

Our Sarata Sisters

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Translated by: Allen E. Konrad
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P.O. Box 157, Rowley, IA 52329
onamission1939@gmail.com

Note: The Lutheran Church in Europe had a deaconess program for women whereby they could serve in the church. The term used was “Sister” and can translate to “Nurse”. Words within [brackets] in the translation indicate translator comment.

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[Translation Begins]

Our Sarata Sisters

by Pastor Winger

O thou homeland, O thou homeland,
Let go to your holy space
Only me once more, only me once again
Escape in a dream!

Today, many beautiful and valuable things that we had in our old homeland seem like a dream. The institution in Sarata belonged to the picture of our life in our German villages in Bessarabia. Everyone who has ever been in the Sarata Hospital gratefully remembers the conscientious and faithful care of our sisters. The institution itself was known to everyone. In recent years, some teachers have come on school trips with their students to the institution at Sarata to show their children what they had heard about from their parents and teachers. Because there was only this one institution of mercy and it was supported and maintained entirely by gifts of love from the Evangelical German population, it was known to every child, and every adult was aware that this work of mercy was also his work. Some typical, original wards, such as Fritz, whose real name was Friederike and was a woman, were known far beyond Sarata due to her odd peculiarity. Therefore, I hope that many readers will be interested in where the representatives of this work, the sisters, have gone.

So let me first briefly bring the life pictures of two sisters who have died in the last two years. Before us stands Sister Frieda Weißhaar. For years she was a cashier in the institution at Sarata,

did her duty faithfully and conscientiously, and always received and served the people who were involved in the institution with the same friendliness. Sister Frieda Weißhaar was born on 8 May, 1877, in Altschwedendorf, southern Russia, and entered the Alexander Asylum on 8 June, 1893 as a deaconess student. She worked for some time in the mentally impaired department. Because she mastered the Russian language, she taught the Russian language to the students for a long time, the knowledge of which was absolutely necessary for dealing with non-German patients in the hospital and for communication in public life. From 1899 to 1900, she cared for the old women in the Old People's Home. For a year, she worked in the Deaf-Mute Institution in Worms, southern Russia, which had been founded by Pastor Daniel Steinwand. Her weak health prompted the management of the institution to assign her a job with less physical exertion. From August 1921 until the resettlement in 1940, she was the leading sister of the Chancellery of Alexander Asylum. She did this work with such faithfulness that she often spent weeks checking the monthly and annual accounts when a very insignificant amount was not properly recorded. The joy was great when she found the mistake.

After the resettlement, she came with the Sarata sisters to the No Longer Working House (*Feierabendhaus*) of the House of Mercy in Litzmannstadt. She suffered from homesickness there. A visit to our house was always an uplift and a joy to her.

On 17 January, 1945, she had to go through the sad path of Flight together with the sisters of the House of Mercy in Litzmannstadt and the Sarata Sisters, found temporary accommodation in the Deaconess House "Bethanien" in Breslau and from there came to the Brückenberg Rest Home. She was in Halberstadt for a short time until she was sent to Altenbrak/Harz on 6 June, 1945, and from there to Wiesbaden in Hesse on 3 February, 1949, to the No Longer Working Station (*Feierabendstation*). She has been ill and broken in recent years. A severe stomach ailment put an end to her life, which had been full of restlessness during the last decade. She died in Wiesbaden on 18 January, 1952, and was laid to rest there on 21 January, 1952. Her mourning text, Hebrews 4:9, 11: "There is still a rest for the people of God. So let us do our best to come to this rest," echoes her longing and our wish. We do not begrudge her the peace after so much restlessness. "Rest, rest, rest, heavenly rest in the bosom of the Mediator, we hasten to you."

Another dear sister, Katja Boger, was called away to eternity on 19 September, 1951. Katja Boger was born in Klöstitz on 16 May, 1894, as the daughter of Friedrich Boger and his wife Magdalena, née Engel. She entered the Alexander Asylum in Sarata on 21 January, 1911, and was installed on 7 August, 1918, for her beautiful vocation. Sister Katja also worked on different wards: three years in the Kitchen, 7 years in the Mentally Impaired Department, then in the Men's Home and in the Women's Home. She was a good nurse, liked very much by doctor and patients. From 1924 to 1928, she worked with great faithfulness in the hospital in Sarata. For a short time, she worked in Transylvania, in Schäßburg, in a hospital. Thanks to her practical talent, she learned hand weaving and also taught some patients within it. This made it possible to hand-weave some of the fabrics necessary for the patients and the household, which meant a considerable saving for the institution. From 1934 until the resettlement in 1940, she worked from that place in the hand loom weaving mill.



Sarata Alexander Asylum



Sarata Hospital

After the Resettlement, she worked under the direction of the House of Mercy in Litzmannstadt in private care, in the Municipal Retirement Home, and from 1944 in the Community Care Service in Maslaki. Unfortunately, Sister Katja did not get out of Poland in time and experienced very difficult things there. It was not until 8 January, 1946, that she arrived in Altenbrak/Harz completely exhausted. For a time, she worked in the Geriatric Kitchen in Emmersleben, then in Altenbrak, and finally as a nurse in Braunlage. On 24 September, 1950, she visited me for a few moments and looked very ill. The last few years, she worked in the Mother House kitchen in Wiesbaden. Due to the hardships in Poland, her health was broken. After two operations and long, six months of suffering, she went home, in the safety of her LORD, on 19 September, 1951 and was buried in the Deaconess Cemetery in Wiesbaden on 22 September, 1951. Revelation to John, chapter 7, verses 9 to 17 was the text of the funeral address at her grave. We hope that God has now wiped all tears from her eyes. Many will remember her fondly.

Where are the other sisters from Sarata and where are they working? Some have become independent nurses, some got married. After the Resettlement, the sisters from Sarata, who remained in the service of the Diakonia, were assigned to the House of Mercy in Litzmannstadt under the direction of Rector Löffler. In 1945, they fled with the sisters of the House of Mercy, first landed in Altenbrak/Harz, until in 1949 they found home and work in Wiesbaden/Hesse, in the Deaconess Mother House Paulinen Foundation. There they faithfully do their service.

The two oldest sisters, Margarethe Fiechtner and Luise Troester, are at the Paulinen Foundation in the evenings and still do temporary work here and there, as far as their strength allows. Sister Pauline Kehrer runs a Girls' Home in the Lindenschmühle near Katzenellenbogen in the Taunus [a mountain range in Hesse, Germany]. Sister Sophie Wagner faithfully helps in the White Sewing Chamber (*Weißnähtube*) of the Mother House. Sister Christine Roemmich works in the Mother House office. Sister Lydia Müller is in a suburb of Wiesbaden, Rambach, in parish care. Sister Eugenie Müller does the same service in Wiesbaden. Sister Emma Knöll trained as a midwife in Tübingen and now works as a midwife at the Paulinen Foundation Hospital in Wiesbaden. Four sisters: Rosalie Kappel, Klara Malke, Hilda Winger and Melitta Falkenberg work in the Mother House in Wiesbaden. In parish service in Königstein in the Taunus is Sister Mariechen Logos, Sister Emma Drews. in Losbach in the Taunus. The sisters: Marie Knöll,

Otilie Rauschenberger, Elisabeth Meyer, Emma Pietz, Adeline Pietz, Ida Hinz, Adeline Schaupp and Anna Eichelberg work at the Braunlage Hospital. Sister Emilie Flöter and Sister Anna Falkenberg work at the Mathilden Hospital in Büdingen/Upper Hesse. Sister Emilie Krüger spends her evenings in Markgröningen/Württemberg with her relatives and was allowed to faithfully care for her mother until her death.

Of the 65 resettled Sarata deaconesses, 25 are still in the service of the Mother House Diakonia, according to the above information. The number has melted down greatly under the storms of time. In the closed sisterhood we see how our ethnic group is thinned out, how many are no longer there. If we had a list of all Bessarabian resettlers today and could make a cross for every missing person, we would only become aware of how many are no longer with us, whether they have been deported or emigrated, or whether they have died. So our life goes by quickly, as if we are flying away. But “faithfulness is first, in the end in heaven and on earth”.

What was the most valuable thing about our sisters? Was it not the extraordinary faithfulness and conscientiousness? These came from faith in the living Lord, Jesus Christ, before whom everyone knew themselves responsible. Whoever serves this Lord can also be grateful for difficult days, he sees in his life the hand of God that guides us. That this Lord is with us is what matters in life and in death. May these lines not only evoke memories from the old homeland, but also make us aware again and again that we are only poor when we have lost faith! That is why the words from the Revelation of John 3:11 also apply today: “Hold fast on to what you have, so that no one may take your crown!”



The last Head Sister Cäcilie Troester
born in Hoffnunstal on 30 January,
1888.
She died under Polish occupation
in Litzmannstadt.

[Translation Ends]