

# The Jewish Community of Laupheim and its Annihilation

Book Pages 196 - 203

## ERLEBACHER, Alfred,

soap manufacturer, 2 Judenberg

Translated by: Markus Ganser

*DR. ANTJE KÖHLERSCHMIDT*

**Alfred Samuel Erlebacher**, born August 10, 1897 in Diedelsheim, Germany; merchant, ∞ **Rosa Erlebacher, née Wertheimer**, born October 30, 1897 in Kippenheim, Germany.

– Albert Erlebacher, born September 28, 1932 in Ulm. Family emigrated to Milwaukee in Wisconsin, USA, on October 31, 1937.

Unser guter treubesorgter Vater, Bruder, Großvater, Schwiegervater, Schwager und Onkel

# Abraham Erlebacher

ist gestern im Alter von 70 Jahren verschieden.

Im Namen der tieftrauernden Hinterbliebenen

**Alfred Erlebacher.**

**Bella Levy geb. Erlebacher.**

**Sofie Einstein geb. Erlebacher**

mit Gatten **Ludwig Einstein.**

**Laupheim, 5. Mai.**

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**Beerdigung: Sonntag, den 6. Mai, nachmittags 4 Uhr.**

(„Laupheimer Verkündiger“ vom 5. 5. 1928)

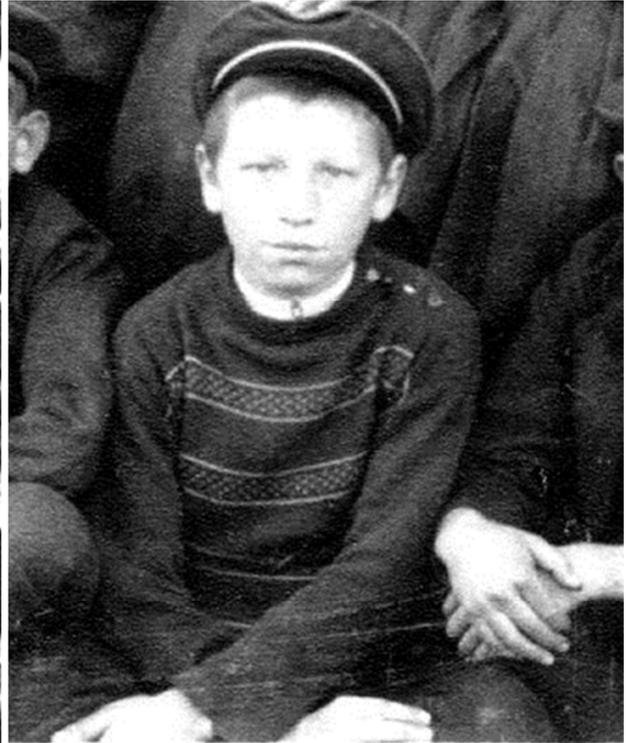
Abraham Erlebacher's surviving dependents announced the obituary for him in the "Laupheimer Verkündiger" on May 4, 1928. These included Abraham's son Alfred Erlebacher and his two elder sisters Bella Levy and Sophie Einstein, both née Erlebacher. The book provides a separate chapter outlining the biography of Bella Levy, whose husband Lucien Levy was killed in action in the First World War. Biographical information about her younger sister Sophie is provided in the chapter about her husband, [Ludwig Einstein](#).

Their mother, Pauline Erlebacher, née Heilbronner, was born on November 5, 1862 and died August 22, 1922. See also the [chapter about the Heilbronner family](#)

Alfred Samuel Erlebacher was born on August 10, 1897 in Diedelsheim near Bretten in Baden, the only son and the youngest of the four children of Abraham und Pauline Erlebacher, née Heilbronner. The family moved to Laupheim at the beginning of the 20th century. Possibly it was the death of Pauline's father, Emanuel Heilbronner, on July 29, 1903 that made the family move to Laupheim: Emanuel had run a soap factory at his home at Judenberg 26, and after his death, his son-in-law, Abraham Erlebacher took the business over and turned the house into their new family residence. A photograph dated 1904 showing Sophie and Alfred Erlebacher and other pupils of the Jewish elementary school with teacher Haymann underpins this assumption. Unfortunately, there's no picture of the other sisters Bella and Hermine Erlebacher. Hermine, who was six year older than Alfred passed away in 1907 only at the age of 16 years. She was buried at the Jewish cemetery in Laupheim.



*Sophie Erlebacher, Jul. Levigard,  
Jul. Regensteiner*



*Alfred Erlebacher as a student at  
secondary school*

There are no further facts about the education and schooling of the Erlebacher brother and sisters. Obviously, after leaving school, Alfred joined his father's business and became a soap producer and trader. When he was twenty years old, he was called to war, being enlisted to the German army in Geislingen near Stuttgart on November 15, 1917, becoming a private bound to fight on the Western front in the last year of the war.

When he returned from war, he joined the Reich Federation of Jewish Front Soldiers like many of his Israelite comrades, and continued to work at his parents' soap manufacturing company called „Emanuel Heilbronner Seifensiederei Inhaber Abraham Erlebacher“. In these times, the family had a Fiat car and employed Mr. Alois Ruf as a chauffeur from November 8 1926 until October 1, 1927. After that, Ruf transitioned to another Jewish employer, Mr. Karl Wallach. Erlebacher issued the work certificate shown below, which is a common practice until today. It clearly illustrates that Jewish-Christian employment relations were commonplace and played an important role in Laupheim's society.

*Em. Heilbronner, Inhaber A. Erlebacher, Laupheim Württ.*

*Begründet 1858 - Telefon Nr. 83*

*Bankkonto Gewerbelbank Laupheim*

*Postscheckkonto Stuttgart Nr. 3543*

*Laupheim, den*

*192*

Z e u g n i s s .

Hierdurch bestätige ich, dass Herr Alois R u f von Hochdorf vom 8. November 1926 bis 1. Oktober 1927 als Chauffeur bei mir tätig war.

Während dieser Zeit hat er meinen Personenwagen 4/20 Fiat gefahren & war ich mit seiner Arbeit vollauf zufrieden. Sowohl Sicherheit & Pflege war in besten Händen & hat das Interesse für mich vollauf gewahrt. Ruf ist ehrlich & arbeitswillig.

Laupheim, 2. O k t o b e r 1927.

*Em. Heilbronner  
A. Erlebacher*

*Alfred Erlebacher.*



The advertisement below from the „Laupheimer Verkündiger“, dated August 9, 1930 puts the statement that „Every housewife has to count with every penny. Saving money has top priority in today’s hard times“. This statement alludes to the impact of the Great Depression in 1929.

# Jede Hausfrau muß mit dem Pfennig rechnen!

## Sparen ist daher das Gebot der heutigen schweren Zeit!

### Daher wählen Sie heute den Einkauf

# nur im Spezial-Geschäft.

Ich führe nur Qualitätswaren zum billigsten Preis.

Prüfen Sie die Preise . . . . . — Ueberzeugen Sie sich von der Qualität.  
 Verkauf direkt an Verbraucher, Die Ware ist  
 daher das Beste zum billigsten Preis. || alt bewährt — neu begehrt.  
 Kein Sonderangebot, sondern nur Beispiele meiner Leistungsfähigkeit.

**Welbertreuselfe** — Die Hausmarke — 63/64 % Fettgehalt  
 Schnittgewicht 200 Gramm . . . . . **16** Pfg. per Stück

**Prima Kernselle gelb** 63/64 % Fettgehalt  
 Schnittgewicht 200 Gramm gepreßt . . . . . **16** Pfg. per Stück  
 " 180 " " . . . . . **14** " " "  
 " 150 " " . . . . . **12** " " "  
 " 100 " " . . . . . **9** " " "  
 Desgleichen in Riegel, Schnittgewicht 500 Gramm, 5teilig . . . **39** " " Riegel

**Prima Kernselle weiß** 63,64 % Fettgehalt  
 Die Hausmarke Schnittgewicht 200 Gramm glatt . . . . . **20** Pfg. per Stück  
 " 200 " gepreßt . . . . . **19** " " "  
 " 180 " " . . . . . **17** " " "  
 " 150 " " . . . . . **14** " " "  
 " 100 " " . . . . . **10** " " "  
 Desgleichen in Riegel 5teilig, Schnittgewicht 650 Gramm . . . **60** " " Riegel

Die Stücke sind eingeteilt je nach Verwendungszweck, vorteilhaft in Block- und Doppelstücke.

## Kaufen Sie nicht nur das Stück Seife, sondern berücksichtigen Sie das Gewicht der einzelnen Stücke

Prima **Feinflocken**, 84/85 % Fettgehalt, aus Grundseife hergestellt . . . **85** Pfg. per Pfd.  
 " **Feinschnittzel**, 80 % Fettgehalt . . . . . **75** " " "  
 " **Kernseifenschnittzel**, weiß, 63/64 % Fettgehalt . . . . . **55** " " "  
 " **Kernseifenschnittzel**, gelb, 63/64 % Fettgehalt . . . . . **48** " " "  
 " **Seifenpulver**, offen in Handtuchsäckchen, v. 2 1/2 u. 5 kg, v. RM. 1.50 bis billigst **90** " p. 5 Pfd. Säckch.  
**Soda cristall** . . . . . **6** " per Pfd.  
**Remy-Reisbrocken-Stärke** . . . . . **60** " " "  
**Remy-Silberglanz-Stärke** . . . . . **65** " " "  
**Lanolinselle** „Madaform“ . . . . . **28** " " Stück  
 " „Pfeilring“ . . . . . **35** " " "  
**Feinseifen** in verschiedenen Sorten, große Auswahl, billigst von . . . **10** " " " an  
 Prima **Lederfett** in 5 Pfunddosen BfN . . . . . RM. **2.50** per 5 Pfd.-Dose  
 " **Wagenfett** (Marke Rappenfett) in BfN. 5 Pfunddosen . . . . . **1.65** " " " "  
 Markenartikel wie Persil, Henko, ImI, Lux, Vim und dergl. zu Originalpreisen.

**Em. Heilbronner, Inhaber: A. Erlebacher, Laupheim.**

Seifensiederei // Wasch- und Bügel-Artikel // Fettwaren und Oele

Gegründet 1858 — Fernsprecher Nr. 83



*Judenberg 26.*

In this time the unemployment rate in Germany was steadily rising, reaching 15.7% in 1930. What is also interesting about the advertisement is the wide range of goods provided by the soap factory, covering articles for washing and ironing plus a great variety of grease and oil products.

According to the picture of the house, which must have been taken after 1928 as it already puts Alfred Erlebacher as the owner, which he officially became in November 1929 by decision of the district court, the shop must have been quite small despite the broad range of goods they had in stock. As taking photographs was still something special in those times, we can assume that both individuals in front of the house belonged to the business; it is very likely, but not 100% sure that the picture shows Alfred and Rosa Erlebacher.

On April 4, 1932 Alfred Erlebacher married Rosa Wertheimer in Laupheim. She was born on October 30, 1897 in Kippenheim daughter of Maier and Lina Wertheimer, née Weil. Alfred and Rosa's son Albert was born 5 months after their marriage in September 1932 in Ulm.

There is hardly documentation about the following years. Like the other Jewish citizens in Laupheim, the Erlebacher family experienced the rapid rise of the Nazi regime which brought social exclusion and continued deprivation of rights to the German Jews. The Erlebacher family could already feel the danger. In October 1937 Alfred and Rosa Erlebacher emigrated to the USA with their five year old son Albert. In November the house was formally sold to the wagoner Theobald Lemmermeyer. It has not been documented what happened to the soap factory and the trade with chemical-technical products, oil and grease and washing articles. No post-war report on Aryanized property puts the name of Erlebacher's company. This leads to the assumption that the business was subject to liquidation.

When the Erlebacher family emigrated in 1937, they were still able to keep most of their furniture and household items by organizing a ship carrier via Rotterdam to New York with the Barr, Moering & Co. GmbH shipping agency in Stuttgart. A list signed by town councilor Dilger by order of the mayor Marxer details out the individual property items of the Erlebacher family, which clearly reveals how big the control of the Nazi authorities was.

Due to the technical possibilities of the Internet and the great support from Dr. Yitzhak Heinrich Steiner, we have access to the extensive correspondence between Rosa's parents, Lina and Maier Wertheimer, her sisters Selma and Hermine, and between her brothers Ernst and Heinrich Wertheimer. The original documents from 1937 to 1954 are stored at the Milwaukee Area Research Center and provide insight into the family relations and living conditions. A main characteristic of these personal letters is that the family members really cared for one another under these adverse circumstances. The main interest was to find a way and help the relatives who still remained in Germany in their emigration efforts. In this context, Ernst Wertheimer was trying to get his parents Lina and Maier and his brother Heinrich to Tel Aviv. Hermine Wertheimer succeeded in emigrating to Johannesburg in 1937, where she started a new life under very simple conditions, being subject to help from abroad in the beginning.

## Life in the USA

During the first two years Alfred Erlebacher was a temporary worker at different companies. In 1939 he got a permanent contract including standard wage. In a letter dated June 3, 1939 he stated:

*„Once I received the contract, I sent an affidavit to my parents-in-law, so that they could make an immigration request for South Africa. Unfortunately this takes too long. In the past, it would have gone along smoothly. Now, it is not sure if things are going to turn out well, just a hope. Things aren't going well here at all. Here, there are many Jews and half of the non-Jewish white people are to a lesser, or to be more precisely, to a greater extent anti-Semitic, even National Socialist. How this is going to turn out politically is not really predictable. For the time being, new emigrants are only allowed in exceptional cases, and I hope that we don't have to migrate again one day.“*

The report on their new living conditions not only outlines the work-related and financial difficulties that newcomers were faced with in the new world, but also the imminent social conflicts. Nonetheless, they did not get discouraged and in 1939 they opened their „Fish & Chip Shop“, with opening hours from 7.00 am to 11 pm. To run the shop, Alfred Erlebacher had borrowed the required money.

In a letter to his sister-in-law, dated November 28, 1939, Alfred wrote:

*„If things work out the way we have right to believe, the future will be brighter for us and we will be able to save some money for the family. In this regard, we are thinking particularly about Selma. Heaven knows what will happen to her if she stays in Germany. As you know, she has the affidavit for the US, and please don't stop to convince her to come over as soon as possible. You are the only ones that can do something for the 'Laupheimer', because neither Ernst nor I live in a neutral country. We can't even write to Laupheim. We don't intend to send you letters to be forwarded, but we will address the Red Cross for this as soon we find some time. Please send them our regards and keep an eye on what's going on with Selma.*

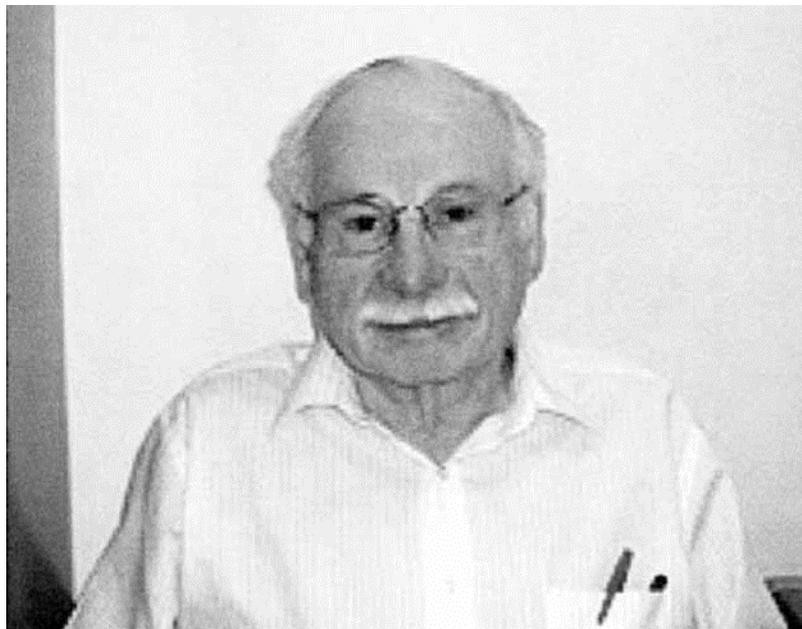
(Erlebacher family Papers, 1937–1954. Milwaukee Small Collection 59.1 cubic ft., The Milwaukee Urban Archives) In a letter dated January 11, 1939 Selma described her perspective on emigration as follows:

*"In the American Consulate in Stuttgart alone, between 45000 and 50000 individuals and families are registered. I have a number between 18 and 19000 and according to current calculations I have to wait about two years. But we don't lose hope that it's getting better. And meanwhile I am also looking to make it to another country (England), but this is equally*

*difficult. In this case too, thousands of young girls and families are waiting. You don't happen to have friends in England who could help to find a job there?"*

(Erlebacher family Papers, 1937–1954. Milwaukee Small Collection 59.1 cubic ft., The Milwaukee Urban Archives) Erlebacher's big and many efforts for the parents-in-law, Lina and Maier Wertheimer, and for the beloved sister-in-law and aunt Selma were not successful in the end despite the existing and new affidavits. Bureaucratic hurdles turned out to be insurmountable. On August 19, 1942 Lina and Maier Wertheimer were deported from Laupheim to Theresienstadt. On the very same day they managed to send Alfred Erlebacher a telegram via the Red Cross with congratulations for his 45th birthday on August 10, 1942. It was their last sign of life. (In this context, see also the [chapter on Maier Wertheimer](#)). A few months after their deportation, Maier Wertheimer died in Theresienstadt on February 13, 1943.

Their daughter Selma had been deported from the central collecting point in Stuttgart, Killesberg to Theresienstadt in August 1942. In the spring of 1944 she was brought from Theresienstadt to the Auschwitz concentration camp, where she was murdered.



*Albert Erlebacher, Professor em.*

Throughout their life, Alfred and Rosa Erlebacher kept up close relations with their relatives who were spread across the whole world. Their son Albert successfully passed his school exams and followed an academic

career. It is owing to him that the mail correspondence of his parents was archived and filed. Albert Erlebacher is professor emeritus at the University of Wisconsin holding a Ph.D. in research about Civil War and Reconstruction. He married Dolores Adler on June 28, 1961. The couple has a son named Seth Allen Samuel Erlebacher. Dr. Albert Erlebacher and his son visited Laupheim in 1988, following the invitation by the Laupheim mayor Ottmar Schick. Unfortunately, a follow-up contact could not be established in the course of writing the memory book.

#### Sources:

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