

# Using Ancestry, FamilySearch, and Polish Archives online for Genealogical Research

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# Overview of Presentation

- My motivation for my trip to Warsaw for IAJGS—my genealogical quest for information on my paternal grandfather
- Importance of history and geography
- Locating ancestral towns
- Archives
  - ELA/Praziad and Szsearch.pl
  - Church Archives
- Did I find what I was looking for?

# Motivation for this presentation

- As advertised, I am an amateur genealogist
- I, like most librarians, love to search. I had hoped to understand the Polish archives as part as my search for information on my Polish grandfather.
- Let me begin again by telling you about my grandfather so you can see how learning more about Polish archives was designed to help my search.

ITS tracing service card from ITS website. This is from one of the few online ITS files

- <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/01020401/name/pageview/733746/548874>

Meldung für die Zeit v. 12.7 bis 28.7.1941  
 Kultusvereinigung: Leipzig *13* Bezirk: *2* *20.7.41*

Zählkarte für ~~XXXXXX~~ — Sterbefall\*) Anleitung auf der Rückseite beachten.

Datum des Wegzug.	Name	Vorname	Geburtstag und -ort	Beruf	Familienstand (led., verh., verw., gesch.)	Staatsangehörigkeit	Neue Adresse *) erstorben am
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	L i c h t m a n n	Saul Israel	27. November 1889 Bolszowce i. Polen		verheiratet	Polen	Landes-Heil- & Pflegeanstalt Sonnenstein verstorben am 14. Juli 1941

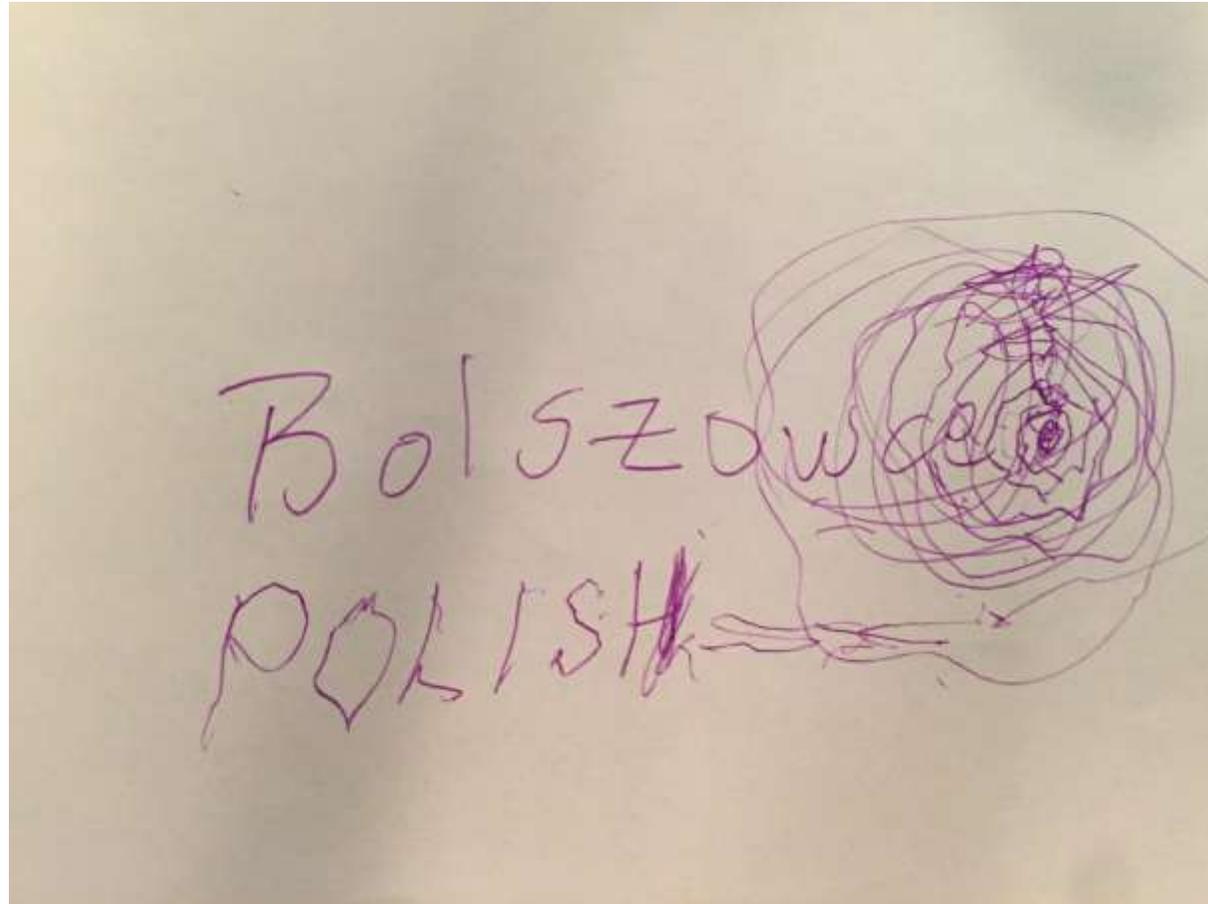
Bisherige Adresse des Haushalts: *016994*

\*) Nichtzutreffendes ausstreichen.

Leipzig, den 18. Juli 1941

Jüdische Kultusvereinigung  
 Israelitische Religionsgemeinde zu Leipzig e. V.

“Proof” that Bolszowce is the right town



# Between a Broch and a hard place: My search for Saul Lichtmann

<a href="#">Saul Lichtmann 1889-1941</a>
<a href="#">Bolszowce 1889 (ITS death card/Sonnenstein)</a>
<a href="#">Cologne 1919 (Nate Birth Certificate)</a>
<a href="#">Cologne 1921 (Herman Birth Certificate)</a>
<a href="#">Buenos Aires 1925</a>
<a href="#">Leipzig 1933 (book)</a>
<a href="#">Leipzig-Dösen 1939 German Minority census</a>
<a href="#">(Landes-, Heil- und Pflegeanstalt Leipzig-Dösen)</a>
<a href="#">Pirna-Sonnenstein 1941 death card</a>





# How I spent my summer vacation 2018— Off to Poland.

- Because my interest is in the part of Poland that was in Ukraine...I was very excited about Gesher Galicia's AGAD day
  - Focus on Eastern Galicia "beyond the Bug River"
- Originally I was going to go to what I believe is my ancestral village, but it didn't turn out that way.
- We will focus on finding information in Archives and Church Records
- Unfortunately, JRI-Poland makes things much easier for Jewish records than non-Jewish

# Importance of history and geography

- Poland's changing borders
- World wars take a toll on records

# Poland's changing borders

- Poland is known for its frequently changing borders (Information from Family Search)-- [https://s3.amazonaws.com/ps-services-us-east-1-914248642252/s3/research-wiki-elasticsearch-prod-s3bucket/images/2/21/Poland\\_Historical\\_Geography\\_Handout.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/ps-services-us-east-1-914248642252/s3/research-wiki-elasticsearch-prod-s3bucket/images/2/21/Poland_Historical_Geography_Handout.pdf)
- Many towns were in more than one country over the periods we are interested in. This has implications for record-keeping rules (e.g., civil registration requirements varied) AND privacy/disclosure timelines.
- Try to locate your town with Jewishgen town finder
  - <https://www.jewishgen.org/communities/search.asp>
  - ... if there were Jews living in the town of interest!

# Polish geography

Poland is currently divided into 16 provinces known as voivodeships (Polish: *województwa*, singular *województwo*).

- <https://www.jewishgen.org/Communities/>





<https://www.jewishgen.org/databases/poland/georegions.htm>

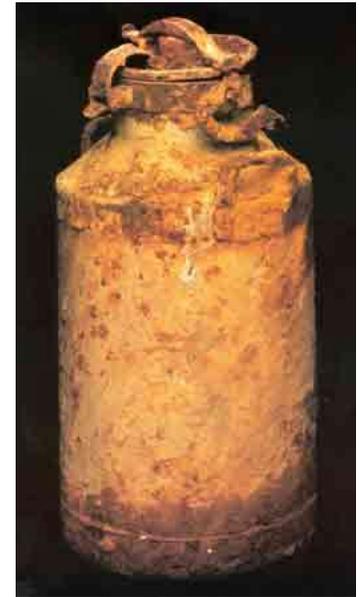
# ARCHIVES

# Overview of Archives

- What are archives
- Vital records
  - Organized by religion
- Civil registration
- Administrative records that are of genealogical interest (e.g., criminal records, wills)
- Administrative records that are NOT of genealogical interest (municipal correspondence)

# What are archives? from <http://www.kings.cam.ac.uk/archive-centre/introduction-archives/definition/index.html#what>

- Collection of unpublished materials.
- More than vital records. They include the records of an institution, personnel records, newspaper clippings.
- They may be in any format, including text on paper or in electronic formats, photographs, motion pictures, sound recordings. In addition to archival records, an archive can contain artifacts such as the milk can from the Warsaw Ghetto that is pictured here.
- We may wish there was one big file of all the names of our Polish ancestors, but that is not the way the archives are arranged. We may have to hunt in multiple archives to find what we are looking for.



# Polish Archives

- Historic archive (in Warsaw)
  - AGAD is the historic archive for materials that are no longer under the restrictions of the Polish privacy laws (more than 100/80 years old).
  - Contain information from Ukraine and Poland
  - List of Fonds by number on AGAD [http://agad.gov.pl/?page\\_id=1599](http://agad.gov.pl/?page_id=1599)
- Urząd Stanu Cywilnego” meaning “Civil Registry Office” for metrical (vital) records under 100 years (80 for marriage or death)
  - Does not contain Ukraine
- Most records remains in district archives
- Many records may remain in local parish or archdiocese’s archives

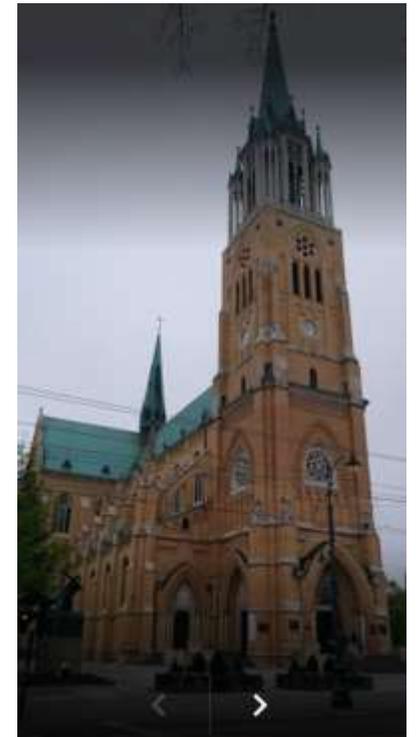
# Examples of different archives

AGAD--historic

USC (Warsaw)--current

Regional archives (Radom)

Church archives



# Polish privacy protection

- New Polish laws for the protection of personal data (as of March 1, 2015) have enabled JRI-Poland to access/scan/extract marriage and death records up to 1935 (more than 80-years old) in Civil Records Offices (USCs) in Poland
- However, economic reality has slowed (or stopped) the transfer of these marriage and death records to AGAD

# Finding records involve understanding location

- We've discussed the importance of history/geography and the types of archives that exist
- **But do the records exist?**
  - Polish search online using szsearch
  - Not all religious archives have ended up online
  - Locating church records



A storeroom in the Tarnów state archive

Download from  
Dreamstime.com

11888811  
View Item | Details



<a href="#">View Image</a>	[ LICHTMAN / SZIFER ]	Sauel	1888	B	176	103	M						Isak LICHTMAN		Bołszowce	
													Chaje SZIFER		Bukaczowce	
<a href="#">View Image</a>	[ LICHTMAN / TEICHBERG ]	Sauel	1889	B	47	103	M						Israel LICHTMAN		Bołszowce	
													Ester TEICHBERG		Bołszowce	

# Decision tree for locating vital records

- Assuming you have figured out the geography...
  - Do records still exist?
  - Are the archival records indexed? (do we even know these records exist?)  
SZsearch/PRADZIAD and JRI Poland
  - Are the individual records indexed?
    - JRI Poland; Gesher Galicia; FamilySearch;
  - Are they scanned and available online
    - Much of the scanning of individual documents was done by Church of Jesus Christ (Mormon Church) decades ago
    - Polish government scans (see SZSearch)
    - NB: Scans of thousands of records that aren't indexed may or may not be useful
    - You may have to contact the archives to get records

# Location, location, location

- Locating your ancestral towns
- Vital records searching in Szsearch.pl
  - Beyond vital records in Szsearch.pl (won't be covering but you'll have the notes)
- Finding church records – overview of Family Search wiki

# Determining the Parish

- I use Google, Wikipedia, Jewish gen's community finder, szukajwarchiwach.pl, and ancestry.com

Place your ancestor might have lived

Pabianice, Lodzkie, Poland

Exact to...

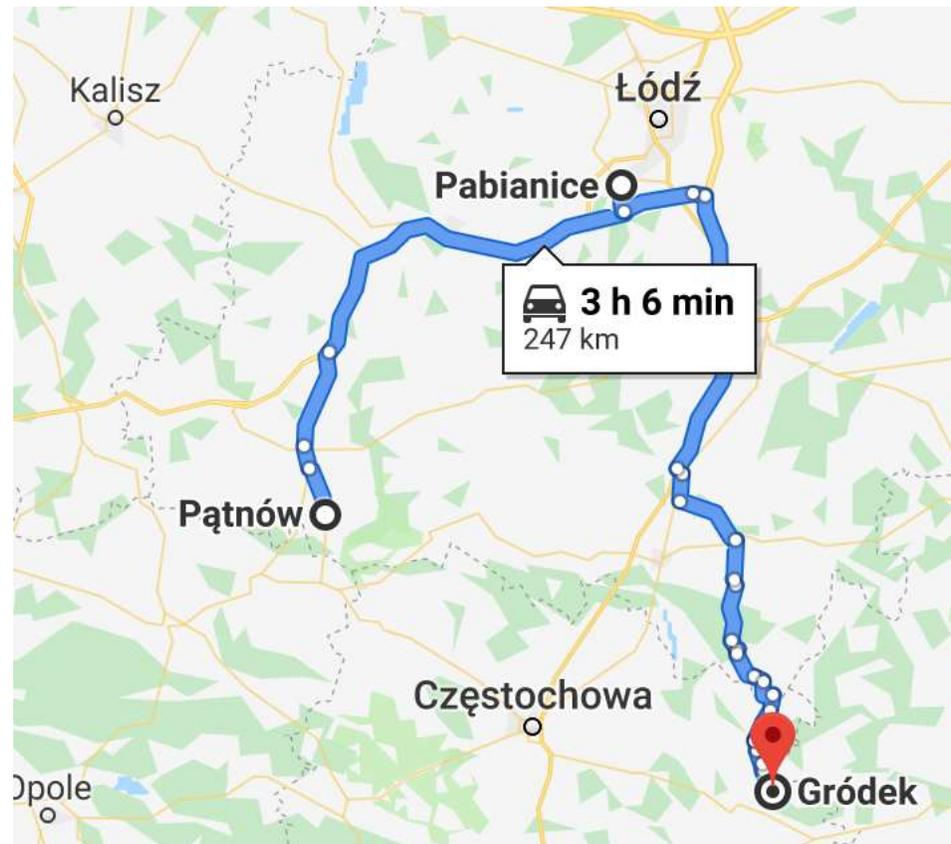
- [https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Poland\\_Church\\_Records#Determining the Parish](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Poland_Church_Records#Determining_the_Parish)

# What do we know about the places Maria's families are from?

My roots on my mother's side are in Patnów, woj: Łódzkie, a small village. My mother was Warzycha.

- 
- On my father's (Romanowski) side, there was Gródek, pow: Białystok, woj: Mazowieckie.
- [http://www.thecatholicdirectory.com/directory.cfm?fuseaction=show\\_country&country=PL](http://www.thecatholicdirectory.com/directory.cfm?fuseaction=show_country&country=PL)

Maria's hometown and that of the Warzechas (her mom is from Patnow) and Romanowskis (her dad is from Grodek)



## Search Results for FamilySearch Catalog

 [PRINT](#)  [Catalog Print List \(0\)](#)

1-3 of 3 results

P

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### [Kopie ksiąg metrykalnych, 1817-1929](#)

Author: Kościół rzymsko-katolicki. Parafja Pabianice (Pabianice)

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### [Kopie ksiąg metrykalnych, 1827-1874](#)

Author: Kościół ewangelicki. Parafja Pabianice (Pabianice)

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### [Księgi metrykalne, 1774-1855](#)

Author: Kościół rzymsko-katolicki. Parafja Pabianice (Pabianice)

[wici ylia wiadzia](#)  
[opis w wikipedii](#)

51,665000 19,359167

SYM: 0959079

SYMPOD: 0959079

typ (PRNG): miasto

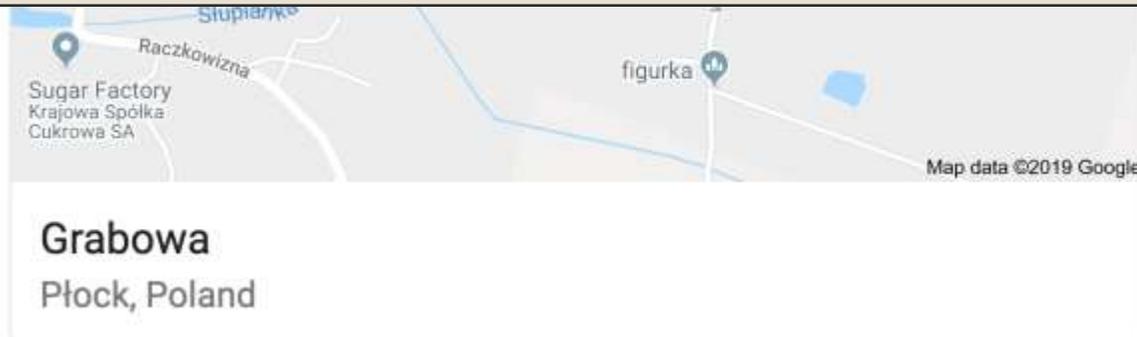
komentarz (PRNG): do 2006 r. - istniały części miasta: Berg, Dąbrowa, Kapuśniaki, Nowa Wola, Ostatnie Pole, Piaski - Kolonia, Sereczyn, Ściężny Strumieński, Za Ługiem (miejscowości włączone do wsi, nazwy zniesione)

Where is this cemetery? Parish info?



# Joan's family— her mothers's manifest Grabowa siem.? Plock

Modern Town & Country	Other Names	c. 1950 After WWII Town / Country	c. 1930 Between Wars Town / District / Province / Country	c. 1900 Before WWI Town / District / Province / Country	# of JGFF Entries
 <b>Płock</b> , Poland 52°33' N 19°42' E 59 miles WNW of Warszawa	Płock [Pol], Plotzk [Yid, Rus], Plozk [Ger], Schröttersburg [Ger, 1941-45], Plotsk	Płock  Poland	Płock <u>Płock</u> <u>Warszawa</u> Poland	Płock <u>Płock</u> <u>Płock</u> Russian Empire	729
<b>Number of matches = 1</b>					



The Izabelin I found in JewishGen was in Belarus. Not Joan's family. Instead...

- <https://szukajwarchiwach.pl/search?q=Izabelin%20XARCHro%3A50>

# Vital Records

- Much genealogical research focuses on vital records
- Birth, marriage, death
- Poland had an excellent vital records system beginning in the late eighteenth century
- Vital records were kept by religion
- Copies of vital records were maintained at the regional level, too.

# Googlization of search

- Trend in field toward "one search" has pluses and minuses
  - You don't have to figure out where to begin
  - You may get too many hits
- Polish archive searching is adopting "one search"
  - **Vital records (Pradziad) combined with civil registration (ELA)**
  - Contemporary records combined with historic records
  - Archival documents (correspondence, administrative records) combined with vital records, civil registration, etc.



szukajwarchiwach.pl

## Administrative records in Polish archives via SZsearch

- Polish archives contain historic documents of what comprises most of modern Poland
- Many records have been destroyed/lost
- Not organized by religion
- Not user friendly

# One Search for all Polish archives

Recently, the National Archives of Poland posted this notification: Ladies and Gentlemen, we would like to inform you that on June 29, 2018, the database and search engines:

Simple search,

SEZAM (Archive Record System SEZAM),

ELA (Population Records in ELA archives)

will be closed and will no longer be available on the websites of the Supreme Directorate of State Archives. The only source of information about the resource of a given archive is the Search in Archives service ( [www.szukajwarchiwach.pl](http://www.szukajwarchiwach.pl) ). At [www.archiwa.gov.pl](http://www.archiwa.gov.pl), the current version of the PRADZIAD database will remain

available. Source: [1] 

- ELA (Ewidencja ludności w archiwaliach ELA)

zostały zamknięte i nie będą już udostępniane na stronach Naczelnej Dyrekcji Archiwów Państwowych. Jedynym źródłem informacji o zasobie danego archiwum jest serwis Szukaj w Archiwach ([www.szukajwarchiwach.pl](http://www.szukajwarchiwach.pl)). Na stronie [www.archiwa.gov.pl](http://www.archiwa.gov.pl) pozostanie dostęp do aktualnej wersji bazy PRADZIAD.

# Scanned but not indexed



Searching phrase: **ludności**

Number of results: **928**

## Search options

- Collections
- Units +
- Items +
- Vital records and civil registers
- Only units/collections with scans

Refine

## Filters

Add filter 

15 results per page 

Sort by accuracy 

Collection: 29/89/0

Digital copies: 12350

### Spis ludności miasta Krakowa z r. 1900

1900

Archiwum Narodowe w Krakowie

Collection: 29/90/0

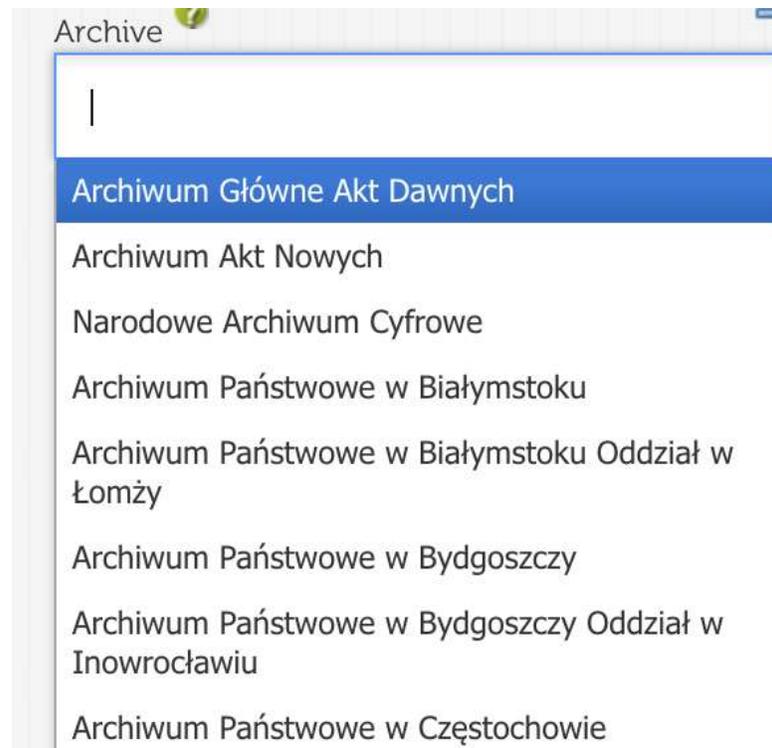
Digital copies: 19489

### Spis ludności miasta Krakowa z r. 1910

1910

Archiwum Narodowe w Krakowie

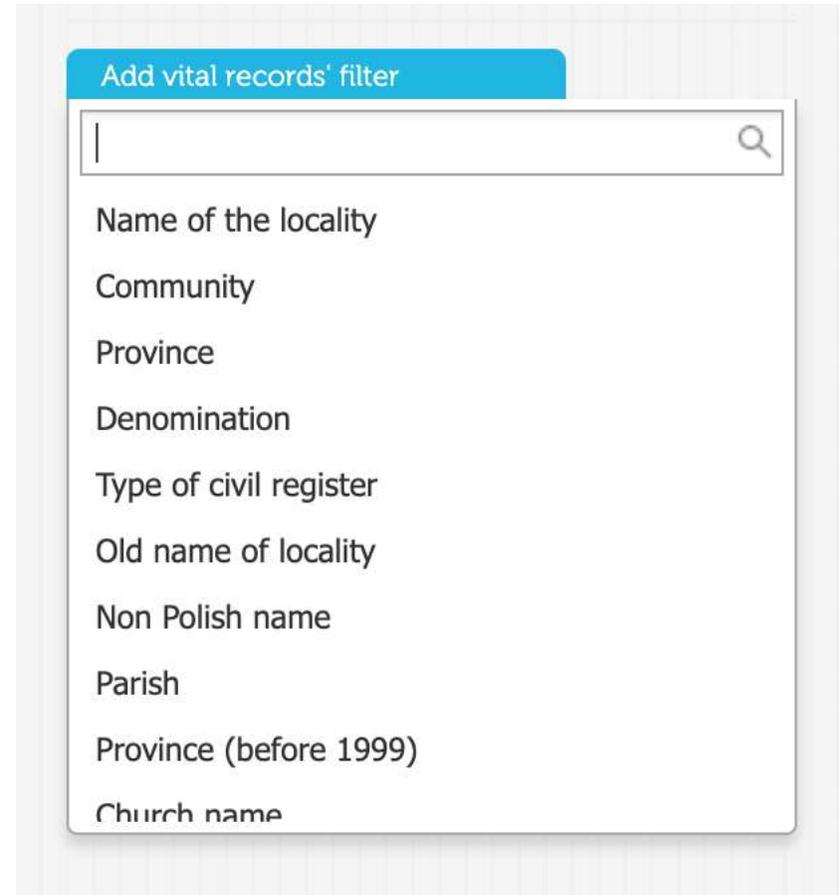
# Szsearch.pl can be searched by Archive



[https://szukajwarchiwach.pl/search?q=XDSTARTz:\[\\* TO 1912\] XDSTOPz:\[1830 TO \\*\] XTYPero:jedn XNRZESP:171 XCDNUMERU: 0 XARCH:24](https://szukajwarchiwach.pl/search?q=XDSTARTz:[* TO 1912] XDSTOPz:[1830 TO *] XTYPero:jedn XNRZESP:171 XCDNUMERU: 0 XARCH:24)

- Backup info on metrical records for Klimontow
  - Klimontow required accent
    - Klimontów (hold down key to get accent)
- Alas, scans not available online

Szsearch.pl can use Vital Records Filter for Name of the Locality, Community, Province, Denomination (i.e., religion), or Type of Civil Register



The image shows a screenshot of a web application interface. At the top, there is a blue button labeled "Add vital records' filter". Below this button is a search input field with a magnifying glass icon on the right. A dropdown menu is open, listing the following filter options:

- Name of the locality
- Community
- Province
- Denomination
- Type of civil register
- Old name of locality
- Non Polish name
- Parish
- Province (before 1999)
- Church name

# Leaving the locality blank

Add vital records' filter 

Name of the locality:  

Province:  

tarnopolskie 

Denomination:  

mojżeszowe 

Type of civil register  

urodzenia 

# Conclusions regarding SZsearch

- The current SZsearch is a work in progress.
- The archives are aware of this and trying to improve it
  - Takes time and money
  - Preservation is a higher priority than digitization
  - Search engine seems idiosyncratic
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polish\\_alphabet#Letters](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polish_alphabet#Letters)

# Family Search wiki on Poland Church Records

[https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Poland\\_Church\\_Records](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Poland_Church_Records)

## Poland Church Records

Poland → Church Records

For information about records for non-Christian religions in Poland, go to the [Religious Records](#) page.

### Contents [hide]

- 1 Definition
- 2 Time Coverage
- 3 Civil Transcripts of Church Records
  - 3.1 In the Austrian Partition (1784-1918)
  - 3.2 in the Russian Partition (1808-1918)
  - 3.3 In Prussian Poland (1794-1874)
- 4 Information Recorded in Church Registers
  - 4.1 Records of Birth and Baptism (akta urodzeń i chrztów)
  - 4.2 Marriage Intentions (zapowiedź )
  - 4.3 Marriage Records (akta małżeństwo)
  - 4.4 Records of Deaths and Burials (akta zgonów i pogrzebów)
- 5 Locating Church Records
  - 5.1 Determining the Parish
  - 5.2 Finding Aids
    - 5.2.1 Catholic Diocese Parish Inventories
- 6 Online Searchable Databases
  - 6.1 Ancestry.com
  - 6.2 Online Indexed Records
    - 6.2.1 FamilySearch Historical Records
    - 6.2.2 Regional Databases
  - 6.3 Online Browseable Images Databases
  - 6.4 Records at the FamilySearch Library
- 7 Writing for Records
  - 7.1 Local Parishes
    - 7.1.1 Parish Addresses
    - 7.1.2 How to Write the Letter
  - 7.2 Diocese Archives
    - 7.2.1 Major Religious Dioceses
      - 7.2.1.1 Catholic Dioceses
    - 7.2.2 Catholic Archives Addresses
  - 7.3 State Archives
  - 7.4 Civil Registration Offices
- 8 Search Strategies

# Locating Church Records

## Locating Church Records

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- Original Catholic records are usually found in individual parish or diocesan archives.
- Protestant records are often in state archives; some are in the possession of Evangelical Church archives or officials.
- Civil transcripts are generally kept in the local civil registration offices (Urząd Stanu Cwilnego) for 100 years; then they are transferred to state archives.

## Determining the Parish

To use church records, you must know the town and religion of your ancestor. You must also determine the parish that your ancestor's town belonged to so that you will know which parish registers to search. Your ancestor may have lived in village that was part of a parish located in a nearby larger town. Over time, some villages may have belonged to more than one parish as jurisdictions changed.

- Use [Kartenmeister](#) to find the Polish and German province, county, Catholic parish, Lutheran parish, and Standesamt (civil registration office), if the town was in the area of Poland once controlled by Prussia.
- Use [Meyer's 1871 Gazetteer Online](#) to find information on towns in the area of Poland once controlled by Prussia. Click on the "Map" option to see the 1871 map of the town in its region with parishes indicated, and the current Google map.
- If the town was in the area of Poland once controlled by Russia or Austria, look it up in [Skorowidz Gazetteer Online](#) to find the parishes of various religions. Here are the [instructions](#). Use the second option, "Viewing anywhere via the Digital Library of Wielkopolska".

# Archives **beyond vital records**— Registers of Population

- **Book of permanent residents (see next slide)**
- Census records (would be similar to what we are familiar with)
- Military records
- Tax records
- Parish records
  - [https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Poland\\_Church\\_Records#Determining\\_the\\_Parish](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Poland_Church_Records#Determining_the_Parish)

# Search Szsearch (=szukajwarchiwach.pl) for vital and civil records

should be able to search for *Księgi Ludności (Book of Residents)*,  
*etc.*

<https://szukajwarchiwach.pl/11/53/0 - tabSerie>

e.g.,

<https://szukajwarchiwach.pl/search?q=XSERIA%3AKsi%C4%99gi%20Ludno%C5%9Bci%20XSKANro%3At&order=>

Collection: 11/715/0	Digital copies: 11800
<b>Urząd Stanu Cywilnego Opatów</b>	
1874-1917	
History of the creator	Urzędy stanu cywilnego w Prusach wprowadzono na mocy ustawy z 9 marca 1874 r. o prowadzeniu rejestrów stanu cywilnego i zawieraniu małżeństw (obowiązujące) od 1 października t.r.). Wprowadzała ona w Królestwie Pruskim powszechną i świecką rejestrację urodzeń, małżeństw oraz zgonów. (...) państwo pruskie podzielono na obwody (Standesamtsbezirke), obejmujące jedną lub kilka gmin, w zależności od gęstości zaludnienia. Akta stanu cywilnego rejestrowano w trzech osobnych rejestrach (urodzeń, małżeństw i zgonów) w dwóch egzemplarzach. Pierwopis (Haupt-Register) zostawał w USC, wtóropis (Neben-Register) przekazywano na przechowywanie do właściwego Sądu Obwodowe(...)
Archiwum Państwowe w Kaliszu	

# Search for Book of Residents Krakow

szukajwarchiwach.pl/search?q=Księgi%2FSpis%20Ludności%20XSKANo%3A1&order=

PUL DB PUL Book Express SFX LIR 2019 PU Gmail Google Scholar NYT Search archives Headspace Asu

Archival resources online szukajwarchiwach.pl

Księgi/Spis Ludności Search Clear

Searching phrase: **Księgi/Spis Ludności** Number of results: **217**

Search options

- Collections
- Units +
- Items +
- Vital records and civil registers
- Only units/collections with scans

Filters

- Add filter
- Add collection filter
- Add units filter
- Add items filter
- Add vital records filter

Denomination

10 items back

15 results per page Sort by accuracy

Jednostka arkowa: 259030/034	Digital copies: 575
<b>Indeks do ksiąg spisu ludności 1910, Litera G</b>	
1910	
Nazwa zespołu	Spis ludności miasta Krakowa z r. 1910
Archiwum Narodowe w Krakowie	
Jednostka arkowa: 259030/034	Digital copies: 403
<b>Indeks do ksiąg spisu ludności 1910, Litera M</b>	
1910	
Nazwa zespołu	Spis ludności miasta Krakowa z r. 1910
Archiwum Narodowe w Krakowie	
Jednostka arkowa: 259030/040	Digital copies: 403
<b>Indeks do ksiąg spisu ludności 1910, Litera P</b>	
1910	
Nazwa zespołu	Spis ludności miasta Krakowa z r. 1910
Archiwum Narodowe w Krakowie	

# Did I find out which of the Saul Lichtmann's is my grandfather?

- For personal reasons, I didn't go to Ukraine and headed home
- Had to change my plane ticket and spent two extra days in Warsaw
- Ended up accompanying a man I'd met at the AGAD archives to the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw. He had an appointment to meet with a researcher there.



# What did I learn from my trip?

- The breakthrough came when Anya at JHI said that February 1889 may have been written as II/1889 and picked up as November.
- I followed through from there and assumed that the Saul Lichtmann born 1889 was my grandfather. Using this info, I was able to rule out the other Saul Lichtman. This was later confirmed by my contact with the Canadian Lichtmans.
- There's still a Saul Lichtmann who married a Sara Lichtmann in Vienna in 1914. I can't rule out that this wasn't my grandfather.

# Summary and Conclusions

- I have made very slow progress, but it is my quest.
- It was helpful to hear the names of Polish places non-stop for a week
- I wouldn't have been able to give this talk if I hadn't gone.
- I will go to Bilshivtsi and the Ukranian archives sometime soon, but not without a translator.

# Additional Sources

- Bussgang (2000) on Books of Residents  
<http://www.afamilytreeguide-chicago.info/Documents/Polish%20books%20of%20residents%20article.pdf>
- Bussgang's handout on sources  
[http://jgsgb.org/pdfs/Polish\\_Resources-Bussgang.pdf](http://jgsgb.org/pdfs/Polish_Resources-Bussgang.pdf)
- Polish vocab [https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Polish\\_Genealogical\\_Word\\_List](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Polish_Genealogical_Word_List)
- Step-by-step on how to use digitized records on the Polish State Archives' website  
[https://s3.amazonaws.com/ps-services-us-east-1-914248642252/s3/research-wiki-elasticsearch-prod-s3bucket/images/a/af/Polish\\_State\\_Archives.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/ps-services-us-east-1-914248642252/s3/research-wiki-elasticsearch-prod-s3bucket/images/a/af/Polish_State_Archives.pdf)
- JRI guide to using Polish National Digital Archives (precursor to SZsearch) [https://jri-poland.org/help/NDA\\_Guide.pdf](https://jri-poland.org/help/NDA_Guide.pdf)
- SEZAM <http://baza.archiwa.gov.pl/sezam/ela.php?l=en>
- Archives Portal Europe <https://www.archivesportaleurope.net/ead-display/-/ead/pl/aicode/PL-21/type/hg/id/06>
- JRI-Poland's Galician vital record titles translated  
[http://jri-poland.org/galicia/GalicianVitalRecords\\_Titles\\_Nov2002.pdf](http://jri-poland.org/galicia/GalicianVitalRecords_Titles_Nov2002.pdf)