

Poland Civil Registration

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CIVIL REGISTRATION

Civil registration is government registration of births, marriages, and deaths. All individuals were to be registered by the government regardless of religious faith. Civil registration is usually organized by registration district, but at times was organized along religious lines.

Partitions of Poland

Poland did not exist as a country between 1795 and 1918. Civil registration records during this time period depend on the country which held jurisdiction.

Russian Partition, called the **Kingdom of Poland** or **Congress Poland**



The bulk of the Russian partition was formed from the Duchy of Warsaw, established by Napoleon in 1807. In 1815, Russia was given authority of the Kingdom of Poland, sometimes called Congress of Poland. **Note:** Russia used the Julian calendar. The records may contain both Julian and Gregorian dates.

Important dates:

1 May 1808: Civil registration was established by Napoleon and was continued in the Kingdom of Poland. Catholic clergy were often also civil registrars. Records were kept in **Polish**. Exception: areas outside the Kingdom of Poland did not keep civil registration.

1826: Other religious sects (i.e. Jewish, Lutheran, Orthodox) allowed to maintain their own civil registration.

1868: All civil registration required to be kept in **Russian**.

German Partition, part of the **Kingdom of Prussia**

All the former German areas of what is now Poland belonged to the Kingdom of Prussia, and was divided into provinces, including: East Prussia, West Prussia, Pomerania, Posen, Silesia, and Brandenburg.

Important dates:

1874: Civil registration instituted in the German Empire; it was organized strictly by *Standesamt*, or civil registration district. The records were all kept in **German**.



1945: Post World War II border changes. Some civil registration records remained in Poland; others moved to Germany.

Austrian Partition, known as the province of **Galicia**



There was no civil registration instituted during Austrian rule in Galicia. Instead, beginning in 1784, duplicates of Catholic parish registers were created and used as civil records. The exceptions to this include:

- Areas that were part of the Duchy of Warsaw, but were annexed to Austria in 1815
- Independent city of Kraków, which was annexed to Austria in 1846

Republic of Poland, 1918-1939

Civil registration established country-wide in 1918. In former Russian and German areas, civil registration continued. In Austrian areas, church books were often confiscated by newly-created *Urząd Stanu Cywilnego (USC)*, or civil registration offices. Records were kept in **Polish**.

Poland has a privacy law for **100** years. Records older than 100 years may be found at the Polish State Archives. Newer records are found at the local civil registration office.



Locating Civil Registration Records

Use the **Skorowicz** gazetteer (for Republic of Poland) and **Spis** gazetteer (for Modern Poland) to identify current civil registration office. For Polish state archives, see the website: <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~polwgv/addresses.html>

Reading Civil Registration Records

“How to” Guides are available to help read birth, marriage, and death records. The guides are available here: https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Poland_%22How_to%22_Guides

For word lists, see the FamilySearch Wiki, found at https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Main_Page. Search for **[Language] Word List**.

For more help:

community.familysearch.org

Click on **Groups**, then in the search box, type in **Poland**. On the right, click on **Join**.