



Fig. 5. Anton Larisch (with bicycle) and his family left Halberstadt with their few possessions in February 1946. Two missionaries, Elders Draegger (left) and Blietschau (rear), assisted the family. The little boy is Fred Larisch. The typical Leiterwagen was a very sturdy vehicle. (F. Larisch)

2. Ibid., December 16, 1939, 5.
3. Ibid., June 27, 1940, 13.
4. Ibid., July 18, 1940, 14–15.
5. Ibid., December 8, 1940, 18.
6. Ibid., March 29, 1941, 22.
7. Ibid., April 22, 1942, 28.
8. Ibid., June 15, 1942, 30.
9. Ibid., August 2, 1942, 31.
10. Ibid., January 4, 1945, 46.
11. Ibid., August 25, 1945, 48. The diary does not mention any other male members in the Halberstadt group.

HALLE BRANCH

According to the records of the East German Mission, the Halle Branch of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints held its meetings in rented rooms at Rathausstrasse 14 in the Hinterhaus. Whereas the city had nearly two hundred thousand inhabitants when World War II began, only thirty-three were members of the Church.

Halle Branch ¹	1939
Elders	2
Priests	0
Teachers	2
Deacons	3
Other Adult Males	8
Adult Females	18
Male Children	0
Female Children	0
<i>Total</i>	33

The Halle Branch had only a few youth and no children (under twelve) at the end of the year 1939. Nevertheless, there is evidence suggesting that the branch was vibrant and perhaps even growing. For example, the history of the East German Mission shows that when the branch moved into the rooms on Rathausstrasse 14 on July 3, 1938, there was a formal dedication ceremony, on which occasion Alfred C. Rees, the president of the mission, delivered the dedicatory address. More than seventy persons attended.²

The new rooms must have been of ample size for the branch membership because a conference of the Leipzig District was held there later that year. Once again, President Rees presided over the meeting and this time 203 members and friends attended. The conference sessions were held on Saturday and Sunday, December 3–4, 1938, and most of the attendees would have come by train from as far as fifty miles away (Halberstadt and Magdeburg).³

As of this writing, no eyewitnesses or writings of members of the Halle Branch during the war have been located.

IN MEMORIAM

Only one member of the Halle Branch did not survive World War II:

Ida Therese Knorre bp. 7 Sep 1935; d. 1 Apr 1941, age 81 (*Sonntagsgruss*, no. 24, 15 Jun 1941, 96)

NOTES

1. Presiding Bishopric, "Financial, Statistical, and Historical Reports of Wards, Stakes, and Missions, 1884–1955," CR 4 12, 257.
2. East German Mission Quarterly Reports, 1938, no. 29–31, East German Mission History.
3. Ibid., 1938, no. 49.

LEIPZIG CENTER BRANCH

When World War II began, Leipzig had been the capital of the German book market for several centuries. The international book fair took place there every year, and the world looked to Leipzig for new books. In this metropolis of about six hundred thousand people, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints had two branches: Center and West.

Leipzig Center Branch ¹	1939
Elders	16
Priests	11
Teachers	7
Deacons	14
Other Adult Males	52
Adult Females	206
Male Children	13
Female Children	9
<i>Total</i>	328

The Leipzig Center Branch met in rented rooms at Moritzstrasse 10 in the second Hinterhaus—just two blocks from the New City Hall and thus near the commercial center of this bustling city. According to the branch history, the rooms there were on the second floor and included a large meeting hall, a cloakroom, and a kitchen where the members who lived farther away could enjoy their noon meal between Sunday meetings. There was also a Relief

Society room where the sisters met on Monday evenings for discussions and craft circles.²

Elfriede Waldammer Werner (born 1918) later indicated that the branch had both a piano and a pump organ. "Sometimes there were more than eighty people in the meetings. There were many children and teenagers."³ With 328 members at the end of the year 1939, this was the fifth-largest branch in the mission and the sixth-largest in all of Germany.

All of the programs of the Church were functioning in the Leipzig Center Branch when the war began in 1939. According to Elfriede Werner:

Sometimes, we were at church nearly every day. We were always there Sundays, Mondays, and Wednesdays. On Sunday mornings, we went to church for Sunday School, went home again for lunch, and then came back to the church for sacrament meeting.

According to Sister Werner, politics had no place in the branch. "When we had our meetings, we didn't talk about anything but the gospel. We also didn't pray for Adolf Hitler."

The history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Leipzig includes the following about the war years:

When the Second World War broke out, most of the brethren were drafted into the army. The lack of leadership led to the combining of the two Leipzig branches in 1941. Brother Johannes Hurst was the branch president at that time. The members gathered for meetings in rented rooms at Moritzstrasse 10. In the early hours of 4 December 1943, the rooms were hit by bombs during an air raid over Leipzig and burned out. The branch was "bombed out" as they used to say in those days. Thereafter, the meetings took place in the home of Sister Herz on Schletterstrasse, then in the rooms of another church on Josephstrasse.⁴

Just before the rooms at Moritzstrasse were destroyed, Elfriede Schiele, longtime secretary of the Relief Society, considered taking the