

2018 SGGEE Convention
Calgary, Alberta
July 27-29, 2018

Navigating Online Record Databases in Poland

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Sources for verifying parishes and locations and searching SGGEE databases:

SGGEE Databases: Master Pedigree Database (MPD), Parish Records Index (PRI), Lodz Trinity Index, and Volhynian Databases are easily accessed from the home page under Members Only:

<https://www.sggee.org/>

The Lublin Project is separate and has its own instructions:

https://www.sggee.org/research/parishes/lublin_records/lublinsearchinstruct.html

These Databases all include some name indexes as well basic information about birth, marriage and death records. Links to scans are provided for some AGAD Volhynia parish records in the St. Petersburg records and to FamilySearch records for Lublin parish. Detailed information for information in the MPD or PRI about record sources can be requested from databases-sggee@googlegroups.com

Information on Parishes in Poland & Volhynia: <https://www.sggee.org/research/parish.html>

SGGEE has compiled information on parishes and links to known records held in various archives, including those which are available in scans. The links on this page are invaluable. The history of Evangelical/Lutheran parishes in Poland is complex and the following page provides an alphabetical list with known links:

https://www.sggee.org/research/parishes/church_parishes/LutheransInRusPoland.html

Note that links to scans may be in various databases: FamilySearch (digitized from microfilms or new photographs) or from several online databases in Poland. Access methods will differ for each. Please report any discoveries of new links or scanned records to databases-sggee@googlegroups.com

Locating parishes & map resources:

SGGEE resources for maps & gazetteers: https://www.sggee.org/research/village_maps.html

Note that Jerry Frank's maps of 19th century Russian Poland are based on several sources of historical maps, providing the locations for many villages which have disappeared. His maps are available to Members online & can be used in conjunction with a modern Poland road map to look for existing nearby towns: https://www.sggee.org/research/village_maps.html

For instructions on how to use the Russian Poland historical maps compiled by Jerry Frank, see the following page:

<https://www.sggee.org/SGGEE2009/members/PDFMaps/poland/WebMapInstructPoland.html>

FamilySearch history on Poland, historical maps, parishes:

Page with many kinds of research tools, including maps, history & translation resources:

https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Poland_Genealogy

Good general information on parishes, their history, terms used for birth, marriage, death records:

https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Poland_Church_Records

Look here to determine where records in various parts of Poland are located:

https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Poland_Church_Records#Locating_Church_Records

NOTE: All of these sources in Poland refer to predominantly Roman Catholic records; however, there are comments or links related to Protestant records. As we know, LDS filmed many Evangelical Lutheran records in Poland. This page also includes some specialized regional databases as well as links to all the known online databases. FamilySearch has tutorials for learning how to use some of them.

Online Databases in Poland

Searchable databases which have been indexed by volunteers (some link to images; others have only indexed information):

<http://geneteka.genealodzy.pl/> **Geneteka** is maintained by the Polish Genealogical Society in Poland and includes records indexed by their volunteers. Membership dues and donations pay for hosting this and other databases which are free to the public to use. Parish and civil records, including some from Evangelical parishes, are included. Geneteka links to scans hosted by other sites, generally Metryki, Szukajwarchiwach, or FamilySearch. An excellent three-part tutorial on using Geneteka and all its features can be found on the following blog:

<https://fromshepherdsandshoemakers.com/2018/04/23/a-step-by-step-guide-to-using-geneteka-part-i/> Julie Roberts Szczepankiewicz writes articles about how to research Catholic families in Poland, but her examples and search strategies will be easily adaptable to any group found in Polish records.

www.ancestry.com (subscription) has the following searchable databases (incomplete):
Eastern Prussian Provinces, Germany [Poland], Selected Civil Vitals, 1874-1945
Germany, Prussia, Brandenburg and Posen, Select Church Book Duplicates, 1794-1874
Brandenburg, Germany, Transcripts of Church Records, 1700-1874

Online indexed records with some links to images:

FamilySearch historical records for Catholic parishes in Lublin, Radom, Tarnow, & Prussia, Posen, Pomerania and Brandenburg: see links here:

https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Poland_Church_Records#Locating_Church_Records

The page also has links to specific regional databases with browsable images but without indexing. Included are the following regions: Przemysl, Rzeszow, Lublin (Catholic & Jewish), Pomerania (Pommern), Poznan (Posen) and Upper Silesia.

Useful regional database for SGGEE members:

Poznan Marriage Indexing Project maintained by Łukasz Bielecki in Poland and volunteers around the world includes Protestant and Catholic marriages for the Duchy of Poznan (Posen): <http://poznan-project.psnc.pl/>

Online browsable images databases:

Archion: Evangelical Central Archives in Berlin (subscription) can be browsed free but searching and examining/downloading records is by subscription only. This includes records for former Prussian localities: <https://www.archion.de/de/suche/>

Szukaj w Archiwach (The Polish Archives): <https://szukajwarchiwach.pl/>

Has both parish and civil records as well as historical documents about parishes. Records include all religious groups who had to report vital statistics in Poland. For Russian Poland regions, records will be in Cyrillic between 1868 and 1917. Some records will be in German or Latin as well as Polish. Any indexes are found as written in the documents. FamilySearch has a tutorial available. Some of the records in this database are linked from the Geneteka indexes.

<http://metryki.genealodzy.pl/> **Metryki Genealodzy** was created by the Polish Genealogical Society in Poland and Geneteka links to some of their records. But using the site directly yield additional data. The homepage map is interactive so you can search by province or you can use the search box to find a parish if you don't know which province to select. Each result shows parish divisions with a range of dates. Here is a link to a good tutorial by Julie Szczepankiewicz on using this database: <https://fromshepherdsandshoemakers.com/2016/06/20/step-by-step-guide-to-finding-vital-records-in-metryki-genealodzy-pl/>

Metryki GenBaza has scans to parish and civil records in Pomerania, Posen, Silesia, and West Prussia. Most are Catholic or "mixed", but the Evangelical ones are coded "ew." The records come from the state archives in Warszawa, Kielce, Koszalin, Sandomierz, Grodzisk, Pultusk, and Lodz and the Catholic archive in Kielce. You have access to more records if you register with the site:

<http://metryki.genbaza.pl/en>

Registration instructions can be found here: <http://mypomerania.com/registering-for-metryki-genbaza-pl/> (They don't make it easy, but it's worth it.)

AGAD (Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych w Warszawie) includes some Greek, Roman Catholic, Evangelical/Lutheran, Baptist, Mennonite, and Jewish records in Poland & Volhynia:

<http://www.agad.gov.pl/inwentarze/testy.html>

SGGEE volunteers have indexed many which are in the St. Petersburg Database; some have links to scans in AGAD if you search our Members Only database:

<https://www.sggee.org/SGGEE2009/members/StPeteMember.html>

FamilySearch

Poland – Evangelical Church books: Baptist, Evangelical, Greek Catholic

<https://familysearch.org/search/collection/2564996?collectionNameFilter=true>

This site includes the available Lublin Project Database images as well as some Baptist birth records near Lublin and Siedlce. The only indexes are those found within the records themselves.

To find microfilmed records in FamilySearch which are now available digitally, use the catalog search feature or old microfilm number. Otherwise, search by place-name. Both can be done here:

<https://www.familysearch.org/catalog/search> Register with FamilySearch to have access to records. If browsing is not available from home, you must visit a FHC or affiliate library where you may get a password to use your own computer or one of theirs.

Polish word list for searching parish records online

birth	urodzin, urodzony, urodzi,ł sie zrodzony
burial	pochowanie, pogrzeb
Catholic	rzymsko-katolicki
child	dziecię, dziecko
christening	chrzest, chrzciny, ochrzczone
death(s)	Zgony/ów, zejść, umarł , zmarł , śmierci
father	ojciec
husband	mąż, małżonek
index	indeks, skorowidz, register, spis
Jewish	żydowski, starozakonny, izraelici, mojżeszowy
marriage	małżeństw(o), ślub(ów), zaślubionych
marriage bans	zapowiedzi
mother	matka
name, given	imię, imion
name, surname	nazwisko
Orthodox	prawosławne
parents	rodzice
parish	parafia
Protestant	ewangelicki, reformowany, protestancki, luterański
Province	teren
Synagogue, temple	bóżnica
wife	żona, małżonka, zamena, kobieźta
year	rok, lat

Common search term definitions used if there is no English interface

all locations	Wszystkie Miejscowości
range of years	zakres lat
remarks	uwagi
relationship search	wyszukaj jako para
exact search	wyszukiwanie dokładne
zoom in (enlarge)	powiększ
zoom out (shrink)	pomniejszy
next photo	następny zdjęcie
previous photo	poprzedni zdjęcie
download photo	pobierz zdjęcie

Strategies & Tips

- Collect data on extended family, especially to verify locations. Check against SGGEE parish maps for possible archives.
- Become familiar with databases by searching first for known records, then looking for siblings or relatives in the parish.
- Use any English interface to become familiar with tools – but remember that the Polish interface will be faster & have more results (the web software platform behind a search is complex).
- Use Polish spellings of names unless you are restricting a search to an Evangelical parish (Polish spellings are still common).
- Watch your browser! Example: Google Chrome will automatically translate pages—that includes names. Your results won't match what is in the records. Also, if a website or database is freezing or not working right, try a different browser.
- Search indexed databases for the “big picture”: SGGEE MPD or PRI or Lublin Project, FamilySearch, Ancestry, Poznan Project, & “Geneteka.” However, remember: indexes by volunteers are not complete & they do not know your family.
- When you find direct scan links that reveal your parish, look there for more records.
- Develop a search strategy & open a notepad file, pasting search results with url links, parish or archive notes, “infodot” remarks, etc. as you search. Follow the links & download records later in another “session.” Focus either on the search or on the results to be more productive.
- Create folders or family subfolders for each online archive to hold downloads. If you rename the record, you'll still know where you found it. You can put urls and notes in a Word document on the family. But those urls can “break” & the record won't be found.

Saving and Sourcing Online Records

- Main source is the online Database where you downloaded the record, e.g. metryki.genealodzy.pl, metryki.genbaza.pl, szukajarchiwach.pl, FamilySearch.org, Ancestry.com.
- Detail includes province, parish, b/m/or d with year, & record #; film number if there is one. Anyone can then find the record even if the url for the online image changes or breaks.
- Downloads include a whole page. Save an edited or cropped version of the record you need and name it. It will be larger & easier to read. If the record continues across two pages, save the parts as A & B.
- **Learn some basic Polish, Cyrillic, German & Latin. This is absolutely necessary even just to find the right record!**