

ALFRED CARO

BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE



Alfred Caro was born July 27, 1911, to Sally and Frida Caro in Samter, Germany (today Szamotuly, Poland). The family then moved to Berlin, Germany, where Sally, a decorated veteran of World War I, bought a

butcher shop. Alfred had three sisters, Cecila, Jenna, and Nora and two brothers, Alex and Siegbert. Alfred had fond memories of his childhood in Berlin, where he was raised in a conservative Jewish home.

In public school, Alfred was one of the only Jewish students. He participated in a number of local sports clubs and particularly enjoyed boxing. After Alfred completed his compulsory education, he studied to be a butcher in Halberstadt, Germany, for three years, returning to Berlin in 1928. Alfred recalled that shortly thereafter, the depression hit Germany hard, and the Nazi party rose to prominence.

Once Hitler came to power in 1933, Alfred noticed changes taking place around him, including antisemitic legislation. About this time, Alfred's father's business failed when his non-Jewish clientele dwindled. In 1935, after the Nuremberg Laws stripped the Caro family of its citizenship and rights, they became Zionists and tried to find ways to flee Germany, but it was too expensive to leave. In 1938, while being falsely sought as a political opponent, Alfred turned himself in to Nazi authorities, hoping his actions would protect his brothers.

Upon arrival in Sachsenhausen concentration camp, Alfred was forced to do hard labor amid primitive conditions and brutal treatment, all the while

witnessing the arrival of new transports from all over Germany. After six weeks of appealing to the police in Berlin, his mother managed to orchestrate his release from Sachsenhausen in July of 1938.

HICEM, a large aid organization in Berlin, helped Alfred get a visa to immigrate to France where he lived in Paris with other refugees until he and about 500 other German and Austrian refugees were granted permission to live and work in Colombia. After two weeks aboard a ship called *Cuba*, Alfred arrived in Colombia with no money, possessions, nor the ability to speak Spanish. Until he caught malaria, Alfred worked in the gold mines deep in the Colombian jungle. Later Alfred moved to Bogota, where he became very successful, eventually owning a restaurant and butcher shop with an affluent clientele.

In 1952, Alfred decided to join his sister, Norma, who had earlier immigrated to America, settling in New York and learning English while working as a butcher for a German-owned delicatessen. Around this time, while on vacation, Alfred met his future wife, Helen, a divorcee living with her son, Allen, in Alabama. After a quick courtship, Alfred joined his new family in Anniston, Alabama, where he opened Caro's Restaurant. Alfred and Helen had a daughter, Alice. Helen passed away in 1967. At the time of his interview in 1997, Alfred still lived in Anniston, enjoying the warmth of the local people and donating to many local causes, particularly the YMCA.



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