

**Erich Gerhard Schirner** b. Bad Kösen, Sachsen, Preußen 8 or 18 Apr 1921; son of Rudolph August Schirner and Elsa Klara Belchschmidt; bp. 21 Apr 1930; conf. 21 Apr 1930; ord. deacon 3 Mar 1935; ord. teacher 5 Dec 1937; ord. priest 23 Jun 1940; d. tuberculosis 22 or 24 Mar 1943 (CHL CR 375 8 2444, no. 37; IGI)

### NOTES

1. Presiding Bishopric, "Financial, Statistical, and Historical Reports of Wards, Stakes, and Missions, 1884–1955," CR 4 12, 257.
2. East German Mission History Quarterly Reports, 1938, no. 35, East German Mission History.
3. *Ibid.*, no. 47.
4. *Ibid.*, 1939, no. 53.
5. *Ibid.*, no. 59.

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## PLANITZ BRANCH

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The town of Planitz lies not quite three miles south of the city center of Zwickau, yet the concentration of Latter-day Saints in the neighborhood warranted the establishment of a branch in Planitz.

Planitz Branch <sup>1</sup>	1939
Elders	6
Priests	1
Teachers	4
Deacons	5
Other Adult Males	7
Adult Females	38
Male Children	4
Female Children	6
<i>Total</i>	71

The meetings were held at Moritzstrasse 13. Manfred Röhlig (born 1921) described the setting in that building:

It was a large room that had previously been a shoe factory, and there were still iron pillars in the room. One time, I ran into one, and I still have a scar on the left side of my forehead. We also had a coal stove inside so the rooms

would stay warm, but when we came on Sunday mornings, we could not breathe. Some of our members worked in a mine, and they made sure that we never ran out of coal. Next to the large room, there were two smaller ones—one for Sunday School and the Primary and the other for Priesthood meeting and Relief Society. . . . There was a picture of Jesus Christ in front of the room. . . . I think that we had a sign on the side of the building saying that [the Church] met there.<sup>2</sup>

The history of the East German Mission has two entries featuring the Planitz Branch just prior to World War II:

Sunday, July 17, 1938: The Planitz Branch, Zwickau District, held a conference. Attendance was sixty-three members and sixteen friends.<sup>3</sup>

Friday, March 3, 1939: A social was held in the Meerane Branch, Zwickau District. It was attended by members and friends of the Zwickau, Werdau, and Planitz Branches. The sum of RM 10.00 was collected for the Meerane Branch Welfare Association.<sup>4</sup>

According to Manfred Röhlig, the branch observed the typical meeting schedule, with Sunday School in the morning and sacrament meeting in the evening. Relief Society and priesthood meetings were held on Monday evening and MIA on Wednesday. When the weather was favorable, they often met outside in a field about two miles away. The locals called it "Mormon Field." Manfred recalled an average attendance at Sunday School of about seventy persons. With nearly 10 percent of the branch being elders, this was a strong group of Latter-day Saints.

When World War II began, Manfred Röhlig was serving in the Reichsarbeitsdienst in the Palatinate (the territory of the state of Bavaria west of the Rhine River). He was inducted directly into the Wehrmacht, receiving his new uniform as soon as he returned to the city of Kaiserslautern following three days of leave. One of his first assignments after the victorious