

Carmen Camarillo Background Information

1. **What were the names of your parents and when did they live?**
My father's name was Adolfo and my mother was Isabel –
2. **Where is your family buried?**
Our family members are all buried in the family crypt at the Saint Mary Magdalen chapel.
3. **What were the names of your brothers and sisters and what did they do in life.**
Rosa, Ave Maria, Pancho, and Isabel. My three sisters became mothers and housewives. My brother became an attorney. Rosa was born in 1890, Ava Maria in 1892, Isabella in 1897 and Pancho in 1897 (later in year).
4. **Where did you go to high school?**
St. Joseph's in Oxnard.
5. **Did all your sisters and brother finish college?**
The girls graduated from Notre Dame Convent in San Jose. Frank earned his law degree at the University of Santa Clara.
6. **Did you marry?**
Yes, I married later in life in 1959. I married Roy Jones. I had met him riding horseback. We were both in the Santa Barbara Fiesta Parade. We were married in Santa Barbara. For a while we lived in Las Posas Estates while we were building a house on the ranch. The type of house we had been a 1960's style ranch house. It is no longer in existence. Since I married late in my life, I did not have children.
7. **Tell us more about some crops you had for your own use.**
Some crops we had for our own use were as follows: avocados, limes grapefruit, oranges, lemons, nectarines, tangerines, peaches, apricots, pears, tomatoes, green peppers, onions, corn, string beans, chilies, potatoes, peas, beets, cabbage, rhubarb, Logan-berries, blackberries, strawberries, huckleberries, carrots, lettuce, squash, turnips, pimientos, celery, asparagus, and pumpkins. As you can see we had about everything we could possibly need—no need to go to a grocery store like you!
8. **Tell us more about the fiestas.**
All our big fiestas had a rodeo and horse skills display. Steers and lambs were butchered for the people to eat. Other foods that were served were tortillas, frijoles, rice, and salsa. Guests were invited from all over the county. The event lasted several days and ended with an outdoor dance. Spanish music was played. When my Uncle Juan came back from his rancho in Argentina, we had a barbecue for 600 people.

9. **Tell us about preparing the steers head.**
The head was prepared with parsley, onions, mint, and bacon fat. These were placed at the neck, in the ears, and in the mouth of the animal. The head was buried in a hole with hot coals for 24 hours. The brain, tongue, and eyes were considered delicacies.
10. **Where did all the people stay during the fiestas?**
You said that there could be several hundred people.
The people who lived in some close communities came each day. Others stayed at our house. Remember we had a large house--15 rooms. Frequently, we would give up our rooms for the guests and sleep up in the attic. Also people would just sleep wherever. Doesn't that sometimes happen today when you have guests?
11. **Which two years of Santa Barbara Fiesta parades did you miss?**
It was one when my mother died. There was also a parade that was not held during World War II. Other than those, two years, I was there every year.
12. **What style of horseback did you ride?**
I could ride western and eastern saddles equally well.
13. **What other philanthropic things did you do?**
I donated an archives room in the library at the Santa Barbara Mission in memory of my father. I was instrumental in building a library for the Boys and Girls Club of Camarillo. A collection of important papers and pictures of my father and grandfather I gave to the Historical Society of Ventura to be used for research in local family history. I continued the tradition of philanthropic endeavors which were started by my father.
14. **Tell us more about the wedding of Rosa.**
It was held at Saint Mary Magdalen Church. I was the flower girl. I wore a white lace dress and carried a basket of rose petals which I sprinkled before the bridal party came down the aisle. Rose petals were so appropriate because my sister's name was Rosa. The reception was at our family home. The banquet room was built at the east side of the house with walls of green cloth. The room was in the shape of a cross with the bridal table decorated with pink roses and pink chiffon in the center. Tables for the guests occupied the four arms of the cross.
15. **Tell us more about what you did with the horses.**
I did not do the day-to-day care of the horses. There were others who did that. However, I always wanted to make sure that the horses were given good care. In fact, once when our stables burned down and had to be rebuilt, I saw to it that the horses had much more room than the normal stall. I spent a lot of time riding the horses.
16. **I understand that you did some breeding of horses.**
Yes, I bred the white stallions (male horses) with quarter horses mares (female horses). All the foals were not white. Quarter horses were the work horses of the ranch.

17. **What has happened to the White Horses?**

In my will, I stated that when I died, the White Horses should be sold. That was done. Today I understand there is a White Horse organization which is trying to keep the breed going.

18. **What did your family have to do with libraries?**

In 1915 my father spoke at a public hearing before the Ventura Board of Supervisors in favor of establishing a county wide library system. He was chosen leader of the delegation. “Gentlemen, we have come to you today about a county library. We do not ask you to establish one. We demand it.” My father Don Adolfo was given the basic credit for the foundation of the library.

Time Line

Date	Event
	Chumash were first inhabitants
1542	Cabrillo came
1782	Mission at Ventura established
1837	Mission land broken into Ranchos and Ruiz family given rancho
1848	Gold discovered in California and gold rush began
1857	Camarillo family moved to Ventura
1864	Adolfo (Carmen’s father) born
1875	Juan Camarillo (Carmen’s grandfather) acquired the ranch from Ruiz family
1880	Juan Camarillo dies and Adolfo takes over management of ranch. He was 16
1888	Adolfo marries Isabel Menchaca and moves to adobe house on the ranch—this building later destroyed by fire
1899	First crop of lima beans introduced and 2000 acres of corn, barley, and alfalfa—
1890	First telephone in county—Adolfo had one of first so Carmen would always have known telephones in her house
1892	Camarillo House built by Adolfo. Style is Queen Anne architecture.
1904	First automobile—2 years after the first one seen in Ventura County
1914	St. Mary Magdalen Chapel, built by family, was completed
1923	Carmen returns to ranch
1927	Land donated for St. John’s Seminary—100 acres—seminary completed in 1930
1936	Carmen’s mother died
1937	Donates land for Conejo grade
1955	50 acres donated for Camarillo High School by Adolfo Camarillo
1958	Adolfo dies from pneumonia
1959	Carmen wed
1964	Camarillo Incorporated