

# Polish-Jewish Genealogical Research

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## HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF POLISH BORDER CHANGES:

- 1795 — 3rd and final partition of Poland; Poland ceases to exist as a nation. Northern and western areas (Poznań, Kalisz, Warsaw, Łomża, Białystok) taken by Prussia; Eastern areas (Vilna, Grodno, Brest) taken by Russia; Southern areas (Kielce, Radom, Lublin, Siedlce) becomes part of Austrian province of West Galicia.
- 1807 — Napoleon defeats Prussia; establishes Grand Duchy of Warsaw from former Prussian territory.
- 1809 — Napoleon defeats Austria; West Galicia (includes most of future Kielce-Radom-Lublin-Siedlce gubernias) becomes part of Napoleon's Duchy of Warsaw.
- 1815 — Napoleon defeated at Waterloo; Congress of Vienna establishes “Kingdom of Poland” (aka “Congress Poland” or “Russian Poland”) from former Duchy of Warsaw, as part of the Russian Empire; Galicia becomes part of Austro-Hungarian Empire; Western provinces are retained by Prussia.
- 1918 — End of WWI. Poland reborn at Versailles, but only comprising 3/5ths the size of pre-partition Poland.
- 1945 — End of WWII. Polish borders shift west: loses territory to U.S.S.R., gains former German areas.

## LOCATING THE ANCESTRAL SHTETL:

- \_\_\_\_\_, *Gemeindelexikon der Reichsräte vertretenen Königreiche und Länder* [Gazetteer of the Crown Lands and Territories Represented in the Imperial Council]. (Vienna, 1907). {Covers former Austrian territory}.
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Spis Miejscowości Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej* [Place Names in the Polish Peoples' Republic]. (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Komunikacji i Łączności, 1967).
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Wykaz Wredowych Nazw Miejscowości w Polsce* [A List of Official Geographic Place Names in Poland]. (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Akcydensowe, 1880).
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- Utrecht, E. *Meyers Orts- und VerkehrsLexikon des Deutschen Reichs* [Meyer's Gazetteer and Directory of the German Empire]. (Leipzig: Bibliographisches Institut, 1912-13).
- U.S. Board on Geographic Names — *JewishGen Gazetteer*: < <http://www.JewishGen.org/Communities> >.
- 1929 Polish Business Directory - Town Index: < <http://jri-poland.org/bizdir/bd1929.htm> >.

**Maps:** Harvard University Library (Cambridge, MA) - Map Department (Pusey Library).  
Library of Congress (Washington, DC) - Geography and Map Division.  
New York Public Library (New York, NY) - Map Division.  
*Euro-Atlas Polska - Atlas Drogowy 1:200,000*. (Warszawa: GeoCenter, 1997). 384 pages.

## CIVIL VITAL RECORDS:

### Record-keeping in the Kingdom of Poland:

- 1808 — Civil vital registration begins in Grand Duchy of Warsaw. Napoleonic format, Polish language.  
People of all religions registered in the Roman Catholic civil registers.
- 1821 — Jews required to take surnames.
- 1826 — Separate civil registers maintained by each religious community (Roman Catholic, Jewish, Protestant...)
- 1868 — Records begin to be maintained in Russian language.
- 1918 — Polish language resumed for recordkeeping.

### LDS / Mormon Records:

- Family History Library Catalog™ — Locality catalog: < <http://www.FamilySearch.org> >.
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*Volume II: Russian*. 496 pages. (2002).

### Polish State Archives:

- Naczelna Dyrekcja Archiwów Państwowych, ul. Długa 6, skr. poczt. Nr. 1005, 00-950 Warszawa, Poland.
- Skowronek, Jerzy. "Jewish Genealogical Research in Polish Archives", in *Avotaynu* X:2 (Summer 1994), pp. 5-8.
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- SEZAM database: < <http://baza.archiwa.gov.pl/sezam/sezam.php?l=en> >.

### An overview of Jewish vital records in Russian Poland<sup>1</sup>

Years	1808 - 1825	1826 - 1867	1868 - 1917	1918 - 1942
Where Recorded	Catholic Civil Transcripts	Separate Jewish registers		
Language	Polish		Russian	Polish
Location of Registers	Records older than 100 years are kept in regional branches of the Polish State Archives. Many of these records have been microfilmed by the Mormons, usually up to around 1865 or later for some towns.		Records less than 100 years old are typically kept in each town's Civil Records Office (Urząd Stanu Cywilnego).	

<sup>1</sup> This chart applies only to records in localities within the semi-autonomous region under Russian rule known as the "Kingdom of Poland" (Congress Poland, aka "Russian Poland"). This area covered forms almost half of present-day Poland. For other localities which are now part of Poland (e.g. former parts of Galicia, Prussian Poland, Grodno Gubernia), the record format, language, and periods covered are different.

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## WEB SITES:

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- Jewish Records Indexing - Poland — < <http://jri-poland.org> >.
- Gesher Galicia — < <http://www.GesherGalicia.org> >.
- Suwałk-Łomża SIG — < <http://www.JewishGen.org/SuwalkLomza> >.
- Vital Records in Poland — < <http://www.JewishGen.org/InfoFiles/polandv.html> >.