLUME IV

JANUARY 1997

ISSUE I

CHAPTER OFFICERS

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January 5, 1997 Lincoln Chapter AHSGR General Meeting & Election of Officers

First German Congregational Church 1st and "F".

1:00 P.M.

Pot Luck Dinner

Bring your own dinnerware

Coffee and drink furnished

January 14, 1997 LLCGS (Lincoln Lancaster County Genealogical Society)

Dick Administration Building (Lower Level) Union College Campus

7:00 p.m.

January 18, 1997 PAF-LUG (Personal Ancestral File-Lincoln Users Group)

Family Service Center 3100 Old Cheney Road

7:00 p.m.

January 20, 1997 New and Old Lincoln Chapter AHSGR Board Meeting

631 "D" St.

6:00 p.m.

Pot Luck Dinner

Bring your own dinnerware

Coffee and drinks furnished

Editor's Notes:

This is the final edition of this Newsletter by your editor. Your new editor will be Annie Lutz Settell, a very competent and sincere person. You, I know will enjoy her as your new editor. Thank you all for your cooperation these past three years. I leave with mixed feelings, as this has been a wonderful experience. I hope you have enjoyed my rendition of what a newsletter should be.

While microfilming the newspaper "Neues Leben", which was published in Moscow during the years of the occupation of East Germany, I ran across a poem printed in German meant for a New Year's Salutation. With the help of JoAnn Kuhr, at AHSGR, we translated this poem. Due to the translation, it doesn't exactly rhyme, but it flows fairly well even so.

Mein Neujahrwunch

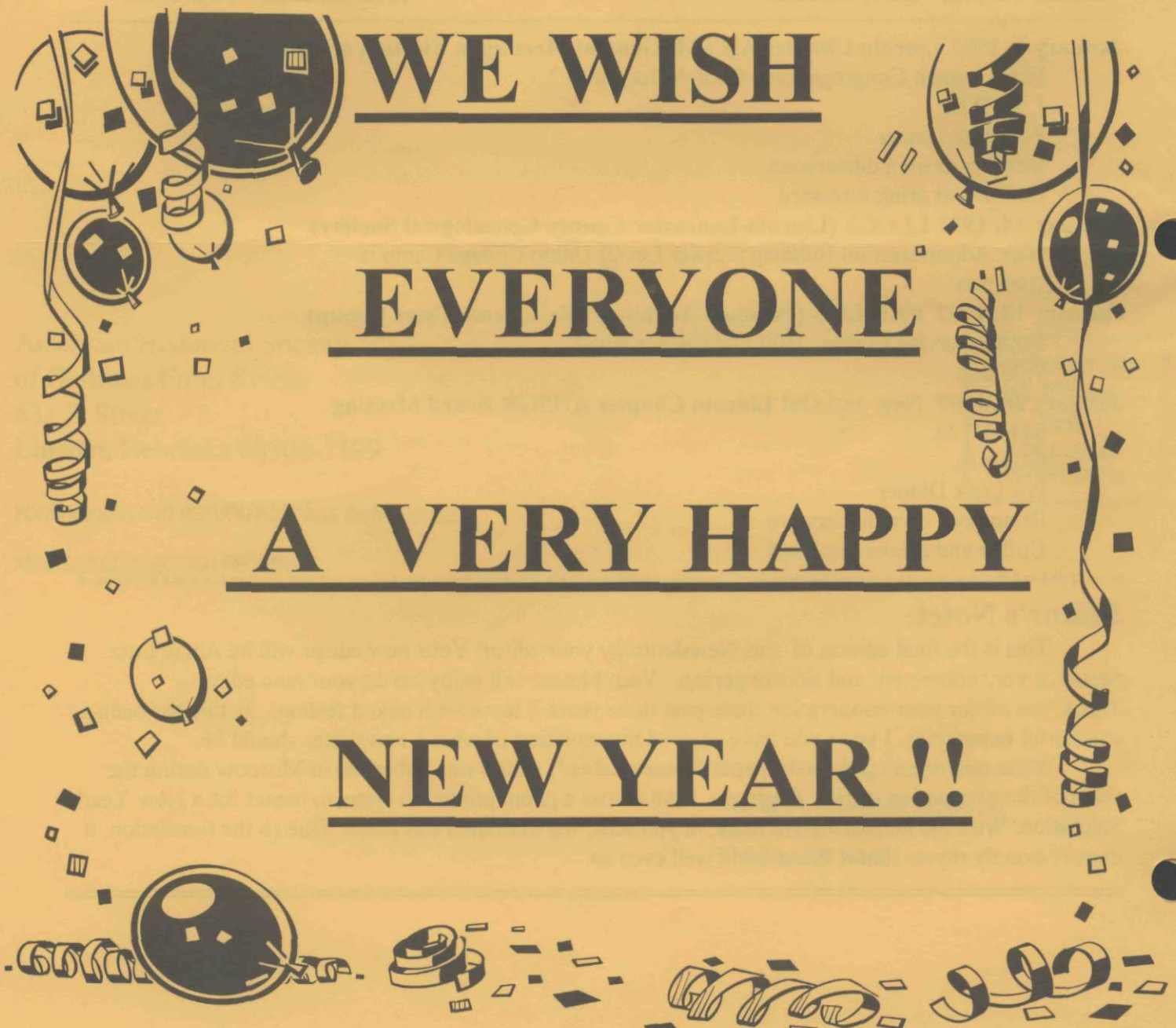
Lieber Freund, zum neuen Jahr
bring ich meine Wuensche dar:
gut Gesundheit, friedlich Leben,
immer froehlich vor waerts strehen.

In Gefahren nicht versagen,
Auch das groesste mutig wagen!
Einen Wunsch im Herzen heg ich:
dass mein Voelkchen, frei von Schande,
sich vereint am Wolgastrande.

My New Year's Wish

Dear friend, for the New Year,
I present my wishes here.
Good Health, a peaceful life
Always happy, forward strive.

In danger do not despair
Always with courage the greatest dare.
One wish i cherish in my heart
That my people, free from dishonor
Will be reunited in the Volga shore.



WE WISH

EVERYONE

A VERY HAPPY

NEW YEAR !!

UNSER LEUTE

DER JAHRSTAG (HAPPY ANNIVERSARY)

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

January 1, 1991	Sidonia and Ken Babcock	6 years
January 1, 1959	Lillian and Wayne Giebelhaus	37 years
January 6, 1951	Berniece and Richard Dittenbir	45 years

GLUCKWUNSCH (HAPPY BIRTHDAY)

January 3	Mary Schwartz	January 14	Tony Chonuskie
January 3	Ruth Stubbs	January 17	Frieda Gies
January 8	Dorothy George	January 19	Mary Ann Hahn
January 8	Ed Klein	January 19	Elinor Wolff
January 9	Alma Kehling	January 20	Juan Rodriguez
January 9	Weston P. Pickett Jr.	January 22	LeRoy Butherus
January 10	Mary Jacobs	January 22	Robert Heidtbrink
January 10	John (Jack) Sexton	January 25	Frieda Johnson
January 13	Hugh Dobler	January 29	James Amen
January 31	Henry Gruenemeyer		

Reminiscences of a Q Locomotive Painter

Recollections of John Fischer, Lincoln, Nebraska, as told to Al Holck in the *Burlington Bulletin*

(continued from previous month's Newsletter)

Locomotive Repair

Another time, I told Ben Meligan, the roundhouse foreman, I'd like to get off at 3 o'clock. I was working on the engine for No. 41. It was a 7006 [a B-I Montana], I think. He said if I could finish by 3:00, I could go home. At 3:00, I had the engine done, and that was a big engine.

When it came to diesels, we found the best way to paint them was to strip them down to the bare metal using a paint remover. We used a pressure hose. I had a uniform, all rubber, with gloves and face mask. After stripping I had to sand the rough spots and places where a little paint was left. This would take one day. The next day, I'd put on the red primer. On the Chinese red diesels, we painted the gray top first, then the red sides. The trucks were black. We masked off for the lettering and strips, which were white.

Stories and Experiences

There are all kinds of stories I could tell about the things that went on. One time when Frank Coffman was running an A engine [a4-4-0] on the Columbus local, his fireman, a guy named Lloyd Mathewson, put a bull snake in Frank's tool box. Since I had to put the tool box on the engine, I was called into the office. I said I didn't know anything about it. Ten years later, Mathewson said, "Hey John, remember the bull snake in the tool box?"

"I remember it very well"

"Well, I'm the fellow who put it in."

At that time -the early 1930s-- Julius Dietrich was master mechanic and wouldn't put up with any practical jokes. You couldn't even smoke on the job. You had to sneak down in a roundhouse pit, or you went out to the old toilet, and there'd be a lookout standing at the window, watching out for the boss.

While I was herding switch engines in about 1929 or 1930, I got down to the third engine from the end and got up in the cab. There was a man lying on the floor on the fireman's side with blood running out of his nose and mouth. I went ahead and got ahold of Hap Rausch, the foreman, and he called the police. They came and got him out of there and apparently dumped him off someplace; because there was never any record of it when we checked with police headquarters.

Then we had a fellow who got confused or lost, because he drove his Model A Ford between the old call office and the wrecker track, down to the coal chute. He turned around and came down to No. 1 track to the cinder pit. Here is where the front end of his Ford fell in. So I got Hap Rausch, and we went into the shop and got some long bars and plenty of help and pried him out of the pit.

George Clemons, a can house man on the 4 o'clock shift ahead of me, was run over by one of the S0-1- A engines. The hostler was backing it from the turntable to the water crane and ran over him. We had a mechanic's helper get killed. He fell into the drop pit and died later. The pit is about 10 feet deep. Once, I fell in the cinder pit. It was wintertime. Usually the east end of the pit was iced over, but the west end was not because that's where most of the hot cinders were dumped. I was in a hurry, and there was ice, but not thick enough to hold me. Down I went into a cinder bucket.

Usually, one of the large engines, I'd start the water crane and look into the tank to see if it was pretty near empty. The big O-5 and M-4 tanks held 18,000 and 21,500 gallons respectively. I started the water, looked, then turned the wheel on the crane wide open and went to look over the engine, figuring I had seven or eight minutes, enough time before the tank filled. I misjudged it, and just as I got back to the tender, it overflowed and I got a real bath. I didn't do again after that.

Fred Taylor, one of the engineers, was getting ready to go out on one of the big M-4 As[s-10-4s]. He said to me, "John, you go and get that foreman and tell him there is something wrong with this crosshead".

I went in and found the foreman at 4 stall and said, " Fred Taylor, wants you to send a mechanic out there, there's something wrong with a crosshead."

He replied, " You tell the engineer to go to hell."

So I went out and told Fred, "The foreman said to tell you to go to hell."

Fred went right over to the master mechanic's office and told Julius Dietrich. Boy, did that foreman catch it. The next day when I came to work, he said, "Did you have to tell the engineer that?"

I said, " You said for me to tell him that. That's what I did, you're the boss."

"Well," he said, "don't ever say anything like that again."

We had a foreman for a while who was always finding fault, not just on me but with everybody. He could always find something. He was always threatening to fire you, but he never followed through if you were a good worker. Of course, he did fire the guys who weren't any good. Later in his career, he got into trouble and was demoted to inspector to handle the federal inspections. After I became a painter, I had to work with him on the drop pit, and I hated him. On this instance, I had painted all of the locomotives except the running gear. He was inspecting one side, and I was painting the running gear on the other. He was right in my path across from the main driver, so I said to myself, "You old SOB, I'll really fix you up." So I opened the spray gun and let him have it. You should have seen him. He always dressed clean, had a black tie on, and clean overalls. You could see the strips on him from the spokes of the wheels. He came over and said, "Look what you did ! I'm going to take you to the foreman". "OK, lets go", I replied.

We found the foreman in his office. He never laughed when the inspector said, "Look at me! He put paint all over my clothes!" All the foreman said was, "I want the engine inspected, and I want that running gear painted. Now you get down on the other end of the that engine and let John paint, and stay out of his way." That was that Later on, we got along fine, and I helped him with his inspections, catching things he missed.

I had one experience that had nothing to do with my job, it just got me in trouble with my folks. I was going home at 8:00 in the morning and got down to the Salt Creek bridge. No. 80 south was a little late that morning and was just barely pulling into the yard when Jake Sell, the fireman on the helper engine and a friend of mine, called down and said for me to come along, they'd be back by 10:00. I got on board and started firing. Of course I had no way of letting my folks know what was going on. I had a double pair of gloves on and still burned my hands because I was getting the shovel too far into the firebox. Anyway, at Firth, the agent said we were to double-head back south to Table Rock instead of cutting off and backing into Lincoln. We were to wait there for a second train 109. At Table Rock, we uncoupled, cooled our engine and took water, then went over to the beanery. It was about 2 o'clock when we got out of there, and we got back to Lincoln about 6:30. My folks were going crazy because they didn't know what happened to me. They had called the shops and all my friends. I told them we had figured on being back in two hours, the usual helper run over to Firth Hill.

At the end of steam, we had engines stored by the roundhouse, by the wrecker and at the ice house. One of the oil-burning S-4 engines had had a general overhaul at Denver-new flues, pint and so forth- and was sent to Lincoln, where they took off the headlight and other parts and eventually scraped it.

During my early years, there was no union for the laborers. The machinists and boilermakers belonged to the Mechanical Department Association. This was an independent union formed by the company after the 1922 shopmen's strike. This union usually agreed to whatever the company wanted. The AL took over in 1934, along the same time the laborers got a union.

We pretty well worked along craft lines, and you didn't cross over to some one else's craft. When I had my own little paint shop near the locker room and wanted to modernize it a bit, I kinda crossed over and ran an air line from the locker room to the paint shop. Somebody turned me in. I explained to Jack Young, the foreman of the boilermaker's and pipefitters, that I wanted the air line because I had to mix white lead for use in the wheel plant. They used it when they pressed the wheels onto the axles. White lead was a real heavy paste and hard to stir. One of the blacksmiths, Mr. Shrine, made a 10 gallon mixer for me that was air-operated. Whenever they ran out at the wheel plant, I'd mix up a batch for them.

I retired in 1974 after forty eight years of service. Thirty four of those years were spent in painting locomotives. I averaged about 5 complete paint jobs a month, totaling over 2,000 locomotives painted in those thirty four years. Now I spend my time making locomotive models and pictures using wood, old flashlight for the boilers, odds and ends of jewelry, pieces of plastic, bottle caps and sections of beer cans (I use beer cans for the drivers).

I also oversee the railroad display in the caboose at the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia Museum in Lincoln.

**GENERAL MEETING
AND THE ELECTION OF 1997
LINCOLN CHAPTER AHSGR
FIRST GERMAN UNITED
CHURCH OF CHRIST
FIRST AND "F" ST
1:00 P.M.
(POT LUCK -COFFEE AND DRINKS FURNISHED)**



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