



# ***Szukaj w Archiwach – The Polish State Archives*** **Website: Church and Civil Records**

Poland “How to” Guide, Beginning Level: Instruction

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## **GOAL**

This guide will teach you to use the website of the Polish State Archives to find digitized records and relevant archival holdings from locations in Poland.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Polish archive system consists of many regional archives throughout Poland which are under the umbrella of the main Polish State Archive in Warsaw. This website incorporates the holdings of all regional archives to help users find and locate records and documents. Most holdings of the Polish State Archives are listed on this website and list the format type, including if the item is digitized. This is a government archive system and does not include records found in church diocesan archives.

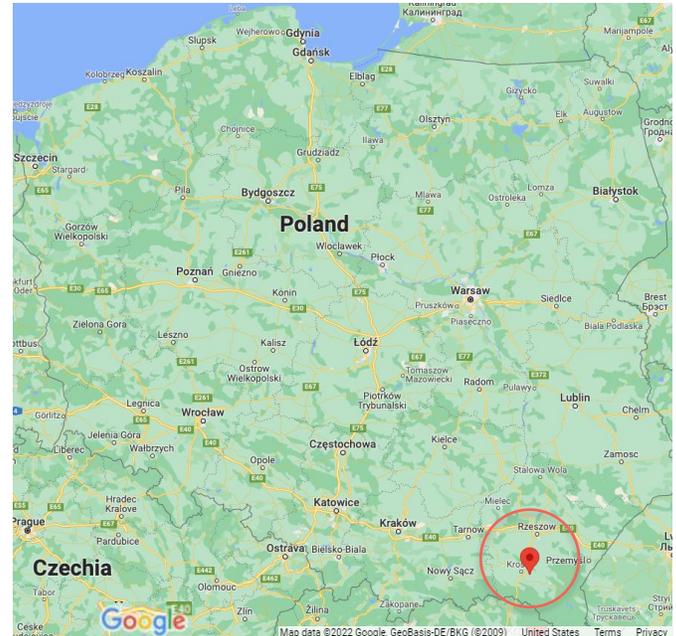
The name of the town which created the record (such as church parish or civil registration office) is necessary to successfully use this website, as records are listed under those locations. If you do not know the name of the parish or civil registration office, consult the “[Poland Genealogy](#)” and “[Poland Gazetteers](#)” research pages on the FamilySearch Research Wiki.

There are many ways to use and search this website. This guide will cover the most effective search method to find “vital records and civil registers” (church books and civil registration). Feel free to click around and explore the website to learn more.

## **HOW TO**

### **Determining the Correct Archival Jurisdiction**

In terms of archives, Poland can be broken into several jurisdictions. Each archival jurisdiction represents a geographic region that an archive's holdings cover. For example, all records from the gray region of Poland labeled Warszawa (Warsaw), will be housed in the Warszawa archive.



One way to determine in which archive a location's parish or civil registration records may be found is to pinpoint the location on a map, and then compare it to the Poland Archival Jurisdictions map (see map above). This can be found on the Family Search wiki page, titled "[Poland Genealogy](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Poland_Genealogy)" under the "Poland Map" section ([https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Poland\\_Genealogy](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Poland_Genealogy)).

While this won't tell you exactly which archive the records are in, it will help you to know in which archives you should check. For the purpose of this example, we are using the location *Haczów*. Based on these two maps, the records could be in the *Rzeszów* and *Przemysł* archives.

### Searching for Birth, Marriage, and Death records on Szukaj w Archiwach

Knowing the location in which a record was created is important to being able to locate the record. If you do not know the name of the parish or civil registration office, consult the [Poland Gazetteers](#) article on the FamilySearch Wiki before continuing.

Use the web browser Google Chrome, as the "Translate to English" feature is very helpful when working on foreign websites.

1. Go to the link: [https://www.szukajwarchiwach.gov.pl/en/strona\\_glowna](https://www.szukajwarchiwach.gov.pl/en/strona_glowna)
2. If the website defaults to Polish, click on the flag in the upper right corner of the website and select the United States flag to translate to English.
3. Type the name of locality you wish to search into the search bar; for practice, search for the town *Haczów*. Then click on the search button to the right of the search bar or press the enter button on your keyboard. Important to note; the Polish alphabet has special characters, however, you do not need to include these in your search.

4. Once the results have loaded, there will be several different filter options, with associated symbols, below the search bar. Click on the book symbol, titled “*Pradziad*”. This will display all the civil registration and religious record matches for the location that has been searched.
  - *Pradziad* is the Program for the Registration of Records from Parish and Civil Registration Offices. This is the option to select in order to view vital records.
5. The results will be displayed below, with information about the record set. They will be organized by village, followed by the *gmina*, or community, in which the village is located. Knowing the full jurisdiction for your place is helpful, as sometimes there will be multiple villages with the same name. Knowing the *gmina* is important to be able to determine which of the villages listed is the village of your ancestor. The religion will also be listed as *wyznanie* in Polish, and confession in English. This is also where the words *urząd stanu cywilnego* would be found.

### Selecting a Record Set

6. Once you’ve determined which village is the correct one (for this example the correct town is *Haczów* in *gmina Haczów*), you can then examine your results and determine what types of records (Roman Catholic, Jewish, Civil Registers, etc.) are available and useful to us. A typical result looks like this.

<b>Haczów, community Haczów</b>	
dates:	1889-1907
Confession	rzymskokatolickie
Type of act	urodzenia
signature:	60/664/0
archives:	Archiwum Państwowe w Rzeszowie Oddział w Sanoku

- Highlighted is the name of the village and the community. This will help you identify the correct location. In this case *Haczów* is in the community (*gmina*) of *Haczów*.
- Beneath that is the range of years that the records cover; in this case, 1889-1907.
- The next line is for confession, and listed is *rzymskokatolickie*, which means Roman Catholic. Other possibilities for that space include, but are not limited to:

<i>urząd stanu cywilnego</i>	civil registry office
<i>ewangelickie</i>	Evangelical
<i>prawosławne</i>	Orthodox
<i>mojżeszowe</i>	Mosiac (Jewish)
<i>mennonickie</i>	Mennonite
<i>greckokatolickie</i>	Greek Catholic

- Below confession is the type of record, or “Type of Act.” In this case that is ***urodzenia***, or births. The other two most common record types are *małżeństwa* (marriages) and *zgony* (deaths), though there are other possible types of records.
- Under the record type is the “signature” which is also referred to on the website as “Reference Code;” in this case being **60/664/0**. Frequently when you search a town there will be several results that are very similar and differ only by the type of record (births, marriages, deaths, etc.). This usually means they are part of the same collection. You can make sure by comparing the signature/reference code of each record set. If they are part of the same collection you only need to look at one of them. If the signatures/reference codes do not match, then you should look at both results. For *Haczów* we have two results with matching signature/reference codes, so you can click on either of the two.
- Under the signature/reference code is the archive in which the records are found. In this case, the records are located at the “**Archiwum Państwowe w Rzeszowie Oddział w Sanoku**,” or the State Archive in Rzeszów from the Branch in Sanok.

## Navigating a Record Set

7. Clicking on an entry takes you to a page with more information about the collection. The top of the page will list the title of this record set. In our example it is ***Akta stanu cywilnego Parafii Rzymskokatolickiej w Haczowie*** (Files of civil status of the Roman Catholic Parish in *Haczów*). Underneath the title will be listed the Reference Code, the Number of Series, the Number of Scans, and the name of the Archive. If no scans are available for this record set, there will be a zero (0) listed under “Number of Scans.” In the “Reference Code” field will be same three numbers as before, highlighted in blue. Click on the blue numbers below “Reference code”; in this example the reference code is “60/664/0”.
  - If no scans are available, one option to obtain the record is to contact the archive and request a copy or a transcript of the record. When contacting the archive, you will want to provide the specific reference code for the unit within the record set, as this is how the archivists will identify the correct book.
    - i. You can find the contact information for the archive by clicking on the name of the Archive, hyperlinked in blue, beneath the word “Archives” in English, or “*Archiwum*” in Polish. After the webpage loads, scroll down to the “Description” section of the page where you will find the mailing address, email address, and web address for the archive. For more information on how to compose a letter to the archive, please visit the “[Poland Letter Writing Guide](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Poland_Letter_Writing_Guide)” found on the FamilySearch Research Wiki ([https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Poland\\_Letter\\_Writing\\_Guide](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Poland_Letter_Writing_Guide)).
  - Additionally, you may come across a record set with no units. If this happens, clicking on the Reference Code numbers will not load a new page.
  - This page may also contain information about the record set. This information will auto-populate in Polish (see step 9 for how to translate a page into English).

8. After clicking on these numbers, the next page that loads will provide additional information about the collection, however, much of this information is not relevant in your search. To view the holdings of this entry, click the tab “List of Units” in the row beneath the reference code.
9. The “List of Units” tab provides information on the specific units in this record set. Notice that the names of units are still in Polish, even though you are on the English version of the website. Now is when Google Chrome’s translation function comes in handy. Right-click anywhere on the page and a menu will appear near your cursor. Click on the option “Translate to English.” Anything on the page still in Polish should be translated to English. Now you can read the names of each unit and determine which scans you would like to view. If you are using a browser other than Google Chrome, you can input the name of the book into a translation engine; a good resource is [translate.google.com](https://translate.google.com). Here is an example of the table you will see:

Reference code	Name	Border dates	Number of scans
60/664/0/-/1	Księga urodzeń dla miejscowości Haczów	1889-1907	115
60/664/0/-/2	Księga zgonów dla miejscowości Haczów	1870-1909	99

- The first column lists the reference code specific to each unit.
- The second column lists the name of the units; in this example, they are birth records for *Haczów*.
- The third column lists the years that the specific unit covers.
- The final column says, “Number of scans.” You can see how many images there are in each unit. If there is a “0” in this column then there are no digital images for that unit. Be sure to check that column for all units in a collection when you are looking for digital images.

In the bottom right corner of the page, there is a dropdown menu in which you can change the number of entries per page.



10. Click on the title of the unit that you wish to view. In this example use the scans for 1889-1907.

## Viewing Images

11. You will now see thumbnail images of the unit (**60/664/0/-/1**). To see if the images have been digitally indexed, look in the row above the scans to the tab titled “Tags and indexes”. If the number is 0, there are no indexes; if there is another number there, click on “Tags and indexes” to access them. Sometimes, even if there are indexes, it is only the name of the place or the type of record. However, there may be handwritten indexes in the set of images, typically at the beginning or at the end of the set. You may be able to find them by glancing through the thumbnails. Using the dropdown menu in the

bottom right corner of the page below the thumbnails to increase the scans on the page can be especially helpful when looking through images.

12. Click on the fourth image. It will enlarge when you click on it. On the bottom of the screen there are + and – icons; you can use these buttons as well as the scroll function of your mouse to zoom in and out of the image. To the left of the zoom buttons will be a button called “Turn”. Clicking on this button will rotate the image clockwise 90°. Moving left along the bottom of the screen will be a down arrow which, when clicked, opens a gallery of all scans in the unit, allowing you to select a different scan without leaving the viewing page. This gallery can be collapsed by again clicking on the down arrow button.

On both the right and left side of the image is an arrow. By clicking the arrow on the right, you will advance one page. By clicking the arrow to the left, you will go back one page.

The button in the bottom left corner is the full-screen icon; it will enlarge the image to take up the whole screen. Clicking anywhere on the image while in full screen mode will close the full screen feature. In the top right corner are a list of additional features including Bookmark, Download, and Share. Additional features are available with the creation of a free account.

To return to the navigation page, click the back arrow in the upper left corner titled “GO back to scans.”

### **How to Filter:**

There may be times in your research when you are searching for records in a location with a common name. The filters on the left-hand side of the page will be important in helping you determine the correct record set.

1. Type the name of locality you wish to search into the search bar and click on the search button.
2. On this results page, navigate to the left side to view the available filters. The first filter you want to look at is called “only photos and scans”. You can toggle this filter if you are only interested in viewing results for your search that contain photos and scans.
3. The next set of filters are the “Date and Time Period” filters. With these filters you can either select multiple predetermined year ranges, or you can create your own custom range.
4. You can also filter by confession, meaning religion, and by type of act, or type of record. Click “show more values” if you do not see the option you are looking for.
5. Next, there are a few location filters, including Voivodeship, Community, Location, and Archives. Of these location filters, I find Archives most helpful as you have already used the Poland Archival Jurisdiction Map to identify the correct archives.

6. Once you have made your filter selections, scroll down and click the word “Filter” to view your new results.

### Other Types of Searches:

In addition to vital records, two other types of records you can find on Szukaj w Archiwach are notarial records and *Księgi Ludności*.

1. Some examples of records that fall under the category of notarial records are write ups of land transactions, prenuptials, and notarized tax records, which often contain important genealogical information. Some common words to search for include *notariusz*, meaning notary, and *notarialny* meaning notarial. When trying to determine where the notarial records for your ancestor’s town may be held, one place to look are gazetteers, as some gazetteers will provide the name of the local court.
  - a. The record set with the reference number 39/438/0 is a great example of notarial records. To practice, click on the “List of units” tab on the 39/438/0 reference code record set. Go to the last unit on page 9 titled *Skorowidz*, meaning index, indicating that this is a separate index book for records from 1821 and 1847. Click on this unit.
  - b. This indexed volume is organized semi-alphabetically, meaning that the sections are listed alphabetically, but within each section it is organized in the order each notarial document was created. Each entry in the index lists the surnames of the parties listed with a single word description of the notarial record (ex: *kwit*, meaning receipt, *kontrakt*, meaning contract, and *obligacja*, meaning bond). On entry 10366 we can see the word “ditto” for the description of the entry. Based on this, we know that the description matches the entry above and is a contract of some sort. Let’s navigate to 10366 now to view this entry.
  - c. To view entry 10366, click on the unit that covers entries 10299-10380.
  - d. Scroll through the thumbnails to locate entry 10366.
  - e. In the top right we see the entry number 10366. Looking through the paragraph we can see the names of the subjects – Florentyna and Ernest.
2. *Księgi Ludności* are residential books containing lists of permanent residence. These records provide genealogically significant information such as name, number of men and women in household, and address. While this is not a vital record, meaning birth, marriage, and death records, like notary records it can contain useful information about your ancestors.

### Search tips:

1. Many places in Poland have names in another languages, including German or Russian. To get the most complete results, you should search for the name of the location in multiple languages, as not all results are included under both names.

## PRACTICE

Now, let's look in the Polish State Archives to see if there are any records for the village of *Mąkolno*. Please note, the Polish character "ą" does not need to be included when searching for this, or any other town. Using "Makolno" as your search term will provide the same results. Follow these steps:

1. Go to the website: [https://www.szukajwarchiwach.gov.pl/en/strona\\_glowna](https://www.szukajwarchiwach.gov.pl/en/strona_glowna). If the website is in Polish, click on the American flag in the upper right corner.
2. Type the name "*Mąkolno*" into the search bar, then click on the search button to the right of the search bar or press the enter button on your keyboard.
3. Once the results have loaded, there will be several different filter options, with associated symbols, below the search bar. Click on the book symbol, titled "*Pradziad*" to display the civil registration and religious record matches.
4. Identify the entries with the title "*Mąkolno, community Sompolno*." Notice that there are several results with the collection title 54/783/0 and several with the title 513/106/0. The second collection has no digital images. Use collection 54/783/0 to answer the following questions.

In what archive are these records?	Archiwum Państwowe w Poznaniu Oddział w Koninie, translated as State Archives in Poznań. Branch in Konin.
Translate the page to English (step 9) and read in "The history of the creator" section. What are marriage annexes and why might they be useful?	"documents confirming the legal capacity of persons to marry." They are useful because they might include "copies of birth certificates, acts of knowing, copies of death certificates of the dead spouse," etc.
Using this same information, what languages are these records in?	Polish, Latin, Russian.
How many digital scans are there in this collection?	6723
Click on the List of units tab. You are looking for someone born in 1873. How many scans are there for that year?	131

5. Click on the title of the unit for 1873. From this page, click on "Digital copies" found to the right of the red arrow box. Then answer the question:

The Reference Code is now specific to this unit. Write the full number to note the source.	54/783/0/6.1/64
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6. Click on the thumbnail labeled 14. Then answer the question:

What is the number of the top entry? It is handwritten and located at the top of the image.	27
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7. On the right side of the screen, click on the paperclip icon with the word “LINK” next to it. In the box that appears on the right, click the button that says “copy link”. You may now paste the website link as source documentation into Family Tree on FamilySearch or your favorite genealogical program.

## ACTIVITY

Now, test your skills you have learned in this “How to” Guide. The Activity is a way to check your knowledge and let you know you’ve mastered the Guide! [Click here](#) to try out the Activity.