

for the invasion of Poland by German troops beginning on Friday, September 1, 1939.

Hindenburg District ⁴	1939	1940	1941	1942
Elders	3	3		
Priests	4	4		
Teachers	1	1		
Deacons	3	3		
Other Adult Males	9	9		
Adult Females	41	43		
Male Children	6	7		
Female Children	5	5		
Total	72	75	79	79

No information regarding the Hindenburg District is found in the journal of the East German Mission after 1939. When a letter was sent by East German Mission leaders to all district presidents on August 12, 1941, no district president in Hindenburg was included among the addressees. It is possible that nobody was called to succeed Elder Zollinger, who was evacuated from Germany with the other American missionaries on August 25, 1939.

All of the Hindenburg District territory was ceded to Poland following World War II. After the Polish government forced the evacuation of German citizens from the region in late 1946, all traces of the presence of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints there were lost.

NOTES

1. East German Mission Quarterly Reports, 1938, no. 29, East German Mission History.
2. East German Mission Quarterly Reports, 1938, nos. 41–42.
3. It was later determined that the “Polish soldiers” were actually criminals from German prisons attired in Polish uniforms. All dead soldiers [prisoners] shown to the media had been executed by the SS and placed in positions that simulated combat.
4. Presiding Bishopric, “Financial, Statistical, and Historical Reports of Wards, Stakes, and Missions, 1884–1955,” CR 4 12, 257.

DEUTSCH RASSELWITZ GROUP

Bertold Patermann joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1932, thanks to an enthusiastic man with whom Brother Patermann worked on the railroad. After his first wife died, Bertold married Kornelia Schiller, and she helped bring up his children in the new faith. The Patermanns formed the nucleus of the Church in the small town of Deutsch Rasselwitz in Silesia, just a few miles from the Czech border. The population of the town was about three thousand when World War II began.

“Later my father converted a neighbor lady and her daughter, who lived in the same house. That was our branch for a long time,” recalled Angela Patermann.¹

During the late 1930s, American missionaries were common visitors in the Patermann home. The town was predominately Catholic, but the neighbors did not seem to care about the tiny group of religious outsiders. “They didn’t cause trouble because they thought we were nuts,” according to Angela Patermann. There was no persecution of any kind.

The Patermann home at Neustädterstrasse 150 hosted all Church meetings in Deutsch Rasselwitz until 1939. Brother Patermann, a priest in the Aaronic Priesthood, conducted a sacrament meeting on Sundays. For larger meetings, such as district conferences, the small group took the train to Ratibor (eighteen miles to the southeast) or Hindenburg (thirty-five miles due east).

Just before the war started, Bertold Patermann was transferred to Berlin in connection with his employment with the railroad, which was a government entity in Germany in

those days. This meant the effectual end of the Latter-day Saint group in Deutsch Rasselwitz. The Patermann family became members of the Berlin East Branch.²

The Polish government expelled all Germans from Deutsch Rasselwitz by the end of 1946, so it can be surmised that no Latter-day Saints were living there after that time. The name of the town was soon changed to Raławice Sldskie.

No members of the Deutsch Rasselwitz group are known to have lost their lives in World War II.

NOTES

1. Angela Patermann Buchta, interview by the author, Salt Lake City, August 9, 2007.
2. For more about the activities of the Patermann family, see the Berlin East Branch chapter.

GLEIWITZ BRANCH

In September 1938, the Latter-day Saint branch in Gleiwitz was meeting in rented rooms on the main floor at Oberwallstrasse 13.

“There were mostly women and children attending the meetings, but we could always count on everybody coming on Sundays. There were eight to fifteen people in attendance.” Such is the recollection of Gerhard Ertel (born 1926).¹

It is interesting to note that while there was an official branch in Gleiwitz, the year-end 1938 membership data available from the East German Mission show not even one holder of the Aaronic or the Melchizedek Priesthood. One wonders who presided over the meetings, baptized new members, or administered the sacrament. If the same was true here as in other small branches, district leaders and priesthood

holders from other branches in the district visited on Sundays and performed such services.

Gleiwitz Branch ²	1939
Elders	0
Priests	0
Teachers	0
Deacons	0
Other Adult Males	3
Adult Females	10
Male Children	0
Female Children	2
<i>Total</i>	15

As a teenager, Gerhard Ertel found himself in a challenging situation on Sunday mornings. He was a member of a brass band in the Hitler Youth and was to open a program at ten o’clock—precisely the hour when Sunday School began. After playing the opening march music in the movie theater, he sneaked out to attend Sunday School (four houses down the street). Just before noon, he sneaked back into the theater and was there when the lights went up again—ready to play more march music.

“In the Hitler Youth we were taught to be tough,” explained Gerhard: “Once we hung a boy up in the tree and didn’t get him down until the next day [unharmed]. That’s what we were taught—to be fast and strict. . . . This education started when we were little children, and they could do anything with us and we would act it out.”

The German radio station on the outskirts of Gleiwitz by the Polish border was the scene of the first altercation between German and Polish troops—at least in the reports given the German people. The fake attack of Polish troops on the radio station was used as the justification for the German invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939. The name Gleiwitz will long be associated with that infamous affair.