The Polish State Archives

Poland "How to" Guide, Intermediate 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 from various locations in Poland.

INTRODUCTION

The Polish archive system consists of many archives throughout Poland which are under the umbrella of the main Polish State Archive in Warsaw. They have made this website, incorporating the holdings of all the various States Archives, for the purpose of helping users find the records and documents they need. Most holdings of the Polish State Archives are listed on this website and show whether the item is digitized or in another format, such as book or manuscript. This is a government entity and separate from holdings found in church diocesan archives.

The name of the town containing the church parish and/or civil registration office is necessary, as all records are listed under those locations. If you do not know the name of the parish or civil registration office, consult the following "How to" Guide before continuing

- [Poland-Skorowidz Gazetteer Online](#)

HOW TO

1. Go to the link: http://www.szukajwarchiwach.pl.

2. Close the white cover page by clicking on the x in the upper right corner.

3. If the website defaults to Polish, click on the British flag, located in the upper right corner of the website. This may cause the white cover page to pop back up. Close it by clicking on the x in the upper right corner.

4. Click on Advanced Search.

5. In the column on the left, check the following boxes: "Collections", "Vital records and civil registers", and "Only units/collections with scans".

6. In the search field located in the black box in the middle of the dark gray bar, type in the locality you wish to search. In this instance, type in the town of Grodzisk, then click on the orange "Search" box.

7. If the records are scanned, the list of record collections will appear as shown in the following image:
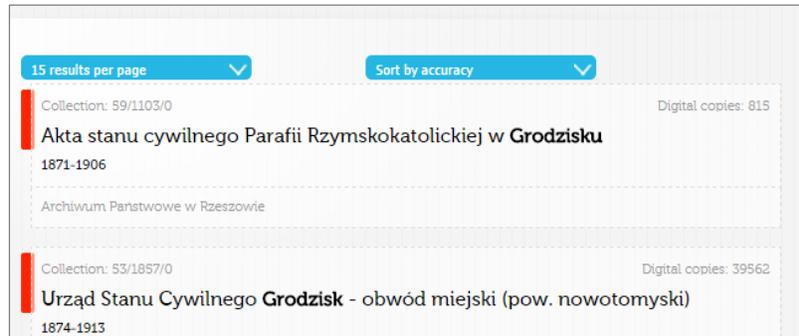
The red bar to the left of each item indicates that there are images available. Each collection contains a description including where the records originated and the time period listed in the collection, the most common being "Akta stanu cywilnego" or civil registration records. On the right side of the entry, it lists how many Digital copies images are available. You can click anywhere in the description box to choose that collection. Click on the first collection.

8. Another screen will appear with more detail about the specific collection. Under the large bolded title of the collection there is a small navigation bar, with the word "Collection" in a red box resembling an arrow. To the right of the red arrow will be the word "Units", along with the number of units that make up the collection. Click on "Units".

9. The next screen shows much more detail about the specific collection, including entries for the Units or separate books that make up the collection. Each Unit will have a title that includes the description of the type of record in Polish, as well as the specific villages that are included in the record. The two columns to the right provide the date range and the number of scans for each Unit. The following record types are most commonly seen in the description:

urodzeń	births
małżeństw	marriages
zgonów	deaths

To select on the desired Unit, click on the title and description. In this instance, select the first entry.

10. You are now in the Unit's detail page. Notice the small navigation bar still has a box resembling a red arrow, with the number 59/1103/0/-/1 inside. This is the archive signature or filing number for this specific Unit. Across the bar you will see other words appearing, including "Archive", "Collection", "Units", "Digital copies", "Indexes", and "Items". Click on "Digital copies" just to the right of the red arrow box.

11. You will now see thumbnail images of the Unit. To find out if the images have been digitally indexed, look in the small navigation bar to the right of the red arrow box for the word "Indexes". If the number is 0, there are no indexes; if there is another number there, click on "Indexes" to access them. There may also be handwritten indexes in the record sets, typically at the beginning or at the end of the set. You may be able to find them by glancing through the thumbnails.

12. The image will enlarge when you click on it. At the bottom right corner of the image there are two icons as shown below. Clicking on the "Z" icon will open the zoom feature; move your mouse over the image to see zoomed in sections for clearer reading. The one to the left of the "Z" is the full-screen icon; it will open a new window containing a larger version of the image. If you hover the mouse on the right or left side of the image, an arrow will appear. 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 icons appear as shown below.

13. If you click on the full-screen icon, you will find other tools including brightness, contrast, and magnification, as shown below:

Close the full-screen window to return to the image navigation page.

PRACTICE

Now, look in the Polish State Archives to see if there are any records for the city of Opole. Follow these steps:

1. Go to the website: http://www.szukajwarchiwach.pl. Close the white cover page by clicking on the x in the upper left corner. If the website is in Polish, click on the British flag in the upper right corner.

2. Click on "Advanced search", and click the boxes: "Collections", "Vital records and civil registers", and "Only Units/collections with scans". Then type "Opole" in the black search box, and click on "Search".

3. There are several results for the town of Opole. Identify the entry with the title "Urząd Stanu Cywilnego w Opolu" and the years 1874-1914, and 1944. The red bar to the left of the entry indicates there are digitized images; to the right you will find that there are over 35,000 images available. Click on the collection and answer the following

questions:

How many digital Units are available?	231
What is the foreign language title of the collection?	Standesamt Oppeln
Click on the words "Archiwum Państwowe w Opolu" written in blue under the red arrow box with the word "Collection". On this screen you will find the archive where these records are held. What is the email address of the archive?	sekretariat@opole.ap.gov.pl

4. Now click the back arrow at the top left hand corner to go back to the previous page. Now click on "Units". Click on the first set of records on that page, listed as "Urząd Stanu Cywilnego w Opolu 1874…"

5. From this page, click on "Digital copies" found to the right of the red arrow box.

6. Hover over the thumbnail images and you will notice that there are file numbers at the bottom of each image. Click on the one labeled File: 14.jpg. Then answer the questions:

What is the number of the entry? It is handwritten and located at the top of the image.	10
At the bottom is the source information. Write the unit numbers to note the source.	Unit 45/1016/0/2.1/1
Below the unit numbers, you will find the name of the Unit or record set. Write it in the space provided.	Urząd Stanu Cywilnego w Opolu 1874 Rejestre Urodzeń (Civil Registration Office of Opole, Register 1874, Births)

7. To the right of the unit number, find the words "Show link" and click on them. This will show the website address that will bring you right back to this specific image. Click once in the box that appeared containing "http:///www.szukaj....." The box should now be highlighted in blue. While the mouse pointer is still in the box, right click and select "Copy". 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.