

## RESEARCHING YOUR GALITZIANER FAMILY: WORKING WITH VITAL RECORDS

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<http://www.jri-poland.org>



This session is sponsored by Jewish Records Indexing – Poland, where over one million Jewish vital records from Galicia have been indexed and made available to researchers without charge. Many of these index entries are directly linked to images of the actual records. All Galician research should start by using two main sources (websites) – JRI-Poland <http://www.jri-poland.org> and Gesher Galicia <http://www.geshergalicia.org/>. Gesher Galicia has an All Galicia Database, which, with few exceptions, brings researchers data not available at JRI-Poland, as well substantial projects and information relevant to research in Galicia.

Galicia was a region of the Austrian Empire acquired from the first partition of Poland in 1772. Galicia includes the Wojewodztwa or provinces of Krakow, Lwow, Stanislawow, and Tarnopol. Galicia was in the Austrian Empire until WWI, then in Poland until WWII, and then split between Poland and Ukraine thereafter.

### **Jewish Record Keeping in Galicia**

Civil recordkeeping in Galicia was mandated in 1789. The system that was established did not function in most places. Further mandates resulted in compliance in some Jewish communities during the 1850s. No formal regulations or consistency in recordkeeping existed until 1877 for Jewish vital events. Surnames were adopted in 1788, when Jews without fixed surnames were required to adopt surnames based on the German language.

Galician Jewish vital records were recorded in columnar format in either Polish or German. Before 1877, the forms were not standard and contained limited information. Starting in 1877, the forms were standardized with headings in both German and Polish. A few examples of form headings translated to English can be found at [www.jri-poland.org/galicia/GalicianVitalRecords\\_Titles\\_Nov2002.pdf](http://www.jri-poland.org/galicia/GalicianVitalRecords_Titles_Nov2002.pdf).

Records before 1877 usually have minimal information. Records after 1876 have more genealogically relevant information. Birth records have the most genealogical relevant information including the mother's parent's names, occupation, and place of residence. Usually the father's parents are not recorded. Many birth records document subsequent events that changed the civil status of the individual including the civil marriage of the parents and the person's marriage, death and name change. Civil marriage records also have good genealogical information. Civil vs. Religious marriages are a big issue for Galician researchers. See the section on this later in this handout. They usually note the occurrence of previous civil events. Death records have less valuable information. Many death records only record the name and the place, time, and cause of death. Although there is no rule of thumb, death records for children usually identify one or both parent's names. For single or married man – no spouse or parent. For married women – husband. For single woman – father.

## **Unique Aspects of Galician Records**

### **Civil Marriage**

The Austrian Government considered marriage to be an event governed by civil law. Jews considered marriage to be a religious event governed by the laws of G-d. Never in 19th Century and early 20th Century Galicia did these polar opinions ever unite. Various laws and marriage-related taxes further discouraged Jewish marriage under civil law. The mostly Hassidic leadership of the Jewish community (Kahal) was strongly opposed to the mandate for civil marriage and counseled Kahal members to resist. All Jews were required to belong to a Kahal.

Marriage in the eyes of G-d and the Jewish community was the accepted norm. It was not until later in the 19th Century that more Jewish civil marriages were registered. Usually this occurred for legal reasons, such as inheritance, or to facilitate emigration. Therefore, researchers may not find a civil marriage for their ancestors or will find a civil marriage many years after the couple started to have children.

### **Legitimacy**

If the parents were not married in a civil ceremony, the marriage was never officially registered with the Government. When that couple had children and could not show an officially registered marriage, the children were considered illegitimate. This practice was consistent throughout Galicia. If the father followed proper procedures for acknowledging paternity, the father's name was supposed to be included in the record (usually in the "Remarks" column). Otherwise, only the mother was listed. This situation creates difficulty for genealogists since the children born to a couple could be known by the mother's or the father's surname. The recording of the child's surname was not consistent. In some cases, the child was given the mother's maiden name. In some cases, the child was given the father's surname. In some cases, no surname was identified to the child. Furthermore, the identification of a child's surname on a birth record has no relationship to the use by the family or in the community.

Although the regulations governing the recording of the father's name was clear, registrars were inconsistent in their application. In some cases, the record does not show the father's name. In some cases, the father's name was shown in the remarks column accompanying a witnessed statement of paternity. In some cases, the father is identified in the father column even though the birth is identified as illegitimate.

In some birth records, the parents had a civil marriage ceremony after the birth of the child. The marriage information may then be noted on the birth record. This notation has the effect of legitimizing the birth after the fact. This notation identifies the place of the civil wedding, the year, and identifies the document number and volume. This should allow researchers to obtain a copy or an extract of that civil marriage.

### **Obtaining Copies of Galician Vital Records**

In 2013, the Polish State Archive commenced a program to digitize their collections of vital records. Each regional Archive independently made their decision on how to create the digital images and where to host the images. Many of the regional Archives images are hosted on the website of the National Digital Archive (Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe) at <http://szukajwarchiwach.pl/>. A guide for using this website can be found at [http://jri-poland.org/help/NDA\\_Guide.pdf](http://jri-poland.org/help/NDA_Guide.pdf).

Galician vital records are housed at the AGAD Archive (Central Archive of Historical Records) for towns now in Ukraine, the Krakow Archives, the Przemysl Archive, and the Rzeszow Archive.

Jewish vital records of the AGAD Archive have been digitized up through Signature 3006 covering years though 1911. The list of digitized Jewish vital records can be found on the AGAD website at <http://www.agad.gov.pl/inwentarze/Mojz300x.xml>.

When you search the JRI-Poland database, the search results for most AGAD towns now have a link "View Image" or "View Nearby Image" in the far left column. Clicking a "View Image" link sends you to the page that includes that record. Clicking a "View Nearby Image" link sends you to the AGAD images that are only APPROXIMATE, but should be within a few pages of the correct image. Use the scrolling arrow buttons at the bottom of each page to move forwards and backwards based on the year and AKT number you want to view.

JRI-Poland volunteers have been mobilized to add the actual AGAD image page numbers to the computer files that make up the JRI-Poland online database. In the future, all links will be "View Image" sending you directly to the proper image at the AGAD website.

Some Jewish vital records from the Krakow Archive for the town of Tarnow covering records up to 1870 have been digitized. The Krakow Archive website <http://www.ank.gov.pl/en/records-and-access/records/collections-on-line> has links to these and other Krakow Archive record images. Searching the JRI-Poland database, the search results for some Tarnow index entries have a link "View Image" in the far left column. Clicking a "View Image" link sends you to the page that includes that record.

Some Jewish vital records from the Przemysl Archive for the towns of Przemysl and Sienawa have been digitized. Currently the results tables for these towns have a note: "Eventually all index records will be directly linked to their images, but in the meantime you can find folders with all currently available images HERE." When you click, you will be taken to the folder and will need to navigate to the actual image. Use the guide at [http://jri-poland.org/help/NDA\\_Guide.pdf](http://jri-poland.org/help/NDA_Guide.pdf). A direct link to the Przemysl Archive group of folders is <http://www.szukajwarchiwach.pl/56#tabZasoby>, where you can also find images of some Stryj records held by the Przemysl Archive. The Przemysl Archive also has its own website with images at <http://www.przemysl.ap.gov.pl/skany/>, but currently does not contain any Jewish records.

Currently there are no links to Jewish vital records at the Rzeszow Archive. The Rzeszow Archive digital image website is at <http://szukajwarchiwach.pl/59#tabZasoby>, where images of Jewish vital records will be added in the future.

## **Research in Galicia – Key Websites**

### **Archival Inventories**

<http://www.rtrfoundation.org/search.php> Miriam Weiner's Routes to Roots (RTR) Archival Inventory

<http://www.archiwa.gov.pl/en/news.html> Polish State Archives (PSA) English Homepage

<http://www.archiwa.gov.pl/en/state-archives/381-list-of-archives.html> PSA List of Archives

<http://archiwa.gov.pl/en/data-bases.html> PSA Databases of Holdings

<http://baza.archiwa.gov.pl/sezam/pradziad.php?l=en> PSA PRADZIAD Vital Records Database

<http://baza.archiwa.gov.pl/sezam/ela.php?l=en> PSA ELA Population Registers Database

<https://familysearch.org/catalog-search> LDS Family History Catalog Search

<http://www.jri-poland.org/jri-lds.htm> JRI-Poland List of Mormon Polish Jewish Microfilms

### **Record Headings and Translation Aids**

<http://translate.google.com/#> Google Translate  
[http://www.jri-poland.org/galicia/GalicianVitalRecords\\_Titles\\_Nov2002.pdf](http://www.jri-poland.org/galicia/GalicianVitalRecords_Titles_Nov2002.pdf) Galicia  
<http://www.jewishgen.org/GerSIG/script.htm> "Gothic" German for Galician records

### **Vital Records in Poland**

<http://www.jri-poland.org> Jewish Records Indexing - Poland  
<http://www.jewishgen.org/InfoFiles/polandv.html> JewishGen Infofile  
<http://www.jewishgen.org/InfoFiles/Poland/biblio.htm> JewishGen Bibliography  
<http://www.jewishgen.org/InfoFiles/Poland/Questions.htm> JewishGen Polish-Jewish Genealogy Questions & Answers

### **Galicia**

<http://www.jri-poland.org/agad/index.htm> JRI-Poland AGAD Indexing Project  
<http://www.jri-poland.org/agad/lviv.htm> Vital records microfilmed by LDS at Archive in Lviv  
<http://www.geshergalicia.org/> Geshher Galicia SIG  
<http://search.geshergalicia.org/> All Galicia Database (NEW)  
<http://www.hagal.com/> Genealogy of Eastern Galicia (not Jewish specific)

### **Jewish Records Indexing – Poland**

<http://www.jri-poland.org/> Homepage  
<http://www.jri-poland.org/support.htm> Contributing  
<http://www.jri-poland.org/jriplweb.htm> Search database  
<http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/Poland/> JewishGen's All Poland Database  
<http://www.jri-poland.org/psa/orderfaq.htm> Order FAQ  
<http://www.jri-poland.org/town/index.htm> Town Index  
<http://www.jri-poland.org/researchguides.htm> Research Guide  
<http://www.jri-poland.org/bor.htm> Books of Residents/Census Projects  
<http://data.jewishgen.org/maps/jrimap.asp> Surname Distribution Mapper