

Adalbert Goertz's Regional German FAQs

Posen FAQ

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Q1: Where is Posen (Poznan)?

A1: Posen was a Prussian province, 1815-1919. Its capital was Posen (Poznan).

Q2: What was Posen's German history prior to 1920?

A2: Part of Greater Poland was annexed by King Friedrich II of Prussia in 1772 and renamed Netze-District during the first partition of Poland. King Friedrich Wilhelm II of Prussia annexed the remainder in the second partition of Poland in 1793 and renamed it South Prussia.

After the Prussian defeat by Napoleon Bonaparte, South Prussia was united with the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, 1807-1815.

After Napoleon's defeat most of the Posen district of South Prussia reverted to Prussia whereas the Kalisch and Warschau districts became part of Russian-Poland (Congress-Poland).

1815-1919 the Prussian province of Posen comprised the two districts of Posen and Bromberg.

After WWI the area became part of the new Poland.

Germany reoccupied the old Posen province 1939-1945, extended it, and named it Reichsgau Wartheland.

The area was cleansed of its ethnic German population and returned to Poland in 1945. The Western powers were silent on the ethnic cleansing.

Q3: What were the administrative areas of Posen (Poznan)?

A3: In 1890 the province of Posen had the following districts and Kreise (counties):

Regierungsbezirk (district) of Posen with 28 Kreise (counties):
<http://pegasus.acnc.com/~websites/ymmd/giaqi.nmm>

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Adelnau, Birnbaum, Bomst, Fraustadt, Gostyn, Graetz, Jarotschin, Kempen, Koschmin, Kosten, Krotoschin, Lissa, Meseritz, Neutomischel, Obornik, Ostrowo, Pleschen, Posen-Stadt, Posen-Ost, Posen-West, Rawitsch, Samter, Schildberg, Schmiegel, Schrimm, Schroda, Schwerin, Wreschen.

Regierungsbezirk (district) of Bromberg with 14 Kreise (counties):
Bromberg-Stadt, Bromberg-Land, Czarnikau, Filehne, Gnesen, Inowrazlaw, Kolmar, Mogilno, Schubin, Strelno, Wirsitz, Witkowo, Wongrowitz, Znin.

Each Kreis was headed by the Landrat who presided over the Landratsamt. The Landratsamt records are deposited in Berlin and the Polish archives with published brief inventories.

The Landrat was in charge of passport and emigrations matters and reported to the Regierung who in turn gave data to the provincial Oberpraesidium in Posen.

Q4: What were the old administrative areas of South Prussia which existed 1793(1795)-1806?

A4: In 1806 The province of South Prussia (Suedpreussen) had 1,503,508 Einwohner with 3 districts (departements):

The Departement der Kriegs- und Domainen-Kammer zu Posen included the Kreise of Posen, Oborniki, Meseritz, Bomst, Fraustadt, Krebe, Schrimm, Kosten, Krotoschin, Peisern, Schroda, Gnesen, Wongrowitz, Powitz, Brzesk, Radziejow, Kowal.

The Departement der Kriegs- und Domainen-Kammer zu Kalisch included the Kreise of Kalisch, Adelnau, Konin, Ostreschow, Wielun, Lumtomiersk, Warta, Schadek, Sieradz, Petrikau, Radomsk, Czenstochau.
(This is the area where a number of Lutheran churches were founded: Wladyslawow in 1776, Babiak 1793, Dabie 1800, Chodecz 1801.)

The Departement der Kriegs- und Domainen-Kammer zu Warschau included the Kreise of Warschau, Blonin, Tschersk, Rawa, Sochaczew, Gostin, Orlow, Lenczyca, Zgierz, Brzezcin.

After 1815 most of the Posen District became the Prussian province of Posen, whereas the Kalisch and Warschau Districts became part of Russian-Poland (Congress Poland).

Q5: What were the court districts in Posen province before 1900?

A5: The highest provincial court and for Deutsch-Krone Kreis was the Oberlandesgericht in Posen.

The lower courts were

Landgericht Bromberg with (7) Amtsgerichte:
Bromberg, Exin, Inowrazlaw, Krone, Labischin, Schubin, Strelno.

Landgericht Gnesen with (5) Amtsgerichte:
Gnesen, Mogilno, Tremessen, Wongrowitz, Wreschen.

Landgericht Lissa with (8) Amtsgerichte:
Bojanowo, Fraustadt, Gostyn, Jutroschin, Kosten, Lissa, Rawitsch, Schmiegel.

Landgericht Meseritz with (9) Amtsgerichte:
Bentschen, Birnbaum, Graetz, Meseritz, Neutomischel, Schwerin, Tirschtiegel, Unruhstadt, Wollstein.

Landgericht Ostrowo, with (8) Amtsgerichte:
Adelnau, Jarotschin, Kempen, Koschmin, Krotoschin, Ostrowo, Pleschen, Schildberg.

Landgericht Posen with (9) Amtsgerichte:

Obornik, Pinne, Posen, Pudewitz, Rogasen, Samter, Schrimm, Schroda, Wronke.

Landgericht Schneidemuehl with (13) Amtsgerichte:

Czarnikau, Deutsch-Krone, Filehne, Jastrow, Kolmar, Lobsens, Margonin, Maerkisch-Friedland, Nakel, Schloppe, Schneidemuehl, Schoenlanke, Wirsitz.

The whereabouts of the records for the Landgerichte and Amtsgerichte is unknown. Of special interest are the land deed records (Grund- und Hypotheken-Acta) with no published survey known to date. State records remained in Poland as well as in the Berlin archives.

Q6: Is there a listserv for Posen family researchers?

A6: There is presently no mailing list for anyone with a genealogical interest in Posen for the time period when it was under German rule until 1945.

A more general list is PRUSSIA-ROOTS-L@rootsweb.com

To subscribe send the word "subscribe" (without the quotes) as the only text in the body of a message to

PRUSSIA-ROOTS-L-request@rootsweb.com (mail mode) or
PRUSSIA-ROOTS-D-request@rootsweb.com (digest mode).

Websites for German genealogy are

<http://www.genealogy.com/gene/reg/rindex.htm>
<http://w3g.med.uni-giessen.de/gene/reg/rindex.htm>
http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/German_Genealogy/kbak.htm
http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/German_Genealogy/kblz.htm
<http://pegasus.adnc.com/~websites/lynnd/vudeu.html>
<http://pegasus.adnc.com/~websites/lynnd/gfaq.html>
<http://www.germany.net/teilnehmer/100.110994/index.htm>

Stiftung Martin-Opitz-Bibliothek Herne.
(ehemals B|cherei des deutschen Ostens)
Inhalt: \ber die Bibliothek. Die Martin-Opitz-Bibliothek....
e-mail: charly@charly.ping.de
<http://w3g.med.uni-giessen.de/~geneal/kp/fome/andere/mob.html>

Herder -Institut Marburg e.V. Gisonenweg 5 - 7, 35037 Marburg/Lahn
Telephon: 06421/184-0, Telefax: 184-139
e-mail: herder@mail.uni-marburg.de....
<http://www.uni-marburg.de/herder-institut/biblio.html>
<http://w3g.med.uni-giessen.de/~geneal/kp/fome/andere/herdermb.html>
<http://www.uni-marburg.de/herder-institut/klassi.html>

Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preu ischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin.
Archivstra e 12-14 D-14195 Berlin (Dahlem)
Tel.: (030) 839 01141 Fax: (030) 839 011 80
<http://www.lib.byu.edu/~rdh/prmss/orte/berlgsas.html>
http://dg3.chemie.uni-konstanz.de/~stuebs/pommern/Archive/berli-geh-st*

Q7: How do I find locations and maps for Posen before 1920??

A7: The best German gazetteer is
Meyers Orts- and Verkehrslexikon des Deutschen Reiches, 1912 edition,
which is available on microfiche in the LDS Family History Centers.

There is LDS microfilm #068814 available of
Karte des Deutschen Reiches, scale 1:100000, 1km = 1cm

<http://pegasus.adnc.com/~websites/lynnd/gfaq.html>

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which may be loaned thru the LDS Family History Centers.
It covers Germany for 1914-1917.

Topographical Maps (Messtischblaetter 1:25000) may also be purchased from

Institut fuer Angewandte Geodaesie
Stauffenbergstr.13
10785 Berlin, Germany

(Ask for their map catalog for Posen)

see also

<http://w3g.med.uni-giessen.de/gene/gifs/maps/>

For German-Polish place name dictionary, see

<http://www.atsnotes.com/other/gerpol.html>

Q8: What book discusses hints and sources for East German searchers?

A8: Wegweiser fuer Forschung nach Vorfahren aus den Ostdeutschen und Sudetendeutschen Gebieten sowie aus den deutschen Siedlungsraeumen in Mittel-, Ost- und Suedosteuropa (AGoFF-Wegweiser):

Verlag Degener & Co, 91413 Neustadt, Germany (1991 and later)

(The out-of-print English edition is being revised presently)

Germanic Genealogy (by Edward R.Brandt et alii), 2nd edition.

1997, St.Paul MN, 517 pp., 1st edition, 1995.

There haven been recently some calls for books in English on the German exodus and holocaust from Eastern Germany. Here is one almost forgotten title:

Thorwald, Jurgen: Es begann an der Weichsel. 1951

Dss Ende an der Elbe. 1952.

English: Flight in the winter;

[New York] Pantheon [1951] 318 p. 22 cm.

CALL #: 940.542 T52F

Q9: What type of land records are available?

A9: In addition to the deed and mortgage records deposited at the courts (Amtsgerichte) a prime and practically unknown source is the

Generalkommission fuer Westpreussen und Posen zu Bromberg

with records deposited at the state archives in Bydgoszcz and comprising 116118 volumes for the years 1812-1920.

Q10: How can I get information on Polish archives?

A10: For information on Polish archives consult the web site:

<http://ciuw.warman.net.pl/alf/archiwa/>

<http://www.man.poznan.pl/~bielecki/geninfo6.htm>

<http://www.man.poznan.pl/~bielecki/archive.htm>

<http://www.man.poznan.pl/~bielecki/catallu.htm>

<http://www.man.poznan.pl/~bielecki/pub/ruspoz.txt>

<http://www.wsdsc.poznan.pl/arch/archive.htm>

Protestant Church in Germany

Listing addresses for Evangelische church archives in Germany

<http://www.ekd.de/english.html>

If you have no access to the Web (www), you can direct web files to your email box by sending a request to

getweb@usa.healthnet.org

or to

getweb@unganisha.idrc.ca

with the message HELP or
get http://.....

Q11: When were civil registers introduced?

A11: Civil registers of births, marriages, deaths were introduced in October 1874. The Civil registry office was called Standesamt. Before this time, the Lutheran church records (1815-1874) or special Dissidenten-Register (1847-1874) served as official registers, and a duplicate copy was deposited at the local court (Amtsgericht). In some areas the Code Napoleon introduced civil registry in 1808-1814.

Q12: Are there links to dictionaries on the web?

A12: Links to Dictionaries to Estonian, German, Hungarian, Latin, Slovak, Slovene, Russian, and others are found at:

<http://www.public.iastate.edu/~pedro/dictionaries.html>
<http://www.dcs.napier.ac.uk/~st5004/dictionaries.html>

Q13: Are there emigration records available?

A13: The state archives have many emigration records.

For details see:

Learned, Marion Dexter, 1857-1917:
Guide to the manuscript materials relating to American history
in the German state archives, Washington, D.C.,
Carnegie Institution of Washington. Publication no. 150 , 1912, 352 p.:
-also Kraus reprints NY 1965-

p.157-159:StA Posen.

Q14: What was the population mix in Posen province?

A14: For practical purposes we can state:
Evangelical = German and Catholic = Polish.
The 1895 Prussian census in Posen province counted
542,013 Evangelicals, 1,164,067 Catholics, 44,346 Jews.
According to language, the 1890 Prussian census in Posen province counted:
697,265 spoke German, 1,047,409 spoke Polish as first language.
Above 80% of the Polish population was counted in the Kreise of
Wreschen, Jarotschin, Schroda, Posen-West, Schmiegel, Kosten, Gostyn,
Koschmin, Pleschen, Adelnau, Schildberg, Kempen, Znin and Witkowo.
Below 20% of the Polish population was counted in the Kreise of
Meseritz, Schwerin, Kolmar, Bromberg-Stadt.
Larger cities had a predominantly German-speaking population.

In the latter decades before 1900 there was a strong migration from Posen province to the Western Prussian provinces, most notably to Rheinland and Westfalen where the booming Ruhr area and its coal and steel companies were the main attraction to the new labor force.

Suggestions for improvements are appreciated. ✉ [Adalbert Goertz \(be404@yfn.yzu.edu\)](mailto:be404@yfn.yzu.edu)

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