

# Finding and Understanding Bubbe and Zayde's Galician Vital Records

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

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 as substantial projects and information relevant to research in Galicia.

Galicia was a region of the Austrian Empire acquired during 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 1784. The system that was established did not function for Jewish recordkeeping 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. JRI-Poland has a file with a few examples of form headings translated to English. This file is online in the new JRI-Poland website at [https://www.jri-poland.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/GalicianVitalRecords\\_Titles\\_Nov2002.pdf](https://www.jri-poland.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/GalicianVitalRecords_Titles_Nov2002.pdf).

Records before 1877 usually have minimal information. Starting in 1877, records 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 marriage is a very critical issue for Galician researchers. See the section on this later in this handout. Civil marriage records usually note the occurrence of previous civil events. Death records have less valuable information. Many death records only document 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.

## An Overview of Jewish Vital Records from Galician Poland

Years	up to 1772	1772-1783	1784-1788	1789-1876	1877-1918	1918-1938	1939-1942
Galicia was part of	Kingdom of Poland	Austrian Empire				Republic of Poland	
Responsibility to Maintain	No Civil Records		Catholic Church	Jewish Community	Jewish Community on behalf of Austrian or Polish Government		
Language			Latin	Mainly Polish	Polish or German	Polish	
<b>For Birth Records in Archives in Poland including AGAD</b>							
Location of Registers			None found in Catholic Registers	AGAD, Warsaw		USC Warsaw	
JRI-Poland Indexing				AGAD Polish State Archives Project		Not Available for Indexing	
<b>For Marriage and Death Records in Archives in Poland including AGAD</b>							
Location of Registers			None found in Catholic Registers	AGAD, Warsaw		USC Warsaw	
JRI-Poland Indexing				AGAD Polish State Archives Project		Not Available for Indexing	
<b>For All Vital Records in Archives in Ukraine</b>							
			None found in Catholic Registers	Ukraine State Archive in Lviv FamilySearch has microfilmed and digitized Gesher Galicia is indexing			
To determine whether records exist and where they can be located				Use the Archive Database at Miriam Weiner's Routes to Roots Foundation website <a href="http://www.rtrfoundation.org/">http://www.rtrfoundation.org/</a>			
To check the availability from AGAD Archives and status of indexing				Check with AGAD Archive Coordinator <a href="mailto:AGAD@jri-poland.org">AGAD@jri-poland.org</a>			
<b>Glossary</b>							
AGAD, Archiwum Glowne Akt Dawnych (Central Archive of Historical Records) in Warsaw							
USC, Urzad Stanu Cywilnego (Civil Registry Office) in Warsaw Houses births up to 100 years old and marriages/deaths up to 80 years old							

### 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 God. 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) were 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 God 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 were 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.

If the parents had a civil marriage ceremony after the birth of the child, the marriage information may then be subsequently 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, allowing researchers to obtain a copy or 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 [https://www.szukajwarchiwach.gov.pl/en/strona\\_glowna](https://www.szukajwarchiwach.gov.pl/en/strona_glowna). A guide for using this website can be found at [https://www.jri-poland.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/NDA\\_Guide-1.pdf](https://www.jri-poland.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/NDA_Guide-1.pdf) and a second guide at [https://www.jri-poland.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Guide\\_to\\_Images\\_Linked\\_by\\_JRI-1.pdf](https://www.jri-poland.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Guide_to_Images_Linked_by_JRI-1.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 4165 covering years through 1918 for births and 1939 for marriages/deaths. The list of digitized Jewish vital records in Fond 300 can be found on the AGAD website at <http://www.agad.gov.pl/inwentarze/Mojz300x.xml>. Information about Fond 300 records can be found on the Geshher Galicia website at <https://www.geshhergalicia.org/agad/>. The best way to find your town's records is to search the Geshher Galicia inventories at <https://www.geshhergalicia.org/inventory/>. You should search by Town (locality) with options to narrow the search by Archive, years, and record types (categories).

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.

When you search the Geshher Galicia database, the search results show the record set where the subject record is found and the archive where the record is housed. If images exist for the subject record, they are made available **only to members of Geshher Galicia** through the inventory search webpage <https://www.geshhergalicia.org/inventory/>.

The Krakow Archive website <https://ank.gov.pl/en/what-we-do/records-and-access/records-online/> has links to some record images on the National Digital Archive (NDA) website. Jewish records can be identified by the words *Bozniczego*, *Izraelickiego*, and *Mojzeszego*.

Some Jewish vital records from the Krakow Archive (and its subsidiary Archives) as well as the Przemysl Archive and Rzeszow Archive (and its Sanok Archive) 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.

A direct link to the Przemysl Archive group of folders is <https://www.szukajwarchiwach.gov.pl/en/web/archiwum-panstwowe-w-przemyslu/zespoly>, 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 <https://skany.przemysl.ap.gov.pl/>, which has Jewish record images for Jaroslaw, Kanczuga, Oleszyce, Przemysl, Radymno, and Sienawa.

Jewish vital records from the Rzeszow Archive for the towns of Rzeszow, Niebylec, and Sokolow Malapolski have been digitized. The Rzeszow Archive digital image website is at <https://www.szukajwarchiwach.gov.pl/en/web/archiwum-panstwowe-w-rzeszowie>, where more images of Jewish vital records will be added in the future. The Sanok branch of the Rzeszow Archive has digitized many of its Jewish vital record holdings including the towns of Sanok, Lesko, and Krosno at <https://www.szukajwarchiwach.gov.pl/en/web/archiwum-panstwowe-w-rzeszowie-oddzial-w-sanoku/zespoly>.

## Available Records

Before March 15, 2015, vital records held in Poland were covered by privacy laws that restricted public use to records over 100 years old. A new law went into effect March 15, 2015 that reduced the protected period to 80 years for marriages and deaths. Births remain protected for 100 years. Instantly 20 more years of vital records became available for indexing. Many of these 1916 to 1939 marriage and death records for towns now in Ukraine have been transferred to the AGAD Archive. Some have been indexed and online and some are awaiting indexing. Other records held by local civil record offices (USC, *Urząd Stanu Cywilnego*) will become available for indexing when transferred to the Archives or if special arrangements can be made with the local USC to digitize or index those records.

## Research in Galicia – Key Websites

### Archival Inventories

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

<https://www.geshergalicia.org/inventory/> Gesher Galicia inventories of Jewish vital records (excellent source)

[https://www.szukajwarchiwach.gov.pl/en/strona\\_glowna](https://www.szukajwarchiwach.gov.pl/en/strona_glowna) Polish State Archive inventories and digital images website

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

### Record Headings and Translation Aids

<http://translate.google.com/#> Google Translate

<http://www.suetterlinschrift.de/Englisch/Sutterlin.htm> "Gothic" German

### 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

<https://www.rtrfoundation.org/lnintro.shtml> Miriam Weiner's Surname Database includes Galician towns

<https://www.amazon.com/Galitzianers-Jews-Galicia-1772-1918/dp/1587366096> *The Galitzianers: The Jews of Galicia, 1772-1918* written by Suzan Wynne

<http://www.geshergalicia.org/> Gesher Galicia SIG

<http://search.geshergalicia.org/> All Galicia Database

<http://www.halgat.com/> Genealogy of Eastern Galicia (not Jewish specific)

### Jewish Records Indexing – Poland

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

<https://legacy.jri-poland.org/support.htm> Contributing

<https://legacy.jri-poland.org/jriplweb-legacy.htm> Search database

<https://www.jri-poland.org/town/> Town Explorer

<https://www.jri-poland.org/project-explorer/> Project Explorer

<http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/Poland/> JewishGen's All Poland Database