



LA GRANGE, TEXAS

# NÁŠ ČESKÝ ŽIVOT

"OUR CZECH LIFE"

(Centrum českého kulturního dědictví v Texasu)

SUMMER 2016

VOLUME 21 NUMBER 2

## The DeLoach No. 1 Saw Mill On The Zapalač Ranch And A Final Home At TCHCC



Exactly when this DeLoach saw mill first arrived on the Zapalač Ranch is still a mystery. Based on when the manufacturing company first released their variable friction feed saw mills to the US market, the earliest known dated photographs of the mill being used by the Zapalač Family, and the style of farm equipment depicted in these early photographs, we arrive at a date range of 1887 to 1930. The black and white photo above shows a log-bearing wagon with the saw mill building in the background. The photo dates to around November 1930 and is courtesy of the Zapalač Family. For more on the saw mill's journey to TCHCC see pages 4-7.

*Dedicated to the preservation and promotion of the history, language, culture and heritage of Texans of Czech ethnicity*

Náš Český Život  
"Our Czech Life"

TEXAS CZECH HERITAGE AND CULTURAL CENTER

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Newsletter Policy: The purpose of Náš Český Život is to disseminate news of the development and activities of the center, as well as to publish material on the history, culture, and accomplishments of Texas Czechs. Náš Český Život does not involve itself in matters of a political nature.

Newsletter Address: All articles, photographs, advertising and correspondence should be directed to Retta Chandler or Janis Hrcncir, co-editors, P. O. Box 6, La Grange, Texas 78945 (979) 968-9399.

Articles: Anyone may submit articles, which will be accepted for inclusion as space permits and subject to review and editing as necessary. All articles must be typewritten. The publication is not responsible for the return of unsolicited material not submitted with a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Ads: Contact the co-editors regarding advertising. Advertising Rates: We will accept limited advertising-only standard business card size (3 1/2" X 2") - \$20.00 per issue; Send camera-ready business cards to co-editors.

**The Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center, Inc. does not endorse or guarantee the products or services that are advertised in this publication.**

**OUR MISSION**

The MISSION of the TEXAS CZECH HERITAGE AND CULTURAL CENTER, INC. is to provide a central facility for the preservation and promotion of the history, language, culture and heritage of individuals of Czech ethnicity who can trace their ancestry to the Czechs who immigrated from the present day Czech Republic or former Austria-Hungary (including Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia and Silesia), to honor those immigrants, and to operate exclusively for charitable, scientific, literary and educational purposes.

**The GOALS of the TEXAS CZECH HERITAGE AND CULTURAL CENTER, INC. are:**

To educate the public about the past and present contributions and status of persons of Czech descent

To encourage the study and preservation of the Czech language, fine arts, music and dance

To provide for the preservation and exhibition of artifacts that are historically significant to the Czech people of Texas

To provide a library and archives for the collection and preservation of books, newspapers, periodicals, family histories, research material, photographs and all printed data of historical significance to the Czech people of Texas

To provide adequate space for gatherings, meetings and educational activities for the benefit of the Czech people of Texas

To encourage and promote a cultural exchange program between the Czech people of Texas and the citizens of the Czech Republic

To provide the public with updated information regarding Czech-related activities and historical sites in Texas, the United States and abroad.

You are invited to continue receiving the newsletter Náš Český Život and an annual calendar by sending in your **ANNUAL SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP**. This journal will only be sent to members. Support your Center — **JOIN OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY.**

2016 Mayfest Raffle Winners

1. Doris Miller
2. Daniel Marek
3. Gloria Mican
4. Thomas Prasifka
5. Theodore J. Slansky
6. Gilbert Vitek
7. Kenneth Klanika
8. Mark Hermes
9. Mary Vasek
10. Frank Bohuslav
11. Jim Kothmann
12. Viola Kunetka
13. Barbara Hruby
14. Z. W. Benson
15. Bernetta Cook
16. John Heinrich
17. Delores Schulte
18. Mary Ann Kocurek
19. Frank Bohuslav
20. Debbie Macik

Door Prizes - Hourly Drawings

\$20.00 TCHCC Gift Shop  
Gift Certificates  
--one entry per person--

Ann Pittway  
Eileen Rosipal  
Georgia Funderburk  
Heather Hoffmann  
Nelson Jonas

Sponsors:

J. L. (Doc) & Agnes Darilek  
Georgia Funderburk  
Mark & Ashley Hermes Family  
Kenneth & Cathleen Noska  
Johnnie & Lorenda Polasek



- ☆ Hospoda <sup>(BEER GARDEN)</sup>
- ☆ Train Rides
- ☆ Music
- ☆ Village Tours
- ☆ Demonstrations
- ☆ Antique Tractor & Car Show
- ☆ Arts & Crafts



# Heritage Festival & Muziky

## October 14th and 15th

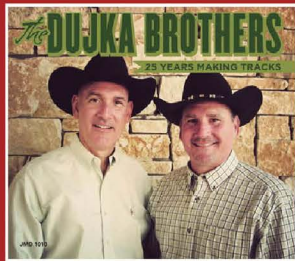
250 West Fairgrounds Road, La Grange, Texas

### Friday, Oct. 14th

~ Octoberfest on the Deck ~  
4:00 PM to 10:00 PM

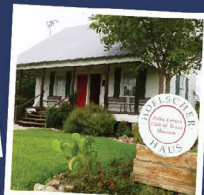
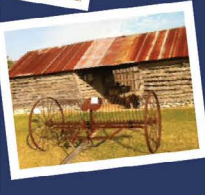
Czech Style  
Chicken & Dumplings Served!!

Music 6:00 - 9:30 PM with



The  
Dujka  
Brothers

Visit The Czech Village



### Saturday, Oct. 15th

Opening Ceremony - 10:00 AM

KJT State Taroky Tournament • Museums & Czech Gift Shop  
Antique Farm Equipment & Car Shows  
Arts & Crafts • Children's Activities • SPJST Kolač Eating Contest



~ Heritage Demonstrations ~

Saw Mill • Blacksmithing • Corn Shelling & Grinding • Textiles  
Noodle Making • Hay Press • Wine Making • Sausage Making  
Peanut Threshing and MORE!!



~ LaGrange Ford Hospoda ~  
"Beer Garden"

Shiner Beer Stage

11:00 AM – 6:00 PM

Shiner Hobo Band and  
Czech & Then Some Band



Czech & Then Some Band

~ Amphitheater ~

7:00 PM - 9:30 PM

Muziky, Muziky



Donnie Wavra Band

"THE LEGENDS SERIES" Featuring  
The Donnie Wavra Band  
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= Saturday Night Fireworks Finale =

Proudly  
Sponsored by  
H-E-B

***A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT: Retta Chandler, TCHCC President***

Preparations are in place for our annual Czech Heritage Festival on October 14 - 15, 2016. We invite you to come to enjoy Friday evening with The Dujka Brothers and then on Saturday for a full day of activities for the whole family. Tour the open houses in the Czech Village and view demonstrations in progress. You will want to stay for the evening performance of Muziky, Muziky with The Legend Series continuing featuring the retiring performance of The Donnie Vavra Band on stage at the Sanford Schmid Amphitheater. See the flyer in this issue. Our manager Mark Hermes, with the help of many volunteers and generous sponsors, has a great line up of activities for all to enjoy.

We are pleased to announce that during the regular March meeting, the TCHCC Board of Directors elected Clarice Marik Snokhous to fulfill the unexpired term of Ray Snokhous. We look forward to having Clarice join us as a Director of TCHCC.

We are deeply saddened with the loss our Board Director, Raymond Snokhous; he was actively involved in the growth of our State of Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center and proud of every accomplishment that preserved our Czech heritage. We also want to remember and honor other Directors, who are no longer with us. They are George Hruby, Larry Laznovsky, Matt Vanek and Dorothy Bohac. Their dedication and generosity of much of their time and energy contributed to the growth of our Center.

The past months were busy with Slavnost-Tribute to our Ancestors, TCHCC/CHS Family Youth Day, the genealogy workshop featuring Robert Janak and Victor Havel and the presentation by Alice Lunakova on the immigrations of Czechs to Texas. In addition to the Czech Heritage Festival in October, plans are in progress for our Annual Christmas Open House and TCHCC Annual Gala. By now you have received the "Save the Date Card". We hope you plan to attend when we recognize George Koudelka, Johnnie I. Krajca, and Victor Caka and the Victor Caka Band. All have made significant contributions to the preservation of Czech music.

We can report that our visitor traffic (out of state and from the Czech Republic), scheduled tours of the Center, and genealogy researchers is steadily increasing. This is very rewarding because our goal is to share with the public the story of the Czechs in Texas.

However, with the increased cost of printing, accommodating visitors and maintenance of our facilities, we find it necessary to change the sponsoring membership dues per year. Individual member sponsorship will be \$50.00 and Family member sponsorship will be \$75.00.

We thank all of you for your donations to increase our Endowment Fund, take on needed projects and to make TCHCC available to the public from Monday through Saturday.

We appreciate your continued support and encourage you to help us in getting new members in our endeavor to promote and preserve our rich Czech heritage and culture. The Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center represents all of us. We encourage you to come often and to invite others.

AND finally, we would like to thank Christine Shimek for setting us up on Twitter and Instagram. You can now Follow us on Twitter @TexasCzechHCC and on Instagram @texas.czech.lagrange. We'd love to hear about your visit to the TCHCC --- tag us!

***A very special thank you goes out to the Wharton County Chapter of the Czech Heritage Society of Texas. They were generous enough to donate the proceeds of their Silent Auction held at the Spring State CHS Meeting to TCHCC.***

***(Right: Brenda Etzler and her daughter Miss Lavaca County Chapter of the CHS Princess Madison Etzler, place a bid.)***



# THE SAGA OF THE SAW MILL

**Cutting Trees in the Pasture.** Before logs were brought to the saw mill, they had to be cut into manageable sized pieces in the pasture. The logs were then lifted off the ground using a homemade winch and placed on the back of a flatbed truck or a wagon attached to a tractor. These photos are circa 1962 and courtesy of the Zapalač Family. The top left photo shows Fred Zapalač, top right Fred and his son Morris, and Lillian Zapalač in the bottom right photo.



**The Zapalač Saw Mill in Action.** The series of photos below show Fred T. Zapalač and a ranch hand Honey Chandler cutting a large log on the DeLoach Mill No.1. The finished product is the large pallet of rough cut lumber stacked to air dry in the last photo. These photos were taken in the early 1960s and are courtesy of the Zapalač Family.



**Saving a Wood-Cutting Treasure.** The saw mill remained in operation for family use until at least the 1970s. Afterward, it remained inactive for decades with the building slowly starting to collapse around it. By January 2013, the north and south wings to the mill building had completely collapsed leaving only the center portion still standing. Realizing something needed to be done to save this wood-cutting treasure, Donna Zapalač Mueller decided to donate the entire mill and all of its associated parts to the Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center. The photo on the right is the front entrance of the saw mill building taken on June 23, 2013.



Left: Back and side views of the circular blade and associated parts of the saw mill still intact and in situ (in place) in the center portion of the building. Both photographs were taken on June 23, 2013 and are courtesy of Stephanie Mueller.

**Extraction of The Sawmill.** On November 23, 2013, plans for the saw mill's safe removal were finally put into action. With an all-volunteer crew and lots of heavy machinery present, the saw mill was carefully removed, piece by piece from its collapsing building. The photo on the left is the front entrance of the saw mill on removal day. Photo courtesy of Stephanie Mueller.

Below left: The Saw Mill Extraction Crew posing for a group photo on removal day. L-R, Front row: Tom Mueller, Marcel Kleihege, Jerry Robertson, Roger Sorum, Mark Hermes, Donna Mueller. Back Row: Timothy Kleihege, Lynn Pieper, Kenneth Pieper, anonymous, Roy Pieper, Morgan Chappell. Stephanie Mueller, taking photo. Below right: Morris F. Zapalač, father, (left) and Donna Zapalač Mueller, daughter, (right) in a motorized mule on removal day. Donna inherited the mill in January 2013. In the Spring of 2013, Donna's family donated the mill and all associated parts to the Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center to be included in a permanent living history exhibition at the center.



**Disconnecting and Loading for Transport.**

Below left: Part of the volunteer crew, members of the South Texas Wheel Spinners and Crank Twisters Antique Farm Equipment Club, and TCHCC Manager Mark Hermes (also president of the club) moving the table frame of the saw mill to the outside tracks for removal via forklift. A week prior to removal day, Hermes and volunteers oiled all of the metal parts of the mill so the removal process would be easier. Photo courtesy of Stephanie Mueller.

Below right: The top frame of the saw mill getting lifted by a large forklift and guided to one of the flatbed trailers by the volunteers. Photo courtesy of Stephanie Mueller.



This sequence of photographs shows the blade frame of the saw mill being removed by the volunteer crew. First, the crew loosened any bolts and screws anchoring the frame to the sides of the wooden and cement ditch at the front of the building. Then they wrapped a chain around the center of the frame. Using a small forklift, the crew carefully lifted the frame out of the mill. Once outside, the larger forklift picked it up and lifted it onto one of the flatbed trailers. All photos are courtesy of Stephanie Mueller.



This sequence of photos shows how the volunteer crew removed the large metal shaft and drive pulley attached to the mill. First, they removed dirt surrounding the piece (below top left). While digging, they realized that the long solid metal shaft continued into the ground towards the fallen corner of the building. The forklift was then used to lift up the fallen roof. As the roof was lifted, two large wooden posts were set in specific places to brace the roof and free the forklift. The crew then removed more dirt and finally found the end of the metal shaft. After unscrewing any bolts and screws anchoring the metal piece to buried blocks of concrete, the crew used the forklift to remove it from the building. As the piece was lifted, it was carefully guided out by several people. The shaft and drive pulley was then placed onto a large flatbed trailer where it was secured by wooden posts at the base and later tied in various areas with tie down securing straps for transport to TCHCC. All photos are courtesy of Stephanie Mueller.



**The Rise of the Small Saw Mill.** With advancements in the steam engine and large horse powered technology, smaller, and in some cases more portable saw mills had become a reality. By the 1880s, numerous engine and thresher manufacturers added sawmills to their inventory, often encouraging threshermen to also become lumbermen. One of those encouraging manufacturers was DeLoach Mill Manufacturing Company.

First going by the name W.H. DeLoach and Sons, the company began with developing portable grist mills. By 1880, the company added their newly patented horse powered crop thresher and water wheel to the inventory. In that same year, the company changed their name to DeLoach Mill Manufacturing Company (continued on next page).

(Continued from page 6.) In October 1887, the company placed the very first full page ad in Southern Cultivator and Dixie Farmer advertising their new variable friction feed saw mill. Described by one buyer as “the simplest and most perfect mill now on the market”, the company sold four sizes of mills which were likely the No. 00, No. 0 (the Pony), No. 1, and No. 1 ¼ . The “Pony” saw mill illustrated in the advertisement is boasted to have cut 10,000 feet of lumber per day. Larger sized mills were advertised to cut at a capacity of 50,000 feet of lumber per day.

With this new and improved variable friction feed technology for saw mills, DeLoach soon became very popular brand among the local lumbermen, boasting that by 1889 it was shipping 75 sawmills a month. By 1910, the company had more than 15,000 mills in use across the United States.

Thanks to the Dickson-Allen Foundation the sawmill is now completely funded and used for demonstrations at festivals and scheduled school tours. Below left: On April 23, 2016, The Dickson-Allen Foundation Representative Jessie Allen and wife Bethel were treated to a demonstration of the mill along with all the volunteers that built the shed and restored the mill and its components. L-R: Morgan Chappell, Mr. Harden, Will Chappell, James Gerdes, JG Hrcncir, Jessie Allen, Donna Zapalac Mueller, Tom Mueller, Walt Walicek, Seth Mueller, Retta Chandler, Mark Hermes, Wilson Huffer. Photo courtesy of Bethel Allen.



Above: Seth with mother Donna Zapalac Mueller. Right: A viewing stand was added to the site which provides a safer viewing area for visitors who come to see demonstrations. Side doors that lift up were installed to protect the mill from rain.

Above: Jessie and Bethel Allen are given a personal tour by Morgan Chappell.



**Thank You Volunteers!!**

Disconnection and Moving Crew: Mark Hermes, Tom & Donna Mueller, Roger Sorum, Stephanie Mueller, Morgan Chappell, Kenneth Pieper, Jerry Robertson, Lynn Pieper, Roy Pieper, Marcel Kliehege, Timothy Kliehege.  
 Significant Contributions Made By: South Texas Wheel Spinners & Crank Twisters Antique Farm Equipment Club, Tom & Donna Mueller Family, James Gerdes, Morgan Chappell, Austin Wampler, Melvin Gerdes, Ellsworth Machlan, Jared Merta, Mark Hermes, RL Shelly, Mark and Theresa Jones, Marcel Kleihege, Timothy Kleihege, Roger Sorum.  
 Shed Construction Crew: Walt Walicek, JG Hrcncir, Waymond Davis, Wilson Huffer, James Darilek, Rudy Patek, Emil Hermes, Mark Hermes, Johnnie Polasek.



# SLAVNOST FESTIVITIES 2016



## TCHCC Immigrant Recognition Ceremony 2016

The TCHCC Museum was the site of the Immigrant Recognition Ceremony that recognized the descendants of Czech and Slovak immigrants to Texas between the years 1916-1920 and those whose ancestors came in earlier years. TCHCC Vice President Bill Schovajsa and 2016 Miss Texas Czech Slovak Queen Monika Cavanagh and Little Sister Katie Hyzak (from CHS Travis-Williamson Counties Chapter) presented the certificates.



The Immigrant Recognition Ceremony began with opening remarks by Judge Ed Janecka (left). Carolyn Heinsohn led us in the national anthems and Bill Schovajsa opened with a prayer of appreciation for our ancestors. (center). Ted and Dorothy Kaspar (right, center) presented TCHCC and President Retta Chandler with a donation from the Fort Bend Chapter of the Czech Heritage Society for the Endowment Fund.



John Heinrich and Cathleen Noska represented the Heinrich and Nitschke Family.



Melissa Shafer Reifka represented the Frantisek Rzyza Family.



The Leo Majek Family received immigrant certificates and a plaque from TCHCC recognizing 100+ years as an orchestra.



Bennie and Victoria Jalufka Orsak Family.

## 1916-1920 IMMIGRANT RECOGNITION, May 17, 2016

### John Heinrich

John's great grandmother Carolina Horak immigrated in the Spring of 1856 and arrived in Cat Springs from Količín #14, Holesov, Zlin District. Carolina's brothers Josef, Victor and Jan immigrated with her and they all establish themselves in Fayette County, Texas. According to Jan Habernicht, in his book *History of Czechs in America*, page 67 "Josef Horak, born in Količín nearby Holešov, Moravia also is an old colonist. He arrived in Cat Spring in 1856, from there he removed to Fayette County in 1859 and settled close to Praha". An entire chapter in the book *Czech Voices* by C. Machann and J. Mendl is devoted to Jan Horak who states that "they set out for America in December of 1855 from Bremen, after eleven weeks, our shabby sailboat landed in Galveston."

Carolina Horak would marry Ernest Nitschke and settle in La Grange.

### Victoria Jalufka Orsak

Vickie's paternal grandparents Ferdinand Reček and Aneska Macha and her father Jan Reček immigrated on August 10, 1881 from Frenstat #156. Also on board were Jan's siblings: Františka, Amalie, Anežka and Anna. They settled in Lavaca County.

Jan Reček would marry Magdalena Krahulik. She was born onboard the ship: *Berlin* as it landed in Baltimore on May 2, 1871 (145 YEARS AGO). Magdalena traveled with her parents Jan and Františka Krahulik and her siblings Wilhelm, Josef, Rudolph, Franz and Josefa.

Jan and Magalena Reček's daughter Marie would marry Rudolph Jalufka in Texas. Their fifth child was Victoria Jalufka who married Bennie Orsak. Rudolph's parent Augustin Jalufka and Johanna Broz were neighbors in Mniši. Augustin was from house #24 and Johanna was from house #22. They immigrated to Texas on the ship *Rugia* on June 18, 1884. The ship began in Hamburg and delivered them to New York where they then had to travel to Lavaca County, Texas where they settled.

### Bennie Orsak

Bennie's father Ludwig Orsak immigrated with his parents Vinc and Rosalie Zapalač Orsak and sisters Alzbeta, Frantiska and Vincie on the *Frankfurt* to Galveston, Texas arriving on August 15, 1903 from Novy Hrozenkov, Vsetin district, Moravia. They first settled in Fayette County, then moved to Lavaca County and finally settled in Wharton County, Texas.

His great grandmother Mariana Konařík Zapalač and his grandfather, Stepan Zapalač, immigrated on the *Oder* through New York on November 27, 1882 from Novy Hrozenkov #424. Also onboard were Stepan's siblings: Anna, Jan, Rozina, Josef and Pavel.

### Ryza Family: Melissa Shafer Reifke

Melissa's grandfather František Ryza left Horni Lidec, Kromeriz District, Moravia on August 25, 1882 from Bremen, Germany and arrived on September 15, 1882 in Baltimore. His wife, Katerina Filak Ryza immigrated on the *Koln* and arrived in New Orleans on August 17, 1882 bringing children Franz and Katerina with her. They settled in Fayette County, Texas. Their son Franz would marry Marie Stancik in Fayette County. She immigrated from Austria on the *Koln* arriving August 7, 1882 into New Orleans. Franz and Marie Ryza had a son, Emil who married Annie Trlicik. Melissa's mother Grace Ryza Shafer was born to Emil and Annie.

### Members of The John Majek Family

Leo Majek, Sr. left Slavkov, Czechoslovakia and boarded the S.S. *Cassel*. He arrived in Galveston on March 12, 1914 and his wife Rosie, along with children Julius and Mary, arrived May 14, 1914 in Galveston on the last ship to leave Europe before the start of World War I. They first settled in Cameron, Milam County and in 1940 moved to Corpus Christi, Nueces County, Texas where children John, Leo, Jr. Charles, Frank, and Joe were born. Leo set about establishing and leading the Leo Majek Orchestra which is still going strong after almost 120 years. .

### Andrew Patrick Pfertner & Patrick Frank Pfertner (They were not able to attend.)

Their ancestors: Peregrin Fiser and Filomena Vacek Fiser arrived in Texas in 1876 from Vermeřovice on the ship S. S. *Hannover*. They settled in Fayette County and produced a large family.

**TCHCC we will now recognize any descendants for any year because immigration stopped after 1920. The Immigration Restriction Act of 1921 limited immigrants by a quota system based on ethnicity. Please submit your ancestors' information for next year's festivities. TCHCC will be celebrating twenty years since it was incorporated and this will be a very special year.**

**Immediately following the Immigrant Certificate Ceremony all were invited outside to participate in recognition of the new stone that was placed on the Immigrant Wall. A wreath was laid on the Immigrant Wall to honor all the immigrants (center). Judge Ed Janecka and 2016 Miss Texas Czech Slovak Monika Cavanagh and her Little Sister Katie Hyzak placed the wreath (left). Bill Raley and Danny Hughes are pictured next to their ancestors' plaque "Florian and Veronika Frnka, Roznov pod Radhostem to Vox Populi, Texas 1870" (right). They were recognized by TCHCC President Retta Chandler.**



### Remembering Rev. Frank C. Vagner

Czech priest Rev. Frank C. Vagner came to the US after spending time in a German concentration camp where he ministered the refugees. He was born in Vrbcaný, District of Kolin and attended the seminary in Prague from 1924-1934 where he taught at the Theological Faculty of Charles University until Nazi Germany abolished it.

He spent years in the Valka Concentration Camp near Neurenberg, Germany and Babenhausen in Hessen, Germany until he was able to immigrate to the US in 1954. With the help of the Catholic Committee for Refugees in New York he was relocated to the Diocese of Corpus Christi, Texas.

He was assigned to various parishes, orphanages and nursing homes throughout the Corpus Christi Diocese until he retired in 1967. He died on May 30, 1975 and is buried in the Rose Hill Memorial Park, Corpus Christi, Nueces County, Texas.

An organization in Prague that deals with human rights of expatriates is wishing to communicate with anyone who would have known him personally while he lived in Texas. His parish assignments are listed below, along with a picture of him with Cardinal Josef Beran. **If you or anyone you know remembers him**, please contact TCHCC and we will give you the contact information needed that will tell the life story of this remarkable priest.

- 1955: St. Joseph Parish, Beeville
- 1956: St. Joseph Orphanage, Laredo
- 1957: St. Joseph Academy, Brownsville
- 1958-59: Sacred Heart Orphanage, Laredo
- 1960: Mount Carmel Nursing Home, Corpus Christi
- 1962-63: Immaculate Conception Parish, Goliad
- 1964: San Juan, Texas
- 1965-67: Corpus Christi Cathedral
- 1968-1975: Retired and living at Mount Carmel Nursing Home, Corpus Christi



## The Gravesite of Jan Hruska

Submitted by Jan Hruska Couch

My great grandfather was Stepan Hruska\*. Stepan Hruska b. 7/21/1848 in Jablunka, Moravia d. 5/26/1889 in Hruskaville, TX. He immigrated with his wife and their two oldest daughters on the Bark *Erna* arriving in Galveston 12/23/1881. The family lived with relative by marriage, Jan Hruska, and his wife Katerina Hruska in Ross Prairie for eight years before eventually settling in east Bell County. Stepan established the Hruskaville Store at the southeast corner of what is now Highway 53 and Hruskaville Road east of Temple. That area became known as Hruskaville.

The story of how great grandfather Stepan comes to be buried in a single grave at the first curve in Hruskaville Road south of Highway 53 was told to me by my father, John Joe Hruska, as we tended the grave. The story my father told me is that a patron of the Hruskaville Store was paying unwanted attention to one of Stepan's daughters and he didn't heed Stepan's warnings to stop. The patron and my great grandfather arranged to meet at the corner just south of the store to "settle the matter" in the east Bell County version of a duel. My father was told that his great grandfather rode to the corner on a horse drawn wagon and the patron rode up on horseback with his gun already drawn. He shot Stepan to death before great grandfather could raise his gun. The Hruska family buried Stepan at the corner where he died. According to my father, the authorities were not notified of the shooting until someone from the area went to the county seat on business at a later date. My father's comment was that Czechs in east Bell County took care of their business themselves without getting the law involved. I was never told the identity of the shooter.

My father and mother tended the grave until they were ill and no longer able to do so. The old iron fence that the Hruska family originally erected to protect the headstone and footstone was hit and mangled by mowing equipment, farm equipment and vehicles through the years. The hackberry tree growing near the headstone appears to be the only reason the headstone and foot stone were not also destroyed. At one time my father said there was a group of wooden crosses in the field just past his grandfather's headstone and when those crosses rotted and fell down, they were just plowed under and forgotten. He often said he didn't want his grandfather to be forgotten.

The Lesikar family recently rehabilitated the gravesites of three Lesikar children at the edge of a nearby field. Those tombstones were so badly damaged over time that they had to be replaced. The Lesikar family did the work themselves, but Richard Lesikar gave me contact information for a contractor in Bell County who does similar restorations. The contractor was not able to salvage the heavy old fence around the gravesite but he was able to reset the headstone and foot stone in a concrete slab to protect them from further damage.

I feel gratified that I have followed through on my father's intention to preserve and maintain his grandfather's burial place. For info on how to reach the contractor, contact me at [jkcouch@hotmail.com](mailto:jkcouch@hotmail.com)

\*Stepan's name is misspelled as Stephen on his original headstone.

*Below left: The gravesite before rehabilitation.*

*Below right: the gravesite now.*



## Recent Presentations at TCHCC

Many Texas Czechs who are searching for their ancestors hit a roadblock when they try to decipher the Czech family records that are online. Although they can view the birth, marriage and death records in the various regions with the “matriky” provided, they find it difficult to read the German script that is present in many of the records. Victor Havel and Robert Janak to the rescue!

Victor Havel of Ennis, Texas spent more than twenty years in Germany during his career. Robert Janak has spent his adult life researching Czech ancestry and records. Robert has also published more than twenty books related to genealogy. Many of these were printed by the Czech Heritage Society of Texas.

They came together to provide information regarding the old German handwriting that was used in church records in the Czech Lands in the early nineteenth century. Participants enjoyed instruction and hands-on help throughout the day. Not only did Robert and Victor help individuals, they left handouts of their presentations for those who need some help with this “quest”. For copies of the handouts stop by TCHCC or give us a call.



Left to right: Victor Havel and Robert Janak gave a presentation and helped individuals on the German script and how to read it.

Right: Robert Janak used a power point presentation to give examples of the script and how to decipher it.

***“How Kolaches Came to Texas”*** was a lecture tour that featured Baylor University Keston Scholar Alice Lunakova of Prague, Czech Republic. Miss Lunakova visited several cities in Texas including TCHCC on August 14, 2016. She shared the results of research she conducted last summer, while a student at Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic. She gave an enthusiastic and animated presentation of her final thesis on the history of Czech immigration to Texas in the nineteenth century.

Lunakova explained why she chose to study Texas Czechs. “The motivation for writing about this topic originates from my two extended stays in Texas. First, I studied for one semester at McLennan Community College in Waco in 2014 with the exchange program offered by the English Department of Faculty of Education at Masaryk University. Their striking pride of being of Czech ancestry raised my interest in learning more about the history of their ancestors. After coming home and starting to research the available sources, I could not find any particularly useful literature as sources of reference, and therefore I decided to return to Texas in the following year. This enabled me to undertake my research at the Library of Baylor University, visit Czech museums and heritage centers, attend the traditional mass at the Praha Feast, and enabled me to meet many Czech descendants who were more than willing to share with me their personal experiences,” she said.

“Thanks to this opportunity, I not only learned about the remarkable history of thousands of the Czechs who settled in Texas, but I was also able to visit the local towns that once used to be the thriving Czech communities, see the Czech signs at the shops and streets, enter the Czech bakeries to smell and taste the renowned kolaches, attend the Czech festivals, and last but not least, to speak with the Czech descendants whose enthusiasm when speaking of their ancestors amazed me.”



Presenter Alice Lunakova

# THE TEXAS CZECH HERITAGE AND CULTURAL CENTER

## Centrum českého kulturního dědictví v Texasu

### and so it continues...1998

The TCHCC Walking Trail Ground Breaking Ceremonies and Reception was held on March 17, 1998. The program began with a performance by the Fayette Czech Singers and Dancers. Speeches were given by TCHCC Board Member and emcee Don Chovanec, State Senator Kenneth Armbrister, State Representative Robby Cook State Comptroller John Sharp and La-Grange City Mayor David R. Noak. Cutright and Allen Architects were recognized by TCHCC President Retta Chandler followed by County Judge Edward F. Janecka's introduction of Governor George W. Bush. After the governor spoke, all moved to the Pavilion "Round-Up Hall" for a reception.



Fayette Czech Singers and Dancers

Carolyn Meiners Heinsohn, Guenter and Donna Merkle, Helen Mikus, Irene Polansky, Cathleen Noska, Lorene Nitschke, Martha Dybala, Bonnie Rohde, Verlene Kuntschik, Helen Muras, Elmont and Georgia Vyvial and Lillie Mae Brightwell.



State Senator Kenneth Armbrister and State Representative, District 28, Robby Cook were on hand to congratulate the efforts and accomplishments of Texas Czechs.



Don Chovanec, TCHCC Board Member and Emcee La Grange Mayor David Noak



Groundbreaking was accomplished by the TCHCC Board Members.



Left: Brad Cutright and Ted Engle, Amphitheater architects. Right: George and Shirley Hlavinka (woodworker and creator of the trail stations).





Above: Guenter and Donna Merkle performed while the Fayette Czech Singers sang and entertained. Center: State Comptroller John Sharp and (below) Governor George Bush greeted attendants.



**1997 TCHCC Officers and Board of Directors**

**Dorothy Bohac** (CHS Travis-Williamson County) **Retta Slavik Chandler** (Czech Ex-Students' Association of Texas & Board President), **Don Chovanec** (Fayette County), **Elo J. Goerig** (KJT), **George Hruby** (CHS Bexar County & Board Vice President), **Glenn Hutka** (RVOS), **Edward A. Krivacka** (Business Leader), **Larry Laznovsky** (SOKOL, Southern District), **Howard Leshikar** (SPJST), **Carolyn Sumbera Meiners** (CHS Fayette County & Board Secretary), **Patricia Alhorn Parma** (Community Leader), **Arnold J. Pechal** (Board Treasurer), **William J. Schovajsa** (Legal Advisor), **Woody Smith** (Czech Educational Foundation of Texas).

**CONTRIBUTIONS/DONATIONS**

**AND MEMBERSHIP**

**May to July, 2016**

**Heritage Friend**

Mark Kubala, M.D.

**Founder**

Joseph Bartosh

Richard G & Molly Cernosek

Czech Heritage Society, Wharton County

**Steward**

Raymond and Sandra Matthijetz

**Patron**

Czech Heritage Society, Bexar County

Czech Heritage Society, Fayette County

**Donor**

Sheila R. Semlek

**Friend**

Cherie Spacek Harris

Lester and Carol Kitchen

**Special Friend**

Stephen Musil

David and Carolyn Pegues

**Individual Membership 2016**

Joan Brezik Connor

John J. Kobersky

Gift from Marilyn S., Sims

Stephen Polasek

Gift from Johnnie & Lorenda Polasek

Susan Wolter

James Kaluza

Dorothy Kaluza Tichavsky

Stephen Musil

Arnold J. Pechal

**Individual Membership 2017**

Hattie Drozd

**Family Membership 2016**

Bruno and Christine Shimek

Daniel and Norma Mares

Ron and Ann Vyvial

**GRANTS:**

Texas Women's League

Czech Foreign Ministry

City of La Grange/LCRA

Bill Bishop and Julie Ardery

**Endowment Fund**

Fort Bend Chapter of CHS

Eugene Repka

**Czech Village Fund:**

Susan Wolter

***In Memory of E. A. and Frances***

***Sladek, Sr.***

Erwin A. and Bonnie Sladek, Jr.

Dr. Jim and Tami Sladek

Brian and Shirley Varner

Patricia and Keith Korenek



### Mayfest 2016

Joseph S. Bartosh  
Richard G. & Molly Cernosek  
Charles & Retta Chandler  
James and Agnes Darilek  
Farmers Lumber Compay  
Georgia Funderburk  
Mark & Ashley Hermes  
Henry and Carolyn Holub  
Oran T. Hrnrcir  
Barbara Stratton Hruby  
Jim D. and Marilyn Kothmann  
Randy G. & Lynne Majek  
Kenneth & Cathleen Noska  
Theresa Cernoch Parker  
Johnnie & Lorenda Polasek  
Herman & Georgia Popp  
Daniel Cernoch Plumbing, Inc.  
Edward Jones Investments  
by Chuck Mazac  
Hengst Printing & Supplies  
KJZT, Catholic Family Fraternal of  
Texas  
KJZT #6, St. Elizabeth Society  
Randy Marak Pest Control  
Reeder's A/C & Heating, Inc.  
RVOS Farm Mutual Insurance Co.  
South Texas Wheel Spinners &  
Crank Twisters

### Donation for lawn mower

### maintenance & supplies:

Walter and Lucy Walicek  
Waymond and Jean Blaha Davis

### Migl House Fund:

Migl Family Homestead

### Melnar Library Fund

Irene Szwarc  
T.J. and Myrna Slansky

### BELL & BELFRY MEMORIAL FUND

#### *In Memory of Helen Carrie Kieke*

Fort Bend Chapter of CHS

#### *In memory of Bernard Gaas*

#### *In Memory of Irene Novak Heibel*

#### *In Memory of Matt Vanek*

Victoria Chapter of CHS

### PERPETUAL ROSE STONE

#### *In Memory of Celestine Ermis*

Richard G., & Molly Cernosek

#### *In Memory of Amalie Machala*

Richard G. and Molly Cernosek

#### *In Memory of Caroline Horak*

John Heinrich

### MEMORIAL BRICK

#### *In Memory of Annie Creppon*

Kim and Dean Niesner

#### *In Memory of Robert and Annie Creppon*

Kim and Dean Niesner

#### *In Memory of Ludwig Orsak*

Ronnie & Wanda Orsak

#### *In Memory of Augustin Jalufka, Johanna Brosch*

Ronnie & Wanda Orsak

#### *Charles Rosipal, Korean War Veteran, Taylor, Texas*

Herbert & Adele Rosipal

#### *Robert Sladeczek, Vietnam Veteran, Corn Hill, Texas Good Dancer*

Eileen Rosipal

#### *Vince "Jim" Marek, US Army Veteran WWII, Granger, Texas*

Isabelle Marek

### MEMORIALS

#### *In memory of David John Kubenka*

Ron and Ann Vyvial

#### *In Memory of Elaine Drozd*

Hattie Drozd

#### *In Memory of Leroy Supak*

Hattie Drozd

#### *In Memory of Raymond Snokhous*

Donna Merkle

#### *In Memory of George Hlavinka*

Donna Merkle

#### *In Memory of Matt S. Vanek*

Edwin and Rosanne Gallia

Charlie and Tracy Theut

#### *In Memory of Annie Creppon*

Georgia Vyvial

#### *In Memory of Irene Bucek*

Georgia Funderburk

#### *In Memory of Paula Heinsohn*

Kenneth & Cathleen Noska

#### *In Memory of Don Strouhal*

JG and Janis Hrnrcir

#### *In Memory of Elmont Vyvial*

Ron and Ann Vyvial

#### *In Memory of Albert Stephen Kubala*

Ron and Ann Vyvial

#### *In Memory of Jaycee Denee Martinez*

Ron and Ann Vyvial

#### *In Memory of Rudolph Rejcek*

Wayne and Linda Wilson

### MUSEUM/ARCHIVES DONATION

### 2016

Volume 5 of Hukvaldy marriage and death records. **Robert Janak**  
Czech glass vase, bowl and powder bowl, Czech Glass book  
**Patricia Seay Trlicek**  
2 binders of Velehrad community, 2 binders of SPJST, 1 binder of Velehrad community Cemetery -  
**David & Janie Bucek**  
John and Christina Chumcall Family Story - **Faith Darilek**  
Czech Republic Pictorial book (personally autographed) - **Pavel Kosar**  
30 Czech books - **Ivo Neuzil**  
Vintage items for village houses - **Jane Sumbera Campbell**  
Approximately 300 Items from estate of Leona Stolle to the village houses -  
**James and Mary Ann Harrison**  
Wedding dress, veil and shoes of mother; wedding invitation; father's tie - **Eileen Sladeczek Rosipal and Richard Rosipal.**  
Oil painting of Rudolph Petr - **Ray Bacak**  
Items for museum and village houses & 7 books - **Carolyn Heinsohn**  
Vrazel Polk Band 40th Anniversary picture, Clyde Chesser, J Plary Picture - **Vlasta Vitek**  
46 Czech DVDs - **Martina Milerova**  
1950 KJZT photo in West - **Bernice Leihardt**  
50 record albums not cataloged, placed on shelves - **Vera Berger**  
All America Sings songbook, 1912 kalendar, Svetozor Magazine - **Mike Darilek**  
Paul Sury Family Tree updated, 6 books on Washington County, Texas - **Olene Stavena**  
Czech Dolls of Cert and Mikulas, Czech home cookbooks, maps, Czech Dictionary - **Edith Molberg**  
8 large pictures of Hostyn parish, 6 SOKOL certificates, Glass SOKOL pic - **Hostyn Parish**  
6 Czech books - **Anthony Ginter**  
Czech Rep book donated in memory of Charles Schmidt - **Pat Schmidt**  
Wall hanging embroidered with blue thread - **Betty Leininger**

**TCHCC Memorials can be made to your deceased loved ones or to honor a family member that is still active in promoting Czech culture and tradition.**

**IMMIGRANTS' WALL**

A stone wall with engravings on plaques that include the name(s) of the immigrant(s), village of origin and date that he/she/they arrived in the United States. Plaques are available for \$2500. Contact us for details.

**ENTRY PAVING STONES**

A 12" x 12" pink granite stone will be engraved with your choice of wording up to 40 letters. These stones are in the entryway of the Czech Center. Contact us for details

**ROSE GARDEN MEMORIAL**

For \$250 a brick will be placed along the Rose Garden path that lines the entry sidewalk to the Czech Center. The brick will be inscribed with your choice of wording. Contact us for details.

**MEMORIAL BRICK PAVERS**

A brick paver will be engraved with your choice of wording for \$100. The bricks will be placed in the sidewalk leading from the flagpoles to the steps that enter the Czech Center. Contact us for details.

**BELL & BELFRY**

For donations of \$50 or more, inscriptions are painted on the memorial sign. For donations under \$50, a record of the donation is made on a parchment list.

**AMPHITHEATER SUPPORTERS**

A designated amphitheater seat will be reserved with your name plate. Participant can reserve this seat whenever there is an event at the Amphitheater by calling ahead. Seats range: \$1,000, \$750 and \$500.

**BECOME A FRIEND OF THE CENTER.**

**Donation amounts are recognized by levels:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Permanent Endowment Fund  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Maintenance and Operations

\$200,000    \_\_\_\_\_ Five Star  
 100,000     \_\_\_\_\_ Platinum Benefactor  
 50,000     \_\_\_\_\_ Gold Benefactor  
 25,000     \_\_\_\_\_ Silver Benefactor  
 10,000     \_\_\_\_\_ Bronze Benefactor  
 5,000      \_\_\_\_\_ Benefactor  
 2,500      \_\_\_\_\_ President's Circle  
 2,000      \_\_\_\_\_ Pioneer  
 1,500      \_\_\_\_\_ Heritage Friend  
 1,000      \_\_\_\_\_ Founder  
 750        \_\_\_\_\_ Steward  
 500        \_\_\_\_\_ Patron  
 250        \_\_\_\_\_ Donor  
 150        \_\_\_\_\_ Special Friend  
 100        \_\_\_\_\_ Friend

**Membership from  
 January 1—December 31**

\$250    \_\_\_\_\_ Corporate  
 \$100    \_\_\_\_\_ Non-Profit Organization  
 \$ 75    \_\_\_\_\_ Family  
 \$ 50    \_\_\_\_\_ Individual  
 \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Other ANNUAL SUSTAINED MEMBERSHIP (yearly)  
 Benefits: Annual Calendar and Nas Cesky Zivot newsletters

**MEMORIALS can be made to honor someone living, on their birthday or anniversary etc., or the memory of a deceased friend or family member.**

FOR \_\_\_\_\_  
 Send Acknowledgement to: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Donor: Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Message: \_\_\_\_\_

**MAIL TO:**

TCHCC, P.O. Box 6, LaGrange, TX 78945-0006



**CZECH REPUBLIC GRAND TOUR 2017**

**14 Days in the Czech Republic - Monday July 17, 2017 to Sunday, July 30, 2017**

**ALL-INCLUSIVE PRICE INCLUDES:** Airfare, bus transfers, entry fees of excursions on the tour, and 24/7 tour guides. 12 overnight hotel accommodations, 12 breakfasts and dinners or evening meals, 11 lunches, free selection of a drink with each meal.

**COST:** \$3,890.00 all-inclusive double occupancy OR \$4,280.00 all-inclusive single occupancy

*Highlights: Experience the homeland, history, trace your roots, visit a castle, museums and factories. Enjoy the best food, beer and wine and the fellowship of members in your group.*

The tour will begin and end in Prague where you will be able to tour the majestic and fairy tale city of antiquity. Walk the cobble-stone streets of Old Town Square (Wenceslaus Square), observe the Astrological Clock as it performs on the hour and shop along your way to the Charles Bridge.

Excursion to Dubí in Northern Bohemia where we will visit the Cesky Porcelain Factory, the producer of the "onion pattern" porcelain made in the Czech Republic and famous worldwide.

Take a boat ride through the Hřensko, the lowest place in the Czech Republic, situated in a valley along the Kamenice River.

Visit Tepla Monastery in Western Bohemia.

Travel to Chodová Planá, a restaurant and small Chodovar brewery museum.

Visit the Plzen Memorial to the US troops.

Tour the Glassworks Svoboda in Karlov.

Enjoy the medieval gothic 13th century castle of Pernštejn Castle.

Take a mouth-watering tour of the Dalešice Confectioners.

Walk the streets of the unique historical city center of Telč, which is a UNESCO World Heritage site, and visit its wine cellar.

Walk the grounds in Slavkov u Brna, known as Austerlitz, where the Battle of the Three Emperors took place in 1805. Tour the museum and memorial that honors the victims of Napoleon's victorious battle between Napoleon, Austria's Holy Roman Emperor Francis II and Russian Tsar Alexander I.

Settle in and relax in the heart of Moravia: Roznov. Visit the Unipar Candle Manufacturer, the Wallachian Open Air Museum, the Frenštát museum, Mr. Drahomir Strnadel and Dr. Josef Šimíček (Lichnov Museum of the Czech Immigrants to Texas) where genealogy research can be pursued. \*If wanting an extensive genealogy tour please plan to visit TCHCC's Melnar Genealogy Library where you can prepare for your visit to the Roznov area.

Taste the frgál kolače of the Cyril Bakery in Hrachovec.

View the weavers in the Moravian Tapestry Factory as they restore old tapestry and create new, modern ones.

Also on the list: excursions to Vizovice to tour the Jelinek Distillery, well known for its slivovice and other spirits and side trips to the Chateau Lešná, the Baťa Institute in Zlín, the Gingerbread Museum in Pardubice and a tour of the National Stud Kladruby (oldest major stud farm in the world).

**AND MUCH MORE... Contact TCHCC for a detailed list of the trip.**





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UPCOMING EVENTS 2016

**OCTOBER 14-15 Heritage Festival & Muziky, Muziky**

Friday, October 14 from 4-10 PM - Octoberfest on the Deck - Music by the Dujka Brothers

Saturday, October 15 from 10 AM - 6 PM Heritage Demonstrations

La Grange Ford Hospoda Entertainment: Shiner Hobo Band and Czech and Then Some

**MUZIKY MUZIKY** 7 - 9:30 PM The Legend Series Part IV: Featuring

**Donnie Wavra Band**, retiring performance.

HEB Fireworks Finale 9:30 PM

**NOVEMBER - FEBRUARY 2017 Josef Lada Exhibit**

**DECEMBER 3 TCHCC Christmas Open House**

Visit the Decorated Museum, Library, Village Houses & Buildings 10 AM - 3 PM

**TCHCC GALA** from 6 - 10 PM 2016 *Honorees: George Koudelka, Victor Caka, Victor Caka*

*Band and Johnnie I. Krajca, D.J.*

**FEBRUARY 11 TCHCC Valentine's Dinner & Concert**



FLAG SPONSORSHIP

William and Betty Melnar