

FAMILY HISTORY AND GENEALOGY GLOSSARY

Family History and Genealogy Glossary for Researching Your Polish Descent

Learning about your family history is like solving a mystery to connect yourself to the people and stories that came before you. Genealogy is the study of family relationships, and it helps uncover how past generations lived and how they shaped the present. By finding written records of people's lives, like birth certificates, marriage records, and citizenship applications, and interviewing your living relatives, you can trace your family tree and discover where you came from. Whether your family tree's roots are in Poland, Pakistan, or Panama, understanding the terms used in genealogy makes it easier to organize your research and follow the clues about your descent left by your ancestors.

- **Ancestor:** A person from whom you are directly descended, such as a grandparent or great-grandparent
- **Ancestry:** The lineage or historical descent of a person or family
- **Archivist:** A professional responsible for maintaining and organizing historical records and documents
- **Birth Certificate:** An official document recording a person's birth, including the date, the place of birth, and the parents' names
- **Burial Record:** A document or record providing details about a person's burial, including the date and location
- **Cemetery Plot Map:** A map showing the layout of a cemetery and the location of individual graves
- **Census:** A government survey conducted to count the population and collect details about people's lives, useful for genealogical research
- **Census Schedule:** A detailed form from a census that lists personal and household information
- **Civil Registration:** The system of recording births, marriages, and deaths by a government authority
- **Collateral Line:** Family members who are not directly related to your line of descent, like cousins or aunts
- **Cousin:** A relative descended from a common ancestor but not directly in your line, like the child of your aunt or uncle
- **Crest:** A family emblem or symbol associated with heraldry and ancestral identity
- **Death Certificate:** An official document that records the date, place, and cause of a person's death
- **Deed:** A legal document related to the ownership of property, which may include family details
- **Descendant:** A person who comes from a specific ancestor, such as a grandchild or great-grandchild
- **DNA Testing:** A scientific method to trace ancestry and genetic connections through the analysis of DNA

- **Emigration:** The act of leaving your home country to settle in another, often recorded in passenger lists
- **Estate:** A person's property, money, and possessions, typically detailed in wills and probate records
- **Family Group Sheet:** A document genealogists use to record information about a single family unit, including parents and children
- **Family Tree:** A diagram showing relationships between family members across generations
- **Generation:** A group of people born and living around the same time
- **Genealogy:** The study of family history and lineage
- **Gravestone:** A marker placed at a grave that often includes important genealogical information like names and dates
- **Guardian:** A person legally responsible for the care of a minor or another person, which may be recorded in legal documents
- **Heir:** A person legally entitled to inherit property or titles from an ancestor
- **Heirloom:** An object passed down through generations that may hold family or historical significance
- **Heraldry:** The study and design of family coats of arms and crests
- **Heritage:** Traditions, customs, and cultural history passed down within a family
- **Homestead Records:** Documents related to land ownership, often tied to government land grants
- **Immigration Records:** Official documents that record the movement of people into a new country
- **Intestate:** Dying without a legal will, which triggers specific laws about dividing the estate
- **Kin:** Another term for family members or relatives
- **Lineage:** Direct descent from an ancestor
- **Marriage Certificate:** A document that records the union of two people, listing details such as the couple's names, the date, and the witnesses to the ceremony
- **Matriculation Records:** Enrollment documents for schools or universities, which may contain genealogical information
- **Migration Patterns:** Trends in how families or groups moved geographically over time
- **Naturalization Records:** Papers showing when and how someone became a citizen of another country
- **Obituary:** A written notice of a person's death, usually containing biographical and family details
- **Oral History:** Stories and accounts passed down within a family without being written down
- **Parish:** A local church community, such as a Polish parafia, which will often maintain records of significant life events like marriages and deaths
- **Patrilineal:** Tracing ancestry or family lines through the father's side
- **Pedigree Chart:** A diagram showing ancestors in a direct line that's used in genealogy
- **Probate Records:** Legal documents dealing with the distribution of a deceased person's estate, often listing heirs and family relationships

- **Registry:** A formal record-keeping system for events such as births, deaths, and marriages
- **Repository:** A place where records and documents, like libraries or archives, are stored
- **Settler Records:** Documents detailing the arrival and settlement of people in a specific area
- **Surname:** A person's last name, typically passed down through generations in a family
- **Vital Records:** Official documents recording life events like births, marriages, and deaths