

Researching your Warszawa Family Roots

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The earliest record of Jews living in Warszawa can be traced to a court record from 1414. However, it is assumed that there was some presence of Jews living in Warszawa earlier, but there was no established Jewish Kehilla (community). During the 15th . 19th Century there were many decrees depending on the ruler at the time, prohibiting and/or establishing heavy tariffs for Jew to live in Warszawa. A census taken in 1765 in order to collect a poll tax, indicated that there were 1204 Jews living in Warszawa and 70 living in the suburb of Praga. A 1778 census %konskrypcja Zydow Spisana w. Styczniu 1778+, showed 3512 Jews living in Warszawa. This census shows family groupings, given names, town of origin and patronymics but does not have surnames.

The earliest available vital records are from the civil records (akta stanu cywilnego) which were established in 1808. These records are divided by the city's geographical districts, known as Cyrkulu and contain both Christian and Jewish records together. The districts are from 1-8 and scans of all of these registers can be found at online at the Polish State Archives digital image website - <http://szukajwarchiwach.pl/> Districts 3 and 4 had the largest population, while district 1 had almost no Jewish residents. These records span from 1808 to 1825 but the records up to 1822 rarely had surnames and only patronymic information was recorded. Jewish Records Indexing . Poland has an ongoing project to extract these records and the later years of the more Jewish populous districts have been completed and linked to the image. <http://www.jri-poland.org>

The dividing lines of Warszawa districts varied over time. Each inner city district maintained their own vital record registration, however there were periods of time where several districts combined their vital registration together. Maps of the districts during different time periods can be found on the JRI-Poland website at <http://jri-poland.org/warsaw/districts.htm>. The vital record contains the house number of where each person lived that is mentioned in the record. This is significant because researchers can match relatives living at the same address.

Jewish Registration began by district in 1826. The Warszawa Branch of the Polish State Archive, Sygnature number 180, %akta stanu cywilnego wyzna niechrze cija skich w Warszawie+, contains Jewish records from 1826-1867. Much of this collection was microfilmed by the LDS (Latter-Day Saints) and has been extracted by JRI-Poland and is searchable on their database <http://www.jri-poland.org>. The

Polish State Archives has only scanned a few fonds on their website from this collection. A full collection of Sygnature 180 images can be found at the Polskiego Towarzystwa Genealogicznego organization website online at <http://metryki.genealodzy.pl>.

A second Sygnature of Warszawa Jewish Vital records is Sygnature 200, Akta stanu cywilnego wyznania moj eszowego w Warszawie+which covers 1858-1925. Many of the fonds are available at the Polish State Archive digital image website <http://szukajwarchiwach.pl/>. The vital records up to 1915 have been indexed/extracted by JRI-Poland and are linked to the online images. There is an ongoing project to update and continue extracting these records.

The Warszawa Jewish vital records are poorly organized by the original clerks. Pages are missing, torn, stained and out of order. Indices page may only contain part of the alphabet. Many registers have not been recovered after World War II and are assumed to have been destroyed during the near destruction of the city near the end of World War II. Warszawa researchers will need to supplement their research with other resources.

Jewish newspapers and magazines were printed in Warszawa from the middle of the 19th century up till World War II. There is a famous photo of a newspaper stand in Warszawa with Jewish Periodicals in multiple languages hanging from the stand. JewishGen Warsaw Research Group indexed two Jewish periodicals. *Glos Gminy Zydowskiej* (The Voice of the Jewish Community) marriage announcements 1937-1939 were indexed and the images are available at the University of Warszawa Website (see JRI-Poland site for links: <http://jri-poland.org/warsaw/warsmarr.htm>) *Nasz Przegląd* (Our Review) Death Notices 1923-1938 were indexed and the images which are currently being linked to the search results are available at <https://polona.pl/> Both projects can be searched from JRI-Poland website or from JewishGen All Poland database <http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/Poland/>. There are many other newspapers which are available for searching on the internet. The Yiddish daily newspapers, *Haynt*, and *Der Moment* can be found at the National Library of Israel Historical Jewish Press collection at <http://web.nli.org.il/sites/JPress/english/Pages/default.aspx>

There is a large collection of Warszawa Directories and Homeowner lists from the 1780s up to 1940s. Many of the Polish libraries have scanned these directories and they are available on line. For a full collection of what is on-line, reference the website <http://genealogyindexer.org/> JewishGen Warszawa Research group has also indexed several of the Homeowner list. <http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/Poland/WarszawaHomeowners.htm>. These directories cross reference the address to the district and are helpful in locating which registration district to search for family vital records.

The Jewish Cemetery on Okopowa Street, founded in the early 19th century was one of Europe's largest cemeteries. The Foundation of Jewish for Documentation Cemeteries in Poland has indexed over 82,000 graves from the Warszawa Jewish Cemetery with linked images of the tombstones to the search results on their website. The index can be searched directly on their website at <http://cemetery.jewish.org.pl> or through the JRI-Poland database. The Jewish Cemetery in the Praga district, known as the Brodno cemetery is the older of the Warszawa cemeteries and was founded in 1780. Most of the matzevot were relocated within the cemetery during World War II but the Foundation of Jewish for Documentation Cemeteries has indexed some of the stones.

Familijna Książka Legitymacyjna, were ID Cards issued for permanent resident of Warszawa. Jewish residents of Warszawa who possessed these cards were exempted from the ticket tax. A collection of these cards are available at the Polish State Archives and publication on this collection in Polish is expected by the end of 2017. Samples of this collection will be shown during the lecture.

There have been several articles written about notarial records. There is a large collection for the city of Warszawa available at the Warszawa branch of the Polish State Archives. Many of these collections have been indexed, but finding the record in the index is not a guarantee that the file has survived. The Notary documents are rich in information to further your family research and provide additional family relationship information.

The Polish State Archives has a collection of business records of companies registered in Warsaw 1917-1946. Hidden within those records are additional clues to family research. Information such as family relationships and even marriage records can be found amongst the collection. Examples will be shown during the lecture.

Court records were documented in the Monitor Polski, The Government Gazette of the Republic of Poland. Post World War II, survival proclamations and family searches may provide details on the fate of your Warszawa family. Archived copies of the Monitor Polski can be found at <http://monitorpolski.gov.pl/> and additional information on indexing of this information can be found at <http://www.jri-poland.org/monitor.htm>.

Researching your family roots in Warszawa can be a challenge as many of the documents were destroyed during World War II but there is other sources and unique information available to further your research.

References websites

- Archiwum Państwowe w Warszawie <https://www.warszawa.ap.gov.pl/>
- Biblioteka Narodowa <https://polona.pl/>
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