Viewing Original Documents Posted on the Polish State Archives Web Site

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The Polish State Archives are digitizing some of their holdings, including birth, marriage, and death records, and putting the images online at their National Digital Archives (NDA) website: <http://szukajwarchiwach.pl>. For new genealogists, this seems nothing out of the ordinary. After all, today's researchers are used to getting images of ship manifests on the Ellis Island website and copies of many other original documents on Ancestry.com. However, for those of us who remember how difficult it was to get permission to even enter one of the Polish State Archive branches prior to the early 1990s, how one was only permitted to see a limited number of books per day, and how difficult it was to order copies of the documents, this is nothing short of a miracle.

In addition to the main NDA site, which currently has record images for towns in the Lublin, Zamosć, Poznan, and several other branches, there are other branch archive sites holding scans of records. While there is currently a lack of uniformity in the way these sites are navigated, this will undoubtedly be refined as time goes on and more records are put online. While the availability of these digital images is wonderful, the Polish Archives do not have any name index information that would let researchers perform a search to locate specific records. The responsibility for creating these indexes is a core part of the historic agreement signed in February 2013 between Jewish Records Indexing-Poland (www.jri-poland.org) and the Polish State Archives.

Over the years, JRI-Poland has increased enormously the accessibility to Polish documents by first indexing records filmed by the LDS (Mormons) and later hiring professionals in Poland to index those records not filmed by the LDS. JRI-Poland's latest contribution is to begin to link the indexes from their search results to the actual images of vital records posted on Polish State Archives websites.

So far, this has been done for Galician records up to 1905 housed in AGAD (Central Archive of Old Acts) in Warsaw, which holds records from communities now in Ukraine. Some records from regional archives in present day Poland have been linked to record groups but not to individual records.

Records from Present-Day Ukraine stored in AGAD:

To view the Galician records, first do a search on JRI-Poland. When the index entries are displayed in a table, click on the "View Image" column to the far left, and you will be linked to the actual record.

Rohatyn PSA AGAD Births 1859-81
Stanislawow Wojewodztwo / Ukraine
(records in Fond 300 in AGAD Archive)
Located at 49°25′ 24°37′
Last updated December 2001

Please note that links to the AGAD images are only APPROXIMATE and should be within a few pages of the correct image.
Use the scrolling arrow buttons at the bottom of each page to move forwards and backwards based on the year and akt number you want to view.

Click to view	Surname	Given Name	Year	Type	Akta	Page	Sygnatura	Sex	Father	Father Surname	Town	Mother	Mother Surname
View Image	BUSGANG	Ire	1873	B		124	1023	M	Seinwel			Feige	
View Image	BUSSGANG	Israel Leib	1877	B	187		1025	M	Juda	BUSSGANG	Knihynicze	Breine	BROJER
View Image	KALFER	Rifke	1878	B	2		1026	F	Hersch	KALFER	Pomonieta / Chodorów	Feige	BUSSGANG
View Image	BUSSGANG	Lane	1878	B	93		1026	F	Osias Abraham	BUSSGANG	Knihynicze	Hudie	NAGELBERG
View Image	BUSSGANG	Jente	1878	B	117		1026	F	Isak	BUSSGANG	Knihynicze	Rifka	ABERBAUCH
View Image	BUSGANG v WAGNER	Breine	1878	B	173		1026	F	Leib	WAGNER		Chane	BUSGANG

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Sometimes, you will be linked to a nearby record instead of the one you search, but it is not too difficult to navigate to the correct image if you have carefully jotted down the name, Akt number, year, and month. At the very bottom of the screen are arrows on both sides to go backward or forward until you reach the desired record.

If you click on Print (command P), you can print a copy of the record. When you see the Print dialogue, you can adjust the scale to get the size of picture you want.

If you want to save a copy on your computer, you can use your Web browser's tool to enlarge or shrink the size of the image and then take a screen shot [Command/shift/4 on a Mac] of exactly the part of the image you want to save.

It is extremely helpful that JRI-Poland has linked the AGAD images, because if one tries to search from the PSA website for images from AGAD, it is very difficult.

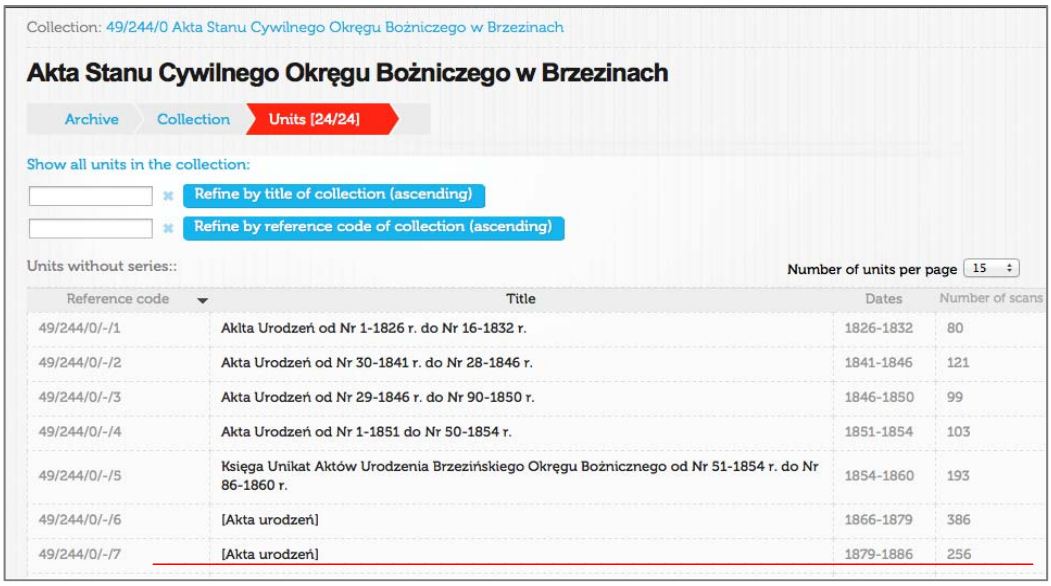
Records from Congress Poland

For records from Congress Poland, the steps are not the same and currently not as simple. Most records have not yet been digitized. The individual records that have been digitized have not yet been linked to a particular image by JRI-Poland. However, some towns have been linked to the record groups for that town. Navigation to the correct individual record for which you are searching is possible with a little patience. The following instructions may help save you some frustration.

First, go to JRI-Poland and search for relevant records. (Bursztajn from Brzeziny, for instance]. If there is a link to that town's record groups, you will see the following message at the top of the display of names: "Eventually all index records will be directly linked to their images, but in the meantime you can find folders with all currently available images **HERE."**

Before clicking "HERE," carefully write down the name of the person, the year, the type of record (B,M,D), and the Akt # for each document that interests you. Then Click on "HERE." That will take you to the PSA website <http://szukajwarchiwach.pl>.

You will see a list of all the items contained in the archives for the town you are researching, showing the number of scans for every record group listed (which may be 0 for some as yet).


Collection: 49/244/0 Akta Stanu Cywilnego Okręgu Bożniczego w Brzezinach

Akta Stanu Cywilnego Okręgu Bożniczego w Brzezinach

Archive | Collection | Units [24/24]

Show all units in the collection:

Refine by title of collection (ascending)

Refine by reference code of collection (ascending)

Units without series::

Number of units per page 15

Reference code	Title	Dates	Number of scans
49/244/0/-/1	Aklta Urodzeń od Nr 1-1826 r. do Nr 16-1832 r.	1826-1832	80
49/244/0/-/2	Akta Urodzeń od Nr 30-1841 r. do Nr 28-1846 r.	1841-1846	121
49/244/0/-/3	Akta Urodzeń od Nr 29-1846 r. do Nr 90-1850 r.	1846-1850	99
49/244/0/-/4	Akta Urodzeń od Nr 1-1851 do Nr 50-1854 r.	1851-1854	103
49/244/0/-/5	Księga Unikat Aktów Urodzenia Brzezińskiego Okręgu Bożnicznego od Nr 51-1854 r. do Nr 86-1860 r.	1854-1860	193
49/244/0/-/6	[Akta urodzeń]	1866-1879	386
49/244/0/-/7	[Akta urodzeń]	1879-1886	256

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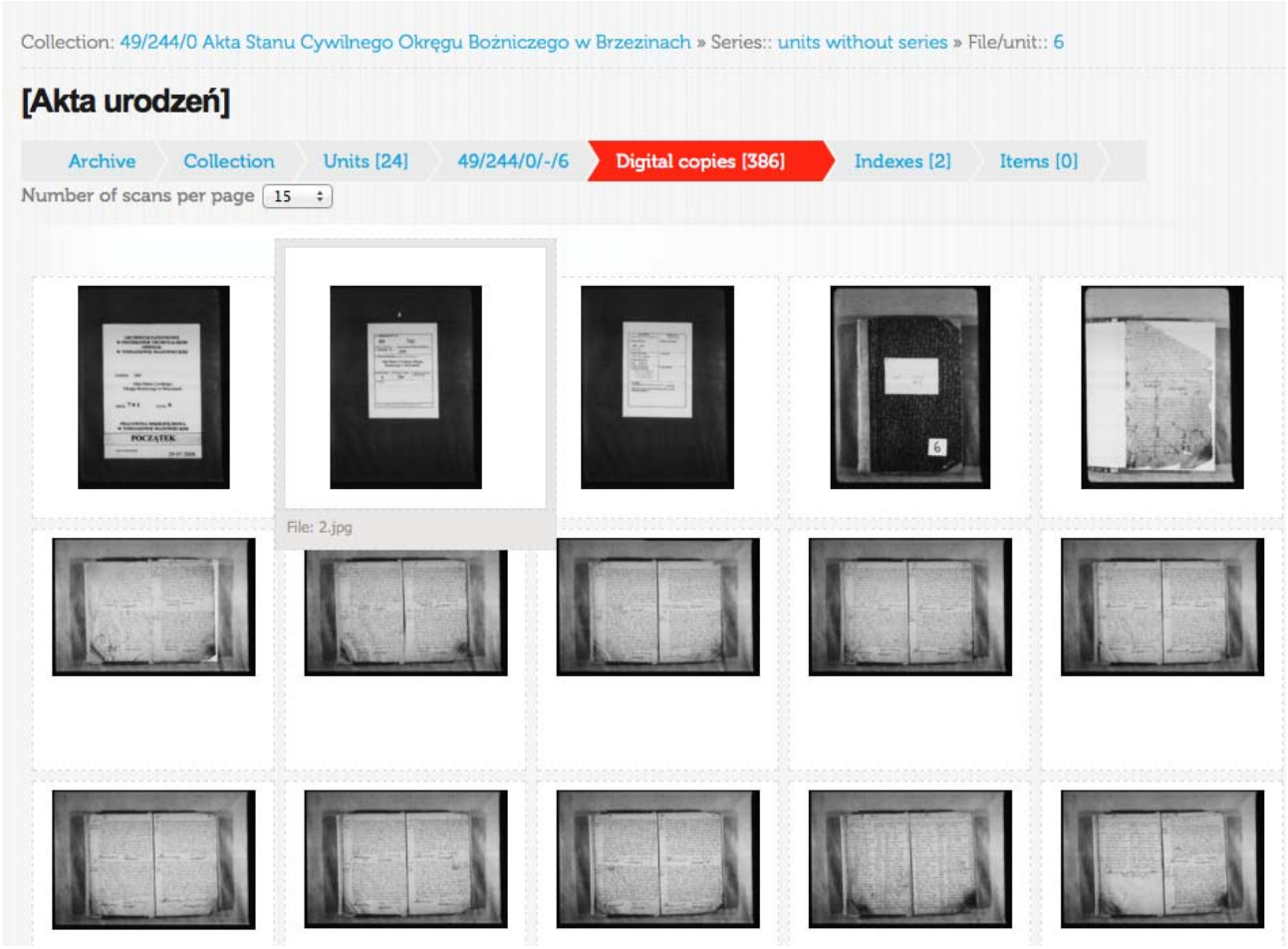
In this example, it was: *Akta Stanu Cywilnego Okręgu Bożniczego w Brzezinach* [Civil Registration Acts from the Synagogue District in Brzeziny] and the screen shows that there are 24 units (groups of records), showing type of record and dates covered within that record group.

I was searching for the birth of Israel Bursztajn, Akt 2, in 1878.

I thus clicked on the item that said *Akta Urodzeń* [Birth Records] 1866 to 1879 and saw that it contains 386 scans [each scan usually covers a two-page spread].

I then got a page showing details of that record group. I clicked on "Digital copies" and got this page showing small images of each scan:



The number of scans to be shown per page is set at 15, but on the drop-down menu, one can also choose 30, 50, or 100. I chose 100 to make scrolling through faster. I was looking for the year 1878, and the images start with 1866, so I had a long way to go.

Along the bottom of the screen are page numbers. I clicked on a page at the end and scrolled through the small images on that page for an image containing a list of names. A page with a list is usually an index and so would tell me what year I was in the midst of and whether the records were births, marriages, or deaths.

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If you hover over the small image or click below it, you see a file/page number. If you click on the image, you get a somewhat larger picture. I clicked on p. 335, where I saw a list, and its heading showed the index was for 1877. The index is usually at the end of the year, not at the beginning. I went to the end of the list a few pages later and assumed, correctly, that 1878 births would immediately follow. I advanced the pages with an arrow on the right and looked for # 22, which I found on p. 343. When I clicked on p. 343, I got the image of the two-page spread, but it was too small to actually read. (It was in Russian, but I could at least pick out the name.)

In the lower right hand corner is a circle with a square inside it. If you click on it, another window opens, and you first get a black screen and a moment later an enlargement of the scan with only one corner of the document visible. If you press the minus sign near the magnifying glass in the upper left corner a couple times, you will get a more manageable size for viewing.

Navigate by clicking on the corner, holding, and then dragging it, the same way you would do with a map in MapQuest. There are tools in the top left corner. In addition to changing the size, you can adjust the contrast with the top tool, the lighting with the second.

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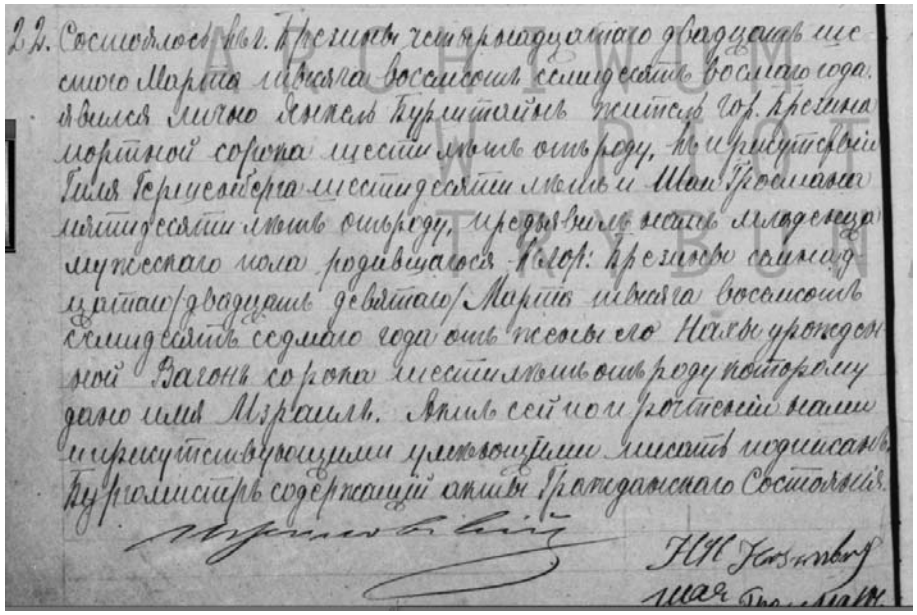
If you scroll all the way to the bottom of your screen, you will see the word “Download,” and you can click on it to save the page to your computer. This will save the entire two-page spread.

If you want to go back to the smaller two-page spread at any time, click on the “z” in the lower right corner or on the thumbnail, and it will take you back to the prior image.



If you want a good picture of just the one document, and if it is all on one page, you can move the “Preview” and “Tools” out of the way, enlarge your document as much as your screen permits and then take a screen shot [“Command/shift/4” on a Mac] of your document only.

If you want to return to the former screen, use “Command W.” This will take you back to the smaller image.

If you then click on the “x” in the upper right of the smaller document, it will take you back to the multiple images, and you can continue your search for other documents.