

Belt Buckle of a Student of the (Emperor) Alexander I School (Gimnasiya) of the city of Vologda, circa 1910s.

In Melchior (white metal alloy of mostly copper and nickel) with brass attachments, measures approx. 68 x 52 mm. The letters БАГ ("VAG") are an acronym for Vologodskaya Aleksandra Pervogo Gimnaziya (Vologda School [named in honor] of Alexander I). In the lower right corner, there is a "crossed hammers" maker mark of an unknown Russian manufacturer.

The buckle is in fair condition. The crown which was once a part of the Alexander I monogram has been filed off, but its outline is still clearly visible on both the front and back of the buckle. The imperial crown was obviously removed by the original owner following the fall of the monarchy in February 1917. This was a common practice at the time, meant to express sympathy to the new regime and often enough, to avoid the wrath of the out of control "masses". Beside the removed crown, the buckle is in very good condition. The letters show only modest wear. The attachments for the belt are original and fully intact.

The Alexander I School was founded in the city of Vologda in 1804. It was named in honor of the emperor who reformed public education in Russia in the early 1800s. For some of the XIX C., the school was financed in part with private donations and provided optional vocational education in taxation and land surveying. It expanded throughout the century and in 1871, was given the status of "Classical" Gimnasiya - i.e., a seven-grade school that provided education sufficient to apply to a university and offered some advanced classes beyond standard gymnasial curriculum. It was closed in 1918, soon after the usurpation of power by the radical socialists in late 1917.

Please note, penny in our photo is for size reference.

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