

21. Bollbach, *Fate Rules My Life*, 142, 153.
22. *Ibid.*, 161.
23. *Ibid.*, 163–64.
24. Theodor Berger to Maria Bresilge Berger, private collection.
25. Bollbach, *Fate Rules My Life*, 169.
26. “Freimann Family History,” 17.

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## MEMEL BRANCH

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The eastward expansion of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints ended in Memel, Germany. Stretching north of East Prussia along the Baltic Sea, the Memel territory was annexed by Germany in 1939. It was one of the territories reclaimed by Hitler in what historians call a “bloodless conquest.” The city of Memel was the capital of the region and was closer to Russia than it was to East Prussia and Germany.

Nothing is known about the status of the Memel Branch of the Church in Germany other than the membership numbers and the address of the meetinghouse (“Bommelsvitte 70 bei Herbst”). Bommelsvitte was a suburb on the north side of the city of Memel. The Herbst family was likely the core of the group of Latter-day Saints there.

Memel Branch <sup>1</sup>	1939
Elders	0
Priests	1
Teachers	0
Deacons	0
Other Adult Males	2
Adult Females	13
Male Children	0
Female Children	0
<i>Total</i>	16

Because there was no elder among the sixteen Saints in the Memel Branch, it is likely

that an elder from another branch in the district was assigned to visit the group from time to time. There was a priest of the Aaronic Priesthood in the branch; therefore, the sacrament ordinance was available in their meetings.

The Soviet army invaded the Memel province in the fall of 1944. If the Saints there had not fled by that time, they would have been expelled by 1946 at the latest, and the branch was erased from the records of the East German Mission.

### IN MEMORIAM

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

**Theresa Henriette Rautenberg** b. Mussaten Litauen 30 Sep 1863; dau. of Wilhelm Rautenberg and Wilhelmine Bartschat; bp. Mussaten 4 Aug 1912; m. August Gottlieb Bartschat; 2 children; d. Memel, Tilsit, Ostpreußen 23 Nov 1940 (*Sonntagsgruss*, no. 11, 16 Mar 1941, 43; FHL Microfilm 25718, 1930 Census)

### NOTE

1. Presiding Bishopric, “Financial, Statistical, and Historical Reports of Wards, Stakes, and Missions, 1884–1955,” CR 4 12, 257.

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## PILLAU BRANCH

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The East Prussian town of Pillau was a very small port on the Baltic Sea. With a population of about ten thousand, it was a short ride on the train from Königsberg, eighteen miles to the east. The branch of Latter-day Saints in Pillau was quite small when World War II began.

The Pillau Branch held its meetings in the Prawitt home at Predigerstrasse 10. With two elders, the branch at least had sufficient priesthood leadership to perform the normal functions of a small Church unit. One of those elders was Branch President Arthur Prawitt.

By early 1943, the meetings of the Pillau Branch had moved to Schmiedestrasse 5. The location was likely a family residence, but the records do not give the name of a host family.<sup>1</sup>

Pillau Branch <sup>2</sup>	1939
Elders	2
Priests	0
Teachers	1
Deacons	1
Other Adult Males	2
Adult Females	11
Male Children	4
Female Children	5
<i>Total</i>	26

Due to a lack of eyewitness testimony nothing more is known about the Pillau Branch during the years 1939–45.

The members of the Pillau Branch most likely suffered the same fate as those in other branches in the Königsberg District—either they fled the advancing Red Army or were expelled from East Prussia when the territory was ceded to Russia after the war. In any case, the Pillau Branch would have ceased to exist by 1946. The name of the town was changed to Baltiysk.

#### IN MEMORIAM

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

**Otto Sawatzki** b. Schackeln, Ostpreußen, Preußen 4 Jan 1912; son of Julius Sawatzki and Auguste Heinrich; bp. 11 May 1931; ord. teacher; m. Fischhausen, Ostpreußen, Preußen 1 Sep 1934, Gertrud Anna Charlotte Bagdon; 2 children; d. 10 Apr 1945 or MIA Breslau, Schlesien, Preußen 1 Apr 1945 (www.volksbund.de; FHL Microfilm 245257, 1935 Census; AF)

#### NOTES

1. East German Mission, "Directory of Meeting Places" (unpublished manuscript, 1943); private collection.
2. Presiding Bishopric, "Financial, Statistical, and Historical Reports of Wards, Stakes, and Missions, 1884–1955," CR 4 12, 257.

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## SELBONGEN BRANCH

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A unique branch in many ways, the Selbongen Branch was situated in a very isolated part of East Prussia from its inception in the 1920s until its demise in the 1970s. The branch was founded in great part thanks to the gospel dedication and missionary spirit of one member, Friedrich Fischer. He was converted in Berlin in 1918 and went home to Selbongen to share the gospel with his relatives and his friends. The branch grew so steadily that the Church decided that the Selbongen Branch needed its own meetinghouse. One was constructed there in just two months during the year 1929. As of the outbreak of World War II in 1939, this was the only meetinghouse owned by the Church in Germany or Austria.

Selbongen Branch <sup>1</sup>	1939
Elders	6
Priests	3
Teachers	8
Deacons	6
Other Adult Males	40
Adult Females	62
Male Children	17
Female Children	14
<i>Total</i>	156

The Selbongen Branch was, in many aspects of the word, a family. From its beginnings among the extended Fischer family, it came to include members of the Krisch, Kruska, Mordas, Pilchowski, Skrotzki, and Stank families. The branch had existed barely two decades when World War II ended, but by then many marriages had occurred among these families. The rate of activity among the members of the branch was also exceptionally high.