

Head Nurse Magdalena Kowalsky

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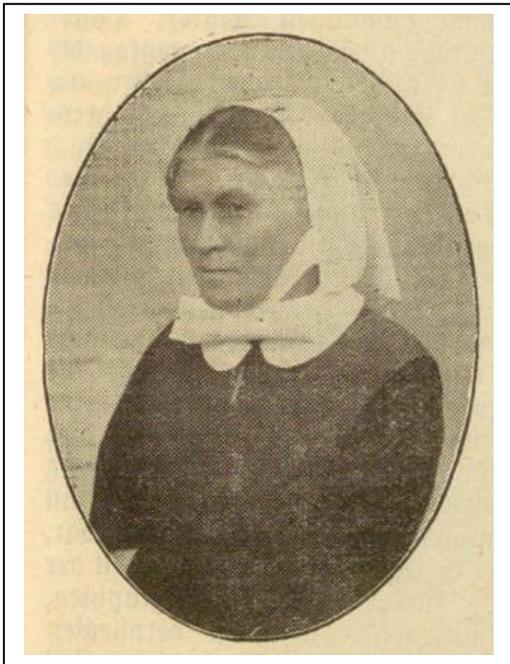
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[Note: Comments in square brackets in the document are those of the translator.]

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[Translation Begins]

Head Nurse Madgalena Kowalsky



For almost 55 years, the deceased Head Sister/Nurse (*Oberschwester*) Magdalena Kowalsky experienced joy and sorrow at the institution in Sarata. She was well known not only in the “Alexander Asylum,” but all over Sarata and beyond. She selflessly dedicated a lifetime to the deaconess profession. In the course of years and decades, she was a welcome friend in many homes. The many, many sick visits which she made will remain in the memory of those in Sarata. Through these visits, Sister/Nurse (*Schwester*) Magdalena gave out practical advice with respect to nursing, various practical experiences she encountered in her five decades of constant activity spent in the Alexander Asylum. In previous years, when there still was no doctor in the village, in an emergency, the nurse had to be the doctor herself until a doctor could be brought in. As a result, she could give out some practical advice. When Sister Magdalena talked about institution life, her supply of subject-matter was inexhaustible. She carried out her calling among various people. She cared for a variety of foster-children. All kinds of experiences from the old days were in her memory. It was the experience from older time that fixed most vividly in her memory. She often told us of the work of the Sarata sisters/nurses in the Bendery military hospital during the Russo-Turkish War 1877-78. One exception was to get the details of the history of the Deaconess House from her. Comforting were the last years of her retirement in the “*Abendfrieden*” [retirement home for nurses in Sarata]. She was given a time of rest from 26 March, 1927 until the day of her death, 14 February, 1929. Shortly before her death, she told us interesting episodes from the earlier

time of the institute's life. On the evening of 13 February, Sister Magdalena was still comfortably in the circle of the older sisters/nurses at the *Abendfrieden*. That same evening, she had a stroke and was already safely asleep [died] the next day, 14 February.

Sister Magdalena Kowalsky was born on 24 November, 1853, in Schlangendorf on the Dnieper River, church parish Alt-Schwedendorf, Kherson *Gouvernement*. She came from a poor peasant family. She spent her childhood and teenage years in the circle of many brothers and sisters, all her relatives stayed in Russia. To the end of her life, she suffered from the misfortune that had fallen upon her relatives in Russia as a result of Bolshevism. She attended and finished her public education in her home village school and, at the age of 15, was confirmed by local Parish Pastor A. Nordgreen. At the age of 21, on 13 June, 1874, she entered as a deaconess student in the "Alexander Asylum" Deaconess House. The desire to be a deaconess caused her to leave home. Already in August of the following year, she was a probation sister/nurse (*Probeschwester*). The first major task she was entrusted with was the supervision and teaching of five orphaned girls in the Mother House. In spite of that, she took part in still further instructions in the Deaconess Home, given at that time by Rector-Pastor Katterfeld and his wife. These hours were fond memories even into her advanced age. After working as a probation sister/nurse for not quite two years, she was ceremonially consecrated in the Sarata church on 5 May, 1877, the day of the annual anniversary of the institution. Also, in the same year, she would get to know the seriousness and impending danger of the occupation by caring for the wounded of the Russo-Turkish War. Initially, she was dispatched with three other sisters/nurses to Kubej to look after the wounded in the military hospital set up there. After about three months, she came to the hospital in Bendery, where she cared for typhoid patients. There she herself became sick with typhus. After she pretty much got over the disease, there was a severe relapse where she also ended up with a severe knee arthritis. Now she ended up with a longer period of suffering. It was first in September of 1879 that she got well enough so that she could resume her work. However, her knee remained stiff. Despite such sad experiences at that time, perhaps just because this time with its need was a testing time and probation period for Sister Magdalena, always again recalling the deceased through the occasion of this work of the Sarata sisters/nurses in the hospital at Bendery, especially since some photographs representing the sisters/nurses in Bendery with their obligation to the wounded are preserved in the Deaconess House. After this time, Sister Magdalena, with a few interruptions, year after year, worked sometimes in the Mother House, sometimes at an outstation, sometimes providing private care. In 1880, she temporarily taught deaconess students in the Mother House. She acted as a substitute for the absent head nurse from 1882-1884. Twice, the deceased travelled to Germany. On her first trip in 1894, she accompanied Pastor Alfons Meyer, the then rector of the Deaconess House, who was undertaking the trip while somewhat ill. In 1898, she went to Germany for the second time and there visited the Deaconess Houses: Bethel in Bielefeld, Kaiserswerth, Neuendettelsau, Stuttgart and the Elisabeth House, hospital, and Deaconess House in Berlin. This stay in the German Deaconess Houses became the blessings for her further professional life. She lived on the impressions gained there into her senior years and always fondly remembered those happy times. After returning from Germany, she resumed her work with new fervor. This consisted in the following: she taught the deaconess students and along the way took care of the sewing room and cloakroom. For a number of years, she was, on the side, an assistant to the head nurse.

After the death of Head Nurse Rosine Tröster in 1918, Sister Magdalena took over the position of head nurse at the Deaconess Mother House. In her modesty, she agonized often over the idea of whether she was up to this post and repeatedly needed the encouragement of the rector. Even as a sister/nurse, even more so as the head nurse, she was absorbed in the care of the Deaconess House. She forgot herself in the process of the concern and welfare of the institution and the business of nursing. One often got the impression that she was not all that concerned about herself. In the last years of her activity, Sister Magdalena longed for rest. In 1924, we were able to celebrate her 50th Career Anniversary with her. She would have preferred to resign from the responsibility of her position already on that day, but, because there was no replacement, she had to remain at her post for another 2 years. Finally, on 26 March, 1927, she was able to be released. On this day, she moved into the quiet "*Abendsfrieden*". She was very happy that she was allowed to live out some carefree time. She was granted almost 2 years of rest. Also during this time, she untiringly visited old folks in Elim, the sick in the village, wrote letters to the sister/nurse employees at outstations. It was in particular the Mother House in Russia and the sisters/nurses who stayed back there, with whom there was no longer a connection, that lay upon her heart. The poorest, who would have liked to come here if they could have done so, tried to comfort her by letters from her old home. Old friends were also greeted with short messages. She could not be without something to do. The Lord of life and death has now taken her to himself. Concerning her life, I want to quote verse 6 of Psalm 16: "Lovely is the lot that has befallen me; I have received a goodly inheritance." She will remain in our memory for a long time even as in the memory of many a reader; a faithful worker in the vineyard of the Lord. May her seed bear fruit. We wish her from our hearts the delightful lot in eternity

Pastor G. Winger

[Translation Ends]