

# הדים

ארגון יוצאי פיוטרקוב טריבונלסקי והסביבה

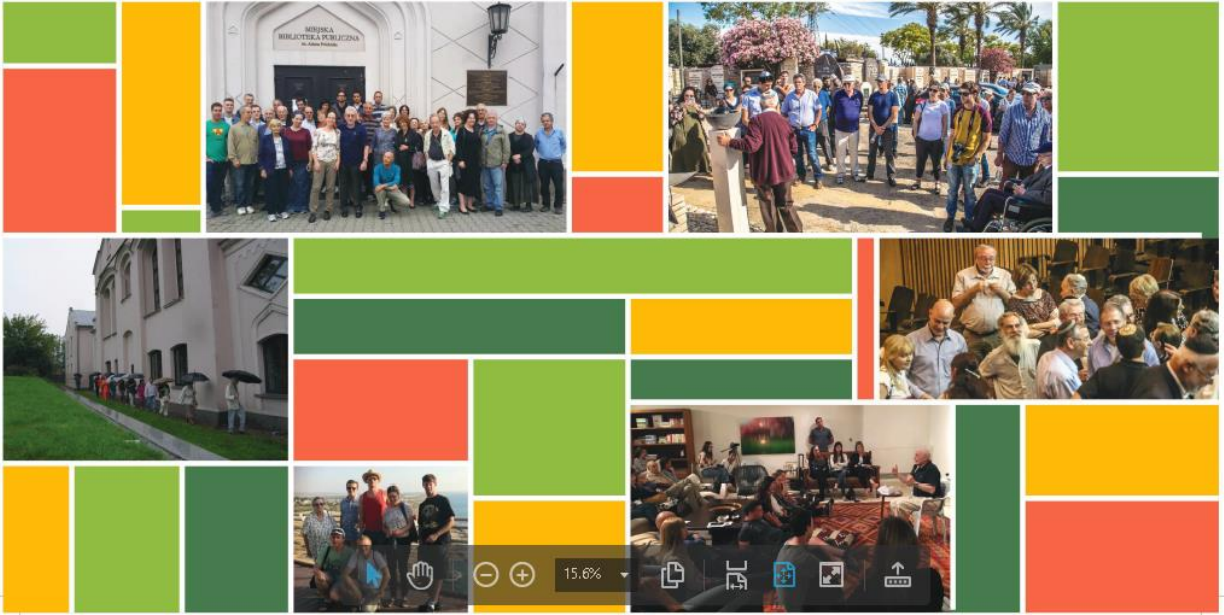
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# The VOICE

With the assistance of:  
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OF PIOTRKOW SURVIVORS



# Research

## JRI-Poland is Identifying Gravestones in the Piotrków Trybunalski Jewish Cemetery

**Judy Wolkovitch, JRI-Poland Piotrków Trybunalski Town Leader**  
**Stanley Diamond, JRI-Poland Executive Director.**

It is Jewish tradition to honor our ancestors and Jewish Records Indexing – Poland ([jri-poland.org](http://jri-poland.org)) has undertaken a unique task to help families with roots in Piotrków Trybunalski pay their respects to ancestors buried in the Piotrków Trybunalski Cemetery.



Since 1995, Jewish Records Indexing --Poland (JRI-Poland) has indexed the Jewish vital records of more than 550 towns in Poland. To date record-indexes and extracts have been made from over five million records of births, marriages and deaths records in branches of the Polish State Archives and other repositories. Work is ongoing and more records are added every few months.

The JRI-Poland database also includes census, passport, army enlistment, cemetery and other record sources to help people both research their family history as well as to connect with living family members all over the world. The JRI-Poland database is also a source of information for families wishing to memorialize their ancestors and relatives who perished in the Shoah through the creation of Pages of Testimony in Yad Vashem.

The latest project led by JRI-Poland Piotrków Trybunalski Town Leader Judy Wolkovitch is matching death records in the JRI-Poland database with the tombstones in the town's Jewish Cemetery.

Piotrków Trybunalski is one of the oldest Polish cities and has two Jewish cemeteries. The Old Cemetery was founded in 1679 and the last burial took place in 1792. It is no longer in existence and today there is only a commemorative stone to mark the location which is on the lawn behind the Great Synagogue. The first burial in the New Cemetery was in 1794 and the last in 2005. According to the Cemetery Project of the International

Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies <http://www.iajgsjewishcemeteryproject.org/poland/Piotrków-trybunalski.html>, there are as many as 3000 surviving matzevot. However, only 1700 are listed on the database of the Foundation for Documentation of Jewish Cemeteries in Poland <http://www.jri-poland.org/foundation-for-documentation-jewish-cemeteries.htm> and only 659 of the 1700 have surnames.

The mission of the Piotrków Trybunalski Cemetery project is take the Foundation's project one major step further by identifying as many graves as possible among those without surnames by correlating the information written on the gravestones with the JRI-Poland detailed extracts of death records. To date we have identified approximately 300 tombstones that were previously unidentified.

The following is an example of our correlation between the tombstones and the death records.

The screenshot shows the website interface with a search bar and a results table. The table has columns for various fields, with some cells containing red text indicating newly added information. To the right of the screenshot is a photograph of a weathered, rectangular tombstone in a cemetery setting, surrounded by green foliage.

Example from the Cemetery Database Tombstone now identified

With the work completed to date we were able to produce the following record (JRI-Poland's added information indicated in red text.)

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
matzeva name	First Name(s) Date Death Matzeva By	Surname	Surname by JRI-Poland (J) Red	Age/Years Matzeva By JRI-Poland	Matzeva name	Father's Name JRI-Poland	Father's Name(s)	Matzeva name by JRI-Poland	Matzeva Surname by JRI-Poland	Spouse Name(s)	matzeva name	matzeva name	date of death (YYYY)	date of death (YYYY)
Yachovev	Jacheta		GRUBMAN	1810	Eliasz Yacheta	Lezer Lech	ADELESTAIN	Chaja	ADELESTAIN	Moszek Jvel				31/4/1932

The computerized Piotrków records and the use of sophisticated data sorting and filtering techniques are the tools used to undertake this previously impossible task. When the gravestone-identification project has been completed, a new data file will be uploaded to the JRI-Poland search system.

In the meantime, you can search for gravestones in two ways. Check the table on

the Foundation's website <http://www.jri-poland.org/foundation-for-documentation-jewish-cemeteries.htm>. It includes varying amounts of information such as parents' and spouse's names, place of birth if outside Piotrków Trybunalski, and sometimes includes the names of illustrious ancestors.

To facilitate finding information in the Foundation's data (from 84 cemeteries in Poland), searching can be done through the JRI-Poland search system at [www.jri-poland.org/jriplweb.htm](http://www.jri-poland.org/jriplweb.htm).

Search Our Database	
Search Parameters:	1: Surname ▾ Phonetically like ▾ <input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Help with Search Parameters	2: GivenName ▾ Sounds Like ▾ <input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Help with Search Types	3: Town ▾ Phonetically like ▾ <input type="text"/>
	4: Any Field ▾ contains ▾ <input type="text"/>
	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Match ALL of the above (logical AND)
	<input type="radio"/> Match ANY of the above (logical OR)

Knowledge of naming traditions (kinnui) is important to the task; while the tombstones have the formal Hebrew name of the deceased, the entries in the Polish records typically used the kinnui or informal nickname, mostly Yiddish. Examples are Hersz rather than Tsvi, and Mendel rather than Menachem Mendel. For women, their formal and Hebrew names also sometimes differed such as Yuta and Ita and Rachel and Rashke. In addition, there was no uniformity in the spelling of family names – different registrars used different spellings over time; examples are Klajn and Klein and Ajbeszyc and Ejbuszic. Thus the gravestone-identification project requires both an in-depth knowledge of Polish records as well as a familiarity with Piotrków family names.

There have already been exciting and gratifying discoveries by those tracing their roots to Piotrków. The additional information added by JRI-Poland has enabled Robert Jacobs of Washington, DC to discover the location in the cemetery of the tomb of his great grandmother and to learn that it is still standing. He has been able to add previously unknown family members to his website that lovingly pays tribute to his family. Robert calls the JRI-Poland spreadsheet "a goldmine." Steve Rabinowitz was surprised at the wealth of information and commented that "The records contained information I never had before and were very helpful." Irving Gomolin was delighted to let us know that the gravestone-identification project had enabled him to find his paternal great-grandfather's tomb.

While the work on this project is ongoing, families with roots in Piotrków are urged to write to [Piotrkówtrybunalski@jri-poland](mailto:Piotrkówtrybunalski@jri-poland) for information about their families.