

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.<sup>2</sup>

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.

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## GLEIWITZ BRANCH

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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).<sup>1</sup>

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 <sup>2</sup>	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.

As in most eastern German cities, the war was far away from Gleiwitz after the conquest of Poland. According to Gerhard Ertel, Church meetings continued as before. Perhaps the branch even gained in numbers somewhat because a directory of the East German Mission showed that the Gleiwitz Branch meeting place had moved to Hüttendamm 4 by January 1943. There is no indication why the move was made or what the rooms were like at the new location.<sup>3</sup>

In 1944, Gerhard turned eighteen and soon was drafted into the armed forces. On April 4, he reported for duty and was assigned to the navy. There he had some choice of service and asked to be made a mechanic. He was shipped to the Baltic seaport of Lübeck and trained to work with torpedoes for submarines. Later, he prepared torpedoes to be shipped to Bremen where they were loaded into submarines.

Advance units of the Soviet army entered the city of Gleiwitz on January 20, 1945.<sup>4</sup> It is likely that some of the members of the Gleiwitz Branch had fled the city by that time. Gerhard Ertel's parents had remained and were treated relatively well by the conquerors.

Gerhard served in the navy barely a year before the British arrived in northern Germany and the war ended. Although he was a POW under the British, he did not feel like a prisoner because he was allowed to move about freely during the day. Nevertheless, he was far from Gleiwitz and totally isolated from the Church. He had no scriptures to read and never encountered another Latter-day Saint while away from home.

In the summer of 1945, Gerhard's parents left what had become Poland and moved west. Their first stop was Berlin, where they received instructions from mission leaders to travel south to the Latter-day Saint refugee colony at Wolfsgrün in Saxony. A few months later, they moved on to the American

Occupation Zone and settled in another refugee colony of Saints—in Langen, south of Frankfurt am Main.

Gerhard Ertel located his family through correspondence and traveled from northern Germany to Langen to be reunited with them. He had never seen combat and had not been subjected to ill treatment as a prisoner of war. Looking back, he reached this conclusion: "What I had learned in the [Gleiwitz] Branch, I used and applied throughout my entire life, especially in the time when I was a soldier and did not have a connection to the Church. The teachers in the Sunday School and my mother taught me."

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints ceased to exist in Gleiwitz by the summer of 1946 at the latest. The Polish name of the town is now Gliwice.

#### IN MEMORIAM

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

**Renate Ingeborg Ertel** b. Gleiwitz, Schlesien, Preußen 15 Oct 1941; dau. of Alfred Ertel and Bronislawa Franziska Schiller; d. Gleiwitz 23 Jan 1944 (Ertel; AF; IGI)

**Anton Helios** b. Groß Lagiewnik, Schlesien, Preußen 8 May 1900; son of Anton Helios and Rosalie Grabinski; bp. Gleiwitz, Schlesien, Preußen 18 Sep 1931; conf. 18 Sep 1931; d. 22 Sep 1942 (CHL, CR 375 8, no. 55; IGI)

**Alfred Bernhard Kowollik** b. Drahthammer, Schlesien, Preußen 18 Aug 1899 or 1900; son of Franz Kowollik and Vateska Gattys; bp. 21 Oct 1937; conf. 21 Oct 1937; m. 6 Oct 1924, Anna Gerszczyk (div.); home guard; d. Woloschilowgrad, Russia 8 Dec 1945; bur. Lugansk, Ukraine (CHL, CR 375 8, no. 56; www.volksbund.de)

**Margarete Henriette Christiane Kruber** b. Breslau, Schlesien 21 Dec 1910; dau. of August Kruber and Emilie Winkler; bp. 6 Dec 1924; conf. 7 Dec 1924; m. 28 Nov 1938 Erich Grau; missing (CHL, CR 375 8, no. 57)

**Anna Maria Motyezka** b. Groß Strehlitz, Oppeln, Schlesien, Preußen 4 May 1892; dau. of Josef Motyezka and Karoline Kowollik; bp. 9 Sep 1938; conf. 9 Sep

1938; m. 10 Sep 1919, Friedrich Jüttner; d. poisoning 17 Oct 1939 (CHL, CR 375 8, no. 38)

**Liselotte Weigand** b. Stettin, Pommern 4 Jan 1916; dau. of Philipp Weigand and Meta Katilius; bp. 31 May 1924; conf. 1 Jul 1924; m. 27 Jun 1936, Erich Gustar Prust; missing (CHL, CR 375 8, no. 58)

### NOTES

1. Gerhard Ertel, interview by Jennifer Heckmann, Langen, Germany, August 14, 2006; summarized in English by Judith Sartowski, and audio version or transcript of the interview in the author's collection.
2. Presiding Bishopric, "Financial, Statistical, and Historical Reports of Wards, Stakes, and Missions, 1884–1955," CR 4 12, 257.
3. East German Mission, "Directory of Meeting Places" (unpublished manuscript, 1943); private collection.
4. David Irving, *The Destruction of Dresden* (London: William Kimber, 1963), 81.

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## HINDENBURG BRANCH

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The city of Hindenburg, Germany, was located just east of Gleiwitz in the state of Silesia. The city had approximately fifteen thousand inhabitants in 1939, of whom only thirty-four were members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Just before World War II began on September 1, 1939, the branch members met in rented rooms at Dorotheenstrasse 9 on the second floor. By early 1943, the meetings had moved to Dorotheenstrasse 94 in the home of a person or family named Czock.<sup>1</sup>

As of this writing, no surviving eyewitnesses from the Hindenburg Branch have been identified, nor have historical writings of deceased eyewitnesses come to light. However, it is fortunate that the records of the East German Mission in Berlin include several entries regarding the Hindenburg Branch:

Hindenburg Branch <sup>2</sup>	1939
Elders	2
Priests	2
Teachers	0
Deacons	2
Other Adult Males	6
Adult Females	17
Male Children	3
Female Children	2
<i>Total</i>	34

Saturday, January 1 [1938]: The Primary Association of the Hindenburg Branch held a program evening, which was attended by one-hundred and thirty-six persons.<sup>3</sup>

Sunday, February 20. A conference of the Hindenburg Branch Sunday School organization was held, attended by seventeen members and eleven friends.<sup>4</sup>

Thursday, February 24. The Hindenburg Branch Primary Association held a program evening, with ninety-three persons attending.<sup>5</sup>

Tuesday, March 8. Following the Breslau Conference, a special meeting was held in Hindenburg, with Miss. Pres. and Sister Alfred C. Rees as honorary guests. In attendance also were sixty-nine persons, forty-three of them friends [nonmembers].<sup>6</sup> The secret police in Hindenburg questioned the branch president about their Primary work and demanded a list of the branch members.<sup>7</sup>

Thursday, 25 August 1938: The Primary Association of the Hindenburg Branch held a very successful "Homecoming." When members and former members met, there were one-hundred and fifty persons present.<sup>8</sup>

Sun 8 Jan 1939: Gerhard Herud is appointed branch president and Karl Czerwinski first counselor.<sup>9</sup>

Tue 28 Feb 1939: After receiving notice that the rent on their hall was ended, and unable to find another branch hall for the time being, the members of the Hindenburg Branch attended religious services in Gleiwitz.<sup>10</sup>