

JEWISH ROOTS IN POLAND

PAGES FROM THE PAST AND ARCHIVAL INVENTORIES

by
MIRIAM WEINER

in cooperation with the
POLISH STATE ARCHIVES



YIVO Institute for Jewish Research
יידישער וויסנשאַפֿטלעכער אינסטיטוט - י"וואָ

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URZĄD STANU CYWILNEGO OFFICES

by Miriam Weiner

INTRODUCTION

In Poland, it is the responsibility of the local *Urząd Stanu Cywilnego* (USC) office to record births, deaths, marriages and divorces in books known as “*księgi metrykalne*.”

Each city and town in Poland has a USC office (generally located in the town hall) that performs these duties as prescribed by law. Very small villages will record these events in a nearby larger town designated as the *gmina* (local administrative district) for the small villages.

Among the 2,500 existing USC offices in Poland, the largest (based upon the number of registered records and the number of books) are located in a few of the larger voivodship towns, including Warsaw, Wrocław, Łódź, Kraków, Gdańsk and Poznań. Depending upon the administrative structure of the region, there can be one main office with branches in particular districts of the city (as in Warsaw, Kraków and Łódź); or, what was common in the beginning of the 1890s, a few separate offices that are managed by the administration of certain local district authorities. There are also some cases in which offices for certain districts are located in the same building to facilitate registration.

In various Slavic and other languages, the term *metryka* refers to, among other things, registers of vital statistics. However, in many transliterated English-language versions of material referring to these registers, the registers are commonly referred to as *metrical books*. That terminology is used in this book.

According to Polish law, the metrical books are retained in the local USC offices for a period of 100 years. Books older than 100 years are to be transferred to the Polish State Archives. When the record books include multiple years, the books are retained in the local USC office until all documents in the book are more than 100 years old. This regulation often causes confusion as to where documents are actually kept.

Public access to USC documents is regulated by law, described more fully later in this chapter.



Janet Greenberg (above left) discovers the birth certificate for her father in the Rejowiec USC office as her translator (center) and the USC director (right) assist her, 1990

Although Polish law prohibits on-site access and research by individuals looking for multiple records for genealogical purposes, it is not uncommon to find a sympathetic clerk in a local USC office who will cooperate to varying degrees in order to accommodate the visitor to the repository. However, this is a courtesy response and not available upon demand.

It is possible to write to the local USC office for your ancestral town, preferably a brief factual letter in Polish. See letter-writing guide and helpful instructions in Frazin, Judith R., comp. and ed., *A Translation Guide to 19th-Century Polish-Language Civil-Registration Documents* (2nd ed. Chicago: Jewish Genealogical Society of Illinois, 1989). Again, local USC offices may not respond to general genealogical search requests (for example, everyone with the same last name), but you may receive a response to requests for one or two documents in the form of a certified extract on a typed form. Sometimes these are mailed directly from the USC office. It is also possible that you will receive a letter from the Polish Consulate advising that it is holding the certified copies of the documents and will send them upon receipt of a fee.

The Jewish documents were recorded in separate books from 1826 to 1943. While many documents were destroyed, it is not uncommon to find an almost complete set of metrical books for the period 1826–1943 (except for a few years during World War I). It is also not uncommon to find the books for one town in several different repositories in different towns.



Town Hall and USC Offices in Nowy Sącz, 1993

2

Prior to 1826, the documents from all religions were recorded together in the same volumes.

In western Poland (formerly Prussia), separate Jewish metrical books were not maintained, and the registrations are mixed with the general populace for towns in the following voivodships: Bydgoszcz, Elbląg, Gdańsk, Gorzów Wielkopolski, Jelenia Góra, Koszalin, Legnica, Leszno, Olsztyn, Opole, Piła, Poznań, Słupsk, Szczecin, Toruń, Wałbrzych, Wrocław and Zielona Góra.

Załącznik Nr. 1

KARTA ZGONU-1

dla zarządcy ośmiora.

1. Imię i nazwisko *Dwojra Szejwa Zyskiewicz*
 2. Płeć *ż.* 3. Data i godzina zgonu *19.03.1935*
 4. Adres (miejsce zgonu) *Rejowiec*
 5. Przyczyna zgonu *cyfra choroby dawnoza*
 Data *19.03.35* Podpis lekarza: *Dr. W. Brodajkowski*

6. Nr. karty zgonu *22* 7. Imiona rodziców *Abram i Laja*
 8. Miejsce urodzenia *Rejowiec*
 9. Data urodzenia *1895* 10. Wzrost *180 cm*
 11. Miejsce zamieszkania (adres) *Rejowiec*
 12. Jak długo przebywał w miejscu zgonu (dla zamieszkowców) *nie ustalono*
 13. Stan cywilny: wolny, małżeński, wdowi, rozwiedziony
 14. Dla dzieci do lat 5: zdrowe, niezdrowe
 15. Zawód *nie ustalono*

Data *21.03.35* Podpis: *J. Jankowski*

Urząd Stanu Cywilnego *Nowy Sącz* sporządził w dniu *21.03.35* w *Nowym Sączu* Nr. *187*
 o urodzeniu *Dwojra Szejwa Zyskiewicz* imię i nazwisko zmarłego *Zyskiewicz*
 Data *1935* Podpis: *Jankowski*

Death record of Dwojra Szejwa Zyskiewicz in Rejowiec (born 1895, died 1935), daughter of Abram and Laja

3

RZECZPOSPOLITA POLSKA

URZĄD STANU CYWILNEGO w **NOWY SĄCZ**
 Województwo **NOWY SĄCZ**

Odpis skrócony aktu urodzenia

1. Nazwisko **Rosenwafser**
 2. Imię (imiona) **Mindel**
 3. Data urodzenia **trzeciego marca tysiąc osiemset osiemdziesiątego /03.03.1880/roku**
 4. Miejsce urodzenia **NOWY SĄCZ**
 5. Imię i nazwisko rodowe **Josef Rosenwafser**
 6. Imię i nazwisko rodowe **Süßel Busch**

Podpisuje się zgodnie powyższego odpisu z treścią aktu urodzenia Nr **49/1880**

data **1992-05-12**

KIEROWNIK
 Urzędu Stanu Cywilnego
Danuta Wdowiak
 Z-ca Kier. USC

Birth record (extract) of Mindel Rosenwafser, born 1880 in Nowy Sącz; daughter of Josef Rosenwasser and Süßel Busch

4

SPELLING OF TOWN NAMES IN UKRAINE AND BELARUS

The archival inventories include towns now in western Ukraine that formerly were part of Poland (and at one time identified as being in Galicia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire). After its independence, Ukraine reclaimed its national language. Although one will hear Polish and Russian spoken amongst the citizens of this region, the official language is Ukrainian.

The Jewish metrical books for western Ukraine (eastern Galicia) include the oblasts (districts) of Lvov, Ivano Frankovsk and Tarnopol. In Galicia, the column headings of the metrical books were in German and/or Latin, and entries were made in German, Yiddish and/or Polish. The book cover, title pages and archival finding aids for these metrical books are primarily in Russian, since Ukrainian was not the official language at the time the finding aids were created and was not used in record-keeping. Therefore, for clarity and consistency purposes, the transliteration of the town names in the aforementioned oblasts are from the Russian spellings rather than the current-day Ukrainian spellings (see Appendix 3 for place-name variants of the above localities included in the archival inventories).

In the repository inventories, towns in Belarus and Lithuania today are also transliterated from the Russian spelling since the entries are in the Russian language.

SOURCES FOR ARCHIVAL INVENTORIES

The following sources were consulted as part of the survey of archives and in the preparation of this inventory:

- Published archival inventories in Poland
- Teller, A., ed., *Guide to the Sources for the History of the Jews in Poland in the Central Archives*. Jerusalem: Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, Jerusalem, 1988.
- *Miasta polskie: Dokumentacja archiwalna*. Warsaw-Łódź: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1981.
- Inventories compiled by researchers and archivists on assignment for this book
- "Polish-Jewish Records in the Genealogical Society of Utah." *Avotaynu*, vol. 2, no. 2 (January 1986): 5-17.
- Gostin, Ted, "Polish-Jewish Records at the Family History Library, an Update." *Roots-Key* (Summer 1995): 8-10.
- *Urzędy Stanu Cywilnego, Informator, Część I*. Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych: Departament Społeczno-Administracyjny [Ministry of Internal Affairs], 1984. This book is based on a national survey of metrical books in more than 2,000 USC offices (the Ministry has not done a subsequent survey and, thus, this inventory is based upon the 1984 data with updating as documents were transferred from USC offices to the State Archives.).
- Polish archivists who added material during the verification process and American researchers who submitted data based upon onsite archival research.

GEOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION OF THE INVENTORIES

The inventory of archival documents is presented in two separate lists of archival holdings, described as follows:

- **Towns in Poland.** Includes documents for towns within the current borders of Poland and also entries for Polish towns that are in archives in neighboring countries. For example, the town entry for Białystok (now in Poland) includes Białystok documents that are in the Grodno Oblast Archives and Grodno Historical Archives in Belarus.
- **Repositories in Poland.** Includes documents for towns now in Poland and towns formerly in Poland (but now in Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania).

Therefore, the repository inventory includes documents in the Polish State Archives for the former Polish cities of Grodno (Hrodna, now in Belarus), Wilno (Vilnius, now in Lithuania) and Lwów (Lviv, now in Ukraine).

REPOSITORY INVENTORIES

The repository inventories represent the following collections:

- Jewish Historical Institute (in Warsaw)
- *Urząd Stanu Cywilnego (USC) Warsaw Śródmieście*. Only those documents (less than 100 years old) relating to the registration of Jewish birth, marriage and death records in the former Polish provinces of Stanisławów, Lwów and Tarnopol. The towns represented in these provinces are now within the current borders of Ukraine (see Chapter 4).
- Polish State Archives

The archival inventories for the Polish State Archives include all district archives (*Archiwum Państwowe*) along with most of their branch (*oddział*) archives. A few small branch archives are omitted because either they did not reply to requests for inventory data or they indicated that they did not have material relevant to this survey.

DUPLICATION AND OVERLAPPING OF ARCHIVAL DATA

In a few instances, there is overlapping and/or duplication of data in the archival inventories for a specific town. Generally, this refers to duplicate copies of record books or situations where one book stops in the middle of a year and the next book begins with the completion of that year.

NAMES OF ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS IN USC OFFICES

Sygnatura/Zespół numbers (archival file numbers) are provided for metrical books in the Polish State Archives. The individual USC offices (local town halls) throughout Poland do not use the same system of numbering; thus, the metrical books in the USC offices are accessible by town name rather than by numbers.

ARCHIVAL LIST CODES

Since some archives in neighboring countries (Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine) have documents for towns now in Poland, the following list codes and archive references include the appropriate descriptions used in the neighboring countries (see also page 188).

Repository Location Town/city where material is located**Repository locations outside of Poland (see page 189):**

Grodno	Grodno (now Hrodna) Historical Archives (Belarus)
Grodno2	Grodno (now Hrodna) Oblast Archives (Belarus)
Vilnius	Lithuanian State Historical Archives (Lithuania)
Lvov	Lvov (now Lviv) Historical Archives (Ukraine)
Lvov2	Lvov (now Lviv) Oblast Archives (Ukraine)

Repository locations within Poland (when more than one in the same city):

Warsaw	AGAD (Archives of Ancient Acts)
Warsaw2	Archiwum Państwowe m. Warszawy (Warsaw Municipal District Archives)

Country	The current location of the town/city
Voivodship/Oblast	Current administrative district where town is located
Town Name	Poland (current spelling); Ukraine and Belarus (transliterated from Russian)
Years Available	Year span of archival material
Example:	1892–1939 (material from 1892 to 1939, with no known gaps)
	1892/1939 (material within these years, but with gaps)

Zespół/Sygnatura or Fond/Opis/Delo Numbers (not applicable in USC offices)**In Poland**

Zespół name or number is used to describe a group of archival documents.

Sygnatura (Sygn) refers to the file numbers within the Zespół.

Some archives in Poland identify the archival group with the town name in addition to the archive numbers.

In Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania

Fond describes a group of documents (material generated by a single entity), i.e., record group.

Opis designates the list number within the Fond.

Delo signifies the file within the Fond and Opis.

Example: 227/5/43,17;226/42

Fond 227/Opis 5/Files 43 and 17; Fond 226/Opis 42

Archival numbers are assigned to each document or group of documents .

Zespół/Fond numbers are separated by “;”

Fond/Opis/Delo numbers are separated by “/”

Repository Type

- A** Archive
- G** LDS Microfilms of German-Held Documents (for towns within the current borders of Poland)
- J** Jewish Historical Institute (in Warsaw)
- U** Urząd Stanu Cywilnego (local town halls in Poland generally holding documents less than 100 years old)

Important Note to Remember

The inventory lists provided by the Polish State Archives and Jewish Historical Institute listed the year span of documents followed by the archival numbers. Thus, it is not always possible to identify which archival number corresponds to a particular year or year span.

Example: 1842–1844; 1857; 1859–1861; 1873

270/2/4,7,9,12;273/1/3–4;279/1/78

Therefore, the archival inventories in this book should be used **in conjunction with** the zespół/signatura numbers (or names) held in the Polish State Archives and the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw.

TOWN NAME	VOIVODSHIP (Province)			Zespół/Sygnatura (Poland) Fond/Opis/Delo (Belarus, Ukraine, Lithuania)
	Repository Location	Repository Type	Document Code Years	
SUWAŁKI		SUWAŁKI		
SUWAŁKI	A	A	1938-1939	31/205
SUWAŁKI	A	B	1808-1825; 1826/1834; 1835-1840; 1842-1854; 1856-1888; 1891-1892	165; 204
SUWAŁKI	U	B	1893-1894; 1896; 1900-1902; 1905; 1908-1914; 1920-1938	
SUWAŁKI	A	C	1846-1867	14/208-219; 533-536; 773
SUWAŁKI	A	D	1826/1834; 1835-1840; 1842-1854; 1856-1877; 1878/1883; 1884-1888; 1891-1892	165/204
SUWAŁKI	U	D	1893-1894; 1896; 1900-1902; 1905; 1908-1914; 1920-1938	
SUWAŁKI	A	E	1847-1867	14/208-215
GRODNO2	A	G	1921-1938 (IMMIGRATION TO POLAND)	208
SUWAŁKI	A	K	1840-1867; 1917; 1926-1937	14/129, 207-215, 466, 605, 703-716; 31/144-148, 155-156, 158, 303
SUWAŁKI	A	L	1857/1876; 1945-1949 (CONFISCATED PROPERTY)	14/89-92, 94, 96-104, 106-113, 117-119, 123-126, 131-132, 136-139, 141, 145, 151, 313/155
SUWAŁKI	A	M	1808-1825; 1826/1834; 1835-1840; 1842-1854; 1856-1877; 1878/1883; 1884-1893	165; 204
SUWAŁKI	U	M	1894; 1896; 1900-1902; 1905; 1908-1914; 1920-1938	
GRODNO2	A	O	1934-1939 (MEMBERSHIP IN JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS)	209
SUWAŁKI	Y	T	1847-1867; 1931-1937	14/208-215; 31/131
WARSZAWA	A	T	1822-1828; 1832-1834	KRSW 5042; 5044
SUWAŁKI	A	W	1812-1871; 1920-1936	31/198; 14/152-190
SUWAŁKI	A	X	1847-1870	14/377; 27/5-20
GRODNO	A	X	1863-1869	1060 (16 BOOKS)
BIAŁYSTOK	A	X	1870-1915	26/85-99, 209-220
SUWAŁKI	A	Y	1826-1939	245-270
SUWAŁKI	A	Z	1807-1866	14
SUWAŁKI REGION		SUWAŁKI		
VILNIUS	A	G	1885-1917 (EXTERNAL PASSPORTS)	1010/1/202, 1557, 2098, 2102, 2105-2106, 2123, 2802; 1010/2/93-99, 106, 110, 112, 115, 118, 123-127 1108; 1466
VILNIUS	A	K	1897; 1911-1914	14/208-215; 24/1-17
SUWAŁKI	A	T	1847; 1867; 1903-1915	
SWARZĘDZ		POZNAŃ		
POZNAŃ	A	K	1734-1792; 1823; 1825-1831; 1902-1916	4389/114-115; 906/16-17; 329/1232
WARSZAWA	J	K	1781/1851	PROVINCE: POZNAŃ
POZNAŃ	A	S	1824-1927	4389/121-123
WARSZAWA	J	T	1781/1851	PROVINCE: POZNAŃ
WARSZAWA	J	Z	1781/1851	PROVINCE: POZNAŃ
ŚWIDNICA		WAŁBRZYCH		
KOBLENZ	G	B	1854-1875	
WROCLAW	A	B	1874-1893	557/II
KOBLENZ	G	D	1854-1875	
WROCLAW	A	D	1874-1893	557/II
KOBLENZ	G	M	1854-1875	
WROCLAW	A	M	1874-1893	557/II
ŚWIDWIN		KOSZALIN		
SZCZECIN	A	E	1871-1899	MAGISTRAT SCHINELBEING 32
ŚWIEBODZIN		ZIELONA GÓRA		
WARSZAWA	J	K	1934-1935	PROVINCE: ŚLĄSK
ŚWIECIE		BYDGOSZCZ		
BYDGOSZCZ	A	C	1923-1931	199
BYDGOSZCZ	A	E	1920-1931	199
ŚWIERKOCIN		GORZÓW WIELKOPOLSKI		
GORZÓW WIELKOPOLSKI	A	B	1828-1836	AMTSGERICHT LANDSBERG W.28/1370
GORZÓW WIELKOPOLSKI	A	D	1830; 1835	AMTSGERICHT LANDSBERG W.28/1370
GORZÓW WIELKOPOLSKI	A	M	1827; 1830; 1836	AMTSGERICHT LANDSBERG W.28/1370
ŚWIERŻE		CHEŁM		
LUBLIN	A	B	1826-1865	113
ŚWIERŻE	U	B	1882-1914; 1916-1944	
LUBLIN	A	D	1826-1865	113
ŚWIERŻE	U	D	1882-1914; 1916-1944	

held in Vilnius
and Suwałki

no 1874

TOWN NAME	VOIVODSHIP/OBLAST (Province)	COUNTRY
Document Type Years		Zespół/Sygnatura (Poland) Fond/Opis/Delo (Belarus, Ukraine, Lithuania)
JELENIOWO	SUWAŁKI	POLAND
B 1808-1893		152; 204
D 1808-1893		152; 204
K 1925-1926		31/144
M 1808-1893		152; 204
KRASNOPOL	SUWAŁKI	POLAND
B 1808-1826; 1828-1829; 1836/1862; 1866/1875; 1882-1885; 1894 (ALSO INCLUDED IN SEJNY)		155; 199; 207
D 1808-1826; 1828-1829; 1836/1862; 1866/1875; 1882; 1884-1885; 1894		155; 199; 207
M 1808-1826; 1828-1829; 1836/1862; 1866/1875; 1882; 1884-1885; 1894		155; 199; 207
LAZDIJAI	LAZDIJAI	LITHUANIA
B 1856-1857; 1859; 1862; 1866; 1877-1880; 1883-1884; 1889; 1894-1896; 1901; 1903-1904; 1907		200
D 1856-1857; 1859; 1862; 1866; 1877-1880; 1883-1884; 1889; 1894-1896; 1901; 1903-1904; 1907		200
M 1856-1857; 1859; 1862; 1866; 1877-1880; 1883-1884; 1889; 1894-1896; 1901; 1903-1904; 1907		200
METELIAI	LAZDIJAI	LITHUANIA
B 1808-1825		156
D 1808-1825		156
M 1808-1825		156
PRZEROŚL	SUWAŁKI	POLAND
B 1813-1825; 1827-1879; 1880/1884; 1885-1889		161; 201
D 1813-1825; 1827-1879; 1880/1884; 1885-1889		161; 201
M 1813-1825; 1827-1879; 1880/1884; 1885-1889		161; 201
PUŃSK	SUWAŁKI	POLAND
B 1808-1825; 1833-1872; 1874-1875; 1878-1882; 1884-1885; 1889		162; 202
D 1808-1825; 1833-1872; 1874-1875; 1878-1882; 1884-1885; 1889		162; 202
K 1926-1929		31/129,137
M 1808-1825; 1833-1872; 1874-1875; 1878-1882; 1884-1885; 1889		162; 202
SAKIAI	SAKIAI	LITHUANIA
B 1826-1833		332
D 1845-1851; 1867-1879		332
M 1826-1833		332
SEIRIJAI	LAZDIJAI	LITHUANIA
B 1808-1825; 1826/1856; 1857-1861; 1864-1869; 1872-1873; 1875; 1878; 1882-1883; 1887; 1890; 1893-1894; 1898; 1900-1901; 1903; 1909-1910		164; 203
D 1808-1825; 1826/1856; 1857-1861; 1864-1869; 1872-1873; 1875; 1878; 1882-1883; 1887; 1890; 1893-1894; 1898; 1900-1901; 1903; 1909-1910		164; 203
M 1808-1825; 1826/1856; 1857-1861; 1864-1869; 1872-1873; 1875; 1878; 1882-1883; 1887; 1890; 1893-1894; 1898; 1900-1901; 1903; 1909-1910		164; 203
Y 1875-1913		241-244
SEJNY	SUWAŁKI	POLAND
B 1808-1825; 1828-1829; 1836; 1838; 1840; 1844; 1847; 1849-1850; 1852; 1857-1858; 1859/1865; 1866-1875; 1880/1894		163; 207
D 1808-1825; 1826/1865; 1866-1875; 1880/1893; 1894		163; 207
K 1926-1938		31/138-143
L 1944-1949		313/155
M 1808-1826; 1828-1829; 1836; 1838; 1840; 1844; 1847/1865; 1866-1875; 1880; 1882; 1886-1887; 1889; 1893-1894		163; 207
Y 1808-1939		227-240
SUWAŁKI	SUWAŁKI	POLAND
A 1938-1939		31/205
B 1808-1825; 1826/1834; 1835-1840; 1842-1854; 1856-1888; 1891-1892		165; 204
C 1846-1867		14/208-219; 533-536; 773
D 1826/1834; 1835-1840; 1842-1854; 1856-1877; 1878/1883; 1884-1888; 1891-1892		165/204
E 1847-1867		14/208-215
K 1840-1867; 1917; 1926-1937		14/129,207-215,466,605,703-716;
L 1857/1876; 1945-1949 (CONFISCATED PROPERTY)		31/144-148,155-156, 158,303
M 1808-1825; 1826/1834; 1835-1840; 1842-1854; 1856-1877; 1878/1883; 1884-1893		14/89-92,94,96-104,106-113,117-119,
S 1847-1867; 1931-1937		123-126,131-132,136-139,141,145,151; 313/155
W 1812-1871; 1920-1936		165; 204
X 1847-1870		14/208-215; 31/131
Y 1826-1939		31/198; 14/152-190
Z 1807-1866		14/377; 27/5-20
SUWAŁKI REGION	SUWAŁKI	POLAND
T 1847; 1867; 1903-1915		245-270
SZAKI	SEE SAKIAI	14
		14/208-215; 24/1-17

no 1874