
MUNICH DISTRICT

West German Mission



The southern half of the historic kingdom of Bavaria was the territory of the Munich District of the West German Mission in early 1938. Essentially all of southeastern Germany from Austria north to the Danube River was included in this district. It consisted at the time of only two branches: Munich with 228 members and Augsburg with 57 members. The traditional dominance of the Catholic Church may have been one reason for the scarcity of Latter-day Saints in the region.

After the annexation of Austria by Germany in March 1938, it became so difficult for American missionaries to travel from Austria to Switzerland that work in the Swiss-Austrian Mission was hindered. Therefore it was decided that Austria should be included within the boundaries of the West German Mission. This change went into effect on November 1, 1938, and the small branches in Salzburg, Haag am Hausruck, and Frankenburg were added to the West German Mission. They became part of the Munich District because it was easier at the time for the Saints in those three towns to travel to district conferences in Munich than to Vienna, the capital of Austria. With the expansion of the Munich District, the southern border extended south to Switzerland on the west, Italy on the southwest and Yugoslavia on the southeast. Most of the district territory was mountainous and sparsely populated.



Fig. 1. The Munich District included all of western Austria since November 1938.

Munich District ¹	1939
Elders	22
Priests	22
Teachers	21
Deacons	22
Other Adult Males	62
Adult Females	207
Male Children	25
Female Children	24
<i>Total</i>	405

The leadership of the Munich District was in the very capable hands of Johann Thaller (born 1907), who lived in Solln, a southern suburb of Munich. His work afforded him the convenience of a company automobile and a delivery van that he was allowed to use for private purposes as well. He eagerly seized the opportunity to travel to the five branches in the district as well as to conferences in Nuremberg, Frankfurt, and Stuttgart. According to his son, Edwin (born 1938), “He had his own company and represented another company operating within the state of Bavaria. One was a Lebkuchen company based in Nuremberg, and the other was a soup company based in Frankfurt.”²

The report of the 1939 spring conference of the Munich District indicates the vitality of the Saints in southern Bavaria. The following is recorded under May 6–7: “All meetings [were] held in the Munich Branch hall that was filled to capacity. Sister Wood [wife of mission president M. Douglas Wood] conducted a dress rehearsal for the [choir] performance of the Munich members in the upcoming mission conference in Frankfurt.”³ At least fifty members of the district made the long journey by rail to Frankfurt in late May to participate in what was probably the largest mission conference held to date.

Members and missionaries alike would later tell of being transported from place to place in one of Elder Thaller’s vehicles. Such transportation was indeed a rare facet of life among the Latter-day Saints in Germany in 1939. According to his son Werner (born 1939), “My dad used to have a delivery truck. I imagine that it was an Opel, and he used to haul people around all the time. He used to put people in the back and put a

couple wooden benches in, and people would sit facing each other just like you’re riding in an old train with wooden benches.”

Werner described his father’s personality traits in these words:

Many times he would roll the carpet back in the house and put a record on, and [he and Mom] would dance. He had a good sense of humor. I don’t know of anyone who didn’t like Dad. He made friends easily. He loved his kids and his wife. He loved to work. He loved the gospel. He would read the scriptures on a regular basis. He knew the gospel well. He loved the Lord. He had daily prayers with his family—family prayer, individual prayers. [He was] always active in the Church and did whatever he could to further the kingdom.

Johann Thaller was in many respects a remarkable man. As a traveling businessman, he sought opportunities to visit the Saints everywhere he went. His name shows up in the general minutes of the Haag and Frankenburg Branches and at conferences in the mission home. He enjoyed the confidence of the mission leadership, as is evident from the fact that he was asked in 1943 to perform the duties of first counselor to mission supervisor Anton Huck.

Elder Thaller was drafted into the German army and served on reserve duty in the Munich area. He was trained as a medic to work with doctors at an army hospital and was never required to report for active duty in the Wehrmacht. Toward the end of the war, he was assigned to medic duties in downtown Munich. According to his son Werner, he received a draft notice in the last months of the war, but a compassionate soldier volunteered to serve in his stead. That would have been a rare occurrence in Germany during the war. The volunteer was not seen again.

Thanks to Josef Grob, President Thaller was not alone in directing the affairs of the Munich District. Elder Grob was an employee of the national railway system and was stationed for several years in Innsbruck, Austria. He was able to take the train north to Munich on Sundays to attend church



Fig. 2. District president Johann Thaller in the uniform of a medic. (W. Thaller)

meetings. By the same means, he assisted President Thaller in visiting the distant branches of Haag, Frankenburg, and Linz (in the Vienna District) as well as individuals and families living near Wels, Austria.⁴



Fig. 3. Johann Thaller (left) served after the war in the North German Mission. He is shown here with young Otto Förster of Frankfurt, also a husband and father. (O. Förster)

The stress of serving as a district president in the Church would be difficult for any man in any country, but Johann Thaller carried out his duties in addition to representing two large food companies. His son Edwin described the situation in these words: “My father was very busy taking care of the two businesses in [his sales territory] and on top of that being the district president and having to visit six or seven branches regularly. He was gone during

the week for business and gone on weekends for church [visits]. We rarely saw him.”

Shortly after the war ended, Johann Thaller was called to leave his wife and his five children and serve on a full-time basis in the North German Mission. As those who knew him would expect, he answered that call and served an honorable mission.

NOTES

1. Presiding Bishopric, “Financial, Statistical, and Historical Reports of Wards, Stakes, and Missions, 1884–1955,” 257, CHL CR 4 12.
2. Edwin Thaller, telephone interview with the author, February 10, 2009.
3. West German Mission quarterly reports, 1939, no. 19, CHL LR 10045 2.
4. Helga Seeber, “Werden und Wirken der Mormonen in München” (unpublished, 1977).

AUGSBURG BRANCH

Augsburg is located just twenty-five miles west of Munich. Situated on the banks of the Lech River, it was an important Protestant city in an intensely Catholic region of the former kingdom of Bavaria. As World War II approached an unwitting populace in the late summer of 1939, the city had 180,039 inhabitants, of whom fifty-seven were members of the LDS Church. They met in rooms rented at Liebig Platz next to the Emelka Theater, according to the mission directory.¹ The meeting schedule was similar to other LDS branches in Germany, with Sunday School beginning at 10:00 a.m. and sacrament meeting at 7:00 p.m. The auxiliary organizations that existed held their meetings on Wednesday evenings—MIA at 7:45 and Relief Society at 9:00. The priesthood holders met at the same time as the Relief Society, as well as on the first Sunday of each month at 11:30 a.m. With only three children of record, there was no Primary organization at the time.

The leader of the Augsburg Branch in July 1939 was an American missionary, Stanford Poulson. His first counselor was a local member, Otto Wintermayr. Elder Poulson's mission companion at the time was Erich W. Bauer, apparently a native of Germany, who was serving as the second counselor. It is not known as of this writing whether Brother Wintermayr was designated as branch president when Elder Poulson left Germany on August 26 or whether Elder Bauer left Augsburg as well.

Augsburg Branch²	1939
Elders	1
Priests	3
Teachers	2
Deacons	4
Other Adult Males	14
Adult Females	30
Male Children	2
Female Children	1
<i>Total</i>	57

The city of Augsburg attracted the attention of the Allied air forces. At least 1,499 persons are known to have lost their lives in attacks on the city, while an additional 9,500 Augsburg men perished in fighting away from home. On April 28, 1945, the US Seventh Army entered the city with no resistance. The conquerors found that at least 25 percent of the city's dwellings had been destroyed. Experts evaluated the losses at 155,000,000 Reichsmark.³ Several members of the Augsburg Branch disappeared during the air raids and were never seen again.

As of this writing, no eyewitness testimonies or reports could be located to describe the life of the Latter-day Saints in Augsburg from 1939 to 1945. It is known only that the branch was still functioning when the war ended, though a substantial percentage of the membership had died or were killed by 1945.

IN MEMORIAM

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

August Anhalt b. Wittislingen, Schwaben, Bayern, 9 Sep 1923; adopted son of Friedrich Josef Anhalt and Sofie Ackermann; bp. 3 Aug 1935; conf. 3 Aug 1935; navy; corporal; k. in battle 21 or 26 Dec 1942 or 1943 (CR Augsburg Branch, FHL microfilm 68783, no. 3; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 725; www.volksbund.de; IGI)

Erich Willy Bauer b. Zschornowitz, Bitterfeld, Sachsen, 24 Jun 1919; son of Robert Alfred Bauer and Marie Sofie Wassmuss; bp. 30 Jun 1927; conf. 3 Jul 1927; ord. deacon 26 Aug 1934; ord. priest 27 Mar 1938; ord. elder 19 Mar 1939; m. 21 Aug 1943, Adina Blechschmidt; corporal; d. wounds field hospital at Brest-Litowsk, Belarus, 23 or 28 Oct 1943 (no. 61; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 926; FHL microfilm 25719, 1925 and 1930 censuses; www.volksbund.de; IGI)

Lydia Heck b. Hohengehren, Jagstkreis, Württemberg, 30 Jan 1892; dau. of Christian Heck and Karoline Wolf; bp. 23 Jan 1925; conf. 23 Jan 1925; m. Friedrich Alwin Queitsch; missing as of 20 Jul 1946 (CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 347; FHL microfilm 271398, 1925 and 1935 censuses)

Herbert Heinhaus b. Barmen, Jülich, Rheinprovinz, 5 Aug 1914; son of Walter Heinhaus and Klara Gutjahr; bp. 14 May 1938; conf. 14 May 1938; ord. deacon 18 Dec 1938; m. 7 Sep 1939 Anni Wein; k. in battle Ukraine 14 Sep 1941 (no. 55; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 765; IGI)

Helga Elisabeth Heinhaus b. Augsburg, Augsburg, Bayern, 23 Aug 1941; dau. of Herbert Heinhaus and Anni Wein; missing as of 20 Jul 1946 (CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 955)

Wolfgang Herbert Heinhaus b. Augsburg, Augsburg, Bayern, 13 Mar 1940; son of Herbert Heinhaus and Anni Wein; missing as of 20 Jul 1946 (CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 932)

Xaver Franz Klughammer b. Göggingen, Augsburg, Bayern, 11 Nov 1905; son of Anselm Männer or Menner and Philomina Häring; bp. 6 Apr 1928; conf. 6 Apr 1928; d. neurological disease 7 Feb 1945 (no. 11; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 517; FHL microfilm 271380, 1930 and 1935 censuses)

Ludwig Josef Lang b. München, München, Bayern, 4 Jun 1917; son of Ludwig Janner and Rosa Marie Theresia Lang; bp. 25 Sep 1930; conf. 25 Sep 1930; ord. deacon 2 Oct 1932; m. 3 or 6 or 10 Feb 1940, Kreszentia Senkmajer; corporal; k. in battle Jabokrok, Russia, 21 Apr 1944; bur. Potelitsch, Ukraine (no. 13; KGF; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 654; www.volksbund.de; IGI)

Franz Xavier Lutz b. Augsburg, Augsburg, Bayern, 20 Oct 1926; son of Georg Lutz and Kreszentia Hehl/Kehl; bp. 22 Jun 1937; conf. 22 Jun 1937; missing as of 20 Jul 1946 (CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 750)

Erich Queitsch b. Esslingen, Württemberg, 2 Jan 1915; son of Friedrich Queitsch and Karoline Leiss; bp. 23 Jan 1925; conf. 23 Jan 1925; missing as of 20 Jul 1946 (CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 343; FHL microfilm 271398, 1925 and 1935 censuses)

Friedrich Alwin Queitsch b. Filtan, Sachsen, 3 Mar 1883; son of August Karl Queitsch and Pauline Kirsten; bp. 23 Jan 1925; conf. 23 Jan 1925; missing as of 20 Jul 1946 (CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 344; FHL microfilm 271398, 1925 and 1935 censuses)

Fritz Queitsch b. Esslingen, Neckarkreis, Württemberg, 28 Dec 1909; son of Friedrich Queitsch and Karoline Leiss; bp. 23 Jan 1925; conf. 23 Jan 1925; missing as of 20 Jul 1946 (CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 345; FHL microfilm 271398, 1925 and 1935 censuses)

Otto Karl Queitsch b. Esslingen, Neckarkreis, Württemberg, 6 Aug 1911; son of Friedrich Queitsch and Karoline Leiss; bp. 23 Jan 1925; conf. 23 Jan 1925; missing as of 20 Jul 1946 (CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 348; FHL microfilm 271398, 1925 and 1935 censuses)

Willy Paul Queitsch b. Esslingen, Neckarkreis, Württemberg, 4 May 1913; son of Friedrich Queitsch and Karoline Leiss; bp. 23 Jan 1925; conf. 23 Jan 1925; missing as of 20 Jul 1946 (CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 350; FHL microfilm 271398, 1925 and 1935 censuses)

Mina Richter b. Augsburg, Augsburg, Bayern, 2 Sep 1876; dau. of August Richter and Pauline Östreicher; bp. 1 Aug 1937; conf. 1 Aug 1937; m. Johann Seidel; d. 3 Mar 1944 (no. 36)

Christine Schramm b. Augsburg, Augsburg, Bayern, 5 Aug 1890; dau. of Matthias Schramm and Walburga Vaumann; bp. 1 Nov 1930; conf. 1 Nov 1930; m. — Braun; d. lung ailment 22 Sep 1940 (CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 644; IGI)

Elise Emilie Schreitmüller b. Bertenbreit, Kaishaim, Bayern, 15 Jun 1923; dau. of Johann Schreitmüller and Emilie Wörnle; bp. 5 Nov 1933; conf. 5 Nov 1933; d. stomach operation 9 Aug 1940 (CHL microfilm 2447, pt. 26, no. 652; FHL microfilm 245258, 1930 census; IGI)

Beno Senkmayer b. Augsburg, Augsburg, Bayern, 11 Jun 1913; son of Emilian Senkmayer and Kreszintia Hoermann; bp. 1 Sep 1929; conf. 1 Sep 1929; m. 1 Jun 1940, Maria Durner; MIA near Iwan See or Naswa Fluss or Pakalowo or Tschernosem 1 Jun 1944 (CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 623; FHL microfilm 245261, 1935 census; www.volksbund.de)

Joseph Spendler b. München, München, Bayern, 1 May 1900; son of Maria Spendler; bp. 3 Mar 1914;

conf. 3 May 1914; m. 5 Sep 1931, Karolina —; missing as of 20 Jul 1946 (CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 711; FHL microfilm 245272, 1935 census)

Kreszenzia Wolf b. Augsburg, Augsburg, Bayern, 12 Apr 1913; dau. of Josef Wolf and Viktoria Mayer; bp. 20 Jan 1929; conf. 20 Jan 1929; m. Nov 1934, Artur Hatmann; missing as of 20 May 1943 (CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 588)

Elisabeth Agatha Zoller b. Augsburg, Augsburg, Bayern, 12 May 1943; dau. of Hans Zoller and Sophie Kerner; bl. 6 Jun 1943; d. croup 18 Aug 1943 (no. 73; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 982; IGI)

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. Augsburg city archive.

FRANKENBURG BRANCH

The town of Frankenburg is located deep in the hills of the state of Upper Austria—as the crow flies, twelve miles southwest of Haag am Hausruck and thirty miles northeast of Salzburg. With a population of less than a thousand inhabitants when World War II approached, it was an unexpected venue for a branch of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The mission directory for the branch in Frankenburg shows only a few offices assigned. Mathias Steindl was the branch president when the war began. The only other surnames that appear in the branch directory in 1939 are Altmann and Brückl. The meetings at the time were held in the Steindl apartment in house no. 61. According to branch meeting minutes of the war years, other members of the branch belonged to the Limberger and Schachl families.

The faithful Saints in Frankenburg were physically isolated but by no means forgotten. The branch

meeting minutes show a great number of visitors coming and going from 1938 to 1940 when the records end. West German Mission president M. Douglas Wood and his wife were there in 1938, as was Vienna District president Georg Schick. After the branch was transferred to the Munich District, president Johann Thaller came for visits on at least five occasions. Presidents Franz Rosner and Rudolf Niedermair of the Haag and Linz Branches (respectively) also came, as did Georg Mühlbacher, president of the branch in Salzburg. Those visits were not made without sacrifice, however, because public transportation from the major cities to Frankenburg was not at all convenient. One of the last reported visits was by Anton Huck, first counselor to the mission supervisor in Frankfurt.¹

Frankenburg Branch²	1939
Elders	0
Priests	1
Teachers	1
Deacons	0
Other Adult Males	2
Adult Females	9
Male Children	1
Female Children	1
<i>Total</i>	15

Because the branch was in a rural setting, communications were slightly slower. Thus American missionaries Nephi Henry Duersch and Robert J. Gillespie were probably the last to hear of the evacuation of foreign missionaries from all of Germany and Austria one week before the war began. Returning to their apartment in Frankenburg from a lengthy bicycle tour in Haag and towns along the route, they found the telegram instructing them to leave on August 25. It was already September 2. They immediately left, taking a train first to Germany and then crossing the border south into neutral Switzerland.³



Fig. 1. Church leaders attending the dedication of the branch meeting rooms in 1938. Left to right: Joseph Grob, Georg Schick, Thomas E. McKay, Horace G. Moser, and Rao K. Parker. (G. Koerbler Greenmun)

“They gave me a bicycle,” recalled Auguste (Gusti) Steindl (born 1928), “It was sad because we were very close to the missionaries. We didn’t have much [money] before the war, but we invited them for dinner. . . . It was a very nice time.”⁴ Gusti had the following to say about her father, the branch president: “We read the Bible and the Book of Mormon, and my father was very strict about the Sabbath day. Oh my, I remember one time, my cousins came from the city, and they wanted to take me to a movie [one Sunday]. Oh, no! Those cousins didn’t talk to him for a long time after that.”

When the war broke out in September 1939, the branch in Frankenburg felt its effects immediately. President Steindl was drafted but for a time was close enough to home to remain the leader of the congregation. In September, he purchased house no. 62 and moved his family in. Following “tremendous work” by the members, a storage room in the house became the meeting place. Soon thereafter, Brother Steindl was quoted as stating that “the branch has endured [difficulties] since 1937, but that the Lord has helped us to overcome all of those difficulties.”⁵ Branch records show a total attendance at meetings during 1939 as 2,624, yielding an average attendance of fifteen persons at the 174 meetings.⁶

During the first month of the war, the sacrament meeting time was changed to 4:00 p.m. to

accommodate the blackout regulations. The clerk kept very detailed records in those days, noting the names of speakers and their topics. The minutes of the Sunday School include the term *Klassentrennung*, meaning that the Saints separated into at least two groups for instruction.

The Frankenburg Branch was increased in size substantially by the arrival of the family of Franz Dittrich from nearby Haag in 1940. Margaretha Dittrich (born 1931) recalled the following about her father's employment: "When we moved to Frankenburg in 1940, my father started working as a streetworker. He cleaned the streets, and that was difficult for him to do that work because he knew that he could do better. He never found work as a baker again."⁷ She also described the branch meeting rooms in Frankenburg:

We met in house no. 61 near the market square. We only had one room on the first floor. The Steindl family had their apartment in the same building. During the week, we also held Primary. We had benches and a pump organ. There were also pictures that we hung up. One of them was a picture of Jesus Christ on his knees praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. It was quite large. All of our neighbors knew that we were members of the Church and it did not matter to them.

Young Hildegard Dittrich (born 1927) was naturally worried about changing schools and leaving her dear friends in the Haag Branch.⁸ She finished her public school experience in 1941 and was soon called upon to serve her *Pflichtjahr* on a farm in support of the national war effort. This service interfered with her plans to become a secretary.

After communications between the Saints in Europe and Church headquarters in Salt Lake City were interrupted in December 1941, the office of the West German Mission in Frankfurt was hard pressed to supply the branches with instruction manuals for Church programs. Hildegard recalled that her father "had to copy lessons for Sunday School out of very old Church books or Church magazines." This did not last for long, however, because in the spring

of 1942, Franz Dittrich (a veteran of World War I) was drafted into the Wehrmacht and assigned to work as a radio operator in the police office in Linz, forty miles to the east. He would remain there until the end of the war.

The records of the branch for the years 1940–41 include a discouraging note: apparently one of the women accused another of endangering her marriage. The accused demanded a retraction of the charge. The unidentified branch clerk added a note to the effect that he and his wife did not feel the Spirit of the Lord when entering the second sister's house. The negative feelings were mentioned again on April 24, 1940. Months later, in January 1941, Anton Schindler (born 1873), a veteran member of the Church from Munich, came with Franz Rosner of Haag "to help resolve differences in the branch . . . but left town without having achieved success in the conflict." By May 3, 1941, the matter was resolved and a "nice spirit" prevailed.⁹

Following her *Pflichtjahr*, Hildegard Dittrich was pleased to find employment in the post office in Frankenburg. After work and on weekends, she was very busy with Church callings. Despite her age (she was only sixteen at the time), she served simultaneously as a Primary teacher, chorister or organist (on a pump organ), and Relief Society secretary and treasurer.

Hildegard later wrote that even though her father was away from home, the family had just enough to eat during the war years, but food was by no means easy to come by:

Every day very, very early in the morning, my sister Grete would go to the store and bakery and stand in line for a few hours so she could buy a loaf of bread for us or some sugar or flour or anything edible. Most of the time the bread in the store was already gone before she got to the counter, and so it was with everything else, and that went on for lots of days.

Along with her schoolmates, Margaretha Dittrich was inducted into the Jungvolk in 1941 at age ten. She described the experience in these words:

We had to attend the meetings, if we wanted or not, but we did not believe in it. We had church on Sunday mornings, so I did not go to the Jungvolk meetings. The leaders were angry and asked me at school where I had been. My parents were cautious and did not say anything about it. I had to justify why I missed the meetings. But I was always the black sheep anyway because of my religion, so it did not really matter. Later, I was a member of the League of German Girls. We got a brown jacket and had to know how to tie the knot a certain way. I burnt it after the war was over.



Fig. 2. The family of Franz and Margaretha Dittrich was baptized in late 1939. As Margaretha recalled, "It took place in Haag in the public pool. After the meeting on Sunday, we walked to the pool. But we had told the owner of the pool that we would come, so he let us be there alone. I was not the only one being baptized that day."¹⁰

For young Margaretha, the political situation under Hitler's Third Reich was not particularly impressive: "There were some members of the party in our branch but we did not talk about [politics] in church. And I never heard anybody pray for Hitler, but we prayed for the safety of all the soldiers."

Although at first it seemed to Hildegard and her family that Germany would win the war, conditions changed, and it was clear that Hitler's Third Reich was in trouble. In the last years of the war, Allied bombers came within range of Austrian cities, and they were bombed despite Austria's status as a conquered nation. The Dittrich family covered their windows in response to blackout regulations and wondered if the many airplanes flying

overhead would drop their bombs on the village of Frankenburg; fortunately, that never happened. Regarding their survival under the increasingly difficult conditions, Hildegard wrote, "We could do nothing but keep on working and doing our jobs in the branch and at work as good as we could. We prayed every day very hard to our Heavenly Father for His protection. We knew that He will bless us if we keep His commandments."¹¹

In a small town far from the war, life was a bit easier than in more critical locations. According to Gusti Steindl, it was still possible to be a teenager and have fun: "We went to dances sponsored by the Catholic Church. We still had parties, games, dates. Things just sort of went on as before. We were fortunate to be in such a quiet area."

When all of the local priesthood holders were absent from Frankenburg, Heinz Jankowsky was assigned to visit the Frankenburg Branch and to administer the sacrament there. There was no cessation of worship services in the small branch during the war. The branch meeting minutes continued without interruption through the end of the war as if nothing out of the ordinary were happening. It is clear that the Saints were doing all that they could to maintain the Church in Frankenburg. The Relief Society records were also duly kept from 1940 to 1945 and state at the end of 1943, "The sisters set a goal to carry out their duties with greater dedication in the coming year." Sunday School attendance was often less than ten persons, but the Primary reported attendance of from seven to thirteen children during the years 1940–41.¹²

According to Margaretha Dittrich, there was little danger to the residents of Frankenburg during the war: "We had some low flying planes [toward the end] but they didn't damage anything. A real attack never happened in Frankenburg. But whenever we heard an alarm, we did go into a basement near our home to make sure we were safe."

For Gusti Steindl, those fighter planes (*Tiefflieger* in German) represented a real danger: "[My mother] used to go in the morning to the farmers

and collect the eggs. And one time when she was coming home, there was some airplanes flying over, and they started shooting at her. But that was the only time. Otherwise, I don't remember anything really dangerous happening."

By some quirk of fate, Franz Dittrich was able to negotiate the forty miles from the city offices of Linz to his home in Frankenburg amid the confusion of the last days of the war. The enemy did not take him prisoner. According to Margaretha, "My father was already home when [the invaders] came."



Fig. 3. Franz Dittrich (left) served as a radio operator in Linz for the last few years of the war.

In April 1945, the American army moved through Upper Austria. The invaders met little or no opposition and found no reason to disturb the residents, but they did use Frankenburg schools for their housing. As in many areas of western Germany and Austria, the residents saw black men for the first time. As Margaretha recalled, "When we saw the black people for the first time, we were scared. . . . But then we were told that they were good people, and then we trusted them. We got chocolate from them."

"We didn't hang out a [white] flag; everybody welcomed [the conquerors]," recalled Gusti Steindl. "We even had three or four soldiers in our home and they were very nice. My mother gave up the bedroom and the living room. . . . But some people were beaten by the Americans. I remember there was an

old lady in a big restaurant, and they really whipped her. But one [soldier] protected us [from searches and drunkards]. And he brought us food—meat and sugar and stuff like that."

By the end of the summer, all of Austria had been organized into four military occupation zones under American, British, French, and Soviet forces. During the transition, Hildegard Dittrich lost her job in Frankenburg and was sent to the post office in Salzburg. Afraid of the many soldiers in that big city, she asked to be released from her employment and was allowed to return home, where she found her father safe and sound. He had avoided becoming a POW, returned home safely, and had been assigned to lead the branch.

Among the occupying forces were several members of the LDS Church who soon located the branch meeting rooms and joined the local Saints in their meetings. They also brought food to share with their new friends. With peace restored, the branch in Frankenburg had survived, and the future looked difficult but bright.

No members of the Frankenburg Branch are known to have died during World War II.

NOTES

1. Frankenburg Branch general minutes, CHL LR 11253 11.
2. Presiding Bishopric, "Financial, Statistical, and Historical Reports of Wards, Stakes, and Missions, 1884–1955," 721, CR 4 12.
3. Terry Bohle Mantague, *Mine Angels Round About*, 2nd ed. (Orem, UT: Granite, 2000), 101–02.
4. Auguste Steindl Rosner, interview by the author, South Jordan, Utah, March 2, 2007.
5. Frankenburg Branch general minutes, 78.
6. *Ibid.*, 90.
7. Margaretha Dittrich Schauerl, interview by the author in German, Frankenburg, Austria, August 7, 2008; summarized in English by Judith Sartowski.
8. Hildegard Dittrich Cziep, autobiography (unpublished); private collection.
9. Frankenburg Branch general minutes, 128–29, 139, 158.
10. Margaretha Dittrich Schauerl, interview by the author in German in Frankenburg, Austria, on August 7, 2008; summarized in English by Judith Sartowski. Cziep, autobiography.
11. Cziep, autobiography.
12. Frankenburg Branch Primary Association minutes and records.

HAAG AM HAUSRUCK BRANCH

In the history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Austria, the branch in the small town of Haag am Hausruck plays a unique and significant role. Founded largely upon the missionary efforts of Johann Huber just after the turn of the century, the branch grew steadily to become the second largest in Austria when the momentous events of 1938 and 1939 occurred.

Haag am Hausruck Branch ¹	1939
Elders	3
Priests	2
Teachers	1
Deacons	3
Other Adult Males	6
Adult Females	27
Male Children	5
Female Children	7
<i>Total</i>	54

According to his granddaughter Theresia Rosner (born 1923), Johann Huber was converted through a friend who had immigrated to the United States.² The friend became acquainted with the Church there and then returned to Austria and showed some Church literature to Johann Huber. Brother Huber was baptized in Munich on April 27, 1900, and soon returned to Haag to share the message of the gospel with his family and friends.³ It is said that he led thirteen families into the Church in the vicinity of Haag.

The Huber farm (German: *Hof Huber* or *Huberhof*) is located just outside of the village of Rottenbach, two miles northeast of Haag, and is

still owned by the descendants of Johann Huber. The farm played an important role in the lives of many Huber descendants and other members of the Church in Austria and Germany.



Fig. 1. In the Rosner home in March 1938. From left: Theresia Rosner, Theresia Huber Rosner, Franz Rosner, missionaries Clark Hillam and George Gould. (C. Hillam)



Fig. 2. The charming main street of Haag am Hausruck as it looked during the war. (E. Cziep Collette)

The family of branch president Franz Rosner lived in a building along the main highway leading into Haag from the north. Their address was Kirchengasse 6. Brother Rosner later purchased house no. 7 next door and constructed a room to be used

as the branch chapel. Daughter Theresia recalled that the room could accommodate forty persons. “We often had visitors from other branches, too,” she stated. The meeting room was outfitted with a pump organ but was otherwise quite spartan in its appearance. Sunday School was held in the morning and sacrament meeting in the evening, with auxiliary meetings taking place during the week. Margaretha Dittrich (born 1931) recalled:

There was also a small podium in the room. We had a picture of Joseph Smith behind the podium. There must have been about twenty people who attended the meetings. Sunday School started at 9 a.m. and at 5 p.m.; we all came back to hold sacrament meeting. . . . We did not have a sign at the side of the building saying that we met there. There were too many Catholics in our area, and if they had known, they would have [persecuted] us more than they already did.⁴

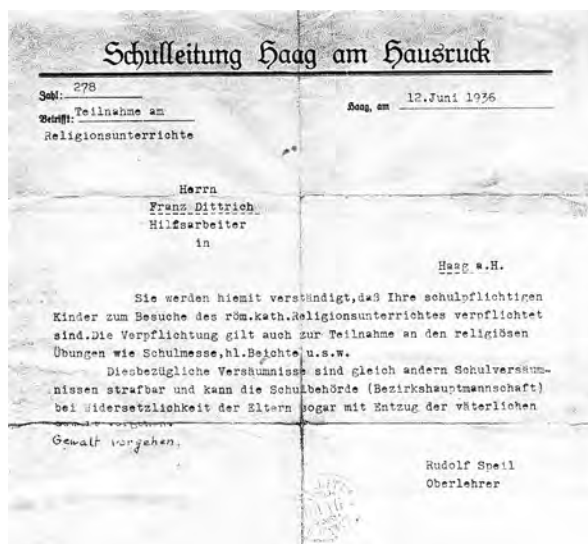


Fig. 3. Franz Dittrich received this stern warning from the principal of the local school regarding the required participation of his children in Catholic instruction. (H. Rosner)

Branch member Theresia Rosner said, “Our branch had a very wonderful climate; we knew each other very well, and support was always needed and given.” Perhaps the need for support was a result of the fact that those few Saints were living in an otherwise entirely Catholic rural community of

1,819 residents.⁵ Before the war, Brother Rosner was accused of keeping his children from attending Catholic religion classes in school but was able to defend himself in court against that charge. Neighbors were not very tolerant when it came to having a “sect” holding meetings in a local residential structure such as Kirchgasse 7, and they sought ways to make the Rosner family’s life difficult.⁶



Fig. 4. The sisters of the Haag and Frankenburg branches enjoy a bicycle tour. (T. Rosner Thill)

Immediately after joining the Church in 1935, Franz Dittrich had difficulties similar to those of Franz Rosner. One year later, Brother Dittrich received a letter from the local school authority reminding him that the law required him to send his children to Catholic instruction in school, as well as to the Catholic Church for school-related events. The letter threatened that his children could be taken from their home in the case of noncompliance. Soon after this dispute, Franz Dittrich lost his employment as a master baker.

After the Anschluss (Austrian annexation) in March 1938, life under Germany’s swastika flag changed very quickly for the Dittrich family. Young Hildegard was substantially underweight and thus sent off to Germany to a children’s convalescent home for six weeks. She did not gain weight there. Four months after returning home, she was sent away again, this time to the Heinisch family in Westphalia for one month. As she recalled, “I had

a great time with that family, lots of food and fun. [But] they belonged to the Lutheran Church and I had to go with them to their church. . . . My parents were glad to see me come home and I was glad to be home with my family and that I could go to church and Primary again.”⁷



Fig. 5. The Rosner house at Kirchgasse 6 as seen from behind in about 1942. (T. Thill)



Fig. 6. A festive dinner in the Haag branch. (T. Thill)

Unfortunately, the Dittrich family suffered two tragedies in less than a year: daughter Ernstine died in November 1939 and her brother, Franz Xaver, followed in July 1940. According to Hildegard, “My parents were very glad and thankful that they had the gospel which gave them the strength to

overcome all these trying times.” By October 1939, Franz Dittrich had found new employment in Frankenburg, and the family moved to that small town the next year.⁸

Despite the problems of being LDS in a Catholic town, Theresia Rosner felt very much at home in her Hitler Youth group, the meetings of which did not interfere with her attendance at church meetings. At the age of seventeen, she was assigned to work in the home of a family in Munich under the *Pflichtjahr* program. She was already acquainted somewhat with the city and the branch there, having taken the long bus ride with her family on several occasions to attend district conferences there.



Fig. 7. Members of the Haag Branch next to the meetinghouse in 1943. (T. Thill)

While in Munich, Theresia was given time off to attend meetings of the Munich Branch at Kapuzinerstrasse 18. The Weiss family of that branch saw to it that she had a way to church. At the completion of her year, she returned home and sought work nearby. The employment office found her a position with a family in the town of Ried, only ten miles west of her home in Haag. While in Ried, Theresia received word that her grandpa Huber had passed away in late November 1941. Just a few weeks later, her brother, Wilhelm, died of meningitis at the age of nine. Franz Rosner then asked his daughter to come home to fill the void in the family, and she did.



Fig. 8. These members of the Haag Branch traveled to Munich for a district conference. (T. Thill)

The condition of the branch during the war was described by the former branch president Franz Rosner and his wife, Leopoldine, in an interview in 1974: “We had about fifty to sixty members at the time. All of the young men were gone [in the military], but there were older priesthood holders at home the whole time. There were no Nazi Party members in our branch that [we] can recall. We were very fortunate in that none of our branch members died [as a result of] the war.”⁹

There were no air raids over Haag, and no battles took place when the Americans moved through the area in April 1945, but Theresia recalled enemy fighter planes cruising by at very low levels to shoot at people in the area. No members of the Church lost their homes. “We had no interruptions in our branch meetings all through the war. As for me, my life was never in danger,” she recalled.

In wartime, the Huberhof continued to be a gathering place for family members and other Latter-day Saints. In 1941, Albert Göckeritz, president of the Chemnitz District of the East German Mission, spent ten days with the Rosner family for a much-needed vacation.¹⁰ At the end of the war, Gertrud Hoppe, widow of the Breslau District president, sought refuge at the Huberhof with her children and stayed for four years.¹¹



Fig. 9. Even in wartime, children knew how to amuse themselves. (T. Thill)

After the war ended, the absent members of the branch in Haag am Hausruck gradually returned to their homes and carried on their lives as Latter-day Saints, anxiously awaiting the day when they would have their own church building and real freedom from religious persecution.

One of the first postwar events in the Haag Branch was the baptism of a convert from Breslau, Silesia (East German Mission)—former Wehrmacht soldier Paul Gildner. He and Hanni Goetzeberger were driven by an American soldier in a jeep from Salzburg to Haag for their baptism. The driver was stopped en route at an American checkpoint and asked the identity of the Germans he was transporting. He answered that they were “Nazi swine” whom he was taking in for questioning. They were allowed to pass and reached Haag safely.¹²

IN MEMORIAM

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

Ernestine Dietrich b. Ebensee, Oberösterreich, Austria, 1922; d. disease Haag Am Hausruck, Wels,

Oberösterreich, Austria, 7 Nov 1939 (Dietrich-Cziep; *Der Stern* 1 Jan 1940, no. 1, 15)

Franz Xaver Sebastian Dittrich b. Ebensee, Gmund, Oberbayern, Bayern, 25 Sep 1925; son of Franz Xaver Dittrich and Maria Gaigg; bp. 19 Nov 1939; conf. 19 Nov 1939; d. tuberculosis Haag am Hausruck, Oberösterreich, Austria 6 July 1940 (Dietrich-Cziep; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 920; IGI)



Fig. 10. Franz Xaver Sebastian Dittrich in 1939.

Maria Gransgruber b. Haag am Hausruck, Grieskirchen, 21 Jan 1878; dau. of Karl Gransgruber and Aloisa Schnitzinger; bp. 6 Aug 1939; conf. 6 Aug 1939; m. 24 Apr 1928, Johann Haslinger; d. heart ailment 3 Jan 1945 (CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 912)

Johann Huber b. Rottenbach, Grieskirchen, Oberösterreich, Austria, 4 Mar 1861; son of Peter Huber and Franziska Polz; m. Rottenbach 11 Nov 1890, Theresia Mayer; 12 children; 2 m. Rottenbach 4 Aug 1910, Anna Bertha Köhler; 2 children; d. diphtheria Rottenbach 30 Sep or Nov 1941 (K. Hirschmann; FHL microfilm 162791, 1925 and 1935 censuses; PRF, AF)

Jörg Jankowsky b. Haag am Hausruck, Oberösterreich, Austria, 16 Apr 1942; son of Heinz Jankowsky and Maria Anna Kroiss; d. lung ailment 5 Sep 1942 (CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 971; AF)

Ferdinand Kussberger b. Haag am Hausruck, Oberösterreich, Austria, 8 Sep 1870; son of Jakob Kussberger and Theresia Klingseis; bp. 21 Feb 1922; conf. 21 Feb 1922; ord. deacon 17 Feb 1924; d. 21 Feb or 13 Dec 1941 (CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 825; FHL microfilm 271382, 1935 census; IGI)

Wilhelm Franz Rosner b. Haag am Hausruck, Oberösterreich, Austria, 7 Jun 1932; son of Franz Rosner

and Theresia Huber; bp. 29 Jun 1940; conf. 29 Jun 1940; d. meningitis 10 Dec 1941 (CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 837; IGI)

Johann Stuhl b. Frankenburg, Oberösterreich, Austria, 1 Dec 1913; son of Johann Stuhl and Julia or Juliane Pixner; bp. 13 Mar 1938; conf. 13 Mar 1938; m. 18 Apr 1942; k. air raid Wels, Oberösterreich, Austria, 30 May 1944 (CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 798; IGI)

NOTES

1. Presiding Bishopric, "Financial, Statistical, and Historical Reports of Wards, Stakes, and Missions, 1884–1955," 721, CHL CR 4 12.
2. Theresia Rosner Thill, interview by the author in German, Haag am Hausruck, Austria, August 7, 2008; unless otherwise noted, summarized in English by Judith Sartowski.
3. Details of the story were published in the *Deseret News* on August 5, 1978, under the title "Stalwart John Huber," by William G. Hartley.
4. Margaretha Dittrich Schauerl, interview by the author in German, Frankenburg, Austria, August 7, 2008.
5. Haag am Hausruck city archive.
6. Hartley, "Stalwart John Huber."
7. Hildegard Dittrich Cziep, autobiography (unpublished); private collection.
8. See the Frankenburg Branch section for more on the Dittrich family.
9. Franz and Leopoldine Rosner, interviewed by Douglas F. Tobler, Haag am Hausruck, Austria, March 16, 1974, 16–17, CHL MS 1882.
10. Karl Göckeritz, diary (unpublished, 1909–43); private collection.
11. Roger P. Minert, *In Harm's Way: East German Latter-day Saints in World War II* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2009), 141.
12. Arthur Gustav Paul Gildner, autobiography (unpublished); private collection; used with the kind permission of Ingeborg Neugebauer Gildner of Munich, Germany.

MUNICH BRANCH

Titles such as "the Venice of the North" and "the northernmost Italian city" have been applied to Munich because of its architectural beauty and rich cultural heritage. The city has been the capital of Bavaria for hundreds of years. Tracing its beginnings to the end of the nineteenth century, the Church's branch in Munich was large and vibrant at

the start of the war, but Saints were rare in this city of 815,212 people. The branch had fifty-nine priesthood holders, and the president, Anton Schindler, had already served in that capacity for more than thirty years.¹

In 1928, the Munich Branch had found nice rooms to rent for their meetings at Kapuzinerstrasse 18, located about one and one-half miles southwest of the city's center.² The building was a Hinterhaus with only one floor, a former workshop. Elisabeth Grill (born 1914) described the setting:

The rooms were very simple with a small heater in the middle of the main room. One brother always had to come earlier to heat up the rooms and make sure that the smoke would be mostly gone out of the rooms. There was one larger room and a smaller one without a window. It always looked dark. I used that smaller room to teach classes. We had another small classroom. The adult Sunday School class took place in the large room. The rooms were in the back of a building. They always told us to be quiet, to not say anything and to walk

quickly and not linger anywhere. The people in the front building did not want to be disturbed by us.³

Munich Branch ⁴	1939
Elders	16
Priests	13
Teachers	16
Deacons	14
Other Adult Males	29
Adult Females	114
Male Children	13
Female Children	13
<i>Total</i>	228

Elisabeth recalled a sign indicating the presence of the Church in that building. She estimated the size of the congregation at sixty to seventy persons on



Fig. 1. Members of the Munich Branch a few years before the war. (M. Behrens)

a typical Sunday. Berta Wolperdinger (born 1922) recalled the green curtains that hung on the rostrum behind the podium as well as a banner with letters cut from gold paper that read in German, “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”⁵ That was later replaced by a rhyming motto reminding the Saints to come to church on time: “*Fünf Minuten vor der Zeit ist des Mormonen Pünktlichkeit*” (Five minutes early is Mormon punctuality). “The children usually sat in the front rows. It was a wonderful atmosphere,” Berta recalled. “We had pictures of the prophets on the walls, and the chairs could be moved to the sides of the room for other activities.”⁶

Berna Probst (born 1926) recalled that a Brother Mathes changed the sayings on the wall now and then. One of the sayings he displayed was “The Glory of God Is Intelligence.” She also remembered that a Brother Westermaier was in charge of the cloak room; with his wooden leg (a reminder of the Great War), he was always in a hurry to keep up with the members as they arrived and handed him their coats.⁷



Fig. 2. American missionaries visiting the Nussbaumer family in late 1938. (C. Hillam)

The counselors to Anton Schindler when the war began were Ludwig Vikari and August Burkart (who

also served as Sunday School president). Anton Vikari was the president of the YMMIA and Paula Leypold the president of the YWMIA. Marie Lerchenfeld led the Primary organization and Anna Wienhausen the Relief Society. Rudolf Netting served as the branch genealogical consultant and the Stern subscription coordinator.



Fig. 3. Anton Schindler served for decades as the president of the Munich Branch. (M. Behrens)

As was the case in nearly all German branches, the Sunday School in Munich began at 10:00 a.m. Sacrament meeting began at 7:00 p.m.⁸ The Primary met on Mondays at 3:00 p.m., and the Relief Society met that evening at 7:30 p.m. MIA meetings took place on Wednesdays at 8:00 p.m., and the genealogical class met after Sunday School on the first Sunday of the month.

“My parents and I were all baptized on August 20, 1939, in the suburb of Unterhaching in a public pool,” recalled Berta Wolperdinger. “We had to pay a fee to enter. The ceremony started at 6:00 a.m. before the public was admitted to the facilities. We were also confirmed that day at the same place.” This baptism story reflects conditions all over the West German Mission at the time, since only three branches had a baptismal font in their meetinghouses.

American missionaries participated in that baptismal ceremony, but just six days later, they were gone—evacuated from Germany. Berta recalled that the atmosphere was uneasy even before the missionaries left Munich. “We felt that war was inevitable in 1939, and some bomb shelters had already been prepared.”

The Habermann family of the Munich Branch traveled to Sunday church meetings in much the same way as LDS families all over Germany did.



Fig. 4. Berta Wolperdinger (front row, third from left in the overcoat) was baptized just twelve days before the war began. (B. Wolperdinger)

Gustav Habermann (born 1922) provided this description:

We lived in the Nussbaumstrasse 12. It took us about twenty minutes to walk to church. There was no other transportation available. We got dressed early in the morning and always went to church with our widowed mother. After Sunday School, we walked home and went back later for sacrament meeting. Our neighbors knew that we went to church. It was normal to go to church on Sundays for all of us—Catholics, Protestants, Mormons.⁹

Erna Probst recalled that her parents, Johann and Thekla Probst, were not at all enthusiastic about the Nazi regime under which they lived. She had no interest in the League of German Girls, and her parents supported her in avoiding involvement with the group. The Probsts were concerned that their three sons would become victims of the war. Sister Probst was even bold enough to make negative statements

about Hitler in public, but her husband constantly reminded her of the dangers of such talk.

As soon as Thekla Probst heard that war had been declared, she sent her daughter Erna to the store to buy anything she could find. According to Erna:

She explained that we couldn't know how long the situation would last so we needed to prepare. I then went and got sugar and flour and whatever I thought we would need. It was interesting for me because I didn't understand at all what it meant to be in a war, or why my brothers had to leave to serve in the war and why I, in the end, had to leave also.

Just after the Polish campaign ended victoriously on September 21, 1939, Gustav Habermann decided to join the army. He recalled:

Before I volunteered for the service, I thought about how I didn't like hearing that whatever Adolf Hitler said, everybody had to obey (*Führer*

befiehlt, wir folgen!). I knew that I would be drafted when I turned twenty-one and I wanted to choose for myself where I was assigned. My goal was to serve in the paratroopers, but I ended up in the air force. I received my basic training in a period of three months and then worked as a technician for airplanes. The basic training was in Flensburg.



Fig. 5. Branch president Anton Schindler lost his dear wife in 1940. In the final war years, resources for such formal death announcements were no longer available. (M. Behrens)

The family of Josef and Philomena Hörner had gone through severe trials even before the war started. A veteran of the Great War, Brother Hörner was a political malcontent and had gained many enemies in high places by the time Hitler came to power. During the Nazi era, the police were constantly on his trail, hoping to find a crime for which

he could be tried and imprisoned. To add to his woes, he had an extramarital affair and was excommunicated from the Church.¹⁰ During the 1930s, his family was not seen in church very often, but by the time the war began, Josef was attending meetings again. His son, Georg (born 1926), recalled the pressure his father's activities put on the family, especially Georg's mother:

When the police came to get him, he would hide in the bushes or in the forest. Then my mother would send my older sister to him with some food. He often came home during the night and we heard our parents talking. But at around 2 a.m., the police would come in and my father had to hide. They would have killed him before our very eyes if they could have. When the police asked us during the night where our father was, we didn't say anything. . . . Often, my father would climb out the window when the police came in, and they would look for him but couldn't find anything. When they were gone, my mother would open the window or knock, and my father was able to come back in again. . . . For us children it was a horrible time seeing our father like that.¹¹

In the fall of 1940, Josef Hörner "was tired and in such a bad condition that he no longer cared what happened," according to Georg. He was caught in his home and thrown down the stairs while neighbors watched. Not long thereafter, he was sent to the Mauthausen Concentration Camp near Linz, Austria. Georg's account of his father's demise continued:

It didn't take long before a letter came saying that my father had died of pneumonia. They also said that if we wanted his ashes, they would send us the urn. We did, but we knew even then that the ashes could have been from many different people. We buried the urn by the grave of my brother Joseph, who had died while a member of the Reichsarbeitsdienst before the war.

The German government believed it necessary to thoroughly indoctrinate every boy and girl, including Rudolf Strebel (born 1931). He had this recollection of the program:



Fig. 6. This Munich Branch photograph was taken at the rear of the main meeting hall. (E. Probst Höhner)

When I was ten years old, our class was drafted into the Jungvolk. We got the uniform and participated in the activities. We saw it as part of normal schooling but we didn't necessarily like it. We had to run a lot. For me, it wasn't much fun. We marched in the parades but never did anything like camping. They did teach us about Hitler and the National Socialist ideals, but that happened in a non-compulsory manner. We made the commitment right at the beginning that we would never miss a church meeting because of a Jungvolk activity. Sunday was my church day. All other days, I would be available. I never got into trouble because of it.¹²

The meeting rooms at Kapuzinerstrasse 18 were lost relatively early in the war. An air raid in 1941 totally destroyed the building, and the Saints were compelled to seek other meeting venues.¹³ Elisabeth Grill recalled meeting for a while on Hebelstrasse and also on Reisingerstrasse. In each location, only one room was available. According to Berta Wolperdinger, "We would find out each Sunday where the meetings would be held the next week."

Elisabeth Grill was an employee of an insurance company that had offices at Goetheplatz in Munich.

As the only Latter-day Saint in that office, she was often asked about her faith. The other employees were Catholic and complained about the church tax they paid.¹⁴ They wondered how she could afford to pay tithing on her meager salary. As she recalled:

They tried to get me to drink coffee and would say that just one drink would not make any difference. But I told them that one drink would also not benefit me at all. Then they quit trying. When we celebrated something like Christmas or birthdays, they were very considerate and would offer me a glass of juice instead of champagne or wine.

Erna Probst recalled what her family knew about the situation of the Jews in Hitler's Germany:

My father worked at the local railroad station so we always lived close to it. The trains that took people to the concentration camp in Dachau always passed our house. The prisoners had to work in Munich and wore striped suits and hats. My mother would often say that she had to go shopping and would cut some bread and take it with her. She passed the trains and would give the bread to the prisoners. My father was so scared that she would get caught.



Fig. 7. The rostrum at the end of the main meeting room was used on many occasions for theatrical performances. (E. Probst Höhner)

Alfred Gerer (born 1934) was the youngest child of the family of Josef and Barbara Gerer; he watched as his older brothers left for military service. He recalled how his widowed father learned of the death of his son Lorenz at Stalingrad, Russia, in December 1942, when the German Sixth Army was encircled and destroyed:

A man came to our home with a telegram. My father knew that a telegram could only mean one thing. And that's what it was. It said that my brother Lorenz died in Stalingrad and that his body would remain there. It also told us that they could not send anything back except his medals. The message hit my father very hard. We held a funeral service in the branch with his picture displayed.¹⁵

As the war dragged on, the building in which Elisabeth Grill's insurance office was housed was damaged and working conditions became challenging: "We also didn't have stairs anymore, but we used a simple ladder to get to the second floor. To

heat the rooms, we used a small oven. The broken windows were covered with simple cloths. It was difficult and not very pleasant to work under those circumstances."

Air raids experienced at home were not pleasant either. Elisabeth Grill explained that the public shelter was too far away from the family's apartment and would likely have been full by the time they arrived, so the residents of her building simply went downstairs into their basement. The building suffered damage to windows and doors, but the damage was minor compared to the house across the street, which was totally demolished. "If our building had suffered a direct hit, we wouldn't have survived," she concluded.

Berta Wolperdinger also experienced most air raids in the basement of her home. Her father had built a small house in the suburb of Taufkirchen, six miles south of Munich. Just a few yards from the local railroad station, the house was in danger of being bombed every time the trains were attacked.

"I remember that when our windows burst, we had glass all over our beds," Berta explained.

Political speeches over the radio were daily fare in Germany during the war. Georg Hörner recalled how he watched police officers clear the sidewalks just before a broadcast, so that nobody had an excuse for missing a speech: "Whenever Hitler spoke, we got time off of work and we were required to listen to the radio." Before his arrest, Georg's father had listened to such broadcasts; he had even told Georg that Hitler was not such a bad man but that there were "lots of little Hitlers" around who were bad.

Alfred Gerer of the Munich Branch was certainly not the only boy who did not fully understand why wars are fought, as he recollected: "When the war started, I didn't understand much of it. But for a boy my age, it also had an adventurous aspect." His story continued:

My father was responsible for all the people in our house during an air raid. He had to make sure that all of us were in the basement or a shelter. He didn't manage to do that with me. I went back outside all the time to watch the American planes drop their "Christmas trees" [illumination flares used to mark bombing targets]. Very close to our home was a factory that produced all kinds of tires [Metzler Gummiwerke]. I knew that the Americans wanted to get that factory. For me, it looked like the finest fireworks. When my father found me, he grabbed me by the ear and dragged me downstairs again.

Alfred was caught between religious loyalties when his widowed father married a Catholic woman. She had no children of her own and did not wish to go to Mass by herself, so she added a few cents to Alfred's allowance to persuade him to go along with her. He wanted the money, and she enjoyed showing off a boy who appeared to be her son.

The family of Anton and Ursula Roggermeier lived in the eastern Munich suburb of Berg am Laim. The area was quite rural in those days and their son, Herbert (born 1936), enjoyed the fact that his mother's parents owned a dairy just a short distance from his home. He went there on his way

home from school each day to spend time with his grandparents and a variety of animals. "I came home late sometimes, but my mother always knew where I was," he recalled.¹⁶ Herbert saw very little of his father, who was drafted in 1939. As an artist and interior decorator, Anton Roggermeier was not well suited for combat. Perhaps the Wehrmacht recruiters recognized this, because he was assigned to serve as a fireman at airfields. His son recalled that Anton was stationed in Munich, Vienna, Romania, and France. Fortunately, he was never wounded or otherwise damaged by the experience of military service.



Fig. 8. The Thaller home in the Munich suburb of Solln in about 1940. (W. Thaller)

District president Johann Thaller purchased a home for his family in the southern Munich suburb of Solln. His son Edwin (born 1938) described the setting:

My father bought a house just outside of Munich in a wealthy area in 1939. (It wasn't a new house.) He hired a maid. The house was large enough to

have all the members of his family live in it. We also had a double-car garage with a sliding door. We were able to keep our own chickens on a one-half-acre piece of land adjacent to the house. The house was a single family home with four bedrooms and one and one-half bathrooms. We had a living room, a kitchen, a family room, and an office. We had very comfortable living standards as far as everything goes—we had a refrigerator, a telephone, and an electric stove.¹⁷

Testimonies of eyewitnesses allow the assumption that Elder Thaller was pleased to share his resources and talents with Church members and nonmembers alike. In 1942, he moved his family to the Austrian town of Haag am Hausruck. The LDS branch president there, Franz Rosner, found them a place to stay in the building in which the branch held its meetings. Life in Munich had become very uncertain, and thousands of people were leaving the city. The Thallers moved back into their home in Solln in the last year of the war.

By the middle of 1943, Georg Hörner had left home for northern France. “After that, I didn’t have any contact with the Church until after the war.” As a Hitler Youth member, he had been trained to use a rifle, but he was not required to use weapons during the war. He spent his first months of service in France, and things were quiet there, but such peaceful conditions would not last long.

According to Rudolf Strebel’s recollection:

We had constant air raids from 1943 to 1945. The Siemens electrical factory was located just about two blocks away from us, which meant that we lived in a targeted area. When an air raid happened, we went downstairs into the basement. It was fortified with the ceiling having extra supports. We also had break-out sections in the walls just in case we needed to climb through into the building next to ours. I remember that a bomb hit the hill in front of our apartment house once and part of the roof came off. But nothing happened on our side of the building, which was on the opposite side. During that attack, we had all of our windows open and nothing happened to them. But the people who had theirs closed came home to broken windows.



Fig. 9. Max Grill of the Munich Branch was one of the hundreds of German Latter-day Saint men who were killed before they could become husbands and fathers. (E. Grill)

Due to the increased danger of living in Munich, Rudolf Strebel was evacuated with his entire school class of boys to the Alpine town of Bad Reichenhall. As part of the Kinderlandverschickung program, he stayed there for eighteen months, with infrequent visits from his mother. Rudolf had the following to say about his time away from home:

Every three to four months, I was able to go home. I was very homesick during that time—I was still so young! It took us about two hours to reach home when we used the train. [In Bad Reichenhall] we could often see the [American] bombers flying towards Munich. We also heard some pounding in the far, far distance. [Munich] was about 100 miles away. There weren’t any other larger targets around us, so we knew they wanted to attack Munich.

On a few Sundays, Rudolf took the train to Salzburg, just seven miles distant. "I wasn't totally isolated from the Church. I couldn't go that often, but if I had the chance, I would. That was maybe once a month or so. The members were so kind and took me in for dinner. [But] they didn't come to Bad Reichenhall to visit me."

Gustav Habermann's military service took him to stations all over Europe. After being trained in engineering in Bernburg, Germany, he learned to fly in Danzig, Germany, but never flew in combat. While in Danzig, he met the girl he eventually married. (She was a Lutheran, which did not please Gustav's mother back in Munich.)¹⁸ Although there was a large and active branch of the Church in Danzig at the time, Gustav did not attend meetings there. He explained the situation in these words:

I didn't think about the Church at all during that time. I was not yet a priesthood holder and did not carry scriptures with me. While being isolated from the Church during my military service, I didn't have a testimony of the Church yet. I didn't pray and even doubted that there was a God. I drank alcohol as a soldier, and I also started smoking but stopped when I got home after the war.

Unfortunately, in Danzig, Gustav made the mistake of refusing to get out of bed one day. "I told the officer I didn't want to get up, so they took me to a court-martial, and I was given a punishment of six weeks at the front." After surviving that experience, he was trained in the Netherlands to drive a tank and from there was transferred to Italy and finally to the Eastern Front. By 1944, he was engaged to be married.

A young adult during the war years, Berta Wolperdinger admitted that life offered very little entertainment in those days: "There was no opportunity for us to go out and have fun. It was dangerous to go out during the evening. If we went downtown with the streetcar, we didn't feel very safe. Everything was dark. All my friends lived in other villages, and we were all scattered." The daily chores also left little time for amusement:

"We went grocery shopping with the food ration cards. We also owned some property on which we could grow things, and that helped get us through the war. It was nothing much, but we always had fruit and vegetables. We still had our problems, but it wasn't as severe as if we had had to live on the ration cards."

By the time Herbert Roggermeier was old enough to attend school, the war in Europe was well under way. Regarding the possibilities of enjoying life as a boy at such times, Herbert had the following comments:

During the war, I played with my school friends a lot; we liked to play soccer. But we could never play very long because we had to go home very quickly when an alarm went off. Also, the school was next to a huge antiaircraft battery. If there was an alarm while we were in that area, we ran home immediately; we knew what we had to do. . . . There was no situation in the war when I thought that I would die. I was a child, and children don't take things like that too seriously. But I had to sit in a shelter and realized that bombs were being dropped on my city.

On June 8, 1944, Erna Probst was inducted into the national labor service and sent to the town of St. Stefan in southern Austria. Because her leaders thought her physically frail, they assigned her to work in a storage area rather than on the farm. She stayed there until the harvest was finished in October and then was transferred to Vienna. In Austria's capital city, Erna was assigned to be a night watchperson. During the day, her unit was to monitor enemy air traffic and report on the number and types of planes flying over. She was also fortunate to attend church with the Vienna Branch on one occasion. She recalled:

I liked my time there because we girls were a fun group, but I didn't like the fact that we had to stay there over Christmas. Near the end of the war, we heard that the Russians were coming closer. We were then trained in marching during the day and night and even got special boots for that. Then, we heard that we had to leave Vienna and we walked [120 miles west] to Linz.

In the last years of the war, life became increasingly difficult, as Elisabeth Grill described: “Sometimes the electricity wouldn’t work, or it would be turned off. It was the same with gas and water. We began to store water in case it was turned off. We were often very cold because there wasn’t enough wood or coal. We couldn’t even go out and get wood anywhere. I collected pine cones from the ground around trees.”

The lives of Munich residents were not just in peril when air-raid sirens were wailing. As Elisabeth recalled, one could be killed just walking through town. On one occasion, she was crossing a long railroad bridge when enemy dive-bombers flew over. Fortunately, they did not return to drop bombs on the trains rolling along below the bridge. “I was very scared, but I didn’t feel as if I was going to die,” she recalled. “I had many spiritual experiences during the war, and those kept me in the Church.”

After the Allied landing on the coast of Normandy in June 1944, Georg Hörner’s unit of the national labor service was moved slowly away from the advancing battlefield. As the enemy pushed eastward, Georg marched through northern France to the Netherlands and on to Cologne on the Rhine. From there he was transferred to central Germany near Halle and Leipzig. When the city of Dresden was destroyed in the terrible firebombing of February 13–14, 1945, Georg was just a dozen miles away, working at the Leuna factory. Because he was never officially drafted into the Wehrmacht, he was not required to confront the enemy invaders and was not classified as a prisoner of war at the conclusion of the conflict.

Trying to stem the tide of invasion from the east was essentially impossible for the Wehrmacht in the spring of 1945. Gustav Habermann was stationed near the Baltic Sea and—like thousands of his comrades in the German army—he wanted nothing other than to make his way west before the Soviets could capture him.

I decided to take a ship, but it was harder to get on the boat than I thought. I saw a soldier who was severely wounded, and I took him with me

on a small boat so that we could reach the larger ship. They allowed us to board and we sailed to Stettin. I got off of the ship in Stettin wearing a jacket with the word Flak [antiaircraft] on it. They had told us that men with that assignment were allowed to leave the ship first, and that’s what I wanted. When a ship is full of soldiers, nobody really knows where anybody belongs. From Stettin, I made my way to Berlin.

A few months before the end of the war, Dorothea Strebel went to Bad Reichenhall to pick up her son. The Hitler Youth leaders did not wish to let him go, but she exercised her rights as a parent and took him home to Munich. Rudolf recalled that after his return home, the branch held meetings in the German Museum. “On our way to church after air raids, we saw many areas destroyed. But we took our bicycles anyway and went to the meetings.”

Returning from Austria to Solln, the Thaller family had to deal with the increasing frequency of air raids in their suburb. An antiaircraft battery had been set up just a few hundred yards from their house and the guns relentlessly fired at enemy aircraft. On one occasion, an airplane was shot down and landed not far from the house. According to young Werner, the plane’s motor was detached and struck the ground next to the house; the impact cracked or broke every window. “It was so close that I could touch the house with one hand and touch the motor with the other hand,” he recalled.¹⁹

Werner’s brother, Edwin, had similar memories:

One night after an air raid, we picked fifty [incendiary] bombs out of our yard and our house.²⁰ One went through our tile roof into my mother’s bedroom and closet. It started burning there [but we extinguished it]. They were similar to phosphorus bombs—you couldn’t put them out with water but had to use your hands or blankets. One also hit our car, and it burned out. Luckily, our second car was still intact.

The Thallers were typical Germans in that they were always on the lookout for neighbors who needed help during air raids. Werner described the conditions in these words:

There's no way you could call a fire department or anything because it just wasn't available. Once we saw flames coming out of our neighbor's roof, so we went over to alert them and found them huddled down in their basement. But because we were alert, awake enough to see, we were able to save them and their house and get the fire put out. The house on the other side of them was a small wooden house and it got hit, but it burned before we could do anything to stop it.

Erna Probst arrived home from Vienna in early March 1945. She already knew that their apartment building had been damaged extensively in an air raid, but her parents had managed to find rooms to live in next door. She remained in hiding for the next few weeks, because she was officially required to report for duty again but had no desire to do so. Fortunately, her neighbors did not report her disobedience, and her father burned her Arbeitsdienst uniform.



Fig. 10. The family of Johann Probst when the war began. (E. Probst Hörner)

"Our home was destroyed in the last attack on Munich," recalled Alfred Gerer. The event was almost tragic for his family, as he explained it:

I was sitting in the basement next to my father and his wife. First, we heard the sounds, but then it was like everything moved in slow motion. Some cracks appeared in the walls, and then everything fell apart. Everybody was running towards the hole in the wall [to the adjacent building], which was too small for everybody at once. All the people made it through the opening except for

my father's wife. She was a bit larger than everybody else, and she was stuck in the ruins of our basement. We all got shovels and got her out of there. We also poured water over her, which was in buckets everywhere [to prevent burns]. When she regained consciousness, her first words were: "The meatloaf is still in the oven." My father told her that she did not have to worry about that anymore. She was not seriously hurt.

When the fires died out, Alfred returned to the ruins to search for a personal treasure: "I was the only boy in the neighborhood who had a film projector, and I was looking desperately in the ruins. It was very dear to me. I never found it. We had lost everything in the ruins."

On March 20, 1945, the American army entered Munich under peaceful conditions. The surviving Saints wondered what kind of treatment they would experience at the hands of the conquerors. According to Berta Wolperdinger:

It was not always a nice situation. They occupied whatever rooms they wanted. We could not sleep very well anymore because it was such an uncomfortable situation. The first night they were there, they came into our house. We were all so tired, and we didn't think that they would take things away from us. But they did. I guess other soldiers did the same. . . . I always carried my watch with me because it was a keepsake. That night, I put it on the nightstand and they stole it. But they kept everything else in order and didn't destroy anything. They also didn't molest us.

"The Americans came down our street and stopped to have lunch," recalled Rudolf Strebel. "Then they moved on. There wasn't any fighting; the German troops had already left. . . . We hung out white sheets, but in reality it wasn't even necessary. Two or three days later, they looked through our homes for weapons or soldiers, but that was all."

The Gerer family moved to the suburb of Allach in northwestern Munich after they lost their home. The Dachau concentration camp was just a few miles to the north, and conditions in the area became very insecure when inmates of that camp were released at the end of the war. According to Alfred, "They

came into our house and took our jewelry. I was scared of the prisoners since they had a feeling of revenge inside, but I was not scared of the American soldiers.” For the duration of the war and for some time thereafter, the family took the train to downtown Munich on the way to church. Josef Gerer was a railroad employee, so they rode for free. Church meetings were still being held every Sunday.



Fig. 11. Herbert Roggermeier of the Munich Branch was baptized in 1944 in this idyllic stream in Taufkirchen, a suburb six miles south of the downtown.²¹ (R. Minert, 2008)

Herbert Roggermeier remembered the day the Americans entered the suburb of Berg am Laim:

We children thought it was cool that they came in Jeeps. We ran towards them. They gave us Hershey’s chocolate and bubble gum. There were both black and white American soldiers. I didn’t know . . . even how to eat a banana. I would have eaten it with the skin.

Next to Herbert’s grandparents’ home was a prison, and his grandmother often threw bread or other food over the fence to the prisoners. After the war was over, the former prisoners found some guns and, according to Herbert, “stood in front of the dairy and made sure that nobody came to do any harm to it. The prisoners were from Eastern Europe—Ukraine and other countries.”

The war was over, but new challenges and adventures presented themselves. Young Werner Thaller recalled one that is common in many cultures:

There was an instance when one of us kids picked up a pack of cigarettes; we saw [American] soldiers driving or walking by and smoking, so we thought that’s the thing to do. We got us a match and sat down out behind our house. As a group of neighborhood kids, we passed the cigarettes around and lit them up. And of course, Mom found out and she got upset and took them away. She told Dad, and he took us into a room. Back in those days, the punishment was always a belt or a wooden spoon or something. So before Dad even began to spank us, we started crying. So mom came in and said something to Dad. I don’t know what she said, what she whispered in his ear, but Dad all of a sudden put the wooden stick down and he knelt down with us and we had a word of prayer.

The Probst family had previously discussed possible outcomes of the war. Erna’s father, Johann, had indicated that conditions in Germany would be worse if Hitler were victorious and that he wanted to take his family to Ukraine if that happened. According to Erna, “We were not scared of the Americans and they didn’t do anything at all to us.” All three of Erna’s brothers had been drafted, and her parents were delighted when they came home. Ernst and Ludwig returned soon after the war’s end, but Sebastian did not come home until 1947. Suffering from a serious lung ailment, he needed surgery and a long hospitalization period before he could recover.

By May 1945, Gustav Habermann was serving with a tank unit in Czechoslovakia. When the men heard that Hitler was dead and the war over, they were told to head for home any way they could. Gustav’s crew loaded a tank with food and planned to drive it to Germany but soon decided it was better to split up. “On my way [to Berlin], none of the Russians bothered me. All they took away from me was a ring and my watch. They left me my engagement ring. I saw a jacket on a scarecrow and took it so that I would look different. I tried to make them think I was an Italian. I was on my way to Berlin because I had heard that if I went to Munich the Americans would make me a prisoner of war.” Arriving in Berlin on May 20, he located

his fiancée, and they were married in the Soviet occupation zone in June.

At the end of the war, the branch members still alive and still in town gathered for meetings in rooms of the Deutsches Museum on the Museum Island in the Isar River in downtown Munich. Few members of the Munich Branch were still in the city by then. As Berta Wolperdinger explained, “When the war began, our branch was very close and we saw each other very often. But as the war continued, we felt more and more torn apart.” By the spring of 1945, many families were still living as evacuees in rural communities, and more than sixty of the members had been killed or had died of other causes.



Fig. 12. The building in which the Munich Branch met during the first years of the war stood adjacent to the Hinterhaus seen at the left in this picture. No structure has been built at that location since the war. (R. Minert, 2008)

In May 1945, Rudolf Strebel had never known any government but the Hitler regime. However, he understood that some aspects of life in Nazi Germany had not been good:

We were glad when the system broke down. We were free again. There had always been a certain pressure on us—what we were allowed to say or do. I knew of one family where the woman was lying on the floor, crying her heart out, because what she had believed in wasn't there anymore. She was really a fanatic national socialist.

The once beautiful city of Munich lay in ruins. At least six thousand people had been killed in seventy-three air raids, and fifteen thousand more had been injured. Twenty percent of the city was totally destroyed, including more than seventy-six thousand apartments.²² In addition to the sufferings of the populace, thousands of refugees from eastern Germany had come to Munich and were competing for housing and food.



Fig. 13. In the last days of the war, the Munich Branch was meeting in a lecture hall of the Deutsches Museum in Munich. (R. Minert, 1973)

The Munich Branch had been scattered to the four winds, and the losses of property and life among the members were among the worst in the West German Mission. Nevertheless, eyewitnesses insist that meetings were held somehow at whatever locations became available and that the spirit of the gospel did not diminish through those challenging and often sorrow-filled years.

Erna Probst summed up her church experiences during the war in these words:

We had a wonderful branch before, during, and after the war. I always loved going to church, and I liked the talks and the music. We had a

wonderful choir, also. When somebody died in the war, the funeral services were extraordinary. There was a large picture of that person on a table on the podium surrounded by flowers. And then we held a sacrament meeting in that person's behalf. I know we did that for Ludwig Lang, Edwin Thaller, and Otto Scharmbeck.

IN MEMORIAM

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

Richard Amerseder b. München, München, Bayern, 4 Aug 1927; son of Karl Amerseder and Amalie Hubauer; bp. 28 Sep 1940; conf. 28 Sep 1940; ord. deacon 6 Jun 1943; k. in battle Romania or d. dysentery in a field hospital Focsani, Romania, 13 Aug 1945; bur. Focsani, Romania (FHL microfilm 68801, no. 305; CHL microfilm 2458, form 42 FP, pt. 37, all-mission list, 1943–46, 186–87; CHL 2445, no. 10; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 943; www.volksbund.de; IGI)

Georg Bader b. Altfreimann(?), München, Bayern, 30 Jan 1900; son of Georg Bader and Anna Walter; bp. 25 Jan 1930; conf. 25 Jan 1930; ord. deacon 14 Dec 1930; ord. teacher 24 Jan 1932; ord. priest 26 May 1935; ord. elder 10 May 1937; m. 2 May 1931, Magdalene Rietzl; d. stroke 7 Jun 1943 (FHL microfilm 68801, no. 13; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 634; IGI)

Alma Peter Bartl b. München, München, Bayern, 19 Feb 1912; son of Andreas Bartl and Walburga Adler; bp. 28 Feb 1920; conf. 28 Feb 1920; ord. deacon 2 Oct 1932; ord. teacher 12 Nov 1933; m. 3 Jun 1933, Magdalena Pitrak; missing as of 20 Aug 1946 (CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 16)

Elisabeth Bausch b. Eningen, Schwarzwaldkreis, Württemberg, 17 Aug 1866; son of Johann Bausch and Regina Eitel; bp. 5 Jul 1924; conf. 5 Jul 1924; m. 21 Feb 1916, Josef Krempf; missing as of 21 Aug 1946 (CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 154; FHL microfilm 271381, 1935 census; IGI)

Theresia Bitter b. Donauwörth, Schwaben, Bayern, 22 Jul 1893; dau. of Hans Bitter and Anna Ziegler; bp. 15 Jun 1926; conf. 20 Jun 1926; m. — Egensberger; missing as of 20 Aug 1946 (CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 50; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 5; FHL microfilm 25760, 1925 and 1930 censuses)

Babette Bocher or Bocher b. München, München, Bayern, 12 Jun 1879; dau. of Christian Bocher or Bocher and Maria Satzinger; bp. 5 Apr 1936; conf. 5 Apr 1936; m. — Drezer or Dreher; d. heart condition 13 Jun 1941 (FHL microfilm 68801, no. 245; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 49; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 734; IGI)

Auguste Anna Bösmüller b. München, München, Bayern, 20 Oct 1868; dau. of Rudolf Egidi Georg Bösmüller and Auguste Carolina Simbeck; bp. 10 Mar 1937; conf. 10 Mar 1937; m. 23 Nov 1893, E. Morald Ehe; 2m. 12 Aug 1895, Anton Bauer; missing as of 20 Aug 1946 (CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 19; IGI)

Anna Breitsameter b. München, München, Bayern, 19 Dec 1881; dau. of Franz Xaver Breitsameter and Anna Sturm; bp. 11 Feb 1903; conf. 11 Feb 1903; m. München 25 May 1920, Anton Pichler; 1 child; d. stroke München 3 or 9 May 1944 (FHL microfilm 68801, no. 120; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 335; IGI)

Agathe Brem b. Kirchdorf, Freising, Bayern, 23 Mar 1871; dau. of Aurel Brem and Anna Maria Meyer; bp. 29 May 1920; conf. 29 May 1920; m. Kirchdorf 27 Feb 1907, Otto Spichtinger; 3 children; d. stroke München, München, Bayern, 21 Jun 1940 (FHL microfilm 68801, no. 158 CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 389; IGI)

Heinz Horst Harry Engelhardt b. Königsberg, Ostpreußen, 23 Nov 1912; son of Ernst Paul Engelhardt and Elise Berta Klein; bp. 2 May 1925; conf. 2 May 1925; d. 27 Oct 1942 (FHL microfilm 68801, no. 284; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 896)

Willibald Fendl b. München, München, Bayern, 15 Oct 1899; son of Josef Fendl and Katharina Sandl; bp. 20 Jan 1909; conf. 20 Jan 1909; missing as of 20 Feb 1944 (FHL microfilm 68801, no. 55; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 158)

Lorenz Gerer b. München, München, Bayern, 2 Apr 1919; son of Josef Gerer and Barbara Rottler; bp. 2 Apr 1927; conf. 2 Apr 1927; ord. deacon 2 Oct 1932; ord. teacher 10 May 1936; ord. priest 30 May 1937; k. in battle Stalingrad, Russia, 12 Dec 1942 (FHL microfilm 68801, no. 48; CHL, CR 375 8 2445, no. 84; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 48; A. Gerer; IGI)

Theresia Greimel b. Reinting, Hohenpolding, Bayern, 29 Aug 1862; dau. of Josef Greimel and Therese Schreff; bp. 2 Jul 1927; conf. 2 Jul 1927; m. Taufkirchen, Oberbayern, Bayern, 5 May 1884, Lorenz Nonimacher; 1 child; m. 24 Mar 1900, Johann Burkhardt; d. old age München, München, Bayern, 4 Aug 1944 (FHL microfilm 68801, no. 30; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 74; IGI)

Max Grill b. München, München, Bayern, 11 Apr 1917; son of Josef Grill and Maria Sandl; bp. München 23 May 1925; conf. 23 May 1925; ord. deacon 26 May 1935; corporal; k. in battle Italy 15 or 20 Apr or 20 Jul 1945; bur. Futa-Pass, Italy (E. Grill; www.volksbund.de; FHL microfilm 68801, no. 53; CHL microfilm 2458, form 42 FP, pt. 37, 463–64; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 208; IGI)

Andreas Jakob Gröber b. München, München, Bayern, 4 Jul 1904; son of Andreas Gröber and Magdalena Hagn; bp. 16 Jun 1923; conf. 16 Jun 1923; missing (FHL microfilm 68801, no. 96)

Gottfried Hartmaier b. Steinen, Lörrach, Baden, 29 Jan 1911; son of Gottfried Hartmaier and Maria Schneider; bp. 13 Jun 1926; conf. 13 Jun 1926; missing as of 20 Mar 1944 (CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 855; FHL microfilm 162777)

Maximilian Hierboeck b. Weihmörting, Weihmörting, Bayern, 25 Sep 1864; son of Georg Hierboeck and Elisabeth Unterbuchberger; bp. 20 Feb 1909; conf. 20 Feb 1909; ord. deacon 14 Nov 1915; ord. teacher 3 Nov 1916; ord. priest 4 Feb 1917; ord. elder 1 Dec 1920; m. München, München, Bayern, 11 Apr 1891, Anna Kislinger; 7 children; k. air raid München 13 Jul 1944; bur. München (FHL microfilm 68801, no. 68; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 240; www.volksbund.de; IGI)

Josef Hörner b. München, München, Bayern, 27 Apr 1898; son of Georg Hörner and Anna Angermaier; bp. 17 Oct 1956; m. München 17 or 27 Aug 1919, Philomena Ficklscherer; 6 children; d. in concentration camp Hartheim, Linz, Oberösterreich, Austria, 9 Nov 1940 (Hörner; IGI)

Joseph Hörner b. München, München, Bayern, 3 Apr 1918; son of Josef Hörner and Philomena Ficklscherer; bp. 12 May 1928; d. asphyxiation München 16 or 21 Jun 1939; state funeral (G. Hörner; *Der Stern* no. 24, Christmas 1939, 387)

Franz Xaver Mathias Huber b. Pfaffenhofen, Ilm, Bayern, 19 Feb 1870; son of Josef Huber and Karolina Eufroonia Wunner; bp. 15 Jun 1926; conf. 20 Jun 1926; ord. deacon 27 Jan 1932; ord. teacher 3 Jul 1938; m. 16 Oct 1906 or 1916, Franziska Müller; d. lung disease 22 or 23 May 1944 (FHL microfilm 68801, no. 78; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 7; IGI)

Karolina Jordan b. Zwerchstraß, Schwaben, Bayern, 11 Sep 1873; dau. of Georg Jordan and Fanny Hammel; bp. 4 Jul 1914; conf. 4 Jul 1914; m. Georg Wiesent; missing as of 20 Aug 1946 (CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 354; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 500)

Friedrich Karl b. München, München, Bayern, 6 Jun 1915; son of Johann Karl and Therese Vollmer; bp. 30 Nov 1935; conf. 30 Nov 1935; missing as of 4 Apr 1945 (FHL microfilm 68801, no. 242; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 731)

Helene Gertrud Rosa Kirschning b. Braunschweig, Braunschweig, 1 Apr 1909; dau. of Friedrich Kirschning and Gertrud Moller; bp. 7 Sep 1918; conf. 7 Sep 1918; m. 9 Sep 1938, Heinrich Hartmann; missing as of 5 Apr 1945 (FHL microfilm 68801, no. 281; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 778)

Anna Kislinger b. Adlkofen, Landshut, Bayern, 13 Dec 1870; dau. of Anton Kislinger and Anna Maria Strohhöfer; bp. 20 Feb 1909; conf. 20 Feb 1909; m. München, München, Bayern, 11 Apr 1891, Maximilian

Hierboeck; 7 children; k. air raid München 13 Jul 1944 (FHL microfilm 68801, no. 67; IGI)

Elisabeth Kowald b. Köln, Rheinprovinz, 4 Jun 1904; dau. of Andreas Kowald and Emma Forstmann; bp. 5 Jul 1921; conf. 5 Jul 1921; m. 3 Dec 1928, Karl Zimmermann; missing as of 20 Feb 1940 (FHL microfilm 68801, no. 269; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 763)

Josef Krempel b. Karlshuld, Schwaben, Bayern, 9 Sep 1859; son of Michael Krempel and Kreszenz Rai; bp. 2 Aug 1924; conf. 2 Aug 1924; m. 21 Feb 1916, Elisabeth Bausch; missing as of 20 Aug 1946 (CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 155; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 2811; IGI)

Maria Lög b. München, München, Bayern, 22 Sep 1858; dau. of Georg and Kreszens Türk; bp. 19 Jun 1908; conf. 19 Jun 1908; m. — Riss; d. old age 19 Jun 1942 (FHL microfilm 68801, no. 147; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 359; IGI)

Georg Merkel b. München, München, Bayern, 18 Nov 1926; son of Adalbert Merkel and Margarete Weininger; bp. 16 Jun 1940; conf. 16 Jun 1940; private; d. mobile field hospital 681 1 Feb 1945; bur. Kaliningrad, Russia, (FHL microfilm 68801, no. 304; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 934; www.volksbund.de; IGI)

Oskar Meyer b. Schrobenhausen, Oberbayern, Bayern, 20 Oct 1917; son of Wilhelm Meyer and Josepha Huiss; bp. 5 Apr 1932; conf. 5 Apr 1932; k. in battle 12 Sep 1944; bur. Wesel, Wesel, Rheinland (FHL microfilm 68801, no. 110; CR 375 8 2445, no. 677; www.volksbund.de; FHL microfilm 245232 1935 census; IGI)

Philippine Meyer b. Schrobenhausen, Oberbayern, Bayern, 17 Apr 1916; dau. of Wilhelm Meyer and Josepha Huiss; bp. 5 Apr 1932; conf. 5 Apr 1932; missing as of 20 Aug 1946 (CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 200; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 676; FHL microfilm 245232; 1935 census)

Rudolf Gottlieb Netting b. München, München, Bayern, 26 Apr 1884; son of Karl Gottlieb Netting and Agathe Kober; bp. 7 Jun 1924; conf. 7 Jun 1924; ord. deacon 18 Mar 1925; ord. teacher 15 May 1927; ord. priest 11 Nov 1930; ord. elder 12 May 1935; m. 7 Oct 1918, Therese Knoll (div.); 2 children; 2m. 2 Jan 1929, Elisabeth Maria Liebler or Liebl (div.); 3m. 3 Apr 1937, Veronika Ligmanovski or Lygenanovek or Lygenanowek; d. stomach cancer München 8 Mar 1940 (FHL microfilm 68801, no. 115; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 60; FHL microfilm 245241, 1925 and 1935 censuses; IGI)

Anna Babette Oberseither b. Winterhausen, Unterfranken, Bayern, 24 Jan 1873; dau. of Emanuel Decker and Sofie Dorothea Oberseither; bp. 30 Aug 1898; conf. 30 Aug 1898; m. München, München, Bayern 23 Feb 1897, Anton Schindler; 7 children; d. heart condition München 16 Dec 1940 (FHL microfilm 68801, no. 164; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 297; IGI, PRF)

Franz Ewald Walter Polier b. Liegnitz, Liegnitz, Schlesien, 27 Jul 1912; son of Franz Albert Joseph Polier and Anna Ernestine Pauline Friedrich; bp. 14 Sep 1929; conf. 14 Sep 1929; ord. deacon 6 Sep 1931; lieutenant; k. in battle Gusaki, Brysgalowo, Russia, 20 Aug 1942 (FHL microfilm 68801, no. 243; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 230; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 729; www.volksbund.de; IGI)

Sigmund Popp b. München, Bayern, 20 Apr 1905; son of Eduard Popp and Katharina Weinsinger; bp. 11 Jul 1914; conf. 11 Jul 1914; missing as of 20 Jul 1944 (FHL microfilm 68801, no. 125; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 229; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 338)

Antonie Katharina Redle b. München, München, Bayern, 10 Oct 1925; dau. of Katharina Hütterer; bp. 5 Jun 1938; conf. 5 Jun 1938; missing as of 20 Aug 1946 (CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 771)

Maximilian Redle b. Freising, Freising, Bayern, 26 Sep 1897; son of Maximilian Redle and Maria Hollmeder; bp. 5 Jun 1938; conf. 5 Jun 1938; m 14 Aug 1931, Maria Hollmeder or Hutterer; k. in battle Russia 18 Oct 1944 (FHL microfilm 68801, no. 271, no. 273; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 770; IGI)

Franziska Ring b. Kelheim, Niederbayern, Bayern, 14 Feb 1866; dau. of Johann Ring and Maria Seebauer; bp. 13 Jun 1911; conf. 13 Jun 1911; m. 6 May 1893, Anton Amann; d. stroke 29 Nov 1943 (FHL microfilm 68801, no. 6; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 83; IGI)

Johann Sandl b. München, München, Bayern, 3 Aug 1893; son of Therese Sandl; bp. 20 Jan 1909; conf. 20 Jan 1909; ord. teacher 6 Sep 1914; missing as of 20 Feb 1944 (CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 385; FHL microfilm 245257, 1935 census)

Katharina Sandl b. Sünching, Bayern, 18 Nov 1870; dau. of Josef Sandl and Anna Behner; bp. München, München, Bayern, 20 Jan 1909; conf. 20 Jan 1909; m. Josef Fendl; d. stroke 1 Apr or Jul 1943 (FHL microfilm 68801, no. 32; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 54; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 159)

Dina Christina Schäfer b. Frankfurt/Main, Hessen-Nassau, 13 Feb 1915; dau. of Friedrich Christian Schäfer and Christina Bausch; bp. 28 Feb 1925; conf. 28 Feb 1925; m. 7 Nov 1938, Wilhelm Allmann; missing as of 20 Aug 1946 (CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 305; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 762)

Otto Schamböck b. München, München, Bayern, 16 Apr 1922; son of Otto Schamböck and Rosa Lang; bp. 25 Sep 1930; conf. 25 Sep 1930; ord. deacon 2 Jul 1939; k. in battle Eastern Front 17 Sep 1943 (Hörner; FHL microfilm 68801, no. 161; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 652; IGI)

Anna Schenkel b. Neuschwettingen, Untermarfeld, Bayern, 3 Jan 1883; dau. of Johann Schenkel and Anna Babette Koch; bp. 7 Jun 1924; conf. 7 Jun 1924; m. Triefing, Oberbayern, Bayern, 11 Oct 1904, Friedrich

Burkhard; 7 children; 2m. Ingolstadt, Oberbayern, Bayern, 29 May 1916, Benedikt Bachmann; 2 children; 3m. 22 Apr 1940, Josef Mathias Ertl; d. heart attack München, München, Bayern, 8 Sep 1941 (FHL microfilm 68801, no. 9; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 142; FHL microfilm 25715, 1930 census; IGI)

Rosine Schenkel b. Neuschwettingen, Neuburg/Donau, Schwaben, Bayern, 20 Jul 1875; dau. of Johann Schenkel and Anna Babette Koch; bp. 5 Jul 1941; conf. 6 Jul 1941; m. Neuschwettingen 3 or 5 Aug 1903, Nikolaus Selzer; d. lung disease Neuburg/Donau 22 Jan 1947 (CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 947; IGI)

Rudolf Ludwig Schulz b. Neusalz/Oder, Brandenburg, 18 Jan 1898; son of Rudolf Schulz and Anna Wolf; bp. 16 Jul 1925; conf. 16 Jul 1925; ord. elder 6 Dec 1931; m. Frankfurt/Main, Hessen-Nassau 15 Jul 1925, Christina Bauch or Bausch (div); 3 children; missing as of 20 Nov 1939 (FHL microfilm 68801, no. 260; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 311; IGI)

Franz Schuster b. München, München, Bayern, 26 Aug 1918; son of Jakob Schuster and Maria Anna Schalch; bp. 23 Jun 1928; conf. 23 Jun 1928; ord. deacon 2 Oct 1932; missing as of 5 April 1945 (FHL microfilm 68801, no. 315; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 526)

Sophie Seidl b. Langenfeld, Neustadt, Oberbayern, Bayern, 24 May 1886; dau. of Johann Georg Seidl and Salwina Hagner ; bp. 22 Jun 1929; conf. 22 Jun 1929; m. Karl Bindewald; d. old age 9 Oct 1939 (FHL microfilm 68801, no. 22; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 607; FHL microfilm 25723, 1930 census; IGI)

Anton Wilhelm Spaehn b. Reutin, Bayern, 10 Nov 1899; son of Xaver Spaehn and Karolina Demptle; bp. 15 Jun 1926; conf. 20 Jun 1926; missing as of 20 Aug 1946 (CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 275; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 6)

Elisabeth Maria Steinseder b. Hirten, Altötting, Oberbayern, Bayern, 19 Nov 1891; dau. of Georg Schukbeck and Maria Steinseder; bp. 22 Dec 1928; conf. 22 Dec 1928; m. 2 Jan 1929, Rudolf Netting; 2m. 18 May 1936, Jakob Schmid; missing as of 20 Aug 1946 (CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 317; IGI)

Erwin Julius Thaller b. Nürnberg, Mittelfranken, Bayern, 7 Jan 1915; son of Georg Thaller and Regina Böhm; bp. 26 Apr 1924; conf. 26 Apr 1924; ord. deacon 29 Nov 1931; ord. teacher 4 Nov 1934; m. 16 Dec 1939, Anna Reithmeier; constable; d. on the Feodosia-Kertsch branch of the Koy Asan railway 26 Feb 1942; bur. Sewastopol, Ukraine (W. Thaller; www.volksbund.de; FHL microfilm 68801, no. 178; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 331; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 451; FHL microfilm 245283, 1925 and 1935 censuses)

Eugen Theobald Thaller b. Nürnberg, Mittelfranken, Bayern, 12 or 13 Nov 1912; son of Georg Thaller and

Regina Böhm; bp. 26 Apr 1924; conf. 26 Apr 1924; ord. deacon 2 Oct 1932; m. 6 Feb 1939, Rosa Pestenhofer; k. in battle Isle of Grado, Italy 27 Jun 1944; bur. Costermano, Italy (W. Thaller; FHL microfilm 68801, no. 179; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 452; www.volksbund.de; FHL microfilm 245283, 1925 and 1935 censuses; IGI)

Werner Gerhard Vikari b. München, München, Bayern, 5 Feb 1945; son of Anton Vikari and Hildegard Plötz; d. 20 Apr 1945 (FHL microfilm 68801, no. 338; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 2; IGI)

Christian Voigt b. Zwickau, Zwickau, Sachsen, 18 Sep 1909; son of Kurt Alfred Voigt and Melanie Beleman; bp. 10 May 1929; missing (Membership Records LDS C 189)

Karolina Wiesent b. München, München, Bayern, 25 May 1911; dau. of Georg Wiesent and Karolina Jordan; bp. 29 Sep 1923; conf. 29 Sep 1923; missing as of 20 Feb 1944 (FHL microfilm 68801, no. 218; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 502)

Katharina Wiesinger b. München, Bayern, 28 Apr 1877; dau. of Jakob Wiesinger and Marie Barbara Steinbeiser; bp. 1 Apr 1913; conf. 1 Apr 1913; m. Josef Wiendl; missing as of 20 Aug 1946 (CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 501; FHL microfilm 245299 1925 and 1935 censuses)

Anton Wimmer b. Altenburg, Landshut, Niederbayern, Bayern, 12 June 1880; son of Peter Wimmer and Anna Nitzel; bp. 4 Oct 1924; conf. 5 Oct 1924; ord. deacon 29 Jan 1928; ord. teacher 18 Apr 1932; ord. priest 30 May 1937; m. München, München, Bayern, 27 Jul 1908, Katharina Kraus; 7 children; d. heart and circulation München 9 Feb 1941 (FHL microfilm 68801, no. 196; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 344; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 506; IGI)

NOTES

1. Munich city archive.
2. Helga Seeber, "Werden und Wirken der Mormonen in München" (unpublished history, 1977).
3. Elisabeth Grill, interview by the author in German, Munich, Germany, August 10, 2006; unless otherwise noted, summarized in English by Judith Sartowski.
4. Presiding Bishopric, "Financial, Statistical, and Historical Reports of Wards, Stakes, and Missions, 1884–1955," CR 4 12, 257.
5. 1 Thessalonians 5:21.
6. Berta Wolperdinger, interview by the author in German, Munich, Germany, August 22, 2008.
7. Erna Thekla Probst Lankes Hörner, interview by the author in German, Ramerberg, Germany, August 10, 2006.
8. West German Mission branch directory, 1939, CHL LR 10045 11.
9. Gustav Adolf Habermann, interview by the author in German, Munich, Germany, August 22, 2008.

10. After the war, Georg Hörner wrote to President David O. McKay to explain the circumstances of his father's excommunication. President McKay then restored the membership status of Josef Hörner.
11. Georg Hörner, interview by the author in German, Ramerberg, Germany, August 10, 2006.
12. Rudolf Strebel, interview by the author, Bountiful, UT, April 10, 2009.
13. Eyewitnesses disagree about the date. Several indicate that the building stood until 1944. No branch records exist to resolve the question.
14. The Church tax consisted of less than one percent of an employee's income that was automatically deducted by the government tax office from the employee's pay. The only way to avoid paying that very small tax was to officially withdraw from the Church. Both the Catholic and the Lutheran churches collected the tax in those days and still do.
15. Alfred Gerer, interview by the author in German, Tutzing, Germany, August 21, 2008.
16. Herbert Roggermeier, interview by the author in German, Taufkirchen, Germany, August 22, 2008.
17. Edwin Thaller, telephone interview with the author, February 10, 2009.
18. Gustav actually found the opportunity to take his fiancée to Munich to meet his mother. Sister Habermann was inactive at the time and was reportedly told by one branch member that if she did not attend church, her sons would not survive the war. Several of them were already in uniform.
19. Werner Thaller, telephone interview with the author, February 5, 2009.
20. Many eyewitnesses told of extinguishing incendiaries and recalled that a great many of that type of bomb did not ignite at all.
21. When the author visited Roggermeier in 2008 and asked about his baptism, he responded, "Come out on the balcony [of the eighth story apartment] and I'll show you where I was baptized." He then pointed to the tree by the creek about six hundred yards away.
22. Munich city archive.

SALZBURG BRANCH

The western outskirts of Salzburg form the border of Austria and Germany. This beautiful city on the Salzach River had not joined Austria until 1815 and had 77,172 inhabitants when German troops marched in on March 12, 1938.¹ The small branch of Latter-day Saints had existed in the city for only a few years at the time, and the branch president was traditionally a young missionary from

the United States. Clark Hillam of Brigham City, Utah, was one such branch president. He recalled that the members he met in January 1939 were “pretty solid.” However, “compared to Munich it was a small branch.”² When the American missionaries were evacuated from the continent in August 1939, Josef Duschl became the branch president.

Salzburg Branch ³	1939
Elders	2
Priests	3
Teachers	1
Deacons	1
Other Adult Males	11
Adult Females	27
Male Children	4
Female Children	2
<i>Total</i>	51

Like so many LDS branches in Germany and Austria, the branch in Salzburg was characterized by a large number of adult women, many of whom were the only members of the Church in their homes. Sunday School began at 10:00 a.m. and sacrament meeting at 8:00 p.m. MIA and Relief Society meetings were held on Wednesday evenings at 7:30 and 8:30 respectively, and the Primary association met on Tuesdays at 4:00 p.m.

The annexation of Austria by Germany had an immediate impact on the LDS missionary work: all five Austrian branches were transferred from the Swiss-Austrian Mission to the West German Mission. The records of the mission office in Frankfurt include the following report dated December 2, 1938:

President and Sister M. Douglas Wood and Private Secretary Richard E. J. Frandsen, visited the second meeting of the series of these gatherings which were held on this trip into the newly acquired branches in Austria, now belonging

to the West German Mission. In Salzburg, there were fifteen members, six friends and ten missionaries, present. Other visitors present were: district Presidents Ludwig Weiss from Nuremberg and Johann Thaller from Munich; Fred. W. Babbel, Nuremberg; Grant Baker, Augsburg; and John G. Teasdale, Munich. It was a thrill for these Saints to meet President and Sister Wood for the first time and to enjoy the fine spirit of the meeting which was held there.⁴

As the war approached in the late summer of 1939, the Salzburg Branch was holding its meetings in a small residential structure just a few yards from the Salzach in the northern part of the city; the address was Jahnstrasse 2. Rudolph Weissenburger (born 1913) joined the Church in 1934 and recalled that the branch moved into the building shortly after his baptism. “There was a small room and a large room that we used. Brother Nestlinger helped a great deal to [find] a meeting hall.”⁵ No other details of the rooms are available.



Fig. 1. The building at Jahnstrasse 2 in Salzburg where the branch held its meetings during the war. (R. Minert, 2008)

With so few priesthood holders among the members in Salzburg, it must have been difficult to watch the young men be drafted and leave the area. Rudolph Weissenburger donned the uniform of the Wehrmacht in 1940 and began an odyssey that took him all around Europe and as far as the Mediterranean Sea. From Salzburg, he went first to Innsbruck and Graz (two of Austria's largest cities), then to Nienburg in northern Germany, where he was trained as an engineer. He spent a few months in France, Poland, and Russia. "We marched almost the entire distance," he recalled. "In one day we marched 75 kilometers [47 miles]." By then it was 1941, and the German army had moved deep into the Soviet Union.⁶

Brother Weissenburger was one of the many German LDS soldiers who struggled with the problem of what to do if he was in a position to shoot at enemy soldiers. "When I was drafted, I fasted for a day and prayed that I would not be forced to shoot anyone during the war. This was my prayer." In Russia, he operated a machine gun, and on two consecutive days was close enough to Red Army soldiers to be in great danger. In each case, he did not fire, and the soldiers hastily retreated.⁷

Rudolph's time in Russia was relatively short because he fell victim to frostbite in February 1942. "My fingers were frozen and they turned black. . . . The flesh fell off. It didn't hit the bones. Had the frost hit the bones, there would have been a need for amputation. The same with the feet. Then I returned to Tapiano in East Prussia." After recuperating in various hospitals, he was sent back to Austria, where he volunteered to serve in Africa. "It's not too cold there,' I said to myself."⁸

Like his counterparts in other LDS branches all over Germany, the clerk of the Salzburg Sunday School kept regular records of the meetings. However, the great detail common in the records before the war declined during the war, and the entries featured only the numbers of attendees and the names of Sunday School officers. The attendance for 1941 and 1942 vacillated from ten to twenty-six

persons. Forty-three members and friends attended the Christmas program.⁹

Herbert Schreiter (born 1901) had been the president of the Chemnitz Center Branch before being drafted into the Wehrmacht. Everywhere he went as a soldier, he sought a connection with the Church. His first opportunity came when he was transferred to Salzburg in January 1943 to work as a gunsmith. He recalled:

Of course, I immediately went looking for the branch. The branch president was Brother Duschl and he was 82 years old. The other brethren had all been drafted and the branch consisted almost entirely of sisters. So I arrived and was [soon] called to be the Sunday School president. . . . I sat up front in my uniform, and I brought a few other soldiers along because they were bored.¹⁰

Herbert's arrival in Salzburg was most timely, for Josef Duschl was too weak to carry on, and Herbert found himself the only priesthood holder left in the Salzburg Branch. Brother Duschl's wife, Elisabeth, passed away about that time, and Herbert borrowed a suit in order to conduct her funeral. At the last minute, Munich District president Johann Thaller arrived and dedicated the grave.

Herbert enjoyed his time in the Salzburg Branch very much, where the Sunday meetings were often followed by group walks amid the local hills. He was disappointed when he had to leave in mid-1944, although the transfer took him back to his native Chemnitz.

The dedication of the remaining Latter-day Saints in Salzburg must have been exemplary, because despite the lack of priesthood holders, the attendance at Sunday School in 1943 and 1944 remained consistent. The numbers swung from thirteen to twenty-seven in 1943 and were as high as forty-six in 1944. Surnames frequently seen in the minutes are Leitner, Herbert, Schreiter, Mayr, Mühlbacher, Schauperl, Standl, Götzenberger, Duschl, Rauch, and Hingshammer.¹¹

Rudolph Weissenburger's next assignment in late 1942 took him from Austria to the island of Crete

in the Mediterranean. There was little to do both in Crete and in his next location, Greece. Back on Crete when the war ended, Rudolph and his comrades surrendered themselves to British forces on June 8, 1945. As prisoners of war, they were sent to a camp near Great Bitter Lake in Egypt. He was released there just in time to return to Salzburg by Christmas 1946.¹² The branch was still holding meetings, and several American soldiers had joined them by that time.

The Saints in Salzburg were fortunate that nearly all of them lived in homes and apartments that survived the war. The city was bombed fifteen times by the US Army Air Corps, and 47 percent of the structures were damaged or destroyed and 482 persons killed. At least 65 of the sons of this city died in military service. American soldiers entered Salzburg in April 1945, and the city surrendered without a fight.

IN MEMORIAM

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

Adolf Duschl b. Guigl, Salzburg, Austria, 17 Jun 1911; son of Josef Duschl and Elisabeth Stockinger; bp. 2 Nov 1921; ord. teacher; m. Cottbus, Brandenburg, 4 Apr 1938, Minna Berta Galow; d. Teodorowka, Russia, USSR, 17 Sep 1944 (FHL microfilm 25758, 1935 census; IGI; AF)

Maria Lindt Gaigg b. Ebensee, Oberösterreich, 11 January 1880; dau. of Johann Loidl and Anna Stueger or Anna Maria Vogl; bp. Bern Switzerland Temple 25 February 1959; conf. 25 February 1959; m. Ebensee 18 November 1900 or 1903, Sebastian Gaigg; d. Ebensee 11 January 1937 (NFS)

Johann Mayr b. Mitterbreitsach, Eberschwang, Oberösterreich, Austria, 11 Jun 1909; son of Johann Mayr and Maria Katzboeok; bp. 27 Jul 1923; conf. 27 Jul 1923; ord. deacon 4 Aug 1929; ord. teacher 15 Apr

1934; ord. priest 3 Feb 1935; m. 1 Oct 1934, Adele Przybyla; 4 children; corporal; k. in battle at Malowa Gora, Poland, 28 Jul 1944 (Dozekal-Vazulik; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 864; www.volksbund.de)

Josef Mühlbacher b. Molln, Oberösterreich, Austria, 23 Jul 1923; son of Michael Mühlbacher and Katharina Gurtner; bp. 13 May 1934; conf. 13 May 1934; ord. deacon 15 Mar 1936; d. wounds 10 Aug 1944; bur. Mont-de-Huisnes, France (Dozekal-Vazulik; CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 873; www.volksbund.de)

Elisabeth Stockinger b. Geboltskirchen, Oberösterreich, Austria, 21 Oct 1875; dau. of Sebastian Stockinger and Elisabeth Arminger; bp. 2 Nov 1921; conf. 2 Nov 1921; m. Guigl, Salzburg, 7 Oct 1909, Josef Duschl; 3 children; d. heart ailment Guigl, Salzburg, Austria, 24 Apr 1944 (CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 853; FHL microfilm 25758, 1935 census; IGI; AF)

Antonia Tibisch b. Molln, Oberösterreich, Austria, 9 Jan 1871; dau. of Vinzenz Tibisch and Antonia Thaler; bp. 18 Aug 1928; conf. 19 Aug 1928; d. stroke 2 Apr 1941 (CHL CR 375 8 2445, no. 889; FHL microfilm 245285, 1930 and 1935 censuses)

NOTES

1. Salzburg city archive.
2. Clark Hillam, interview by the author, Brigham City, Utah, August 20, 2006.
3. Presiding Bishopric, "Financial, Statistical, and Historical Reports of Wards, Stakes, and Missions, 1884–1955," 721, CHL CR 4 12.
4. West German Mission quarterly reports, 1938, no. 45, CHL LR 10045 2.
5. Rudolph Weissenburger, interview by Justus Ernst, April 30, 1986, Salt Lake City, 4, 14, CHL MS 9260; trans. the author.
6. Weissenburger, interview, 11.
7. Ibid., 13.
8. Ibid., 11.
9. Salzburg Branch, Sunday School minutes, CHL LR 7846 15.
10. Herbert Schreiter, interview by Matthew K. Heiss, Leipzig, Germany, October 11, 1991, CHL; trans. the author.
11. Salzburg Branch, Sunday School minutes.
12. Weissenburger, interview, 4–5.