

hood; this constitutes thirty-three percent of the branch population.

Magdeburg Branch <sup>1</sup>	1939
Elders	2
Priests	2
Teachers	0
Deacons	1
Other Adult Males	14
Adult Females	22
Male Children	0
Female Children	2
<i>Total</i>	43

According to East German Mission records, the members of the Magdeburg Branch held their meetings in rooms rented at Blumenthalstrasse 11, about a half mile southeast of the city's main railroad station. It is not known just how many rooms were used by the branch or what they looked like.

Anton Larisch was working in Halberstadt (thirty miles to the southwest) and serving as the group leader there (the membership was not sufficient for branch status). In his diary entry of June 15, 1942, he mentioned that the group had acquired the pump organ "of the Magdeburger Branch, which has completely ceased to be."<sup>2</sup> There is no explanation regarding how the Magdeburg Branch population of forty-three in 1939 had decreased to zero four years later.

As of this writing, no eyewitnesses from the Magdeburg Branch could be located, nor could any biographical or autobiographical writings by members of that branch be found.

#### IN MEMORIAM

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

**Minna Pauline Amalie** — b. Sangerhausen, Sachsen, Preußen 3 Jul 1868; bp. 15 Sep 1936; m. Erdmann Adolf Hermann Koebel; d. Magdeburg

or Aschersleben, Sachsen, Preußen 7 Jun 1940 (*Sonntagsstern*, no. 23, 7 Jul 1940, n.p.)

**Erdmann Adolf Hermann Koebel** b. Benstedt, Halle, Sachsen, Preußen 1 Apr 1868; bp. 19 Dec 1932; m. Minna Pauline Amalie —; d. Aschersleben, Sachsen, Preußen 18 Sep 1942 (IGI)

#### NOTES

1. Presiding Bishopric, "Financial, Statistical, and Historical Reports of Wards, Stakes, and Missions, 1884–1955," CR 4 12, 257.
2. Anton Larisch, diary, June 15, 1942, 30; private collection; trans. Ruth Larisch Hinkel.

## NAUMBURG BRANCH

Old, small, and historic, the city of Naumburg was the home to a very small branch of Latter-day Saints as World War II approached in 1939. With only twenty-seven members, the branch nevertheless had a place of its own at Grosse Marienstrasse 5–6. The rented rooms were located in the second Hinterhaus.

Naumburg Branch <sup>1</sup>	1939
Elders	0
Priests	0
Teachers	3
Deacons	1
Other Adult Males	3
Adult Females	17
Male Children	1
Female Children	2
<i>Total</i>	27

Gustav Mudrow was born in Kreuz in Pomerania. He was drafted and chose to serve in the German air force. Assigned to the central Luftwaffe headquarters on Wilhelmstrasse in Berlin, he became a member of the Schöneberg Branch. While in Berlin, he met and married Else Focker, a native of the capital city, in 1941.<sup>2</sup>

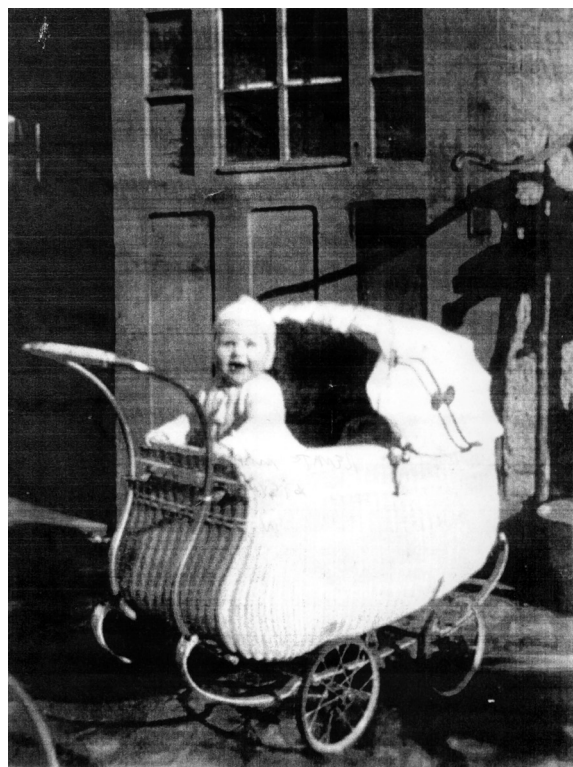
During the next few years, Gustav served in the Soviet Union, North Africa, and France—seeing more of the landscapes of the war than most men. By 1944, conditions in Berlin had become so insecure that he had his wife leave the city and move into the home of her grandparents in the town of Gebstedt in Thuringia (about twenty miles east of Erfurt). By doing so, she became a member of the branch in Naumburg, about twelve miles distant.

The war was for all practical purposes over in Thuringia in April 1945. Nevertheless, the locals were still cautious, wondering how the conflict would end in their vicinity. The American army was just a few miles from Gebstedt when an incident occurred that could easily have ended the life of an infant. Gustav Mudrow's daughter, Renate, was just eleven months old when Else put her in the stroller for a few moments in the sun.

The stroller stood in the small courtyard between the family home and Sister Mudrow's father's workshop. Else was working in the kitchen when she heard the sound of an airplane. Because most Germans had sufficient experience to associate specific sounds with specific aircraft, she knew that a fighter plane—an enemy aircraft—was approaching very low. There were no military targets in the small town, but enemy pilots were looking for ways to disrupt the lives of civilians.

Else Mudrow ran out the door to bring her daughter into the house at precisely the moment the fighter plane began to fire. Fifty-caliber bullets tore across the courtyard and struck the stroller, tearing it in half. Little Renate tumbled out onto the cobblestones—totally unscathed. More bullets buried themselves in the ground and pierced the wall of the grandfather's workshop.

A few days after this near miss, the American army arrived. Soldiers moved into the home of Else's grandparents and stayed there for two



*Fig. 1. Little Renate Mudrow in her stroller just days before it was torn in half by bullets from a fighter plane. (R. Mudrow Buttars)*

months. On July 1 they moved out and were replaced by Soviet occupation forces.

Before the year 1945 ended, Gustav Mudrow was released as a prisoner of war and joined his family in Gebstedt. He had nearly lost his leg to a frightful wound but convinced the surgeons that he could be healed—as he was. From Gebstedt, the Mudrows enjoyed making the trip to church, walking about two miles to the railroad station in Tromsdorf and riding the train about twenty miles to Naumburg.

As of this writing, no other eyewitnesses in the Naumburg Branch have been located.

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

## NOTES

1. Presiding Bishopric, "Financial, Statistical, and Historical Reports of Wards, Stakes, and Missions, 1884–1955," CR 4 12, 257.
2. Renate Mudrow Buttars, interview by the author, Ogden, Utah, May 30, 2006.



*Fig. 2. Hitler Youth boys were often assigned to monitor radio broadcasts while local residents sat in air-raid shelters hoping that the enemy bombers were headed elsewhere. (Deutsches Bundesarchiv, Bild 146-1981-076-29A)*