



German Genealogy and German History

April 20th, 2024

Red River Valley Genealogical Society

Historic Research in Poland
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April 2024

1. **Historical Background:** Knowing the history of Poland and how the borders have changed will help locate ancestral village(s) in Poland.
<https://maps.arcenum.com/en/map/northgermany-1877>
 - a. Poland did not exist from 1796 to 1919 as a separate country.
 - b. During this time Poland was divided between Austria, Prussia, and Russia. Your family records will vary in language and content depending on the 'partition' the town was located.
 - c. Poland re-emerged as a nation between the two world wars (1919- 1939) and extended from the Poznan area in the west to the Wilno (Vilnius) area in the east. In the interwar period, Poland included significant parts of what are today Lithuania, Belarus, and western Ukraine.
 - d. During the 2nd World War, Poland was occupied by Germany. Poland came under the jurisdiction of the Soviet Union following the defeat of the Nazis. At this time Poland gained territory from Germany in the west and lost territory to Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine in the east.
2. **Poland Today**
 - a. <https://www.mapsofworld.com/poland/poland-political-map.html>
3. **Ethnicity and Religions**
 - a. In the 19th century Poland had the following ethnic groups: Germans, Jews, Poles, Ruthenians (Lemkos).
 - b. These groups had diverse religious practices:
 - i. Poles were Roman Catholics in general,
 - ii. Germans were mainly Protestants, and
 - iii. The Ruthenians were Greek Catholics
 - c. 2nd World War changed Poland's ethnic and religious makeup dramatically:
 - i. The population was relatively homogenous as Polish Roman Catholics
 - ii. Most of the Jewish population died at the hands of the Nazis (as did millions of ethnic Poles)
 - iii. German-speaking people moved out of Poland to Germany
 - iv. The Ruthenians were largely forcibly resettled in the new western areas of Poland and to the Ukraine
4. **Recording Keeping System**
 - a. Church records: (Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, Protestant, Jewish).
 - b. The end of the nineteenth century, civil authorities began to keep records of births, marriages, and deaths.
 - c. Polish Church records can be found in both state archives and church archives, with many records still in local rectories.
 - d. Some records of German-speaking Protestants were brought from Poland to Germany and deposited in German archives.
 - e. Some church records may be found at the Civil Registry Offices in Poland which holds records that are less than 100 years old.

5. Alphabets, Translations of Common Words and Polish Suffixes

- a. Records in the Polish Church could be in
 - i. Polish ...Special characters: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Polish-alphabet.png>
 - ii. German: <http://www.omniglot.com/writing/german.htm>
 - iii. Russian: <http://www.pbs.org/weta/faceofrussia/reference/cyrillic.html>
- b. Type language special characters.
 - i. polish.typeit.org
 - ii. german.typeit.org
 - iii. russian.typeit.org
- c. Common Research Word

Common Church Research Words				
German or Latin records will usually be tabulated.				
Polish or Russian records will usually be in a paragraph format.				
English	Polish	German	Latin	Russian
Baptism	Chrest	Taufe, Taufen, Unterschiedlich	Baptize (to baptize)	КРЕЩЕНИЕ
Born/birth	Urodzić się	Gerbuten, Geburtsregister, Kinder	Natus, nata (nat.)	РОЖДЕННЫЙ/ РОЖДЕНИЕ
Marriage or Wedding	Małżeństwo Ślub	Heiratin, Trauungen, Unehelich	Copulatio	БРАЧНЫЙ БРАК
Death	Umarł	Tote, Vor	Mor, mortis	БЕЗ ПЕРЕВОДА (died) СМЕРТНЫЙ (death)

- d. English - Polish - Latin - German Definition:

English	Polish	Latin	German
and	i	et	und
born	urodzony	natus	geboren-geborene
buried	pochowany	rssepultus	begraben
child born out of wedlock		vulga quaesitus	uneheliches kind
city	miasta	oppidum urbis	stadt
citizen	obywatel	civis	bürger
daughter	córka	filia	tochter
day	dnień	des	tag
death register	śmierć zarejestrować książka	libri mortourum	totenbücher
died (male)	zmarł	defunctus	verstorben
died (female)	zmarła	defuncta	verstorben
died	zmarł zmarła	obiit obitus	starb gestorben

English	Polish	Latin	German
hour	godziny	hora	stunde
Lord's day- sunday	niedziela	Dominica	Sonntag
marriage	małżeństwo	copulatio	heirat
month	miesiąc	mensis	monat
pastor	pastor	parochus	pfarrer
place	miejsce	locus	ort
same date, the same	tym samym	idem	gleiches datum das gleiche
sir- master	pan	dominus	herr
son	syn	filius	sohn
spinster -not married	panna	virgo	jungfrau
widow	wdowa	viduus	wittfrau-wittwe
wife	żona	uxor	ehefrau gattin
with	z	cum	mit
year	rok	annus	jahr

e. Months: English - German - Latin - Polish - Genitive

English	German	Latin	Polish	Genitive
January	Januar	Ianuarus	Styczeń	stycznia
February	Februar	Februarius	Luty	lutego
March	März	Martius	Marzec	marca
April	April	Aprilis	Kwiecień	kwietnia
May	Mai	Maius	Maj	maja
June	Juni	Iunius	Czerwiec	czerwca
July	Juli	Iulius/Quintilis	Lipiec	lipca
August	August	Augustus/ Sextilis	Sierpień	sierpnia
September	September	September	Wrzesień	września
October	Oktober	October	Październik	października
November	November	November	Listopad	listopada
December	Dezember	December	Grudzień	grudnia

f. Glossary of Terms

- https://wiki.familysearch.org/en/Poland_Genealogical_Word_List
- https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/German_Genealogical_Word_List
- https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Latin_Genealogical_Word_List

6. Kartenmeister: <http://www.kartenmeister.com/preview/databaseuwe.asp>

Note: Use Latitude/Longitude of towns and Distance Calculator to determine if towns are in the same area.

From Name: <input type="text" value="Bernsdorf"/> Longitude: <input type="text" value="17"/> Degrees <input type="text" value="31"/> Minutes EAST Latitude: <input type="text" value="54"/> Degrees <input type="text" value="07"/> Minutes NORTH <input type="button" value="Pick From Location from List"/>				German Name Bernsdorf Alternate Name 1: Bernsdorff 1804 Alternate Name 2: Ugoszcz 1686 Polish/Russian Name Ugoszcz Kreis/County B"utow German Province Pommern Today's Province Pomorskie Location East 17°31' North 54°07' Google Map Google Maps (Bernsdorf) Map Number 26 Location Description This village/town is located 4.5 km and 320 degrees from St"udnitz, which is known today as Studzienice Lutheran Parish Bernsdorf 1905 Catholic Parish Bernsdorf 1905 Standesamt/Civil Registry Damsdorf 1905 Gemeindelexikon/Town Index IV-4-2 Population By Year/Einwohner 1905: 798 Church Yes <input type="button" value="Buy Map of this Location"/>
To Name: <input type="text" value="Oslawa Dabrowa"/> Longitude: <input type="text" value="17"/> Degrees <input type="text" value="37"/> Minutes EAST Latitude: <input type="text" value="54"/> Degrees <input type="text" value="06"/> Minutes NORTH <input type="button" value="Pick To Location from List"/>				
<input type="button" value="Calculate Distance"/> <input type="button" value="Clear"/>				
Distance From: Bernsdorf To: Oslawa Dabrowa Distance: 6.8 kms 4.2 miles				

Where to Begin

Glenn Ellingsberg

April 20, 2024

Start with Closest Ancestor and Work Backwards

- Relatives, especially Grand Parents
- Start with One Ancestor (Parent, Grand Parent)
- Gather all the information you can!
 - Birth Certificates of Each
 - Place of Birth in as much detail as you can discover.
 - Marriage Certificate and place of marriage
 - Places they lived along with dates they lived there.
 - Their Parents, Grand Parents (Full & Maiden Names)
 - Places they lived along with dates they lived there.
 - Death Certificates for Each
 - Place of Death for Each
- Photos, Cards, and Letters
 - A valuable resource for information on your ancestors.
 - Sort by Surname, Place or Dates and hopefully one will lead to clues for the others, especially finding out the names of ancestors in those photos.

Translation Services for Photos, Cards, and Letters:

- DeepL Translator www.deepl.com/translator
- Google Chrome <https://translate.google.com/>
- Bing www.bing.com/translator
- Apps on IOS and Android Devices (Google Search, Select Translate below bar)
- Alte Deutsche Handschriften (German Fonts) www.deutsche-handschrift.de
- Hire Translation
 - Search the Internet for Translation or Transcription Services.
 - Germanic Genealogy Society www.ggsnm.org
 - International German Genealogy Partnership www.iggp.org

Labeling Photos:

- Type of Pencil
 - Use a Soft Number 2 Pencil
 - Use a Stabilo Pencil on newer photo paper if necessary!
- Information to put on Photographs.
 - who's in a photo, the date it was taken, the occasion, and where it was taken.
 - Place it along the edge of photo to prevent damage to the central part of image.
- Digital Photos
 - Standardize your labeling methods across all forms of information.

Sample File-Naming Templates

NAME FIRST

surname-firstname_yyyy-mm-dd_state-place_event.ext
Grant-Alva-A_1921-08-24_MN-Clay-County_Probate.pdf

Note: You could omit the word *County*.

PLACE FIRST

state-county-place_event_surname-firstname_yyyy-mm-dd.ext.
ME-Aroostook-County_Deed-Index_Pennington_1808-1879_FHL-Film-10432.pdf

Note: Here, *FHL-Film* refers to a Family History Library microfilm.

DATE FIRST

yyyy-mm-dd_surname-firstname_state-place_source.ext
1903-08-13_KY-Lexington_Morning-Herald-Page-1_GenealogyBank.pdf

Note: This file is in a folder all pertaining to the same person, so I didn't include the person's name in the file name.

Digital Labeling for Electronic Images/Files <https://www.rideau-info.com/photos/labelling.html>

Use IPTC/XMP (metadata of an image)

the data can be viewed in 50 or 100 years. Prefers Jpeg (Color) or Tiff (B/W) formats for images.

- Adobe Bridge (Free) www.adobe.com/products/bridge
- BreezeBrowser www.breezesys.com
- ACDSee www.acdsee.com
- Picasa (Windows/mac/Linux): No Longer Produced, Might get 3.9 on secondary market.
- Edit Adobe PDF Metadata by going to >File >Properties>Description:

German Children Given Confusing Names

- First Name were often the same beginning in Middle Ages:
 - Boys commonly were baptized with the first name Johannes (or Johann, abbr. *Joh*) or Hans (Nickname for Johannes)
 - German girls were often baptized Maria, Anna, or Anna Maria
- The second name, known as the *Rufnamen (Call Name)*, is what would often be used in marriage, tax, land, and death records. So, in a family with boys Johann Friedrich, Johann Peter, Johann Daniel, etc., the children might be called by and recorded in documents as:
 - Friedrich, Peter, Daniel
- By the 19th century, more Germans gave their children three names. Again, typically only one of the middle names was used throughout the person's life. Roman Catholics often used saints' names, while most Protestant groups also included names from the Old Testament or even non-Christian mythology.
- Nicknames, called Spitzname or *Kurzforme*
 - often shorten a given name by dropping the first part of the name:
 - Nicklaus = Klaus
 - Sebastian = Bastian
 - Christophel = Stophel
 - Christina = Stin or Stina
 - Katharina = Trin

Ancestral or Pedigree Charts

- Four (4) Generation
- Twelve (12) Generation
- Use a numbering system to keep track of Ancestors
 - Several are available but **Ahnentafel** is commonly used



The first Ahnentafel,
published by German,
Michaël Eytzinger
Cologne: 1590

Ahnentafel (German for “Ancestor Table”)

Ahnentafel Number	Ancestor
1X2	2 = FATHER
1X2+1	3 = MOTHER
2x2	4 = GRANDFATHER
2X2+1	5 = GRANDMOTHER
2X4	8 = GREAT GRANDFATHER
2X4+1	9 = GREAT GRANDMOTHER
2X8	16 = GREAT GREAT GRANDFATHER
2X8+1	17 = GREAT GREAT GRANDMOTHER
2X16	32 = GREAT GREAT GREAT GRANDFATHER
2x16+1	33 = GREAT GREAT GREAT GRANDMOTHER

DPI (Dots Per Inch) and it does matter:

DPI, which is a paper dots per inch, does count when scanning. When an image is scanned, one scanning "dot" equals one digital image pixel. You are converting an object with physical dimensions to digital pixel dimensions.

Scanning Paper (photos, documents, etc.):

Before you do your first scan, you'll want to know what DPI the paper object (a printed photo for example) should be scanned at. There are a couple of ways at looking at this:

1. You can simply pick a number that will provide a good quality scan with a reasonable filesize. This is usually about **600 dpi**. That will provide enough pixels to effectively double (or triple) the potential output size while maintaining photographic quality. See item #2 for exactly why.
2. Publishers often require 300 dpi, but 600 dpi will allow a 4 X 6 photo to be enlarged to 8 X 10 and still maintain its clarity.