



*^Siegfried Fedrid received this wool blanket during his imprisonment in Auschwitz, and managed to keep the blanket while in Dachau and Dachau's sub-camps. Later, in America, Fred explained that this single blanket could keep him and five other men warm.*

## Blanket

Siegfried "Fred" Fedrid was born in April 1920 in Vienna, Austria. Fred was born deaf to Jewish parents who were also deaf. In 1936 Fred graduated from the School for the Deaf in Vienna. At 16 years old, he began an apprenticeship in a custom tailor shop. He trained there until 1938, when the Nazis forced the owner of the shop, a Jewish man, to close his business.

In October of 1941, the Gestapo arrested Fred and his family. They were sent to the Lodz Ghetto in Poland. The Lodz Ghetto, surrounded by barbed wire fences, was crammed with more than 150,000 Jewish people. The Germans established factories in the ghetto, and the Jews were used as slave labor. That winter in the ghetto was bitterly cold. Fred's father,



suffering from starvation, froze to death. Fred's mother died of starvation several months later.

*<Seven year-old Siegfried "Fred" Fedrid with his sisters, circa 1927. Fred was the only one to survive.>*

While working conditions were terrible, Fred was lucky to have a job as a tailor – a job meant food and life. For long hours he was forced to work in a factory altering uniforms from dead soldiers to fit current

recruits.

The Nazis liquidated the ghetto in the summer of 1944. Fred was deported to Auschwitz, and managed to receive a wool blanket that helped keep him warm. From there he was taken to Dachau concentration camp in Germany. At each camp, Fred could fit under the blanket with up to five other men, sharing warmth that helped him survive. He was liberated by the American army at the beginning of May 1945 near Dachau.

When Fred returned to Vienna to look for his friends and relatives, he found no one. Further, he was told that the Nazis had sold all of the possessions he and his parents had left behind. He had lost everything. Fred was hired at a custom tailor shop, lived in a rented room, and supported himself.

Fred later immigrated to New York where his aunts and uncle lived. There he met his future wife Doris Rosenstrauch, also a deaf Holocaust survivor.

"It was very important to him to never rely on handouts or government subsidies to live. He wanted people to know that deaf people are capable, intelligent, and able to support themselves financially," wrote Fred's daughter Eleanor Corner, in an article published by the Jewish Deaf Community Center in California in 1999. Eleanor lived in the Seattle area and donated some items from her parents' Holocaust experience to the Holocaust Center for Humanity.

In 2017, Fred's blanket traveled on loan to be displayed as part of the international exhibit "Auschwitz: Not Long Ago, Not Far Away."

*This metal pin was worn by Fred Fedrid in a DP camp after the war. The pin bears his number and is imprinted with the word "Taubstumm" meaning "deaf and dumb." It is unclear whether Fred received this pin from soldiers while in Dachau, or if American liberators fashioned the pin for him.>*

