

*Old Dingledorf Square  
and other Christmas Tales*

*Written by James Bixby  
Drawings by Chuck Salty*

† Old Dingledorf Press  
St. Clair Shores, Michigan

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Second Printing  
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Cover art and all illustrations by Chuck Salty

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*To order:*

Old Dingedorf Square Press  
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ISBN 978-1-60461-550-0

*To  
Our wives and children and OLGB.  
Always Our Inspiration*

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Chuck Salty's drawings give birth to entertaining characters, both plucky and petulant, who highlight the playfulness of everyday life. In "*Old Dingledorf Square*" Salty's pen will show you how Terwilliger Mugs and ol' Klinkel the town crier hop and skip to the Christmas bells ringing in their hearts. Along with Terwilliger and ol' Klinkel, you'll meet Mr. Wassel and his family, the distinguished Sir and Dame of Dingledorf who enjoy all the affluence of Christmas, the Christmas Witch and her children, Grandma and Grandpa Christmas, and the Creep who lives in Old North Church's bell tower. All these characters will leap into your world through Salty's dexterous and delightful drawings.

Next, Chuck's characterizations come to life more vividly than ever, as Cruthers Smuthers revels through a menagerie of mischievous fun in the poem "*Cruthers Smuthers and the Green Ghost of Christmas.*" And, finally, please join in Chuck's pictorial meanderings through the big city where beggars, Bobo and Mo, stroll down Main Street on Christmas Eve. Amidst the last minute rush of those fortunates who can enjoy the holiday's opulence, Bobo and Mo experience firsthand the distinction between those who have and those who have not in "*The Light of the Beggar.*"

Enjoy the rhythm, rhyme, and rich diction of James Bixby's poetry, and listen as his characters tell you many of the deeper Christian and philosophical meanings of Christmas. Visit Old Dingledorf, a Victorian town where great bells are made, but where they have fallen silent because the spirit of Christmas has suddenly and inexplicably vanished. Join young Terwilliger Mugs on his quest for food and shelter, and learn along with him as his search reveals the diverse meanings of this great Christian feast. Cruthers Smuthers, too, will tell you what Christmas is really after his frightening experiences with the Green Ghost of Christmas. And Bobo and Mo provide a glimpse into what Christmas really and truly means to the homeless who live in the destitute poverty of an urban slum. James Bixby, an educator and Michigan resident, takes you back in these Christmas narrative poems to those warm Christmases of yesteryear where Christian morals and family values reigned supreme, values which still have great relevance today, especially at Christmastime.

Illustrator Chuck Salty, also a Michigan resident and an esteemed member of the medical profession, will delight your eyes with varied and vivacious characters who project the fanciful imagination and innocence of childhood.

## Introduction

Ever since he was a child, Chuck Salty—a.k.a. Dr. Andrew Knechtl—has enjoyed delighting youthful hearts with the fantasy world of cartoon characters and drawings. Creating smiles on faces young and old is as important in medicine as it is in the world of cartooning, so turn the pages of "*Old Dingledorf Square*," and enjoy Chuck Salty's ability to entertain. Take pleasure in the evocative humor, and the childlike innocence and delight of his drawings—the same youthful innocence and joy that defines the Birth of the Baby Jesus, which has motivated so many artists to tell of this joyous event in pictures throughout the ages.

"*Old Dingeldorf Square*" is author James Bixby's response to the same challenge: to express the joy and exuberance of the Savior's birth. Bixby, a veteran schoolteacher who has taught in Michigan's Public and Parochial Schools, wrote "*Old Dingledorf Square*," along with its companion pieces "*The Light of the Beggar*" and "*Cruthers Smuthers and the*

*Green Ghost of Christmas,*” to ring the bells of Christmas joy a little louder in your heart.

In his famed “Christmas Carol,” the legendary Charles Dickens tells us the real meaning of Christmas through the voice of Tiny Tim: “God bless us everyone.” Terwilliger Mugs, the hungry and homeless waif in “*Old Dingledorf Square,*” attempts to bring this same message of God’s universal blessings as he knocks on the front doors of the town and begs: “Merry Christmas, kind sir, can you spare but a bite to unchill a poor heart on this freezing cold night?”

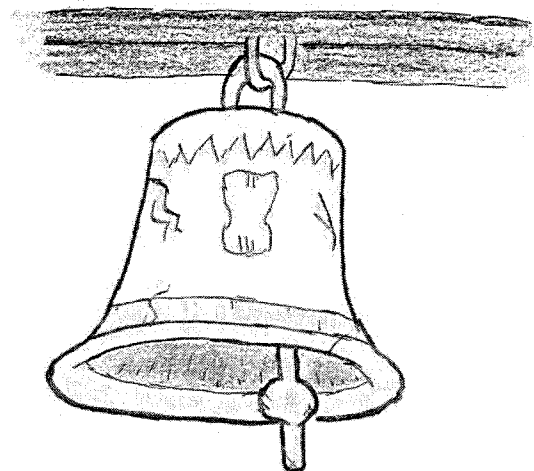
If you open your door to Terwilliger Mugs and the other characters in these stories, you will share a little ‘Christmas gladness so sweet’ as you turn the pages to celebrate the miraculous Birth of Jesus Christ! God bless us everyone!

## “*Old Dingledorf Square*”

*by James Bixby*

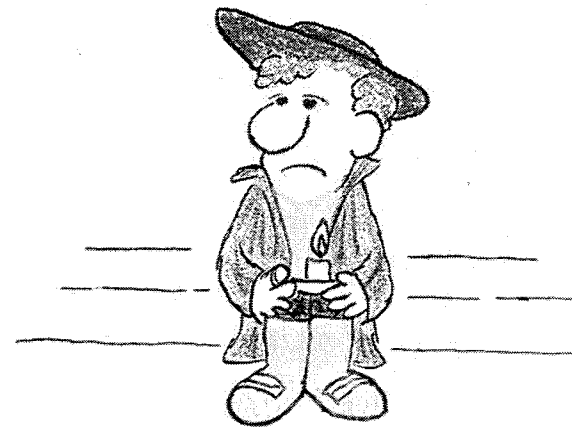
Christmas bells every year in old Dingledorf Square  
Jingle tidings of joy that unchill the crisp air.  
A grand birthday of bells over Dingledorf swells,  
As a symphony of ringling and jingling then jells.  
There’s no place on this earth that keeps Christmas so dear  
And can let it ring forth quite as loud or as clear;  
For the folks in this town manufacture great bells  
That are famed round the world for their echoing knells.  
Oh, such glorious, joyous, melodious spells!  
When dawn breaks in the East, a dim glow lights the night  
And the folks in old Dingledorf rise with delight  
To ring bells through the square neath North Church’s  
spired height.  
Like a wreath round their church they ring bells with such  
cheer  
That this Christmas their music just may reach your ear.  
Listen well to their carol; it rings to this day,  
And you’ll know why ol’Dingledorf sings so this way.

1.



Long ago in the loft of North Church's bell tower  
Winter winds drifted snow in the dark by the hour.  
Neath the bell the winds caroled with shrill sounding rings,  
As they sculpted from snowdrifts ungodly shaped things.  
The December moon peeked through the bleak northern  
sky,  
Shining lackluster pale as though Christmas weren't nigh.  
Through the loft the moon shone like a candle at night,  
The sole sign of God's warmth amidst winter's cold blight.  
Swirling snowflakes aglitter in crystal'd profusion  
Brightly glistened with moonlight in strangest illusion.  
Far below, Christmas Eve was a blanket of white,  
While last minute gift buyers rushed home in the night.  
On the steps of North Church, all alone at the door,  
Crouched a poor ragged boy, shivering cold to his core.  
On the eve of this feast all the warmth he could gain

Faintly shone from the stub of a candle's weak flame.  
Even though the damp cold nearly froze all his hope,  
With this candle somehow he was sure he could cope.



Young Terwilliger Mugs looked so pitifully sad  
In his poor beggar clothes, the sole outfit he had.  
On his head was a tri-cornered hat of deep green;  
His black knickers and coat had long splits in each seam.  
There Terwilliger sat watching folks passing by  
And sleighs full of gay shoppers o'er snowfields then fly.  
To warm homes shoppers flew, cuddling packets in hand,  
But the waif only dreamed how a hug would be grand.  
Nobody noticed him; nobody cared,  
Only an old couple casually stared.