



On display at the Washington State Holocaust Education Resource Center.
On loan from the family of Siegfried Fedrid. Photo by Harve Bergmann.

Blanket

Siegfried (Fred) Fedrid was born deaf to Jewish parents who were also deaf.

In 1944, Fred was deported to Auschwitz where he obtained this woolen blanket.

He managed to keep this 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.

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A seven year-old Siegfried "Fred" Fedrid pictured with his mother, an aunt, and other cousins in Vienna, circa 1927. Fred was the only survivor.

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 fence, 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.

While the 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 from there he was taken to Dachau in Germany. 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.

"He wanted people to know that deaf people are capable, intelligent, and able to support themselves financially."

Fred was hired at a custom tailor shop, lived in a rented room, and supported himself.

"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," writes his daughter Eleanor Corner in an article published by the Jewish Deaf Community Center in California in 1999.

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



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