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Summary

Christine Winecki was born Irena Stela Wilder on 20 December 1928 in Stanislawow, Galicia in Eastern Poland (now Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine). Her parents were Dr. Oscar Wilder and Yanila Wilder (nee Gelernter). Her father was a lawyer and barrister. Her maternal grandfather was Dr. Solomon Gelernter. Her mother had four brothers, one of whom, Branislav, lived in Stanislawow with his wife and two children. Christine was an only child. Her father's family was from Lwow (now L'viv, Ukraine). Her paternal grandfather was Sigmund Wilder and paternal grandmother was Amalia nee Ginsberg from Vienna. Her father had a brother, Ludwig and sister Voczia [PH]. Her mother died in 1937. Shortly after the German and Soviet invasion of Poland in 1939, Her father remarried Peppa Solomon in 1939 and her flat was seized by Soviet forces and they were forced to move. In June 1941, Nazi Germany invaded the USSR and occupied Stanislawow. In August 1941, the Judenrat [Jewish council] called her father and all other Jewish intelligentsia to a meeting where they were all killed in secret by the Gestapo. She recalls the Bloody Sunday Massacre on 12 October 1941. On 20 December 1941, the ghetto was set up. Shortly before, a Ukrainian man helped Christine escape to Lwow under a new identity, Maria. Peppa and the rest of her family stayed behind and did not survive. She was delivered to her father's family in Lwow who were living with fake names. They soon left for Warsaw in 1942. Christina Julia Soletska was her new name with them. In 1943, she was arrested on suspicion of being a Jew, but was released by a Polish police officer. She then volunteered to go to Germany with her aunt to work there. She was transported by train to Wiener Neustadt to a large work camp there. A young woman in her thirties selected Christina to work in her house as a maid. She left after V-E Day in May 1945.