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# LEIPZIG DISTRICT

*East German Mission*



At the west-central border of the East German Mission was the Leipzig District. The territory comprised the northwest portion of the province of old Royal Saxony, most of Prussian Saxony, and all of Saxony-Anhalt. The city of Leipzig was in the southwestern portion of the district.

In 1939, there were two branches of the LDS Church in Leipzig itself—the Center Branch and the West Branch. The other branches in the district were located in Magdeburg (sixty miles north), Aschersleben (fifty miles northwest), Halle (twenty miles northwest), Dessau (thirty-six miles north), and Naumburg (twenty-seven miles southwest). Mission records indicated that a group was holding meetings in Halberstadt (sixty-six miles northwest of Leipzig).

Church units bordering the Leipzig District were the Berlin District on the northeast, the Spreewald District on the east, the Chemnitz District on the southeast, and the Zwickau District on the south. Districts of the West German Mission were the neighbors to the west (Hanover) and the southwest (Weimar). The leader of the Leipzig District in 1939 was Erich Hein, and his first counselor was Erich Gützlaff.<sup>1</sup>

Leipzig District <sup>2</sup>	1939	1940	1941	1942
Elders	27	27		
Priests	18	18		
Teachers	17	16		
Deacons	29	35		
Other Adult Males	97	77		
Adult Females	370	346		
Male Children	24	20		
Female Children	24	23		
<i>Total</i>	606	562	564	562

Although the years just prior to the war were a time of growth and prosperity for the Church in general in Germany, there were challenges in certain areas. For example, the East German Mission history reported on September 30, 1938, that the full-time missionaries in the Leipzig District were forbidden to tract or to use other means of missionary work. One may presume that their activities were restricted to responding to inquiries, teaching interested persons in the homes of Church members, and giving public lectures. The mission history indicates that the restriction was in force “during the month of September” and thus may have been only short-lived.<sup>3</sup> In addition, baptisms were allowed only if the local police office gave permission, but there is no indication that anyone was denied the privilege of being baptized.

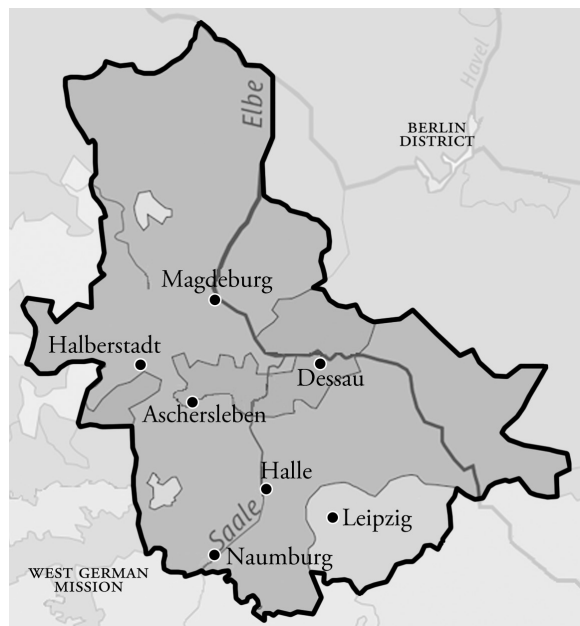


Fig. 1. The Leipzig District of the East German Mission in 1939.

Because the historical records of the East German Mission were not preserved after 1941, the last entry made regarding the Leipzig District was a report of a district conference held on March 25–26, 1939 (Saturday and Sunday), in Leipzig. The main meeting held on Sunday evening was attended by 205 members and thirty friends.<sup>4</sup>

The two branches in the city of Leipzig were combined in 1941, and all meetings were held in the Moritzstrasse until those rooms were destroyed in December 1943. Thereafter, meetings were held in the homes of members.<sup>5</sup>

### NOTES

1. East German Mission Quarterly Reports, 1938, no. 13, East German Mission History; 1939, no. 58.
2. Presiding Bishopric, "Financial, Statistical, and Historical Reports of Wards, Stakes, and Missions, 1884–1955," CR 4 12, 257.
3. East German Mission Quarterly Reports, 1938, no. 40.
4. *Ibid.*, 1939, no. 59.
5. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *Die Gemeinde in Leipzig* (Leipzig, Germany: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1988), 10; trans. the author.

## ASCHERSLEBEN BRANCH

The city of Aschersleben is located in the historical Prussian province of Saxony, some fifty miles northwest of Leipzig. Shortly before World War II began, there were only sixty-one members of the Church there. The city had a population of about thirty-five thousand people.

Aschersleben Branch <sup>1</sup>	1939
Elders	0
Priests	1
Teachers	0
Deacons	4
Other Adult Males	9
Adult Females	45
Male Children	2
Female Children	0
<i>Total</i>	61

East German Mission records indicate that the meetings of the Aschersleben Branch were held at Feldstrasse 21A by the end of 1938. Irene Hampel (born 1928) recalled that the rooms were part of a shoemaker's business. "The branch was permitted to use one main room and two smaller rooms." As in most other branches, Sunday School was held in the morning and sacrament meeting in the evenings. Irene and her mother walked home between meetings and back again in the evening. They lived about thirty minutes (walking time) from the meetinghouse.<sup>2</sup>

Rolf Richter (born 1930) remembered that branch meeting location all through the war. They began with one or two rooms and eventually expanded to five rooms.<sup>3</sup>

Just days before the war began, Irene came home from school. Her father was at home, and