

## “Of Cyclamen and Water Lily”: The Erich and Käte zu Putlitz Story

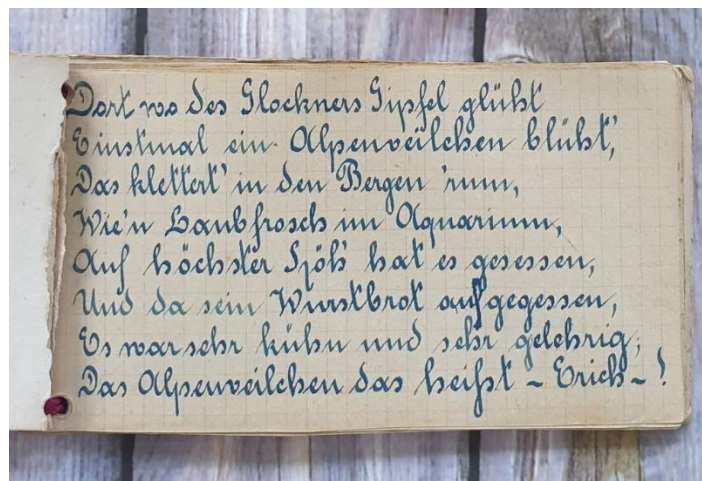


**UPDATED – the booklet is identified and the blogpost updated!**

This little hand-written booklet came to me from German ebay. It is a love story of one Erich and Käte, fully written in verse! It describes their lives before they met and the two years that they had been married by Christmas 1919. I believe this was a romantic Christmas gift by one of them to the other. And the best part is that you can see the couple's photos on the cover!

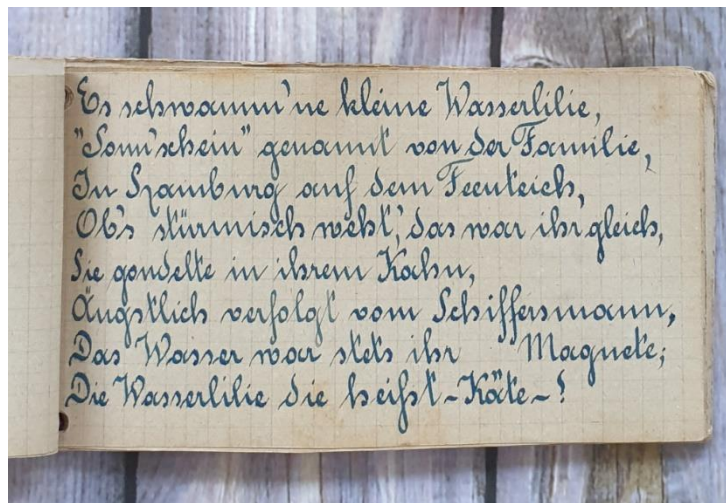


Erich and Käte are referred to as **Cyclamen and Water Lily** in the booklet. The verse holds sooo many genealogy clues! And although not once the surname of the couple is mentioned, perhaps by breaking down the verse and collecting all the clues will help us identify this lovely couple. So let's give it a try!



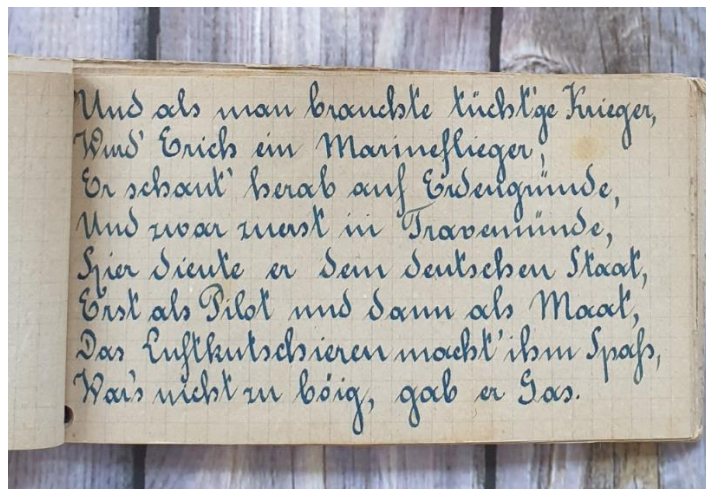
“Dort wo des Glockners Gipfel glüht einstmal ein Alpenveilchen blüht...”

The first line of the verse refers to the peak of the Grossglockner, the highest mountain in Austria and in the eastern Alps. Cyclamen grows in the Alps and Erich is referred to as the Cyclamen. This made me wonder if Erich was born in the South of Germany near the Alps, or even in Austria. About that later.



*"Es schwamm 'ne kleine Wasserlilie in Hamburg auf dem Feenteich..."*

Käte was born in Wandsbek in Hamburg, in the North of Germany. She is the Water Lily, floating on the Feenteich (Fairy Pond) in Hamburg.

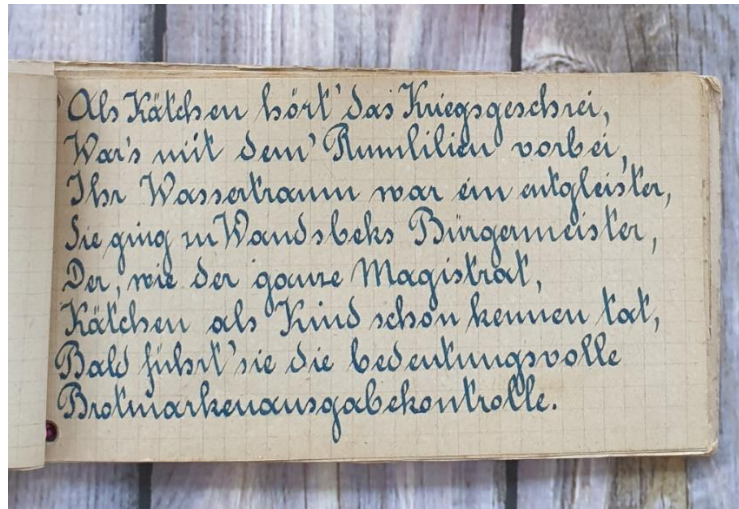


*"Hier diente er dem deutschen Staat erst als Pilot und dann als Maat..."*





When the WWI broke out, Erich joined the German Army and became a navy pilot (Marineflieger), stationed first in Travemünde. He later ranked Petty Officer Second Class ("Maat"), according to the verse.

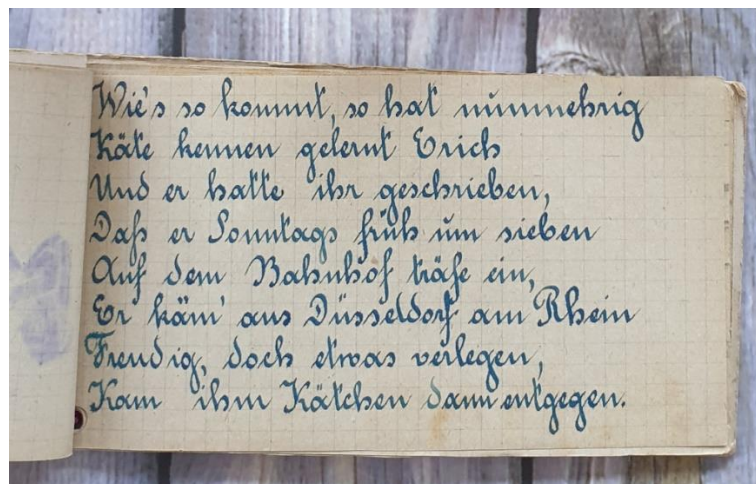


Als Käthe'n hört' das Kriegsgeschrei,  
War's mit dem' Rumlilien vorbei,  
Ihr Wassertramm war ein aufgelaister,  
Sie ging in Wandsbeks Dingammeister,  
Da, wie der ganze Magistrat,  
Käthe'n als Kind schon kennen kot,  
Bald führt' sie die bedeutungsvolle  
Brotmarkenausgabekontrolle.



"Bald führt sie die bedeutungsvolle Brotmarkenausgabekontrolle..."

Käthe applied for a job in Wandsbek in Hamburg as a supervisor of bread stamps during food rationing in the years of the WWI.



Wie's so kommt, so hat nunmehrig  
Käthe kennen gelernt Erich  
Und er hatte ihr geschrieben,  
Dass er Sonntags früh um sieben  
Auf dem Bahnhof käse ein,  
Er käm' aus Düsseldorf am Rhein  
Freudig, doch etwas verlegen,  
Kam ihm Käthe'n dann entgegen.

"Wie's so kommt, so hat nunmehrig Käthe kennen gelernt Erich..."

Erich and Käthe met during the war and they wrote each other letters. One day, Käthe received a letter from Erich, saying that he will arrive at the Hamburg train station "on Sunday at 7 am" from Düsseldorf and Käthe met him there.

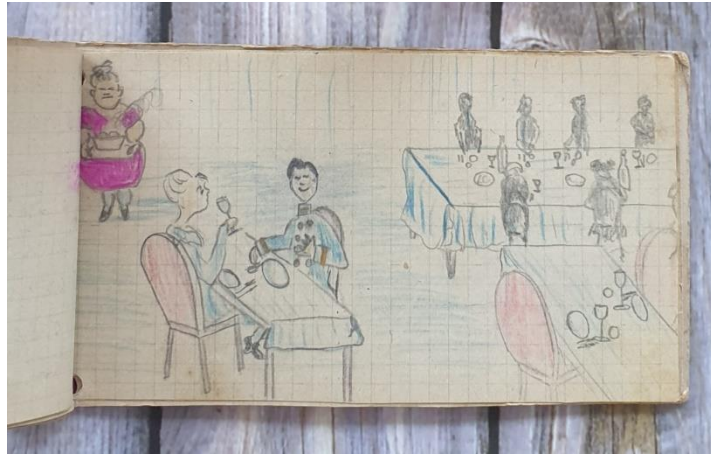
They spent the whole day together, visiting Käte's favourite places in Hamburg. They went rowing on the Fairy Pond and Käte took lots of photos of Erich.



*“Es dauerte nun noch ein Weilchen, da heiratete Alpenveilchen, die Wasserlilie ihm gefiel. Die Hochzeitsfeier war in Kiel...”*

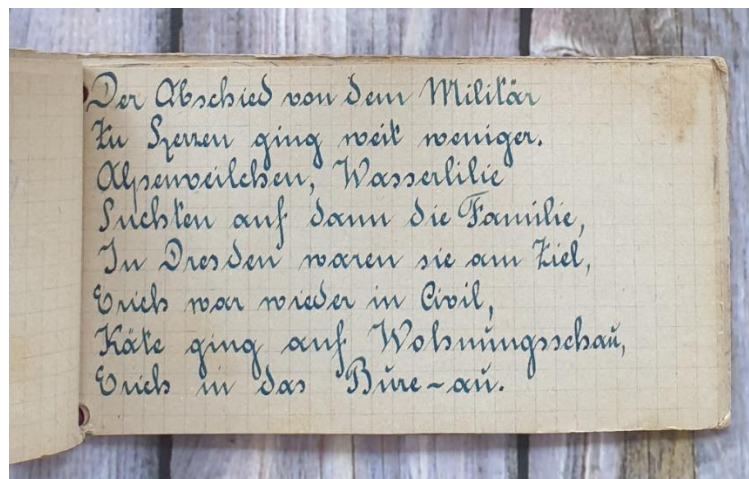
*Es dauerte nun noch ein Weilchen,  
Da heiratete Alpenveilchen,  
Die Wasserlilie ihm gefiel.  
Die Hochzeitsfeier war in Kiel.  
Dann holt' man in Johanniethal  
Sich Urlaub nach dem Isarkhal  
Wo man bei Doktor Ubeleisen  
Viel' Griesaufläufe hat verpeisen.*





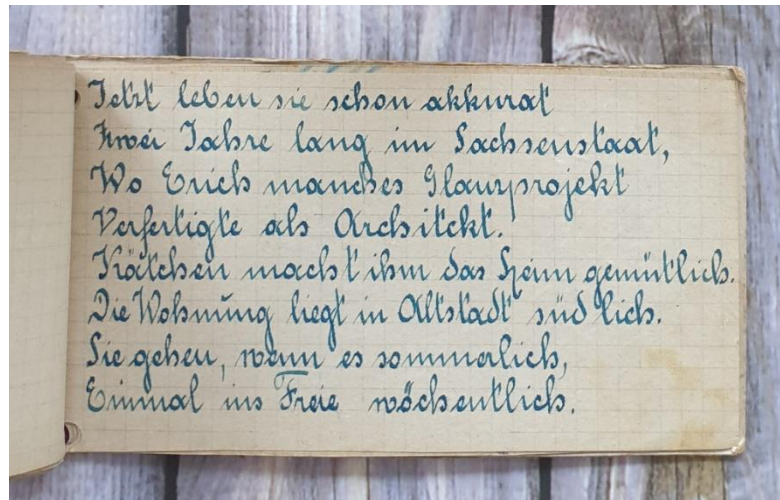
A few years passed, and Erich was stationed all over the place, in Wilhelmshafen and Hage. Finally the couple got married in Kiel. By Christmas 1919 they had been married for 2 years, so I assumed they got married some time in 1917.

They spent their honeymoon in Johannisthal and Isarthal as well as in Munich. They visited the sanatorium of Dr. Uebeisen in Thalkirchen and dined in various restaurants and beer gardens.



*"In Dresden waren sie am Ziel, Erich war wieder in Civil, Käte ging auf Wohnungsschau, Erich in das Bur-eau..."*

When Erich was discharged from the military after the war, the couple started looking for an apartment in Dresden. Their new home was located in the old town of Dresden.



*“Jetzt leben sie schon akkurat zwei Jahre lang im Sachsenstaat wo Erichs manches Glanzprojekt  
verfertigte als Architekt.”*

Erich worked as an architect in Dresden and Käte was a home-maker. The couple loved to go to the movies and skiing in the winter time, and spend time in the nature. Erich loved painting and looks like Käte modelled for her husband while they both drank coffee, freshly brewed by Käthe.



The booklet is signed off with the initials “K.z.P.” Could the “K” stand for Käte? Could the rest be the clue to the initials of their surname?





And this is where I got stuck in my research. Was Käte a nickname for Katharina? I looked through the lists of persons who got married in Kiel in 1917 (and in 1916 and 1918 as well, just to be sure) and then compared if any of the surnames of the Erichs of Kiel turned up in the addressbooks of Dresden, cause that's where the couple settled down and where Erich worked as an architect. I then looked through the section of architects in the Dresden addressbooks but could not find any Erich to match ours. And that's when I turned to my amazing Instagram community and within hours we knew the identity of this couple:

They were **Erich zu Putnitz** and **his wife Katharina (Käte) née von Kobbe!**

**Erich Wilhelm Julius Freiherr Gans Edler Herr zu Putnitz**, born on February 1st, 1892, in Brandenburg, was a German architect. He came from an old Brandenburg family of nobility. His initial training was in stonemasonry, and he was employed to restore the dome of Magdeburg. He then decided to study at the Magdeburg Arts and Crafts School. Just before WWI broke out, he presented his first architectural design for the Schauspielhaus Theatre in Düsseldorf. His résumé confirms that during WWI he served as a naval aviator.

He married **Elisabeth Johanna Katharina née von Kobbe** on July 3rd, 1917, in Kiel, just as the booklet told us. And indeed, the couple moved to Dresden in 1919 where Erich worked at the prestigious architecture firm *Lossow & Kühne*. He continued to participate in national and international competitions of architectural projects of which some he won. He moved to Sofia in Bulgaria to implement some of his projects. Slowly he was making a name for himself as an architect, both nationally and internationally. When he returned to Germany after 2 years, he was offered a position at the architecture firm of *Klophaus & Schoch* in Hamburg which he made partner of just shortly after. Already before 1933, his architectural style was influenced by neo-classicism, which later progressed into monumentalism. I don't know about his deep political beliefs and convictions but officially, he was a member of the NSDAP (the Nazi party) whose leaders applauded his architectural monumentalistic style and had him design state buildings. He participated in the 1936 Berlin Summer Olympics Arts Competition. Internationally, he was known for one draft of the Palace of the League of Nations in Geneva and a monument for Columbus in Santo Domingo which was never built. According to his death certificate, Erich passed away on January 28th, 1945, of pneumonia. Unfortunately, I don't know anything about Käte's life or if the couple had any descendants.

