

Beginner's guide to finding your Polish ancestors

TABLE OF CONTENTS

About Polaron	3
About this guide	4
Brief history of Poland	5
Diverse Poland	6
Poland through the ages	7
Key dates	8
Migration waves out of Poland	9
Looking for records	14
Types of records	22
Certificates	24
Helpful information	26
Need professional help?	28

ABOUT POLARON

Polaron are your friendly, knowledgeable professionals for all your international research, EU citizenship and property restitution needs. With services in Poland, Australia, UK, Israel, Germany, US and Canada, our services help people communicate, cut the red tape and expand their horizons. If you would like some professional help with your genealogical research, contact Polaron for a free, no obligation quote. We will advise you on your individual situation and suggest the most appropriate action.

Polaron is officially recognised by the National Archives of Australia as a genealogical institution. We are members of the Israel Genealogical Society and enjoy excellent working relationships with the Institute of National Remembrance and the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw as well as various Polish, Ukrainian, Belorussian and German archives. We are also well-versed in the operations of other national archives, including Canadian, US, New Zealand and South African and would be delighted to assist you research your Polish heritage: it can be a life-changing experience!

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

It is estimated that over 25 million descendants of Polish migrants live around the world today: one of them could be your long lost Polish relative. Whether you are looking into your family's history as a hobby, trying to find records to reclaim your Polish citizenship or are in the process of updating your family tree, this guide has all you need to know about how to navigate the complexities of genealogical research.

Finding records in Poland and neighbouring countries is notoriously difficult because of the passage of time, lack of reliable information and shifts of geographical borders. Before World War II, Poland kept excellent records of its citizens: birth, marriage and death certificates, commercial documents, electoral rolls and other directories. Whilst many of them were destroyed, available resources are painstakingly being digitalised by state archivists. Some of these archives are now online and can be accessed free of charge. We've listed them all for your convenience in the ***Looking for records*** section below.

We will also point you to international archives holding refugee records, as well as US, UK, Australian, South African, South American, Israeli, New Zealand, immigration and naturalization archival resources.

Best of luck with your research and if you need help, remember, we can be contacted at any time to give you some extra support.

Polaron European Citizenship	Email	citizenship@polaron.com.au
	Phone	+(61-3) 95-10-9661
	From Australia	1300-88-55-61

BRIEF HISTORY OF POLAND

The written history of Poland began in the 10th century. At that time, Poland was ruled by the Piast dynasty. In the 12th and 13th centuries, Poland prospered and town life flourished. In the early 14th century, Poland became a strong and unified state and Krakow was founded. The era from the 14th century to 16th century was one of greatness for Poland. While the power of the king gradually weakened, the Polish nobles became increasingly powerful.

The 16th century was an age of economic prosperity for Poland. Learning flourished thanks to the Polish physician Nicolaus Copernicus. In 1596, Warsaw replaced Kraków as the capital of Poland. The 17th century was marked by wars and Poland was severely weakened by the lack of an effective central government. In the 18th century, Poland continued its political and military decline and Russian Empire, Austro-Hungarian Empire and Prussia interfered in Poland.

Poland rebelled against interference and was dominated by neighbouring countries. After 123 years of partitions, Poland eventually regained freedom after World War I and a new constitution was put in place. At the beginning of the World War II, Germany invaded Poland and concentration camps were created in the country. Polish Jews were exterminated by the Nazis and the country was left devastated after the war. At the same time, Poland was invaded by Soviet Russia, with many people deported to Siberia. After the war, Poland's borders were shifted westwards, with the country losing 25% of its territory. It remained under the Soviet rule until 1989.

Poland underwent transition from communism to capitalism and developed a new constitution in the early 1990s. It joined NATO in 1999 and the EU in 2004 but did not join the euro zone. Today, Poland has about 38 million inhabitants.

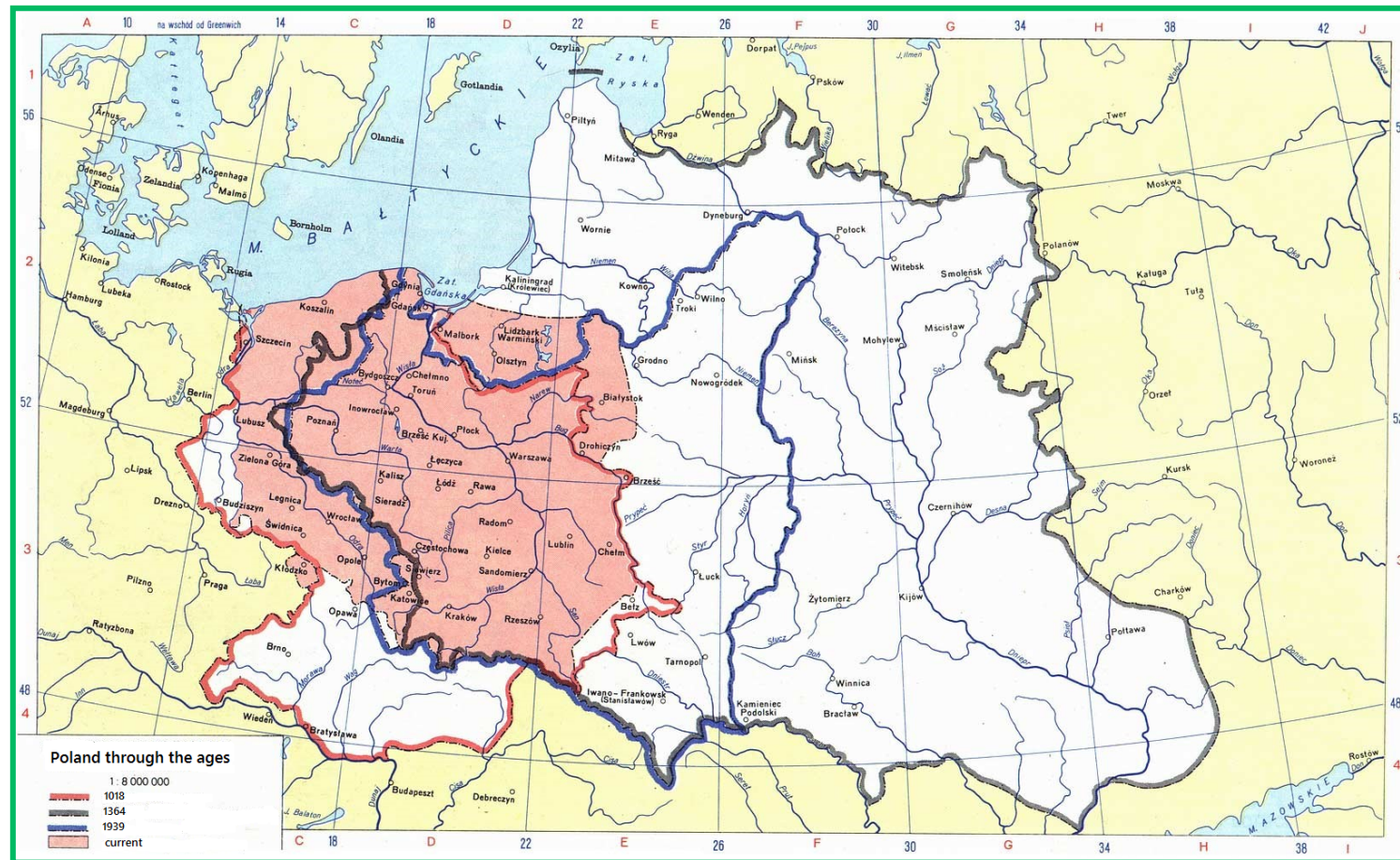
DIVERSE POLAND

Poland is historically a nation of many nationalities. This was especially true after the country regained its independence after World War I. According to the 1921 census, 30.8% of the population was of diverse background. This was furthered with the Polish victory in the Polish–Soviet War, and the large territorial gains in the east, made by Poland as a consequence. According to the 1931 Polish census, 68.9% of the population was Polish, 13.9% were Ukrainians, around 10% Jewish, 3.1% Belarusians, 2.3% Germans and 2.8% “others”, including Lithuanians, Czechs and Armenians. There were also smaller communities of Russians and Gypsies.

There are presently three categories of recognized minorities in Poland: 9 national minorities (Belarusians, Czechs, Lithuanians, Germans, Armenians, Russians, Slovaks, Ukrainians, Jews), 4 ethnic minorities (Karaites, Lemkos, Roma and Tatars), and a regional linguistic minority (Kashubians).

The history of the Jews in Poland dates back over 800 years. For centuries, Poland was home to the largest and most significant Jewish community in the world. Poland was the centre of Jewish culture thanks to a long period of statutory religious tolerance and social autonomy. During World War II there was a nearly complete genocidal destruction of the Polish Jewish community by Nazi Germany, during the 1939–45 German occupation of Poland and the ensuing Holocaust. Since the fall of Communism in Poland there has been a Jewish revival, characterized by the annual Jewish Culture Festival, new study programs at Polish high schools and universities, the work of synagogues such as the Nozyk, and the Museum of the History of Polish Jews.

POLAND THROUGH THE AGES



KEY DATES

966	Duke Mieszko I became Poland's first recorded Christian leader
966–1370	The Piast Polish Dynasty
1382–1572	The Jagiellonian Dynasty
1572–1795	The Royal Republic
1700s	The partitions - Russia, Prussia and Austria partition Poland
1914–18	World War I
1918	Poland regains independence
1939	Germany and Soviet Union invade Poland
1944	Warsaw Uprising
1945	End of World War II
1947	Poland becomes the Communist People's Republic
1980	Solidarity movement
1981–83	Martial law was imposed
1990	First free post-communist era elections
1995	New constitution
2004	Poland joins the EU

MIGRATION WAVES OUT OF POLAND

Canada

There were six waves of Polish immigration to Canada: 1854–1901, 1902–15, 1916–39, 1944–56, 1957–79 and 1980–93. The first two waves included many family groups from small towns of Austrian-occupied territory. Hardworking, religious peasants, many received land grants from the government or bought lots in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, where they built farms. Others worked on railway construction or in the coal mines. The immigrants of 1916 to 1939 arrived from an already independent Poland and settled primarily on the Prairies. Until 1944, Winnipeg had the largest Polish community. The first wave of immigrants after 1945 consisted largely of former soldiers of the Polish armed forces, former inmates of Nazi concentration or labour camps and political refugees. From 1957 to 1979, immigrants again arrived directly from Poland. The 1981–93 wave (about 119 000) was motivated by the deep economic and political crisis in Poland; 50% settled in Ontario.

USA

From the early 1800s to the beginning of World War II, more than 5 million Polish immigrants came to the United States. The first wave of immigrants, arriving mainly from the late 1800s up to World War I, were considered "za chlebem" (meaning "for bread") immigrants. They came to America mainly from economical but also political and religious reasons. Many immigrants were unskilled labourers. The majority came from South and South-eastern part of Poland. The second wave of immigration took place after World War II. During the war, Poland lost disproportionately more people than any other country. Over 6 million of its 35 million people were killed. Poland was also devastated economically. Many people decided not to return to Poland after World War II for political

reasons or became displaced – many of them immigrated to the US. The third wave of immigrants started arriving in 1980 – most were skilled professionals. Many settled in Chicago, New York or Detroit.

Australia

Polish settlement in Australia dates to the early 19th century when a Polish convict by the name of Joseph Potaski arrived in the colony of Port Phillip. The first settlers from Poland arrived in South Australia in 1856 and settled in the Clare Valley region in a place later called Polish Hill River. The first mass migration occurred in the late 1940s when large groups of displaced persons who could not return to Poland migrated to Australia after World War II. Between 1947 and 1954, the Poland-born population increased from 6,500 to 57,000 people. During the 1980–91 period, Australia granted permanent entry to a large number of Polish migrants, many arriving as refugees.

In 2006, about 50,000 Australian residents declared they were born in Poland. Cities with the largest Polish populations were Melbourne (16,439), Sydney (12,514), and Adelaide (5,859). In addition, in 2006, approximately 150,000 Australian residents declared they had Polish ancestry, either alone or in combination with one other ancestry.

New Zealand

In 1944, several hundred Polish children and their caregivers, survivors of forced resettlement of Poles to Soviet Siberia, were temporarily resettled at a refugee camp at Pahiatua, New Zealand. It was originally planned for the children to return to Poland after World War II ended, but they were eventually allowed to stay in New Zealand with the onset of the Cold War. At the 2013 Census, Polish New Zealanders numbered 1,944 by birth and 2,163 by ethnicity; of those, 42 percent lived in the Auckland Region and 23 percent in the Wellington Region.

South Africa

According to the Council of Polonia in South Africa, some 25,000–30,000 Poles live there. The Polish community in South Africa dates to World War II, when the South African government agreed to the settlement of 12,000 Polish soldiers as well as around 500 Polish orphans, survivors of forced resettlement of Poles to Soviet Siberia. More Poles came in the 1970s and 1980s, many of whom were qualified professionals.

Argentina

The first Poles arrived in Argentina during the 19th century. In 1890, the first Polish organization in Argentina was founded (Towarzystwo Polskie). For many years, the Misiones Province was the major Polish centre in Argentina. Today it is estimated that between 500,000 and 1 million Argentines have Polish ancestry. Over a quarter of Misiones population has Polish roots (250,000 persons), the highest concentration of Polish Argentines in the country. About 140,000 Poles live in Buenos Aires; other Argentine cities with large Polish populations include Córdoba, Rosario and Santa Fe. A major organization of Polish minority is the Polish Association in Argentina (Związek Polaków w Argentynie). In 1995, the Argentine National Congress made June 8 Polish Settlers' Day.

Chile

A small number of Poles came to Chile, with first of them coming during the Napoleonic wars. In early 20th century, there were around 300 Poles in Chile, but they were considered Germans. After World War II, in 1947–51 around 1,500 Poles, mostly *Zivilarbeiter*, as well as some former soldiers and Nazi concentration camp inmates settled in Chile, and in 1949 the Association of Poles in Chile was founded. An estimate of 45,000 ethnic Poles live in Chile. Most live in Santiago. One of the notable Polish Chileans is Ignacy Domeyko.

Russia

Millions of Poles lived within the Russian Empire as the Russian Revolution of 1917 started, followed by the Russian Civil War. While some Poles associated with the communist movement, the majority of the Polish population saw cooperation with Soviets as a betrayal of Polish national interests. There were 73,000 Polish nationals living in Russia in 2002. This includes autochthonous Poles as well as those forcibly deported during and after World War II; the total number of Poles in what was the former Soviet Union is estimated at up to 3 million. The number of Polish speaking people in Russia was 47,125 in 2010.

Ukraine

According to the 2001 Ukrainian census, there were 144,130 Poles residing in the country. Poles began settling in the territory of present Ukraine in the 14th century, after Red Ruthenia had become part of the Kingdom of Poland. The number of Poles in Ukraine gradually increased over the centuries, but after World War II it drastically decreased as a result of Soviet mass deportation of the Poles in Ukraine to Siberia and other eastern regions of the USSR as well as a campaign of ethnic cleansing, carried out in the early 1940s by Ukrainian nationalists in western part of the country. There was a Polish Autonomous District, located near Zhytomyr, created in 1926, but it was disbanded in 1935 and its Polish inhabitants were either murdered or deported to Kazakhstan. The majority of those who survived the war in Ukraine were forcibly deported to the former eastern territories of Germany after Poland was shifted to the West by the Allied Potsdam Agreement after World War II.

United Kingdom

Polish people have travelled to the British Isles throughout the centuries for a variety of reasons. By 1016, Cnut the Great, of Danish–Polish descent had conquered England assisted by Polish troops. In the 16th century, Polish travelers came as traders and diplomats. In the 18th century, a small number of Polish Protestants arrived as religious refugees due to the Counter-Reformation in Poland. In the 19th century, due to the collapse of the November Uprising of 1831, many Polish fighters came to Britain in search of sanctuary. Many Poles settled in the UK after World War II. Following Poland's entry into the European Union in May 2004, Poles gained the right to work in other EU countries. Many young Poles have come to work in UK since then. Estimates vary between 300,000 and 800,000.

Polonia in Europe

The term "Polonia" is used in Poland to refer to people of Polish origin who live outside Polish borders, officially estimated at around 10 to 20 million. Available data suggest there is a total of 60 million Polish people worldwide. There are almost 38 million Poles living in Poland and also Polish minorities in Germany, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Ukraine, and Belarus. There are some smaller indigenous minorities in Moldova, Latvia and Russia as well as those forcibly deported during and after World War II; the total number of Poles in what was the former Soviet Union is estimated at up to 3 million. Poles have lived in France since the 18th century. In the early 20th century, over a million Polish people settled in France. A recent large migration of Poles took place following Poland's accession to the European Union with an approximate number of 2 million Poles taking up jobs abroad. Since 2011, Poles have been able to work freely throughout the EU. The Polish community in Norway has increased substantially and has grown to a total number of 120,000, making Poles the largest immigrant group in Norway.

LOOKING FOR RECORDS

Now that you have a better understanding of Polish history and waves of Polish migration, it is time for us to start a journey through documents, archives and records.

Step 1: Start with yourself!

Write down your own name, birth date, place of birth, parents, husband or wife if married, date of marriage, place of marriage, children's complete names and

their dates of birth. After you do your own family, do your parents, grandparents and so on.

Step 2: Make a family tree

The family tree will give you a clear perspective of what you know, who is related to whom and what you are missing for each individual. There are many software packages available to help you do a family tree but you can also do it in a simple spreadsheet or

even draw it up by hand. Start with the basic details: names, dates and places and slowly add to it as you go along.

Step 3: Look through documents

It's worth analysing certificates, old photos, letters and records as they can contain many helpful details. Look for dates, names and any other useful information. Don't forget envelopes and inscriptions

on backs of photos. Anything in your possession can contain clues: birth certificates, marriage certificates, death certificates, naturalization certificates, army registrations, travel documents. Diaries, letters,

correspondence of any sort and written records may also be useful. You will soon become an expert on

reading between the lines, analysing stamps, people's clothing in the photos and other visual clues.

Step 4: Talk to your family

Your relatives are by far the best source of information. Your parents, aunts and uncles, or even grand-parents have first-hand knowledge about your ancestors and your family's history. Start with the oldest ones, as they should have the most information. We recommend you record the interview as a video or audio. Whilst talking to your family might

be a challenge at times, you're likely to learn some interesting facts. Ask each relative about specific individuals and gather details surrounding their lives including nicknames, places they lived, vital information including birth, marriage, and death dates, occupations and other important clues.

Step 5: Look up the archives in your own country

Australia

The Australian National Archives website helps you find official records of your ancestors if they immigrated to Australia. You can enter the surname of your ancestor on the search bar and the record search will bring up the names of everyone with that surname. The record listing will contain the access

status, information on whether it is open, open with exceptions, or not yet examined, as well as the location of the record. Further information on each record includes the country of origin, the means of arrival, the arrival date and place. A digital copy might also be available and you will be able to view it online

and request a hardcopy. Several types of documents are available on this website. You can find immigration files, naturalization files, medical records, incoming passenger cards, photos. In some cases, you might be able to find your ancestors' travel documents, birth certificates and other unique documentation. Best of all, the archives will have the original records of your ancestors, created at the time

USA

The website usa.gov/genealogy provides historical and government records that can help you trace your heritage and build your family tree. The following resources are available for you:

- State archives contain historical information including state census, microfilm, Native American records, and pioneer certificates.
- Census Bureau's Genealogy Page provides resources that may help your search for historical information, including the newly released 1940 Census Data.

of arrival to Australia: they will contain very useful information. All available documents will give you a hint on the history of your ancestors and guide you on the journey of genealogy. The most important thing is to gather all possible information through records and archives. Each document listed serves as a piece of evidence and can lead you to further information.

- Nationwide Grave site Locator can help you find burial locations of veterans.
- The Department of the Interior (DOI) provides a guide to exploring and tracing your Native American heritage (PDF, Download Adobe Reader)
- National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) offers genealogical workshops and courses. Topics include an introduction to genealogy and research into records such as census schedules, military service and pension records, and passenger lists.

- The Statue of Liberty - Ellis Island Foundation has 51 million passenger records in their

searchable database which allows you to find family members that entered the United States through the famous port.

Canada

The Library and Archives Canada website allows you to consult databases, research topics, find Canadian places discover other websites and ask a question. Databases are organised by topics such as:

- Births, marriages and deaths
- Census and enumerations
- Immigration and citizenship
- Military
- Land
- People

You also have access to other databases such as:

- AMICUS: Published sources such as books and newspapers are catalogued in this database. It contains references to local histories, church and cemetery indexes, family histories, city directories, genealogy society journals and more.
- Archives Search: Many archival records can be searched using this online research tool.
- CAIN: The Canadian Archival Information Network (CAIN) provides access to holdings of more than 800 archival institutions across Canada.

United Kingdom

Nationalarchives.gov.uk offers a wide range of records to trace your ancestors. In addition, the Sikorski Museum and Institute holds records on Poles

who lived in Britain, as well as the records of the Polish government in exile. This includes military and passport records.

Step 6: Try general online resources

Ancestry.com.au

This resource is useful if your Polish ancestors lived outside of Poland. You can access a search menu and enter names, locations and birth dates. This detailed search tool helps you enter the information you already know. You can also select the category you want to look for.

You can find all sorts of documents such as:

- Birth, marriage and death certificates
- Census and voters list
- Citizenship and naturalization records
- Military lists
- School, directories and church histories
- Land records and wills

Findmypast.com.au

This is a family history and genealogy website, which launched in May 2010 with millions of records covering Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea

and the Pacific Islands. The Australasian collection includes:

- Cemetery and death records

- Probate, land & court records
- Migration records
- Electoral rolls

- Military records
- Government gazettes

MyHeritage

MyHeritage is an online genealogy platform. You can create family trees, browse through photos, and search global historical records. It is free to sign up but in order to read full versions of documents, or confirm relationships, you will have to have a paid subscription. The MyHeritage online database

contains 6.3 billion historical records, including census, birth, marriage, death, military, and immigration documents along with historical newspapers. Users may also upload photos to their family trees.

JewishGen

JewishGen offers resources and research tools, general databases, country specific databases (including one for Poland) and special interest groups. Among the databases, you can find the following:

- Compilation of surnames and towns currently being researched by genealogists worldwide. It contains over 500,000 entries, including 130,000 ancestral surnames and 18,000

town names. JewishGen uses phonetic matching technology to yield results on all the different spellings of the name being searched.

- A database containing the names of all localities in 54 countries in Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East and more than 3 million Jewish names.

- Information on over 6,000 Jewish communities, together with Jewish population figures, historical town names and jurisdictions, inset maps, and links to JewishGen resources.
- A database of names and other identifying information from cemeteries and burial records worldwide. Contains nearly

2.5 million burial records from 5,400 cemeteries in 115 countries.

- JewishGen's Holocaust Database: a collection of databases containing information about Holocaust victims and survivors. It currently contains more than 2.7 million entries, including concentration-camp lists, transport lists, ghetto records, census lists, and ID cards.

FamilySearch

FamilySearch is a genealogy organization operated by the Genealogical Society of Utah ("GSU"), the genealogical arm of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is the largest genealogy organization in the world. It maintains a collection of records and resources and it gathers, preserves, and shares genealogical records worldwide. It offers free

access to its resources and service online at familysearch.org. The Family History Library has microfilmed many records in Poland and is continually adding to the collection. There are extensive records from the former Russian and German areas of Poland, but fewer for the Austrian areas of Poland.

Genealogy.com

Genealogy.com is a source to find genealogical research originally posted in GenForum. You can

browse databases, articles, forums and you can browse by topics or by location. This website also

gives you lots of advice and tips on how to do your research and keep everything organised. We highly

recommend this website for its helpful tips, especially if you wish to undertake the research by yourself.

The USGenWeb Project

This website provides free genealogy research in the United States. This Project is non-commercial. This website provides you with links to all the state genealogy websites which, in turn, provide gateways to the counties. The USGenWeb Project also sponsors important Special Projects at the national level and this website provides an entry point to all of those pages, as well. You can click on a State Link

which will take you to the State's website. Clicking on the tabs at the top of the home page will take you to additional information and links. You can also use the drop down menu in the upper left hand corner which will also take you to the State's website of your choice. Overall, this website provides extensive information of your ancestors in the US.

Step 7: Use Polish resources

Straty.pl

This Polish website gives you information about Polish victims of oppression, as well as records from Germany. You can then enter the name of your ancestor in the search tool bar and the website will come up with a list of persons with this surname. Be careful, if the surname you have entered is too

common and there are too many results, nothing will come up. You would need to provide additional information, such as first name or date to narrow down your research. Once you get the list of records, look for your ancestor. When you think you have potentially found him/her, you can click on the name

and you will be re-directed to a webpage with more information. Read through the information and work

PolandGen Web

The PolandGenWeb Project was created to help you, the genealogical researcher, to uncover your Polish ancestry. Part of the WorldGenWeb Project, the website provides visitors with research tutorials, maps (historic and present day), town locators and town lists, translation aids, archives addresses, and much more. Transcribed Records are the highlight of PolandGenWeb . Volunteers have transcribed records and donated them to the project to be displayed online. These records include birth, marriage, and death records filmed by the LDS as well as tombstone inscriptions from Polish cemeteries located in Poland and elsewhere. Transcribed passenger manifest pages containing

out whether that might correspond to your ancestor.

Polish immigrants are also available to view on the site. There are 160 pages designed to assist you in uprooting your family tree. In addition, each Polish province has its own website devoted to researching your ancestors specifically within those boundaries and can be accessed from the PolandGenWeb home page. There is no fee to view the online records and resources, and you will never have to register to use this website, as some other genealogy website require. Whether you're new to researching your Polish roots or have years of experience, PolandGenWeb is a resource you will use over and over again.

TYPES OF RECORDS



Immigration and travel collection — to discover the moment your ancestor arrived as well as details reported to obtain citizenship; note that women and children may not have naturalization records and may have been naturalized through a parent or spouse, depending on laws at the time.



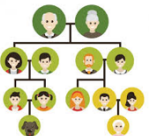
Military collection — to learn more about military service in both Poland and other European countries; look for key records associated with First and Second World Wars, some of which mention land, give personal stories and information about other relatives.



Obituaries and newspapers — to locate your family lines and possibly the birthplace of an ancestor; check for obituaries for siblings, too, some of which may contain additional details.



Location maps — to quickly view all of the records available from a specific location.



Family trees — to link to other family members, possibly even distant cousins, who are also researching the same family lines; one of them may have the details you're searching for.

CERTIFICATES

Certificates hold a wealth of information about your ancestors. They are definitely worth searching your house for. Be sure to ask other family members if they have anything that may be useful. If you can't find what you need you can always order a copy. Certificates from Australia and New Zealand may provide the following information, depending on where and when the event occurred.

Birth certificates can tell you:

- The name of the person
- Father's name, occupation, age and birthplace
- Mother's name and maiden name, occupation age and birthplace
- When and where the parents were married
- Names and ages of siblings (both living and deceased)
- The informant and their residence
- Names changed or added after registration

Marriage certificates can tell you:

- When and where the marriage took place
- The bride and groom's full names and birthplace
- Age and the date of birth of the bride and groom
- Marital status at marriage, i.e. widowed, divorced, or single
- Profession, residence
- The names of the parents of the bride and groom.
- Details of the parents of the bride and groom

Death certificates can tell you:

- Full name of the person
- When and where a person died
- Age and occupation
- The cause of death, the duration of the last illness
- Details of the informant (often a family member)
- The names of the parents of the deceased and the profession of the father
- When and where buried or cremated
- The name and religion of the minister for the burial/cremation
- The names of witnesses to the burial/cremation
- Where the deceased was born and how long in the colony/country
- If married, the name of the spouse, their age at marriage and where the marriage occurred
- Living children in order of birth with their names and ages

HELPFUL INFORMATION

Good to know! Having the following details handy can make searching international records much simpler:

Ethnic given name: (for instance “John” could also be Jan, Janek, Johann or Giovanni): search the Internet to find equivalents.

Surname variations: sound the name out and see what types of phonetic spellings you can come up with; review citizenship documents to see if aliases or name changes were included.

Age: estimate from a census records or obtain from vital records.

Family structure: you can discover the names of siblings in census records, which can help you locate the family immigrating, even if the surname has changed slightly.

Nationality: use caution with Eastern European ancestors — countries changed names and borders often.

Estimated date of arrival: 20th century census records include this detail as do citizenship (naturalization) documents; note that both were self-reported and could be inaccurate.

Inconsistencies in dates: note that dates might not be accurate, such as dates of birth and dates of arrival among others and you might have to rely on false dates to start with before finding the truth.

Documents in other languages: remember that Poland was partitioned several times in its history and you may find documents in languages other than Polish, such as Russian or German for example.

Seven tricks for tricky names

Immigrant names can be tricky. Even something as simple as Jan may have been changed to John after arrival. Use the following tricks to help you uncover your ancestor, regardless of the name he or she is hiding behind.

- Trick 1:** Use the Internet to help you determine equivalents of an ancestor's name. Sites like BehindtheName.com let you type in your ancestor's name and search for related names that include equivalents.
- Trick 2:** Look for literal translations: the German surname Schwartz may have been changed to Black just like the French surname LeBlanc may have been changed to White.
- Trick 3:** Lengthen and shorten names. And remember that more than one ancestor may have changed a surname. Weisenberger, for example, may have originally been changed to Weisenberg before becoming Weisen and finally, generations later, Wise.
- Trick 4:** Try a wildcard search in which you use asterisks to replace some of the letters in a name. For example, if the surname was Berlengauem, B*rl*g*m* would produce it as well as Burlingame and other variants.
- Trick 5:** Forego the surname and search using birthplace, age, gender, occupation and other details to find people who match the ancestor you're seeking. Pay special attention to the names in your search results.
- Trick 6:** Check immigration records and passports carefully — at times they may include notations indicating a previous name change.
- Trick 7:** Try maiden names. Female ancestors may have traveled using them, even when married.

NEED PROFESSIONAL HELP?

If you'd like to continue with your enquiry, we will need from you:

- 1. Further information linking you to your Polish ancestor/s** (e.g.: birth and marriage dates, year they left Poland, year they were naturalized & if they served in a foreign army)
- 2. Polish documents you have from your ancestor/s** – we can conduct research to retrieve what's needed to support your case. The more you have, the quicker the process and the less you pay!

If you'd like to proceed with your enquiry, we will:

- Create an action plan
- Conduct a phone or face-to-face interview with you
- Provide you with a no-obligation fixed quote and time lines

For more information contact us

Polaron European Citizenship	Email	citizenship@polaron.com.au
	Phone	+(61-3) 95-10-9661
	From Australia	1300-88-55-61
	Visit	polaron.com.au