

My family story

From Mila van Kempen

For my great-grandmother and great-grandfather on my grandfather's side, we know that they were in Colombia at the time, having left Poland years prior.

However, we don't exactly know where my great-grandmother and great-grandfather were on my mother's side were; they were likely still in hiding.

My great-grandfather was a Partisan* in the war; he was one of those running around barefoot in the woods blowing up train tracks and fighting the Nazis. He was likely still in hiding in the woods somewhere, unaware that the war was over.

My great-grandmother was likely still hiding in her hole, semi-paralyzed. Due to her blond hair and light eyes, she was able to get fake papers escape from the ghetto she was living in with her family on the night of the liquidation of the ghetto. We can only assume what happened to the rest of the family.

After the complete liberation of Europe and my great-grandmother's recovery from semi-starvation and lack of movement, she went back to her town and the only other surviving person from the Jewish Community was my great-grandfather, and they married for safety. They eventually arrived in Colombia after searching for a place that would accept Jews.

Written on behalf of Xander van Kempen

* Partisans were those in the Jewish resistance