

Werner School

Bessarabischer Heimatkalender—1951

W. Rumpelstin, Buchdruckerei und Zeitungsverlag K.G.

[Book Printing and Newspaper Publishing Limited]

Burgdorf, Hannover/Germany

Pages 58-61

Translated by: Allen E. Konrad

July, 2025

P.O. Box 157, Rowley, IA 52329

onamission1939@gmail.com

Note: Information within [brackets] are comments by the translator.

=====

[Translation Begins]

The Werner School

by Professor Hans Wagner

The fact that the German Evangelical Teacher Training Institute in Sarata bore the well-known name Werner School was a special honor of the grateful community for the noble benefactor and friend of the people, merchant Christian Friedrich Werner.



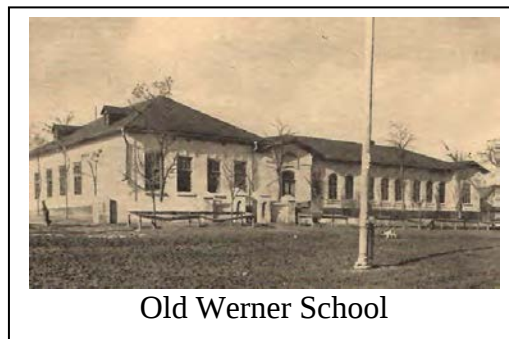
Teacher Residence of the Werner
School in Sarata

As an agent at the Emigration Office, he had not only rendered important services to our forefathers in the motherland, and later helped the poor and poorest of the community with financial support and other gifts during the settlement, but when his end approached (he lived only about 2½ years in Bessarabia), he also bequeathed his entire fortune to the community of Sarata with the determination: “that it should be used for the welfare and benefit of the church, but especially for mission purposes and for the expansion of the Kingdom of God.”

His friend, the long-time Senior Mayor Gottlieb Veygel, had been appointed as executor. After the death of Werner, Veygel then interpreted the legacy in a true ethnic spirit in such a way that it was fulfilled in the spirit of the testator and at the same time served the communities entrusted to him in accordance with the wishes of the authorities. It was agreed on the plan to found a school for the newly settled colonies with the capital left behind by Werner, “for teachers, clerks, surveyors and architects”.

The mission purpose desired in the will was provided by the activity of the teachers as sextons in the communities, apart from the already completed building of a church in Sarata.

While Sarata was settled in 1822, the founding of the Werner School did not officially take place until 1844. In the meantime, the above-mentioned basic resolutions, the obtaining of official permission and the preparations for the construction of the school building are in place.



The Werner School originally had only one class with a four-year course. The teaching staff consisted of a German and a Russian teacher, together with the local pastor as religion teacher. So the school, which was intended for the general public, was modest in terms of construction and content in accordance with the modest conditions of the time; but in proportion as the intellectual life and the number of pupils grew, it adapted itself to the demands of the time, always remaining true to the original goal.

After only a quarter of a century, the urge for education had grown so much with the greatly increased population in the German colonies on the Black Sea that the old school building with one class proved to be too small, a new one was built with classrooms, a library and a large hall. Now the school was two-class with a two-year course for each class.

Meanwhile, the crowd of students grew more and more and departments had to be set up in the classes. This intermediate solution was remedied by adding the third and fourth class one after the other.

Although the school had the task of training teachers, the educational science subjects such as general pedagogy, teaching theory, educational theory, and so forth were not taught at that time, and the Werner School—officially called Central School (*Zentralschule*)—was a general educational institution in the sense of the time.

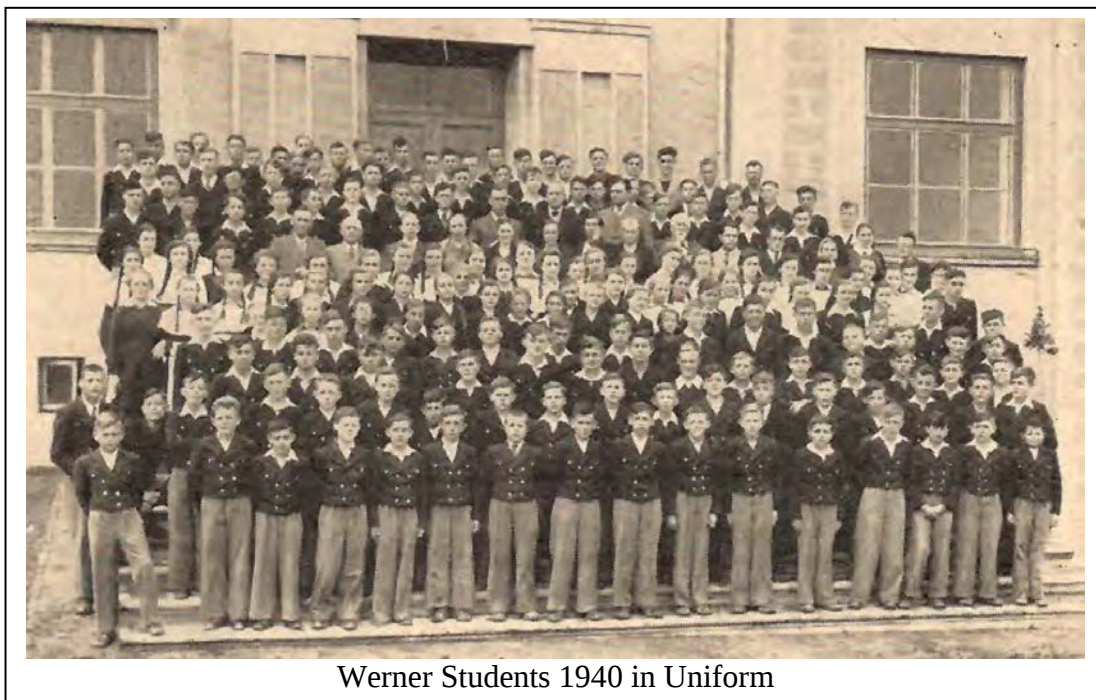
The special demands on the school as a Teacher Training Institution already came to them when the Russian Teacher Training Colleges (*Lehrerseminare*) were founded in the 70s of the previous

century. In the following period, in order to satisfy the wishes of the authorities and to train teachers who were reasonably prepared in keeping with the times, pedagogical courses were temporarily set up at the Werner School.

The character of a Teacher Training College was only established at the Werner School in the way that, in 1910, permanent, two-year pedagogical courses were added, with a curriculum specifically approved by the school authorities, which generally corresponded to the curriculum of the State Colleges (*Staatsseminare*).

Later, the courses became three-year and finally four-year, so that since 1928 we had a four-year, pedagogical superstructure at the Werner School, above a four-year, general educational substructure for girls and boys, which corresponded to the substructure of the Secondary School (*Gymnasium*). This eight-class school bore the name Werner School.

In the past, mainly confirmed graduates of the Elementary School (*Volksschule*) were admitted to the Werner School, who then received a four-year, general education. In this way, after passing the state examination, the graduate became a teacher in most cases at the age of eighteen to nineteen.



Werner Students 1940 in Uniform

However, after vocational training became more and more demanded, and the teacher took on an independent, responsible position in the state and in society, our training system shifted to the point where one had to complete only four classes of Elementary School, in order to then go through the lower, four-year level of the Werner School and then move up to the third, four-year department of teacher training.

In the past, one needed about as many years for training for the teaching profession as now; but this was last adapted to progress—more in-depth and specific. From what has been said it follows that the Werner School was not simply only a Teacher Training Institute, but that a special type of school developed out of the living conditions abroad, which corresponded to the various professions of our people.

Thus, in view of the fact that 90 percent of the population were agricultural folks, the sense of the German farmers abroad was consciously cultivated in the Werner School, so that a constant and lively connection between school and soil was maintained through the teachers and through the Elementary School.

Since the state also required teachers to have an agricultural orientation in its school regulations, we were justifiably able to give theoretical and practical instruction in agriculture. Our Werner School had an experimental field and its own agronomist.

Craftsmanship has always been neglected in our rural environment. The authority wanted to promote the understanding of this profession in the state by means of a special decree. We did this at the Werner School and introduced the lessons in manual dexterity and manual work in order to awaken in our people the love of art, domestic industry and handicrafts.

The Werner School had towards the end special teachers and a well-equipped workshop for these purposes.

After completing the eighth Class and passing the school exam, the pupils were able to become fully entitled Elementary School teachers recognized by the state. Another examination entitled them to exercise the Sexton service (preacher and organist). With the completion of the fourth Class, one essentially achieved the intermediate maturity, could be admitted to the upper levels of the Secondary School and the Werner School, or transition into the “school of life” with this solid general education, meaning that the graduates of the lower level successfully provided apprentices for clerks, commerce, skilled trades, and the educated agricultural folks.

In the course of the past, it was not always easy to meet the demands, at the same time in school, of the foreign state, the church, the parents with their economic difficulties (and not least the German Reich).

The state demanded the same curriculum as in the State Schools, along with a thorough treatment of the state language. The German community naturally insisted on a careful German education and training in all subjects in the mother tongue. The church should not and did not want to lose its influence on religious and moral education, especially since the teachers were often servants of the church at the same time.

Together with the representatives of the parents, the school often wrestled with the most serious economic worries in the various phases of its development. In addition, it had to assert itself against the efforts of the foreign state and the foreign environment to de-Germanize the school.

And, full of gratitude, it should also be stated at this point that it would never have been possible to meet the high demands of the state and the time of a Teacher Training Institute that was modernly established both internally and externally, if the German Reich had not supported us to a great extent, both morally and professionally and especially financially.

With the uniquely strong growth of the number of souls of Bessarabian Germans and with the urge for education, the expansion of the rooms had to be considered, as has been the case several times in the history of our school. As is so often the case, we would not have come to a fundamental solution to the question so soon, if the school authorities had not also made the irrefutable demand to set up a Boarding School. Now it was decided abruptly to set up the old school as a Student Home and to build a new, modern school in 1934 that met all requirements.



It took five years to complete the project. The new school building cost about 3 million lei, but it was also a house that was worthy of accommodating a teaching and educational institution of the importance of the Werner School. Externally, the building grew from a simple, one-story schoolhouse from 1844 to a modern, stately magnificent building, in which was given the opportunity to master the large, comprehensive teaching program of modern times, in contrast to the small beginnings of a curriculum 100 years ago.

There, where once only three teachers imparted knowledge in the few subjects required at that time, at the end of our Bessarabian life in the Werner School, 15 well-trained pedagogues taught the individual branches of knowledge in the mother tongue, along with the various foreign languages. The Warner School with boarding school and practice school was now a modernly oriented, higher school, which was in no way inferior to the other institutions of the motherland. It was of the greatest importance for the cultural and economic development of our German colonies abroad and for 100 years the strongest bulwark for the preservation of our national culture and our faith.

[Translation Ends]