

Friedrich (Fritz) Berg

13.5.1889–September 1942

Prisoner #21314, Dachau 11.11.1938–6.1.1939



Friedrich Berg
circa 1935

My father, Friedrich Berg was born in Rockenhausen, a small city in the Rhineland-Palatinate region of Germany, to Abraham and Clementina Levy Berg on 13.5.1889. He was a decorated German army veteran of World War I. His brother Alfred, a medic in the German army, was killed in World War I.

After World War I, Friedrich lived with his family at 16 Speyerstrasse, Rockenhausen (see picture below, Friedrich is sitting on the right and my mother is standing behind him).



Extended Berg Family, Rockenhausen, circa 1930

Friedrich was an active and respected member of the Rockenhausen community and was known as "Fritz" Berg. He was employed as the town's chief justice inspector. He enjoyed gymnastics and was a member of the Rockenhausen Gymnastics Club (see picture below, Friedrich is bottom row, right). Those were the good old days, and I remember accompanying my father to the gymnasium.



The Rockenhausen Gymnastics Club, circa 1922

He married Karola, nee Schwarz, in 1930. He had two sons, me, Alfred born on 11.12.1930 and Otto born on 22.2.1934 (see family picture below). Otto Americanized his name to Stanley Otto after he arrived in the United States.



Last picture of the Friedrich Berg Family, circa 1939

In 1938, Friedrich and his family were forced to move to Mannheim because of growing anti-semitism in Rockenhausen. Mannheim was deemed to be a safer community than Rockenhausen, because more Jews lived there. However, on Kristallnacht, my father was arrested and imprisoned in Dachau, where he was held until 6.1.1939. Upon his release from Dachau, Friedrich returned to his family in Mannheim, where he was a member of the Judische Gemeinde.

On 22.10.1940, Friedrich, Karola, and Stanley Otto were deported from Mannheim to the Gurs internment camp in southern France. Stanley Otto was allowed to join his brother, who had been sent by his parents to an O.S.E. children's home in France, for safekeeping, in March, 1939. O.S.E. stands for the french organization "Oeuvre de secours aux enfants" which established and ran the homes. In addition to providing security, the staff of the homes helped the children overcome the psychological shock of the separation from their parents and the humiliation that they had endured as a result of the Nazi mandated anti-semitism.

While Friedrich and Karola were originally deported to Gurs, at a later date they were transferred to Riversaltes, another camp in southern France. During their internment Friedrich and Karola tried, but could not obtain visas to emigrate to the United States.

On 14.9.1942 they were sent to Drancy, where on 16.9.1942, they were put on Convoy 33 to Auschwitz. According to Serge Klarsfeld's book "Memorial to the Jews Deported from France", of the 993 prisoners on Convoy 33, only 38 people survived the war. Unfortunately, Friedrich and Karola were not among the 38 survivors.

Fortunately, Alfred and Stanley Otto were able to come to the United States in September, 1941 on the Portuguese freighter/passenger ship Serpa Pinto from Lisbon, Portugal (on picture, Alfred is the boy in the upper left corner).

Leider kann dieses Foto aus
urheberrechtlichen Gründen
nicht gezeigt werden.

The Serpa Pinto docking in New York, Sept. 1941

(From the HIAS Migration Archive)

Both Alfred and Stanley Otto succeeded in their endeavors and continue to live productive family lives in the United States.

We dedicate this Biography to our parents, and appreciate its inclusion in the Dachau Remembrance Book.

Alfred & Stanley O. Berg

Bibliography

1. Alfred Berg's personal recollections and family records
2. International Tracing Service records
3. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum records
4. "Memorial to the Jews Deported from France" by Serge Klarsfeld