
FRIEDRICHSTADT BRANCH

The branch in Friedrichstadt was very isolated. The city was located just a few miles from the mouth of the Eider River at the North Sea, and Latter-day Saints there had to cross almost the entire breadth of Schleswig-Holstein (forty miles) to reach Kiel. The landscape around Friedrichstadt is extremely flat, some of the territory having been reclaimed from the North Sea since 1700 and protected ever since by a network of earthen dikes.

Friedrichstadt, a town of only 2,197 in 1939, had an LDS branch consisting of seventy-one souls, twelve of whom held the priesthood. Over two-thirds of the members were women over twelve years of age.¹ According to the list of branch officers, several members lived in towns and villages a few miles to the north, such as Husum and Mildstedt. Rail connections at the time were such that members who did not live in Friedrichstadt may have walked substantial distances to attend church meetings.

Friedrichstadt Branch ²	1939
Elders	4
Priests	1
Teachers	1
Deacons	6
Other Adult Males	7
Adult Females	46
Male Children	1
Female Children	5
<i>Total</i>	71

Andreas D. Andresen was the president of the Friedrichstadt Branch in the summer of 1939. His counselors were Jakob H. Peters and a Brother

Fuhrmann. The latter was also the superintendant of the Sunday School, while Brother Peters also directed the YMMIA. The leaders of the YWMIA and the Relief Society were respectively Johanne Danklefsen and Emma Micheelsen, while Friederike Peters was the local genealogical class instructor.

The branch meetings were held in the apartment of a Sister Vogt—in a single room, according to Dora Micheelsen (born 1923).³ “The children often had to sit on the floor because the room was not large enough.” The priesthood meeting began at 9:00 a.m. and was followed by Sunday School at 10:00 and sacrament meeting at 2:00 p.m. The Relief Society sisters convened on Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. and the MIA members at 7:30. A genealogy class was held on the second Sunday of the month at 1:00 p.m.

Baptisms were conducted in the Treene River, which flows through Friedrichstadt into the Eider. There was no need to keep the ceremonies secret because relationships with people of other religions were quite unencumbered in those days, as Dora recalled: “I had a Jewish friend, and I took her to church, and I also went to the synagogue with her.” Even though the branch members were instructed to avoid singing hymns with the words *Israel* and *Zion*, Dora stated that they did not observe the rule.

One of the few quiet corners of the war in Germany was certainly the area of Schleswig-Holstein around Friedrichstadt. The vicinity was not home to significant industrial or transportation installations and thus was not particularly attractive to Allied bombers. Although the residents there heard bombers overhead on their way to other locations in Germany, few bombs fell on Friedrichstadt. According to Dora, “All in all, I have to say that we got through the war pretty well. We didn’t have much to complain about.” While they were not bombed out or driven out of town, the residents of Friedrichstadt were called upon to house some of the millions of refugees from eastern Germany. Dora explained that her family took in nine refugees: “We all felt like we were engaged in a common cause.” That cause, in the last year of the war, was simply survival.

Dora Micheelsen recalled that the Friedrichstadt Branch was never without a place to meet on a Sunday (“but there were difficulties now and then”) and that there was always at least one priesthood holder to provide the required leadership and services. Her own mother died during the war, but Dora had younger siblings to care for and her family employment to keep her sufficiently busy. Regarding her well-being as a member of the Church, she had this to say in retrospect:

During the war, my testimony grew and grew. With all the things we had to go through, our Heavenly Father protected us and helped us find a way. We used to say to each other, “It’s so good that we have the Church in our lives!” Whatever happened, we seemed to think about the Church first and how it could help us. It was the first thing we turned to.

The little Friedrichstadt Branch in its rural setting survived the war in general, but two of the members died in the service of their country, two more disappeared and were not seen again, and two more died of illnesses not common in peacetime. There were enough members left in the summer of 1945 to carry on the activities of faithful Latter-day Saints.

IN MEMORIAM

The following members of the Friedrichstadt Branch did not survive World War II:

Andreas Martin Albertsen b. Mildstedt, Husum, Schleswig-Holstein, 12 May 1909; son of Albert Bahne Albertsen and Anna Maria Petersen; bp. 10 Jul 1920; conf. 10 Jul 1920; lance corporal; k. in battle Ravienna or Russia 3 Mar 1944 (CHL CR 275 8, no. 1; www.volksbund.de; FHL microfilm 25708; 1925 and 1930 censuses; IGI)

Gottfried Ernst Bernhard Christiansen b. Mildstedt, Husum, Schleswig-Holstein, 2 Apr 1915; son of Johannes Wilhelm Friedrich Christiansen and Anna Sass or Christiansen; bp. 16 Jul 1924; conf. 16 Jul 1924; sergeant; k. near Goldberg, Schlesien, 8 Mar 1945 (CHL microfilm 2448, pt. 27, no. 78; www.volksbund.de; IGI)

Gertrud Rosa Degen b. Elmshorn, Schleswig-Holstein, 23 Oct 1912; dau. of Willy Degen and Maria Kohn; bp. 17 Jul 1921; conf. 17 Jul 1921; missing as of

20 Feb 1942 (CHL microfilm 2448, pt. 27, no. 91; FHL microfilm 25753; 1925, 1930, and 1935 censuses)

Henning Detlef Franzen b. Hude, Husum, Schleswig-Holstein, 21 Mar 1870; son of Henning Detlef Franzen and Anna Dorothea Olm or Ohm; bp. 5 Jun 1921; conf. 5 Jun 1921; ord. deacon 18 Jun 1922; ord. priest 1924; m. 11 Jun 1909; d. lung disease 19 Nov 1940 (CHL microfilm 2448, pt. 27, no. 95; FHL microfilm 25769; 1935 census; IGI)

Peter Franzen b. Hude, Husum, Schleswig-Holstein, 14 Apr 1911; son of Henning Detlef Franzen and Helene Margarethe Spiecker; bp. 5 Jun 1921; conf. 5 Jun 1921; ord. deacon 28 Mar 1927; m. 20 Aug 1939, Kaethe Kroger; d. typhus 30 Apr 1944 (CHL CR 275 8, no. 1; CHL microfilm 2448, pt. 27, no. 97; IGI)

Emma Catharina Peters b. Moordorf, Steinburg, Schleswig-Holstein, 7 Oct 1893; dau. of Claus Peters and Anna Catharine Kunstmann or Kuntzmann; bp. 5 Jun 1921; conf. 5 Jun 1921; m. Breitenberg, Schleswig-Holstein, 28 Jan 1915, Karl August Brassat; 1 child; 2m. Friedrichstadt, Schleswig-Holstein, 11 Mar 1922, Claus Christian Bernhard Micheelsen; 4 children; d. stomach cancer Tönning, Schleswig-Holstein, 2 Aug 1944 (CHL microfilm 2448, pt. 27, no. 185; FHL microfilm 245233; 1930, 1935 censuses; IGI; AF; PRF)

Karl Rehder b. Flensburg, Schleswig-Holstein, 14 Sep 1905; son of Karl Rehder and Bertha Mölln; bp. 31 Aug 1929; conf. 31 Aug 1929; missing as of 20 Jan 1940 (CHL microfilm 2448, pt. 27, no. 321; FHL microfilm 271400; 1930 and 1935 censuses)

Erna Theede b. Drage, Friedrichstadt, Schleswig-Holstein, 17 Oct 1912; dau. of Jürgen Theede and Katharina Kirchner; bp. 18 Jun 1922; conf. 18 Jun 1922; d. tuberculosis 24 Aug 1944 (CHL microfilm 2448, pt. 27, no. 254; FHL microfilm 245283; 1925, 1930, and 1935 censuses; IGI)

Margarethe Theede b. Hohn, Rendsburg, Schleswig-Holstein, 17 Oct 1901; dau. of Jürgen Theede and Katharina Kirchner; bp. 18 Jun 1922; conf. 18 Jun 1922; d. typhus 10 April 1944 (CHL microfilm 2448, pt. 27, no. 422; FHL microfilm 245283; 1925, 1930, and 1935 censuses)

NOTES

1. West German Mission branch directory, 1939, CHL LR 10045 11.
2. Presiding Bishopric, “Financial, Statistical, and Historical Reports of Wards, Stakes, and Missions, 1884–1955,” 257, CHL CR 4 12.
3. Dora Micheelsen Zentner, telephone interview with Jennifer Heckmann in German, March 6, 2009; summarized in English by Judith Sartowski.