

LIQUIDATION or TRANSMITTING TABLES in the RUSSIAN PARTITION of POLAND

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<https://moremaiorum.pl/przydatnosc-tabel-likwidacyjnych-w-poszukiwaniach-genealogicznych-poradnik-genealoga/>

Liquidation tables are archival materials that arouse great curiosity in genealogies and, due to sometimes too high hopes, they cause slight disappointment when it turns out that the information obtained will not solve the puzzles, will not provide the expected birth dates, nor the names and surnames of their parents. Also, they are in Russian.

Nevertheless, files of this type are very popular in genealogical research. It is worth visiting them because on their basis we are able to determine the size and numbers of *działka*, plots of land, which belonged to our ancestors. They contain personal lists of peasants to whom ownership of these plots of land were given. Based on the entries in the table, it is also possible to approximately determine where ancestors lived in a given village.

Liquidation tables are the result of changes that took place in the field of land ownership in the lands of the Kingdom of Poland in the 19th century. According to "The decree concerning the peasant", introduced by Tsar Alexander II (Journal of Laws, Volume 62, Warsaw 1864 No. 187), February 19 (2 March) 1864, which was proclaimed on March 31 (April 12) 1864, land held by heirs, landowners in private property, government property, etc., became the property of those peasants who used these properties. The decree also exempted heirs from all serfdom obligations including rents, tributes, etc. However, for the land they purchased, they had to pay the land tax to the Treasury as calculated in accordance with the provisions of the Act.

For the purposes of enfranchising peasants in the Kingdom of Poland and all related matters, among others the compensation to landowners who lost property and organizing rural communes, offices were established at the central and local levels – Organizing Committee in the Kingdom of Poland and Governorate Offices for Peasant Affairs. At the district level, the offices of Commissioners for Peasant Affairs operated and implemented the regulations resulting from the Act. It is worth adding that the offices of commissioners operated until 1915, being dissolved when Austro-Hungarian troops entered the Kingdom of Poland during WWI.

The responsibilities of the commissioners, who had custody of their respective areas, included:

1. Assistance in drawing up winding-up tables,
2. Receiving complaints and grievances from peasants regarding measurements,
3. Arbitrage in disputes between heirs and new settlement owners,
4. Delimitation, land swaps, etc.

As a result of the disputes, there is sometimes quite extensive correspondence which is also worth exploring to collect various facts from the history of our ancestors.

What information did the table contain? Liquidation tables were prepared in the Kingdom of Poland in the years following the announcement of the decree. In order to determine the amount of land owned by peasants and the amount of remuneration due to heirs for the abolished obligations of peasants,

"Winding-up tables" were prepared (Dziennik Praw, Volume 62, Warsaw 1864 No. 187 III). The table must included:

1. A list of all plots of land that became the property of users, separately listing the plots that were subject to the earlier decree of 1846 and which had already been assigned a separate table,
2. Determining the size of land (measures used were morgas and rods),
3. Precise definition of peasant rights regarding easements (e.g. the right to use pastures, forest, access to construction wood, firewood),
4. Estimation of liabilities from the settlement and the amount of remuneration for the landowner whose land was transferred to the ownership of peasants.

All tables had the same form, containing the name of the owner of the land or his heirs, the area of the land developed for gardens, arable land, meadows, forests and wasteland.

Obligations of landowners

Landowners were obliged to prepare a draft table and submit it together with the appropriate attachments to the Peasant Affairs Commission in the district. The submitted draft table was subject to verification and comparison by the district commissioners with the original documents, i.e. the table of prestation or contracts that previously constituted land rights and peasant duties. Then, the draft table, in the presence of the village head and three witnesses, was read to all people participating in the village meeting. The objections raised to the draft were obliged to be considered separately by the District Commissioner and to submit any amendments and comments. Objections to the project had to be made in writing and sent to the Commissioners for Peasant Affairs.

After the table was finally approved, its content was written down on the printed form. One copy was kept in the Governorate Office, and copies were issued to the landowner and the village head. The extract from the table received by the peasant was proof of ownership rights to the land. From these plans we can, quite precisely, recreate where in a given village where an individual or family had a plot of land. Despite the passage of years since the production of liquidation tables and plans, they are still used today to regulate plot boundaries in ownership matters.

Liquidation tables should be found in the sets of files created by the Commissioners for Peasant Affairs of individual counties, in the files of the Governorate Offices for Peasant Affairs, or other archival materials regarding agriculture, parcellation, agrarian reform. They might also be located where you can find newly arranged tables or copies and extracts of attachments to mortgage books, matters of taking out loans from the State Agricultural Bank, or matters handled by the District Land Office in the interwar period. Such tables are included in the collections of the State Archives in Białystok, Radom, Kielce, Łódź, Warsaw and Zamość. Within the resources of the State Archives in Lublin, they constitute the separate set: 168/0 a collection of liquidation tables of the Lublin and Siedlce governorates from 1864-1917 [1918-1938] which contains 3,515 tables for individual towns arranged by district. The sheets usually contain a draft table with annotations, an approved liquidation table, sometimes measurement registers and additional tables prepared in later years.

In the example on the following page, you can find individual plot numbers from the liquidation table (State Archives, Lublin, team no. 141/0 Lublin Governorate Office for Peasant Affairs [1864-1870] 1871-1918 – plans, ref. no. 392).

