

Polish Books of Residents and Other Lesser-Known Sources

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When vital (metrical) records are missing for the towns you are researching in Poland, there are other sources that may give you the information you seek. Listed below are several examples of such sources, what they might contain, and where they can be found (see addresses on last page).

1) **Books of Residents/Residents Lists** (*Księgi Ludności, Spis Mieszkańców*). These records, usually bound in huge volumes, are found in Polish regional state archives. If the books have survived for the towns you are researching, you can get an enormous amount of information from them. Unlike a census, Books of Residents are ongoing registrations, spanning a number of years, recording the comings and goings of the permanent residents of a community. Organized by house number or address, they contain some or all of the following information for each household: name of resident, sex, names of parents (including maiden name of mother), place and date of birth, marital status (single, married, widowed), social status (peasant, town dweller, nobility), religion, occupation, and previous residence.

Sometimes, a name may have been crossed out at a later date. If so, the reason is given in the "Notes" column. For example, if a daughter had married and moved out, the date and place of her marriage, the name of her husband, and the registration number of the marriage document might be listed. If a person had died, the date and place of death would be shown. If the person had moved, the new city or address or house number was often noted. A man's military status might be given—in the army, in the reserves, etc.

The time period covered by the books may vary from community to community. From the mid 1800s until 1931, all communities in the Kingdom of Poland were required to maintain Books of Residents. In Kraków, Books of Residents exist from the 1850s onward. However, rather than being continually updated, as in the Kingdom of Poland, they recorded data every ten years or so, like a census. Maiden names and names of parents were not included. [Books of Residents of the city of Kraków sometimes include the Jewish quarter, Kazimierz, and/or the suburb of Podgórze (where many Jews lived), but for some years, books for these areas are separate. In addition, people living in Kraków who were not permanent residents (*obcy*) were sometimes listed in separate books.]

Until recently, it has been difficult to find out which Books of Residents have been preserved for particular towns and what dates are covered by them. However, the Polish State Archives now offers this information, both on a CD-Rom that can be purchased and on their website (see below).

2) **Registration Books** (*Księgi Meldunkowe/Księgi Rejestru*) or **Books for Population Mobility Control** (*Księgi Kontroli Ruchu Ludności*). These books replaced the *Księgi Ludności*, beginning in 1932. They contain information similar to the Books of Residents, except that they are organized by surname rather than by house number or address and include all residents of a community, not just those who have their permanent legal residence there. These volumes are also housed in regional state archives.

3) **Survivor Lists**. Located in the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw (*Żydowski Instytut Historyczny*), these lists contain the names of thousands of Jewish survivors who were registered after the war all over Poland plus many lists of Polish Jews registered elsewhere, e.g., in DP camps or in Swedish rehabilitation centers. The lists contain name, birth date, names of parents, address before the war, and address when registered. Unfortunately, this information is not always accurate or complete.

4) **Ghetto Lists:**

a) **Łódź Ghetto**. A list of Łódź Ghetto inhabitants, originally kept by the Germans, can be found in several places, including the headquarters of Former Lodz Residents in Tel Aviv, Yad Vashem, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, and the University of Toronto Robarts Library. The list shows name, birth date, place of residence, and all changes of places of residence. It also shows date of death if it occurred in the ghetto and sometimes date of deportation. By comparing addresses of people with the same last

name, it may be possible to reconstruct family living units. Yad Vashem has recently made this list available online. It can be accessed through JewishGen or through the Yad Vashem Central Database of Victims of the Shoah (see Useful Addresses below). The database can be searched not only for surname but for any word, making it possible to find people for whom you know only a first name or address.

b) Other ghettos. The Polish State Archives in Kraków have copies of applications for *Kennkarten* (wartime identity cards). Information about the inhabitants of ghettos in Białystok, Łódź, Kraków, and Warsaw are located in the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw. At the Institute, there are also cards documenting deaths of Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto. These cards often have photos.

5) **Records of Jewish Communities** (*Kahał* or *Gmina Żydowska*). Jewish community records for many towns are located in the Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw (Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych–AGAD) at 7 Długa Street, in the collection called “CWW” (Centralne Władze Wyznaniowe Królestwa Polskiego). The time frame for most of these records is mid to late nineteenth century.

Jewish communities had their own form of self-government within the Polish state. These *gmina* (community) records are mostly concerned with building and maintaining synagogues, assessing and collecting contributions, and electing rabbis—sometimes, with resolving disputes. For the genealogist, these records may be useful simply in placing someone in a given community at a given time. When there was an election for a rabbi, all the adult male synagogue members (female members, if heads of household) were usually listed with how they voted.

6) **Synagogue Records**. These 20th century records, found in the Jewish Historical Institute, are for a limited number of communities (see Useful References # 2 below). A list of members shows not only the names and what contributions they made to the synagogue each year but may also show the address where they lived. By looking at a series of addresses, one can often infer who is related to whom. The lists usually did not show ages, however, and women were often not included.

7) **Notary Records**. Each notary kept his own books, so there may be many such records for a given community. Preserved in regional state archives, these records may contain prenuptial agreements, wills, business agreements, summonses (e.g., for non payment of rent), documentation of loans, validation of matriculation, etc.—any kind of a situation in which one might need to have an official certification that something took place.

8) **Cemetery Records**. These exist for a very limited number of communities. Kraków, Łódź, and Warsaw are known to have partial lists of people buried there, maintained by the present-day Jewish community in each of these cities. There is also a book published in Łódź in 1938, *Stary Cmentarz Żydowski w Łodzi* (Old Jewish Cemetery in Łódź), which contains information about individuals buried there. A copy of this book can be found in YIVO in New York. The Jagiellonian University in Kraków has put out a book, published in 1995 in Kraków by the Judaica Foundation, on the Jewish cemetery in Pilica, describing each grave and documenting the inscription written on the tombstone. The JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry (www.jewishgen.org/databases/cemetery/) is seeking to document more of these cemeteries.

9) **Księgi adresowe** (Address Books/Business Directories). *Księgi adresowe*, found in regional archives, are similar to city directories. Each volume may be somewhat different but in general contains: 1) lists of individuals by occupation and 2) lists of heads of household within the city, noting address and occupation. Sections in newer volumes of *księgi adresowe* may have telephone numbers, addresses of city offices, schools, institutions, and sanatoriums, as well as house owners, listed by street. What volumes are available and where they can be found is absolutely hit or miss. For example, the Kraków Archives contain the following *księgi adresowe*: i) Kraków: some volumes include the suburb of Podgórze (1892, 1905, 1908, 1909 [1908 & 1909 also include Lwów]), others are of Kraków alone (1926, 1929–30, 1932, 1933–34); ii) Lwów: (1898, 1901, 1902); and iii) Warsaw: (1937–38).

To search for surnames in several Polish business directories that have been digitized, see Logan Kleinwaks’ “Search Engine for Online Historical Directories” at <<http://www.kalter.org/search.php>>.

10) **Kalendarze** (Calendars). Found in regional state archives, *kalendarze* were business directories published every year or so in cities like Łódź. Much like our Yellow Pages, they contained a list of businesses, organized by trade and by location, as well as advertisements.

11) **Almanacs**. These are most likely to be found in libraries. An *Almanach Żydowski*, edited by Herman Stachel, was published in Lwów in 1937, a Jewish *Who's Who* of Lwów. There are copies of it at the *Biblioteka Narodowa* (National Library) in Warsaw and at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków. YIVO in New York has a photocopy. This book lists information about Jews living in and around Lwów who were prominent and active in literature, art, music, sports, business, finance, political and religious life, and institutions of culture or charity. There are short biographies, sometimes accompanied by photographs. How many such books exist for other communities is difficult to determine, but it is worth inquiring for the towns or area you are researching.

12) **Identity Cards** (*Zaświadczenia o tożsamości*) and **Passports** (*Paszporty*). Copies of applications for the issuance of identity cards and passports can be found in regional state archives from the period between the world wars. They usually contain a photograph of the applicant.

13) **Physician Records**. Found in the Central Library of Physicians in Warsaw (see address below), these records may give clues to published articles or obituaries, which can then be found in other libraries.

14) **Military Records**. Records for those who served in the Polish army can be found in the Military Archives in Warsaw. The Military Archives in Vienna have records of those who served in the Austrian army, and the Ministry of Defence (*sic*) in Great Britain has records of those who served in the Free Polish Forces under British command during World War II (see addresses below).

Some Useful References

1. "Po mieczu i po kądzieli," CD-ROM, Naczelna Dyrekcja Archiwów Państwowych, Warsaw, 2003. Catalogue of holdings of Polish State Archives relevant to genealogical research.
2. Bussgang, Fay, "Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw," *Avotaynu* 10, no. 1 (Spring 1994). List of main archival holdings, including names of communities for which there are records.
3. Bussgang, Fay Vogel, "How to Pronounce and Recognize Your Polish Town and Family Names," <<http://www.jewishgen.org/InfoFiles/poland/PronunciationGuide.pdf>>.
4. Bussgang, Julian, "The Polish Concept of Permanent Place of Residence," and Bussgang, Fay, "More about Polish Books of Residents," *Avotaynu* 16, no. 3 (Fall 2000): 12–15.
5. Dobroszycki, Lucjan, *The Chronicle of the Łódź Ghetto 1941–1944*, Yale University Press, 1984. Day by day events in ghetto. Index of names.
6. Falstein, Louis, editor, *The Martyrdom of Jewish Physicians in Poland*, published for Medical Alliance, Association of Jewish Physicians from Poland, Exposition Press, New York 1963. Lists names, describes circumstances of death of Polish-Jewish physicians killed during World War II.
7. Kowalski, Isaac, editor, *Anthology of Armed Jewish Resistance 1939–1945*, Jewish Combatants Publishers House, Brooklyn, N.Y., four volumes, published 1985–1992. Individual stories of people involved in uprisings, partisan warfare, etc. Index of names in each volume.
8. Lewin, Abraham, *A Cup of Tears: a Diary of the Warsaw Ghetto*, edited by Antony Polonsky, Basil Blackwell, London, 1988. Day by day account of activities in the ghetto. Index of names.
9. Meirtchak, Benjamin, *Jewish Military Casualties in the Polish Armies in World War II*, Tel Aviv, five volumes, 1994–1999. Contain name, rank, date and place of birth and death, burial place.
10. Sack, Sallyann Amdur, and Mokotoff, Gary, editors, *Avotaynu Guide to Jewish Genealogy*, Avotaynu, Bergenfield, NJ, 2004. Comprehensive guide covering many aspects of Jewish genealogy.
11. Śliwowska, W., editor, *The Last Eyewitnesses: Children of the Holocaust Speak*, vol. 1, translated by Julian and Fay Bussgang, Northwestern University Press, 1998/2000. Sixty-five war-time accounts of child survivors still living in Poland. Index of names and places. Volume 2, edited by Gutenbaum and Latała, with thirty-three new accounts, issued September 2005. Index of names and places.
12. Weiner, Miriam, *Jewish Roots in Poland: Pages from the Past and Archival Inventories*, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York, 1997. Online at: <www.rtrfoundation.org/>.

Useful Addresses for Polish Records

1. **JRI-Poland** (indexes to Polish vital records and how to order): <www.jri-poland.org/>.
2. **Naczelna Dyrekcja Archiwów Państwowych**, (Polish State Archives–PSA), ul. Długa 6, skrytka pocztowa Nr 1005, 00-950 Warsaw, Poland. Main office. Regional branches contain:
 - Metrical records (birth, marriage, death) over 100 years old for communities now in Poland/formerly in Galicia.
 - Books of Residents/Population Registers (*Księgi Ludności, Karta Meldunkowa, Rejestr Mieszkańców*).
 - Notary Records; *Kalendarze; Księgi Adresowe*.
 - *Kahał* (Jewish Community) Records from Kingdom of Poland—in “CWW” collection (Warsaw AGAD).
 - *Kennkarte* (Wartime I.D.) applications from Kraków ghetto (Kraków Archives).For list of metrical records and population registers (including *Księgi Ludności*), see <www.archiwa.gov.pl>. Click on English version. Click on databases. Choose Vital Records (PRADZIAD) or Registers of Population (ELA). For ELA, enter town name in “*Tytuł Spisu . . .*” Results will be in Polish. Can get addresses of regional archives at this site. PRADZIAD & ELA also on CD-Rom (for PC) “*Po mieczu i po kądzieli*.” Order from PSA.
3. **Urząd Stanu Cywilnego** (Civil Registration Office–USC): Metrical records less than 100 years old.
 - USC Warszawa-Śródmieście (for Central Warsaw), ul. Jezuicka 1/3, Warsaw. Tel. 48/22/831-01-60.
 - Archiwum Zabuzzańskie (beyond the Bug River—former provinces of Galicia now in Ukraine), ul. Smyczkowa 14, 02-687 Warsaw (Mokotów), Tel. 48/22/847-48-21.
 - USC Łódź, Al. Piłsudskiego 100, 92-326 Łódź, Tel. 48/42/92-326.
 - USC Kraków, ul. Lubelska 27, 30-003 Kraków, Tel. 48/12/633-55-66.To search for addresses of other USCs in Polish Yellow Pages, go to <www.pkt.pl/index.php?lang=eng>. Type in “Stanu Cywilnego” in “keyword.” Select correct *województwo* (province). Type in town name if there are no diacritics in it. Otherwise, use pull-down list. Scroll down to see address of USC.
4. **Żydowski Instytut Historyczny–ŻIH**, (Jewish Historical Institute–JHI).
ul. Tłomackie 3/5, 00-090 Warsaw. Tel. 48/22/827-83-72. <www.jewishinstitute.org.pl/>.
 - Survivors Lists—Polish Jews registered in 1946–47, some outside Poland.
 - Computerized Database of Survivors (Lauder Foundation Genealogy Project).
 - Pre-World War II *Gmina* (Jewish Community) Records of certain towns [see Useful References # 2].
 - Some metrical records and related documents [see JRI-Poland for extracts].
 - Deaths in Warsaw Ghetto. • Records of Jewish organizations, mostly postwar.
 - Individual wartime testimonies and memoirs.
5. **Główna Biblioteka Lekarska**, (Central Medical Library, Special Collections Department),
ul. Jazdów 6, 00-476 Warsaw. Tel. 48/22/849-74-96, 849-78-51/2/3. <www.gbl.waw.pl/>.
 - Registry of physicians and pharmacologists, personal data and medical articles by/about them.
6. **Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe**, (Central Military Archive), ul. Czerwonych Beretów bl. 124,
00-910 Warszawa-Rembertów. Tel. 48/22/681-32-02, Fax 681-46-37. <www.caw.wp.mil.pl/>.
 - Information about those who served in the Polish army.
7. **Ministry of Defence CS (RM)** 2c, Bourne Avenue, Hayes, Middlesex UB3 1RF, England.
Tel. 44/ 870-607-4455. <www.mod.uk>.
 - Info on those who served in Polish army in the West during World War II (Anders Army, British army, etc.).
8. **Österreich Staatsarchiv/Kriegsarchiv**, Nottendorfergasse 2, A-1030 Vienna, Austria,
Tel. 43/1/79540-0. <www.oesta.gv.at/ebestand/ekv/efr1_kv.htm>.
 - Information about those who served in the Austrian army.
9. **Lodz Ghetto Database**: <www.jewishgen.org/databases/Poland/LodzGhetto.html>.
10. **Yad Vashem Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names**:
<http://names.yadvashem.org/lwp/workplace/IY_HON_Entrance>.
11. **Yizkor Book Translations**: <www.JewishGen.org/Yizkor/>. Click on “Read Translations.”
 - Information about various towns, necrologies.
12. **Jewish Community of Poland**: <www.jewish.org.pl/index-en.html>.
13. **Dan Kazez**: <www.benkazez.com/dan/crarg/>. Various projects, lists of victims and survivors.
14. **Index of Polish citizens repressed in the USSR**: <www.indeks.karta.org.pl/wyszukiwanie.asp>.