
GÖTTINGEN BRANCH

Famous for its outstanding university, the city of Göttingen lies near the southern border of the old kingdom of Hanover, approximately one hundred miles south of the city of Hanover. The railroad from Hanover to Frankfurt connected the two cities and made it easy for members of the Church in Göttingen to attend district conferences in Hanover.

One of the smallest branches in Germany when the war began in 1939, Göttingen had a single elder, and most of the members were older women. According to the mission directory of August 1939, the only meeting held in the branch was Sunday School, which took place at 10:00 a.m.¹ The location of the meeting hall was Schildweg 5 in a Hinterhaus. The term “cottage meeting” was used, suggesting that the address was that of a member of the branch.

Göttingen Branch ²	1939
Elders	1
Priests	0
Teachers	0
Deacons	1
Other Adult Males	4
Adult Females	11
Male Children	0
Female Children	1
<i>Total</i>	18

The branch president, Bruno Regenscheit, is the only person named among the leaders of the Göttingen Branch. Nothing else is known about this small group of Latter-day Saints as of this writing because no eyewitnesses or documents can be located.

No members of the Göttingen Branch are known to have died in World War II.

NOTES

1. West German Mission manuscript history, CHL MS 1004 2.
2. Presiding Bishopric, “Financial, Statistical, and Historical Reports of Wards, Stakes, and Missions, 1884–1955,” 257, CHL CR 4 12.

GOSLAR GROUP

When World War II began in September 1939, the only members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints living in Goslar were the family of Walter Horn. With his wife, Rosilie, and three daughters, Walter had moved to Goslar from Weimar, where the family had been faithful members of the branch. The family was motivated to move because Nazi Party leaders in Weimar were putting pressure on Brother Horn to join the Party. It occurred to him that he might escape that pressure by moving to Goslar, where he found other employment. According to his daughter, Evelyn (born 1932), the tactic worked: “Once we got to Goslar, the party there did not come looking for my father.”¹

Evelyn’s earliest memories in Goslar include seeing Jewish residents with the garish yellow Star of David on their coats. She recalled telling her girlfriend that it was not nice to make the people wear that star because it made them nervous when people saw it. When she told that to her mother, Sister Horn panicked and said, “Don’t you ever dare say this to anybody or else they will pick up your father and take him away!” After that, Evelyn worried every time there was a knock at the door that somebody was coming to arrest her father.

The Horns held church meetings in their home. Walter and Rosilie taught their children the gospel, and they sang the hymns of Zion. “We rented a pump organ and eventually owned it,” recalled



Fig. 1. Walter Horn (left rear, with shirt and tie) was probably considered conservative when he participated in this company outing to the Baltic Sea in 1943. (E. Horn Pruess)

Evelyn. “When we held our testimony meeting, we just went around the table, and everybody gave their testimony—young and old.” Brother Horn taught his family from several different church books, such as *The Voice of Warning* by Parley P. Pratt. As the district president of the Sunday School, Brother Horn was an expert in Church literature.

The Horns were joined early in the war by Sister Kramer and her daughter, Hilda, so the group of Saints grew from five to seven. The family sometimes traveled from Goslar to Hanover (forty miles away) to conferences and other church activities. Evelyn was baptized in a public bathhouse in Hanover along with several other persons from the district.

Walter Horn was employed by the Greifwerke, a company that made stationery items for the government. As a small man, he was classified as unfit for military service, something neither he nor his family

ever regretted. In many ways, the war seemed far away from this historic city at the foot of the Harz Mountains, but Evelyn Horn knew that there was a war going on. The military hospitals established in local hotels offered clear evidence of that. As she recalled:

We were encouraged in school to take our families and visit the soldiers. So on Sunday afternoons we would go and visit the soldiers, and then later on they made it even a school thing that we had to just go with recorders or violin or whatever and sing for them or play music. I remember that one time I just couldn’t stand to see those people suffer, and I was just sick. . . . There was one man who had just been dragged out from under a burning tank, and you couldn’t see anything [because he was all wrapped up], and it smelled awful in there.

On many occasions, Evelyn and her sisters saw soldiers who were well enough to walk around



Fig. 2. Winter 1943: the Horn girls (from left, Annegret, Irene, and Evelyn) with their mother, Rosilie, grandmother Anna Gluth (whose home had been bombed in Hanover), and visiting Luftwaffe soldier Hans Beyer. (E. Horn Pruess)

town, but even that was a frightening sight. She recalled seeing soldiers who had severe facial injuries. Skin was grafted from an arm to the face, and a soldier would walk around town with his arm tied to his face. “I’ve always been happy-go-lucky, but I thought, ‘Oh these poor guys!’ It was terrible. Sometimes, one side of the face was already healed, and it was all just red and the other side still [looked terrible].”

For the three Horn girls, growing up in wartime meant restrictions in the types of entertainment available. However, their parents knew how to entertain their daughters. According to Evelyn, “we were a family of readers. We read a lot. When we couldn’t get new books, my mother went through all of our books and picked out the ones we could read. I read lots of books that were written for adults.”

The air raids that made life unbearable in larger cities were not a problem in Goslar, but on

occasion enemy planes flew by Goslar on the way to other targets, and that set off the local sirens. When the sirens wailed, the Horns went down into their dank basement and listened to the radio until the all-clear was sounded. “They never bombed us, so eventually, nobody worried if people didn’t all come to the basement,” claimed Evelyn Horn. Nevertheless, the Horns always took a briefcase with their most important personal and genealogical records.

The war ended in Goslar in mid-April 1945 with the arrival of the American army. The city’s mayor asked that the residents hang white sheets out of their windows. Evelyn recalled the day:

All of a sudden, somebody came running down the street yelling, “They’re here! They’re here!” . . . We all ran down to the end of the street and waved to them, and they threw chocolate and all kinds of stuff around. . . . They were smiling

and waving, and people were waving [back], and it was liberation. . . . The next morning we had a surprise: there were all kinds of pamphlets glued and stapled on the buildings [with curfew restrictions] in German.

The Horn family spent the war years in relative peace, and the war came to an end for them in an equally peaceful way. In the following months, LDS refugees from the East German Mission moved into the area around Goslar, and soon group leader Walter Horn found himself branch president.

District president Hermann Walter Pohlsander wrote the following in his report to the West German Mission office in August 1945:

The dependent branch of Goslar, which is connected with the Braunschweig Branch, has only 7 members, consisting of the Horn family in Goslar and Sisters Kraemer Sr. and Jr. in Oker. The meetings are held in the home of Elder Walther Horn. The branch is small but very fine. At this time there are also members of the East German Mission [refugees] in Oker.²

No known members of the Goslar group died during World War II.

NOTES

1. Evelyn Horn Pruess, interview by the author, Salt Lake City, December 1, 2006.
2. Goslar Group general minutes, CHL LR 3260 2.

HANOVER BRANCH

Formerly the capital of the Prussian province of the same name, the city of Hanover was home to 470,950 people as World War II approached in the late summer of 1939.¹ One of the largest branches in the West German Mission was meeting at the time in rented rooms at Gellertstrasse 10. Doris Fraatz (born 1927) had this recollection of the facility:

The rooms were used as a dance school during the week. Brother and Sister Wille lived in the same building. Willy Wille was our district president at that time. It was quite a large building. Downstairs in the dance school were benches and a wardrobe. We used those rooms also. The large room of the dance school was the room in which we held our meetings. We put up single chairs for everybody to sit on. There was also a podium in the front of the room. . . . Classes also met in the living room or the bedrooms of the Wille apartment. The dance studio was on the main floor of the building. I think we even had a central heating system at that time. . . . I remember that we would meet outside in the backyard for classes in the summer. We also had a restroom inside. For Primary meetings, we met in a different home sometimes because the dance studio was closed for us during the week. There might have been one hundred and fifty people in attendance on a typical Sunday.²

Doris added these comments about goings-on in the meetings:

In Primary they would ask us if we knew of any poems that we could recite, and if we could, we had to do it during sacrament meeting. All the young children sat on one side of the room, based on their age either in the very front or the following rows. I remember that my mother always looked around to make sure that we were behaving. Whenever we were fidgety, my mother would wave, and as soon as she did that, we knew what she meant—we had to sit still.

Hanover Branch ³	1939
Elders	12
Priests	9
Teachers	8
Deacons	12
Other Adult Males	43
Adult Females	128
Male Children	3
Female Children	11
<i>Total</i>	226