

Culture Historical Museum of Bessarabia German Colonists

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[Note: Comments in square brackets are those of the translator.]

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[Translation Begins]

The Cultural Historical Museum of the German Colonists of Bessarabia (on the 10th Anniversary of its Existence 1922-1932)

As Sarata made preparations for the centennial celebration, the member of the Festival Committee, Mr. Im. Wagner, made the proposal to organize, in a class of the village school, a collection and exhibition of antiquities, that is, such as objects, pictures, documents, books, letters, and so forth, that are still preserved from the time of the founding of Sarata and which can teach us today in a more vivid way about the life of our ancestors. This proposal was well received and Mr. Im. Wagner was commissioned to bring into play the necessary forces and make this idea a reality.



A trunk brought along from the time of Emigration from Germany, made completely of wood, without nails and straps. Lighting Items: Lampstand, Candle Snuffer, and Mould to Form Tallow Candles.

So the “Antiquities Commission” was formed under his chairmanship, also called “Museum Committee”, which now proceeded to collect “antiquities” in the village. Over 100 items came

together that could be viewed in a class of the elementary school during the festive days, at which time the members of the Museum Committee would give explanations and comments. All items were brought together on loan and should afterwards be returned to the owners again. However, the members of the Museum Committee made a promise among themselves, from the items submitted, to come up with something permanent, a local history museum, for the benefit and blessing of our people.

So we found the committee referred to gathered again after the anniversary celebration where the following minutes (*Protokoll*) were drawn up, which will be repeated here word for word:

**Minutes
of the members of the Museum Committee for the Jubilee Celebration of Sarata on 29
October, 1922.**

The zealous participation and the lively interest which the visitors demonstrated, during the anniversary celebration of Sarata, on the items exhibited there, as well as the belief that it was necessary that items, which characterized our cultural life in the past and present, be gathered and put on display, led the undersigned, at the invitation of the chairman, to come together today, whereby it was agreed that next Sunday, 05 November, at 1:00 PM, to invite the friends of this matter to the village government office:

1. To discuss the establishment of a museum, and
2. To submit a project for the establishment of the same.

With the meeting called to order, Mr. Im. Wagner was appointed to the office of chairman.

Chairman of the Committee: Im. Wagner
 { Johs. Wagner.
Members: { Im. Schöch.
 { E. Knauer.



Crown House – Double Residence Type – for 2 Households

These resolutions were adopted, in the course of which now the following “meeting for the purpose of establishing a museum” on 05 November, 1922, with the Articles of Association presented by Prof. Johs. Wagner and also adopted in principle.

The following resolutions were adopted by the 40 persons present:

1. It was decided unanimously to found a museum.
2. The museum should be established socially as an association.
3. For the final editing of the Articles of Association, a temporary commission was chosen, consisting of: (1) Im. Wagner, (2) Director A. Mauch, (3) Johs. Wagner, (4) Friedrich Fiechtner, (5) Im. Schöch, (6) Dr. I. Waldenmaier, and (7) Alexander Wagner from Akkerman.

These people also had the task of take the necessary steps required for the ratification of the Articles.

In addition, a voluntary contribution list was produced, which resulted in a yield of 1,230 lei, to cover the necessary cost for the ratification of the Articles and to begin the work.

And with that, the Museum Association was founded on the occasion of the centenary of the community of Sarata (01 October, 1922), and can now look back to the first decade of its existence. For this reason, the Board of Directors of the Museum Association was asked by the General Assembly to compose a brief historical overview.

After the above mentioned temporary Commission had carried out its task and the Articles of the Museum Association (see docket 1511 of 26 February, 1923) were confirmed, a meeting of the founding members of the Museum Association was scheduled for 29 March 1923, at which time the first administration was elected; namely, these men:

- (1) Im. Wagner—1st Chairman; (2) Dr. I. Waldenmaier—2nd Chairman; (3) Im. Schöch—Secretary; (4) Friedr. Winger—Treasurer; (5) Prof. Johs. Wagner—1st Curator; (6) Prof. A. Gunsch—2nd Curator.



View of a Museum Wall.

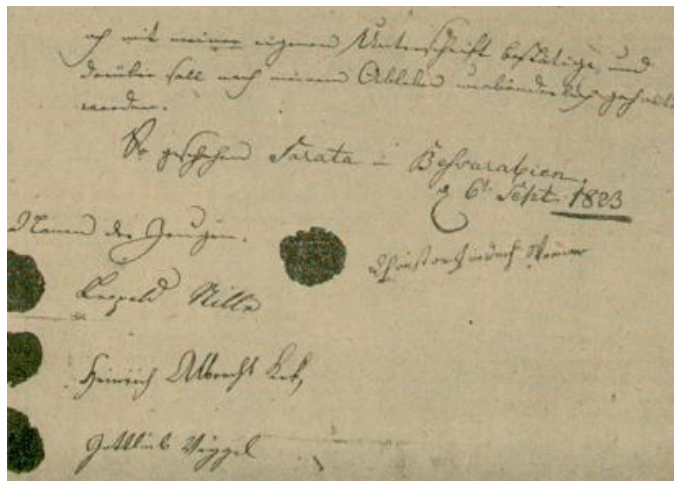
In the first Proposed Council (*Aussichtsrat*), the following were elected at that meeting: (1) Dr. L. Dobler, (2) Tr. Knauer, and (3) J. Schnaidt.

Now, the real work of the Association could begin. Within the first year, 57 new members were added to the 58 charter members; also, within the first year, Chr. Fr. Werner carried out valuable research, who, at 100, died in September of 1923.

The question concerning the location gave a lot of concern because nowhere was there to be found a room suitable for the museum. The issue was resolved by the Association Chairman, who made available a room in his home; at first without charge, later for a small fee. The museum was housed here for eight years until it found accommodations at the Werner School in 1930, where it is located until today.

Slowly but surely, the Association collection increased. Each year, new items were added so that, today, there are already 469 museum artifacts, some of which are of special value, for example: the 64 volumes of documents from 1822-1892, which, on loan, were rescued from our former District Office and which were a real treasure trove for the writer of the history of our people (***note**); then some separate documents: (Werner's Last Will and Testament comes to mind here), letters, photographs, books, items used in the house and on the farm, and so forth.

(*note: It is strongly urged to preserve the valuable records of the District Office in a different location in order to preserve them from destruction, and, if possible, convey them to the museum. If this does not happen, we will lose irreplaceable valuables.)



End of the Werner Will with the Signatures of C.F. Werner and Witnesses.

As the number of members and items increased, so the importance of the museum also soared. More visitors came from year to year. Not only did guests come from our neighboring communities, but also from other Romanian settlements, and, not least of all, from the mother land.

That the museum artifacts were appreciated by the visitors can be shown by the entries made in the guestbook. For example, the following wrote:

Dr. Hans Werner, Count of Trebnitz, leader of 215 Silesian irregular troops: "...was a guest for three days in Sarata and visited with great interest the homeland museum."

Dr. Georg Leibbrandt, archivist in the Reich Ministry of the Interior, Berlin: "One of my most pleasant surprises on my trip to the German colonists of Bessarabia was the cultural and historical museum in Sarata. With great joy I could see that here, thanks to the untiring zeal and the Swabian certainty of the aim of its founders, in particular of Chairman Im. Wagner and his active assistants, a center for the care of German nationhood is created which can have great importance for the history of the Germans in Bessarabia. Deepen the understanding of the historical, demonstrate the life of the fathers of the younger generation, obtain the cultural and spiritual goods pertaining to the colonists—this provides tasks that the museum is called upon to accomplish. May he be granted good success in his work and may it become a care facility of German nationhood in the noblest sense of the word!"



Dismantling of a House of the Landless (*Kleinhäuslers*). Also Built at the Time of the Founding.

Prof. Heinrich Wachner from Kronstadt: "Occasionally, I have stopped in Sarata on a big study trip and am indebted to the homeland museum for the very valuable clarifications and inspirations..."

Ernst Lochmann, head of the Frontier Germanness (*Grenzdeutschtums*) and Expatriate Germanness (*Auslanddeutschtums*) of the Stuttgart student body: "I was very pleased with the zeal and the beautiful museum collection."

Dipl. *rer. merc.* N. Thilemann: "A very interesting hour spent here at the museum. This visit gave me much inspiration..."

Archaeologist E. Kovalenco from Kischinev: “*Malenkij Saratskij Musej iawliaetsia primerom bolschoi liubwi I swoemu proschlomu I k swoemu narodu I dostoen podroschanija I uwaschenija.*” (The Sarata Museum is an example of great love for its people and to its past and is worthy of imitation and respect.)

Any stranger who comes to Sarata considers it his duty to visit the museum, and others who were here also: Prof. C. Uhlig, Tübingen; State Undersecretary *Brandsch*, Transylvania (*Siebenbürgen*); Member of Parliament Hans Beller of Banat; and other persons from Russia.

What fills the friends of the museum with special joy is the fact that the number of visitors from year to year is growing and just in the last year of the Association we were pleased to welcome a goodly number of teachers and students from our colonies, such as Tarutino, Schabo, Eigenfeld, and others. But also, by way of correspondence, the museum imparts all sorts of information to inquiries from within and from outside the country. Various institutions and individuals have already turned to it and the administration is happy to answer all inquiries, as much as is possible.



Present Executive Committee of the
Museum Association.

Since 1925, the Executive Committee made it a task of theirs to work in the German villages through lectures, educational and recruiting support. Up to today, 38 lectures have been conducted in various communities. Since the themes of this report are, at the same time, to indicate the ideas and work of the museum, here, at least, are some that should be listed:

- Emergence of the museum.
- The objectives and the importance of the museum.
- From the life of our ancestors.
- Causes of the emigration of our ancestors.
- Family Information.
- The ancient Germans (*Germanen*).
- The Germans in the world.
- The Germans in Romania.
- Land and people in Transylvania (*Siebenbürgen*).
- Luther's life in the light of the Reformation.
- Pastor Löhn and the institute in Neu-Dettelsau.
- The female deaconesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.
- Ignaz Lindl.
- Chr. Fr. Werner.

Themes will also be addresses concerning questions about agriculture and hygiene.

So as to also arouse an interest in the museum in the communities outside of Sarata, to collect items and recruit members, the following trusted people were identified for:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 01. Akkermann—Mrs. Lydia Golver 02. Arzis—Mr. Johs. Schöch 03. Alisowka—Mr. Aug. Schulz 04. Andreewka—Pastor Kern 05. Alt-Posttal—Mr. M. Weiss and E. Baisch 06. Alt-Elft—earlier Mr. N. Tschritter, now Mr. Chr. Fruck 07. Borodino—Mr. Wilhelm Geigle and Em. Stuhlmüller 08. Balktschelly—earlier Mr. Johann Zick, now Mr. Osk. Koch 09. Beresina—Mr. Oskar Oßwald 10. 10 Brienne—Mr. Erich Klo 11. Eigenfeld—Mr. W. Schöch 12. Eigenheim—Mr. Joh. Gäßler 13. Friedensfeld—Mr. G. Necker 14. Friedenstal—Mr. J. Kelm | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15. Friedrichsdorf—Mr. D. Koth 16. Gnadental—earlier Mr. F. Wagner, now Mr. G. Riethmüller 17. Lichtental—earlier Mr. G. Schreiber, now Mr. Fr. Meyer 18. Leipzig—Mr. H. Knauer 19. Mannsburg—Mr. W. Baisch and Al. Mutschler 20. Klöstitz—Mr. Otto Wagner 21. Katzbach—Mr. Arnold Winger 22. Neu-Posttal—earlier Mr. Fr. Herberg, now Mr. H. Mauch 23. Seimeny—Mr. R. Becker 24. Teplitz—earlier Mr. H. Weiß, now Mr. Simon Zacher 25. Tarutino—earlier Dr. J. Fuchs, now Dr. K. Stumpp |
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In Sarata, the duties are carried out by trusted men of the Executive Committee. Those in this position, respectively, are the following persons:

- 1. 1st Chairman: Im. Wagner from 1922 until today.
- 2. 2nd Chairman: Dr. J. Waldenmaier from 1922 until 1925
Prof. Friedrich Fiechtner from 1925 until today.
- 3. Treasurer: Fr. Winger from 1922 until today.
- 4. Secretary: Teacher Im. Schöch from 1922 until today.
- 5. 1st Curator: Prof. Johs. Wagner from 1922 until today.
- 6. 2nd Curator: Prof. Alb. Gunsch from 1922 until 1926.
Teacher Reinh. Wagner from 1926 until 1930.
Friedr. Reinöhl from 1930 until today.

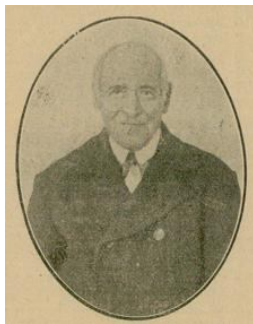
Past and Present members of the Board of Directors:

- 1. Dr. L. Dobler from 1922 until today.
- 2. Tr. Knauer from 1922 until today.
- 3. Jakob Schaidt from 1922 until 1924 and
Alb. Knauer from 1924 until today.

The ever gripping turning point did not fail to stop at our Association and membership has declined significantly in recent years, as can be seen from the following table:

Date	Number of Members	Number of Objects	Balance On Hand	Remarks
1922-1923	57	67	1,436.60 Lei	
1923-1924	81	113	2,342.58 Lei	
1924-1925	252	156	5,622.65 Lei	
1925-1926	293	233	10,506.59 Lei	
1926-1927	361	288	7,450.68 Lei	Purchased chairs, show case & other inventory
1927-1928	357	327	13,992.00 Lei	
1928-1929	327	368	16,838.00 Lei	
1929-1930	233	422	22,892.00 Lei	
1930-1931	199	469	27,886.00 Lei	of which 13,128.00 Lei belongs to the Building Fund
1931-1932	not complete			

It is to be noted that the supporting members—5 in number—are not counted in the above table. Only two of them are still alive: Chr. Müller, 91 years old, (now the oldest man in Sarata) and Jak. Wagner, 85 years old; the others: Wilh. Oßwald, Johs. Wagner and Jak. Rüb have already died. Supporting members have submitted their statements and stories, which were carefully recorded, handing over to us some valuable accounts from the days of their youth. (*note)



Chr., Müller
The oldest member of the Museum Association and now the oldest man in Sarata, at 91 years old.

(*note: We want to draw very special attention to these statements of the old people. With each of these “old oaks”, a piece of our past falls into the grave. One misses no longer being able to question the oldest men and women in our villages and to write down their reports. One is often surprised at what can still be uncovered here.)

Now also, in order to exist and grow in the future, the Museum Association needs the support of our people. The annual subscription—20 lei!—is apportioned so low so that everyone must bring this small offering for a good cause. However, it is also so low, that the museum, with such a small number of members, as at present, cannot be expanded. To stand still, however, is to fall back!

To have our own independent building, under the present circumstances, is completely unthinkable, and yet we must not give up this idea; because our artifacts can be accommodated only insufficiently due to a lack of space.

So, in this situation, the request also goes out to everyone: Join the Museum Association! Recruit members and collect items for the museum! We owe it to our elderly, but also to our future generations!

The museum is a link that wants to continue spinning the thread of unity from generation to generation. It wants to assist in the ethnic summary and renewal and help educate us to love people and homeland. Last, but not least, it also wants to appear in closer relations with the mother land and form new ties of togetherness. It also has a double importance: first of all, it is a collection point, where everything, what for us is valuable from the past and present, is collected, stored and presented; but, secondly, it is also a school reporting, in a vivid and convincing manner, on the days of the fathers gone by, in which our mind should be turned back to the nature and condition of the fathers, to genuine German national characteristics!

Our fathers succeeded splendidly with firm trust in God, tough sticking to German behavior and practice, truthfulness and honesty, diligence and work, and a simple way of life. The museum wants to be of assistance in bringing these German virtues to importance again.



Werner Trading Firm in Giengen

The importance of the museum is probably clearest to us if we remember the purpose and objective of the same, how it is set forth in the following Articles:

**Articles
of the Museum Association of the Bessarabian German Colonists.**

Note: The museum was founded as a result of the 100th Anniversary of Sarata Colony, celebrated on 01 October, 1922.

I. Purpose of the Association and its Realization

- § 01. The purpose of the Association is the collection, storage and exhibition of artifacts characterizing the past and present from all areas of our German Bessarabian cultural life, nature and condition, as we have inherited them from our fathers, to maintain in us and in the coming generations; as well as come to know more about our current cultural life and our Bessarabian homeland and to learn to love it.
- § 02. The Association strives for the realization of this purpose:
 - a) Through the establishment of a cultural and historical museum, which should be expanded partly through the gathering of things from members or friends, partly through donations, loans or exchange, but also partly by purchase;
 - b) Through display and discussion of the collections on certain days.
- § 03. The Association shall enjoy the rights of a corporate body.

II. Location of the Association.

- § 04. The Executive Committee of the Association shall be located in Sarata, where the museum also is.

III. Members

- § 05. The Association shall consist of regular, supporting, and honorary members.
- § 06. Members of the Association can be both male and female.
- § 07. All persons who sign the application for the ratification of the Articles shall be considered founders of the Association.
- § 08. A regular member shall pay an annual amount determined by the General Assembly. He is also required to support the efforts of the Association and, where possible, to take an active part in the work of collecting things.
- § 09. A supporting member shall be any person who shows special interest in the Association by advertising, donates thing, and things like that.
- § 10. Honorary members shall be persons who have promoted the Association with outstanding activity or have funded it through major grants. Their appointment shall be done by the General Assembly on the proposal of the Committee.
- § 11. All members are eligible to vote and entitled to vote.
- § 12. A member who refuses to pay the annual dues, after an unsuccessful reminder, shall be considered as having left, loses his right to the assets of the Association and the realized payments [dividends].
- § 13. Each member shall have the right to use the collections and any tool of the Association to study under the conditions listed in § 25.

IV. General Assembly.

- § 14. A regular General Assembly shall take place annually (at the close of the Association year).
- § 15. Urgent matters shall be discussed in an extraordinary General Assembly called for by the Committee or by at least 20 members.

- § 16. These Articles may be amended only by a majority of votes, in a General Assembly, in which 2/3 of all members must be present to form a quorum,. If the first General Assembly convened for the purpose of the amendment of the Articles does not meet the conditions, a called for meeting of the General Assembly, after three weeks, is empowered to pass resolutions by whatever number of members present.

V. Administrative Body.

- § 17. To manage its business, at its annual General Assembly, the Association shall elect, for a term of three years, a Committee consisting of a First and a Second Chairman, a Secretary, a Treasurer and two Supervisors (Curators). The Committee shall elect from among its members the actual Director of the museum. Treasurer and Secretary each have a candidate (*einen Kandidaten*).
- § 18. The Association year shall start on 01 October.
- § 19. The Committee shall meet at least once a month to conduct current business, whereby decisions must be recorded and signed by the Chairman and Secretary.
- § 20. The Secretary shall manage the correspondence of the Association and the minutes of the Committee.
- § 21. The Treasurer shall collect the annual dues and other funds of the Association, keep a record of income and expenditure, and shall present an annual report to the regular General Assembly.
- § 22. The Curators shall divide the respective duties at their discretion, prepare catalogs, show the submitted items at the next meeting of the Committee, and systematically arrange them in the museum. The submitted items are to be provided with a number by the relevant Curator, along with the name of the submitter, in a detailed evidence catalog.

VI. Board of Directors

- § 23. The Board of Directors (*Aufsichtsrat*) shall consist of three members, and a candidate (*einem Kandidaten*), who shall be elected by the General Assembly for a term of three years. Either the General Assembly or the Council shall elect the Chairman from among its own members. The Board of Directors shall audit the treasury, books, and all other assets of the Association and submit a report on the situation to the Annual General Assembly. Concerning these actions, the Board of Directors shall make comments in a special book.
- § 24. All voting of the Administrative Body, as well as of the Board of Directors, shall be done by secret ballot.

VII. Use of the Museum.

- § 25. The Association's collection can be used, as a rule, only in the rooms of the museum during the hours specified by the Committee; but individual items may be signed out, on request to the Curators, by regular members for a certain period and in return for liability. The borrower has to record these items, with his signature, in a book specifically for this purpose, and, if he lives outside Sarata, shall be responsible for whatever expenses are involved.

§ 26. Everyone is free to have noteworthy objects set up in the area of the museum with retention of ownership, but first of all, it will be necessary to have a discussion with the Chairman concerning receipt of item, time, liability, maintenance, and so forth. The latter can give an official certificate of guarantee (*Versicherungsschein*) to the owner.

VIII. Resources of the Association.

§ 27. The resources of the Association consist of the annual contributions of the members; voluntary donations and supports; proceeds from events, lectures, and so forth; Association entrance fees from visitors not affiliated.

§ 28. The funds of the Association are paid out by the Committee according to a budget approved by the General Assembly.

IX. Dissolution of the Association.

§ 29. If the dissolution of the Association should ever become necessary, the museum and the possible cash-on-hand should be turned over to the Werner School in Sarata.

It is our wish and hope that these lines may also contribute towards the help to promote the good things of the Museum Association. Yes, may the museum exist, grow and thrive, to the honor of our ancestors, and a blessing to us and the coming generations!

The Board of Directors.

[End of Translation]