

Chapter 10. Into the 21st Century!

Generation 9: Joseph John Kadlec

(B. 17 May 1911, M. 25 Jun 1936, D. 1 Jun 1967)



Joseph John Kadlec was born in Hale Township, McLeod County, Minnesota on 17 May 1911, the second-born son of Albin and Josephine (Micka) Kadlec.

Like his father Albin, Joe Kadlec is remembered as a well-regarded and compassionate man with a quick wit and a tremendously good sense of humor. He maintained his sense of humor even though he was afflicted with multiple sclerosis for twenty-nine years and an invalid for the last twenty-five of his fifty-six year life is certainly a testament to his strong personal character.

On his first day of school, Joe could not speak English—he only knew the Czech language. He attended the nearby Komensky grade school for eight years and then Silver Lake High School in 1928. Subsequently the Kadlec family found the resources to send young Joe to the University of Minnesota to study Chemical Engineering, where he graduated in 1933.

On June 25, 1936 he was married to Rose Marie Bednar at the Church of St. Joseph (now Holy Family Catholic Church in Silver Lake, MN) by Father Joseph Boushku and had the following three children:

1. Jerome Joseph Albin Kadlec
2. Joan Marie Ahrens
3. Kenneth Donald Kadlec

In his early childhood years, young Joseph would live in a log house on the land that the young Albin Kadlec family purchased from the John Lorence family. (see map item H on page 190).

In 1919, when Joe was nearly eight years old, the family would build and move into a new home located in the North-Central portion of the Kadlec farm, the present day home of the Jerome Kadlec family. The old log house was eventually moved near the new home and used as a garage for many years, before it was razed in 1968.

Figure 10-1. Joseph John Kadlec.



Figure 10-2. Joseph John Kadlec as a toddler.

On June 23, 2011 I wrote the following piece for the *Pavučina Corner* column for the *Silver Lake Leader* newspaper:

The arrival of May and June 2011 has brought me to reflect on the lives of my paternal grandparents, Joe and Rose Kadlec, both of whom who were born one hundred years ago in these months respectively. Although Joe passed away forty-four years ago and Rose twenty years ago, they both still live through the memories and stories we share with family and friends, but also in the physical traits, mannerisms, strengths, and foibles that show up in ourselves, in our children, and our grandchildren.

“We who were fortunate enough to know our grandparents well knew them with the directness and fullness of our youthful senses and the wonderful openness of impressionable minds. In contrast to our disciplining and guiding parents, grandparents provided us a gentle and less confrontational encounter with the past. Grandparents themselves were the children of generations whose individual traits and ways have been irretrievably lost to the body of deep time, transformed into archetypical myths of distant origin, epochal migrations to and primitive settlements in primordial lands. Without grandparents’ stories, photographs, and documents, their childhoods are lost to the great gulf of time, and we are ignorant of their family and everyday life. Knowledge of their diets, manners, gestures, habits, thoughts, emotions, sensibilities and beliefs vanish, and we must reconstruct them. They are the most “familiar strangers” from the past we know, and they prove the right spot to begin our work on the family past.” (Jacob’s Ladder, p. 15, Joe Amato).

My volunteer genealogical research for Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International (CGSI) has introduced me to countless stories of people who were perfectly ordinary and rarely noted for posterity in any history books. In some of these stories you learn of remarkably wonderful people, who led lives full of grace, strength, and integrity, even when life handed them hard knocks and misfortune.

The story of Joe and Rose Kadlec is one of those stories.

Joseph John Kadlec was born in Hale Township, McLeod County, Minnesota on 17 May 1911, the second-born son of Albin and Josephine (Micka) Kadlec. He was a middle child, with older brother Amos (husband of Bertha Wozniak) and younger sister Alice (wife of Arthur Woznak). In his early childhood years, Joseph lived in a log house on the land that the young Albin Kadlec family purchased from the John Lorence family. In 1919, when Joe was nearly eight years old, the family hired local builder Frank Bren to build a new house on the Kadlec farm, the present day home of the Jerome Kadlec family.

Showing up on the first day of grade school at Komensky (District 11), little Joe could not speak English—he only knew the Czech language. After eight years at Komensky, he attended Silver Lake High School, graduating as valedictorian of his class of 1928. As a young man with a talent for mathematics and science, he went off to the University of Minnesota to obtain his degree in chemical engineering, where he graduated in 1933. These were the days of slide rules, drafting tools, and study time spent at his quarter-sawn oak desk (the same desk that would travel with me to the same engineering school some sixty years later, the desktop finish now worn away from his and the forearms of his descendants).

It is funny how certain odd facts are remembered about one's life and it makes you wonder what will be remembered about you, doesn't it? During his years at the University of Minnesota it was more economical for Joe to send his dirty laundry home by mail from Minneapolis to Silver Lake to be washed by his mother or sister and then returned back to him by the same mail service. Joe was said to have had the skill of being perfectly ambidextrous when handwriting with both hands simultaneously, but only as long as he was writing on a vertical surface, like at a chalkboard.

Upon his graduation, Joe would interview for positions in areas far away as Chicago and Detroit, but due to the devastated economy of the Great Depression, he was unable to secure work as a chemical engineer. He would return to work on the family farm, just West of Swan Lake, where he put his technical training to work for the betterment of his local community. In October 1935 Joe was named director for the rural electrification project for bringing electricity to the farms and homes of Hale Township. He also contributed to the design, surveying, and construction of the road which now runs around the North and West side of Swan Lake.



Figure 10-3. Joseph John Kadlec

Family legend has it that young Joe first met his sweetheart Rose Marie Bednar at a dance at the Swan Lake Pavilion (now the Playmor Ballroom in Glencoe, MN)—just a short walk around the West edge of Swan Lake, from the Kadlec farm.

Rose Marie Bednar was born 25 June 1911 in Rich Valley Township, the daughter of John Bednar and Frances (Cacka) Bednar, with siblings, Frances (Jilek, Zajicek), Josephine (Lassen), Lillian (Wagener), and Cyril Bednar (husband of Florence Weier). She attended school at Steven's Seminary in Glencoe, graduating from the Normal Training Department with her teaching degree.



Figure 10-4. Rose Bednar Kadlec reading at the Koci family home in St. Paul, Minnesota.

One of her first teaching assignments was at the County School (District 29), near the Bednar family farm North of Glencoe. At this school, one of her pupils was her nephew Ray Jilek (son of Frances Bednar Jilek), who recalled the young suitor Joe Kadlec waiting down the road sitting in his car, waiting to pick Rose up after classes were done. Rose pulled her nephew Ray aside and made him promise not to tell his family. In this school, there were two groups of students, those whose families spoke German at home and other, children who were raised to speak Czech and these two cliques did not intermix very well. Rose's other nephew-student, Francis John Jilek remembers Rose telling both groups of students, 'we are all Americans now and we will speak English at this school and get along well, together'.

Rose would eventually become the teacher at Komensky School (District 11) from 1931 to 1936, where her duties involved getting to the school early in the morning to prepare it for the day, which in winters meant shoveling snow and getting the stove fired. The Komensky school teaching contract for women in those days stipulated that the teacher be unmarried.

Perhaps this clause is what brought the end of her teaching career, as Rose was married to Joe on her 25th birthday, June 25, 1936, at the Church of St. Joseph (now Holy Family Catholic Church) in Silver Lake, in a ceremony officiated by Father Joseph Boushka.



Figure 10-5. June 25, 1936 Wedding Photo, from left to right, Josephine (Micka) Kadlec and her husband Albin, Joe and Rose Kadlec, John and Frances (Cacka) Bednar.

For their honeymoon, Rose and Joe travelled up North to stay at the posh Hotel Duluth (now Greysolon Plaza) and drove up the narrow and winding gravel roads to enjoy the North Shore as newlyweds. It was with all the driving of this road trip that Joe first noticed that he was having troubles with his eyesight. What he was experiencing were first symptoms of a disease that would come to ravage his life--Multiple Sclerosis (MS), a chronic, inflammatory, demyelinating condition that affects the central nervous system.

It would not stop Rose and Joe from enjoying the life of parenthood with their three children, Jerome, Joan, and Ken-born in 1937, 1939, and 1942, respectively.



Figure 10-6. The children of Joe and Rose Kadlec: Joan, Jerome, and Ken.

As the symptoms of Joe's disease advanced, he would gradually lose the ability to control his limbs and to do normal everyday tasks. But where there is a will, there is a way—by the early 1940's, Joe and his son Jerome would still find a way to play "catch" with the baseball. Since Joe could only throw but not catch, after catching the ball thrown by Joe, young Jerome would have to run it back to his father and hand him the ball, so that Joe could throw it back to him again.

On the eve of August 22, 1942, Rose would go into labor with her third and final child, Kenneth and would need to drive herself to the hospital, pulling over to the side of the road to stop the car during her major contractions, as her husband Joe was unable to drive the car on this occasion.

By October 1942, however, he was still able to help out his father Albin with the farm work. On the 22nd day of that month, Joe set off on the family's Farmall F-20 tractor to do some plowing and headed South down the field road to cross the Luce Line railroad tracks (which cut midway through the Kadlec farm), when he was suddenly struck by an oncoming railroad inspection car.

The force of the impact threw the 31-year old Joseph from his tractor, where he lay unconscious, injured and bleeding. The railroad worker involved in the accident was traveling the line to inspect it; after the collision he ran up the field road to the Kadlec farm for help. Upon reaching the farmhouse, where Rose was in the process of giving her infant son Ken a bath, the railroad worker broke the bad news with the phrase, 'Lady, I think I just killed your husband'.



Figure 10-7. October 22, 1942, The Scene of Joe's Tractor Accident.

Consternation ensued as they got into the family car, sped down the hill on the field road, retrieved Joseph and brought him back to the farmhouse. Five-year old Jerome still remembers his father's blood on the family car seat, his father's blood-soaked long underwear and the sight of his father's head, with a large six to eight inch long gash that required stitching. Fortunately Joe would recover from his injuries and it is recalled that Rose's request of the railroad company was not for a large cash settlement, but for the company to simply pay Joe's medical bills and not a penny more.

Over the next twenty-five years through the end of his life in 1967, Joe became completely disabled and physically unable to take care of himself, his wife and young family, and the farm. Holding onto hope, the family brought Joseph to non-traditional medicine/faith healers as far away as Canistota, South Dakota, but to no avail.

Joseph would spend his days in the farmhouse dining room, smoking his cigarettes, keenly aware of the world on the farm as it revolved around him. From his daybed he would tutor neighborhood kids in math and science and would tell you who you were calling on the rotary dial phone, as he listened to the amount of time it took for the dial to snap back for each number dialed, as he had all the phone numbers of family and friends memorized. It was through these years, that his wry sense of humor and intelligence continued to persevere and is remembered in our family legend.

And through the trials and tribulations of those twenty-five years, the Kadlec sense of humor (i.e. the ability to tell a dumb joke that is witty only to the teller of it) still persevered and it continues to this day; for example, Joe remarking to his future daughter in law Judy at her first sit down dinner at the Kadlec home, that his favorite dish was indeed, “skunk-meat”.

It is with a great sense of reverence and respect that we remember the love, loyalty, and hard work of Rose, who cared for her husband, her three children, and ran the family farm in an era when that was ‘man’s work’. Her inner-strength and mental sharpness were skills she exercised when playing cards with her Silver Lake and Hutchinson friends. Among the ladies in her 12-person, 3-table Silver Lake bridge club were: Ann (Mrs. Ed) Reid, Rose (Mrs. Henry) Hawlish, Florence (Mrs. George) Warnke, Pearl (Mrs. Henry) Nuwash (formerly Mrs. Joe Lowy), and Marcille (Mrs. Steve) Reml.



Figure 10-8. Rose Kadlec, cleaning barn on a winter day at the Kadlec farm.

Without exaggeration, Rose never complained and never raised her voice in frustration or anger towards the people in her life as she bore her hardships. According to her son

Jerome, there was one occasion when her husband Joe was taken outside to witness the new water well being drilled. He was accidently scratched by a nail and contracted a bad case of blood poisoning; this was the only time he ever saw his mother break down and cry. Rose retired from farming in 1978, selling the farm to her son Jerome and his wife Judy.

Back in the spring of 1967, Jerome and Judy Kadlec were expecting their second child (yours truly), a child who would never have the pleasure of meeting his grandfather in person. Jerome told his father Joseph that if this baby were to be a son, he would name him Joseph in his grandfather's memory (the middle name that I now bear). When Joseph heard this, a tear trickled down his cheek.

Other stories of Joe recorded in the family legend:

- One old citizen of Silver Lake once told me that “Joe was so smart, he could look at a building structure and then design the necessary plumbing system for it”;
- Joseph loved to play cribbage, listen to Twins and Gopher games on the radio and smoke. When he was out of cigarettes, he would utter “God dammit, get me a butt!”;
- One of his favorite expressions was, “More slippery than skunk shit on a marble floor!”;
- A joke he would tell: “How do you pronounce the name, ‘M-a-c-D-o-n-a-l-d’”? (person would answer: ‘MacDonald’). “How about, ‘M-a-c-C-o-r-m-i-c-k’”? (person would answer: ‘MacCormick’). “How about ‘M-a-c-H-i-n-e-r-y’”? When the person would answer ‘MacHinery’, he would respond, “NO, it’s pronounced, ma-CHINE-ery”!
- When Joseph’s son Ken was at his wit’s end dealing with mosquitoes while needing to pick cucumbers on an unbearably hot summer day, he put on a winter coat to finish the job. To which, Joseph replied, “Aww...Kenny are you cold?”
 - My uncle Ken would acquire the same sense of humor...on one day when it was raining heavily, young Ken remarked to his father Joseph: ‘Pa, it is really pr-šitting out there!’ (“pršit”, pronounced *PYR-shey* is the Czech word for ‘its raining’)
- If and when a child would put on a crying tantrum, Joseph would respond to the child, “Louder and funnier!”
- Joseph was very sensitive to the needs of others and it is remembered that on one cold fall or winter day he could not bear the sight of seeing his granddaughter Melissa playing the floor, to which he replied, “Get the baby off the floor!”



Figure 10-9. Joseph John Kadlec, Silver Lake High School Graduation Photo, 1928.



Figure 10-11. Joseph John Kadlec, College Graduation, 1933.



Figure 10-12. Rose (Bednar) Kadlec as Young Woman.



Figure 10-13. Joseph and Rose Bednar Kadlec Wedding Photo, 1936.



Figure 10-14. L to R: Joseph Kadlec and his children Ken, Joan, and Jerome.

Obituary of Joseph Kadlec

A Requiem High Mass for the late Joseph Kadlec, lifetime resident of Hale township, was offered by Father Michael Skoblik, at the Church of St. Joseph in Silver Lake on Monday, June 5, 1967.

Joseph Kadlec, 56, was born in Hale township on May 17, 1911. He was the son of Albin and Josephine (Micks) Kadlec. He attended Komensky school for eight years, graduated from Silver Lake High School in 1928, and graduated in 1933 from the University of Minnesota with a degree in Chemical engineering.

On June 25, 1936, he was married to Rose Marie Bednar at the Church of St. Joseph by Father Joseph Boushka. Born to this union were two sons, Jerome and Kenneth of Hutchinson and a daughter, Joan Ahrens of Richfield; also surviving are two granddaughters, Ruth Ann Ahrens and Melissa Rose Kadlec. Survivors in addition to his wife and children are a brother Amos Kadlec of rural Hutchinson, and a sister Alice Woznak of Minneapolis. Preceding him in death were his parents.

He was afflicted with multiple sclerosis for the past twenty-nine years and an invalid for the past twenty-five. He, nevertheless, maintained a cheery disposition and always enjoyed callers.

Early Wednesday morning, May 31, he suffered a stroke after which he never regained consciousness and passed away at 3:30 P. M. on June 1, 1967 at the Hutchinson Community hospital.

Pallbearers, all nephews of the deceased, were Terrence Kadlec, Milan Woznak, Ernest Noga, Raymond Jilek, Francis John Jilek, and Joseph Zajcek. He was a member of the Knights of Columbus who attended the Mass in a body. Interment was in the parish cemetery in Silver Lake. Marek Mortuary was in charge of funeral arrangements.

CARD OF THANKS

The family of the late Joseph Kadlec wish to thank Father Skoblik, Dr. Peterson, Fred Marek, the John Marvan family, and all those who sent Spiritual and floral bouquets. Memorials to the multiple sclerosis society, School Sisters of Notre Dame, Altar boys, Choir and all those who sent food or money or assisted in any manner after the death of our beloved husband and father.

Figure 10-15. Joseph Kadlec Obituary, *Silver Lake Leader*.

Generation 10: Jerome Joseph Albin Kadlec

(B. 6-Jun-1937, M. 24 Apr 1965)

Jerome is still living and his life story is in process and waiting to be told in greater detail.



Figures 10-16, 10-17, Jerome Joseph Albin Kadlec as a young boy and young man.



Those who know Jerome Kadlec, know that he married “very well” to Judith Emilie Landkammer, daughter of Wilfred and Emilie Landkammer of Winthrop, Minnesota.

Jerry and Judy met in 1964 at the Lake Marion Ballroom, just South of Hutchinson, Minnesota, where Jerry was playing his usual sax and clarinet at a dance job that night. He offered to give her a ride home that night, but she politely declined; however, they were engaged within two months and married within a year.

After more than fifty years of playing music in orchestras, big bands, Navy bands in Mediterranean ports, and old-time/polka bands, Jerome was inducted as a member of the Minnesota Music Hall of Fame in 2004 (<http://mnmusichalloffame.org/Inductees.html>). For the record this was three years before Prince Rogers Nelson achieved the same honor.

As of 2011, he is still playing gigs and making music that is enjoyed by many.

Figure 10-18 Jerome Kadlec, aka “Big Daddy Kaddy”, the musician.

Generation 11: Anthony Joseph Kadlec
(B. 27 Dec1967, M. 15 Jun 2002)

Anthony is still living and his life story is in process and waiting to be told, however, I will shift from the voice of the third to the first person and add some final comments, to bring some closure to this Kadlec family history book. If you found yourself wishing that there were more photos or stories related to your favorite ancestors or relatives, then I encourage you to try your hand at writing your own chapters to add to this story.



Figure 10-19. Anthony Kadlec, author of this Kadlec family history book, standing on the field that generations of his Kadlec ancestors farmed, with the village of Velké Tresné, Moravia, Czech Republic in the background.

Consider for a moment, the following thought:

“A family, like any group, passes through time and change collecting, modifying, discarding, and forgetting stories. In the process of doing this it knits itself into one, recasts itself, comes unraveled and unless written, is finally entirely forgotten.” (Joseph Amato, *Jacob’s Well*, p. 128).

It was this sentiment, which really motivated me to write this Kadlec family story, when the book that you are reading now started with a single blank page. One might call it the ‘fear of being forgotten’, but in simple terms, I wanted my sons to have the opportunity of someday being able to pick this book up to read and know at least some of the stories that helped to define the character of our family over the many generations of its development.

Having grown up in the small Czech community of Silver Lake, Minnesota, the Kadlec family stories we shared over the years helped me to understand that I was the product of a long line of proud Moravian people (yes Moravian) of strong character. As I became interested in the genealogy research of my father’s Czech roots, I found wasn’t too difficult to get started—my great grandfather Albin Theodore Kadlec and his father Josef

and his father František were all interred in the nearby Bohemian National Cemetery, which was co-founded by Josef Kadlec in 1873 just over the hill from the Kadlec farm where I was raised.

While in the midst of sorting out the tangle of descendants of the fifteen children of my great great grandfather Josef and his wife Francis (nee Kutina of Choceň, Vysoké Mýto now Czech Republic), there remained a series of unanswered, fundamental questions: what was the home village of the Kadlec family? What members of our family made that fateful trip across the Atlantic and what was their motivation for leaving? When did they arrive on the American shores and what was that journey like? How did they come to arrive in the Czech settlement of Silver Lake, Minnesota? And what family members were left behind, if any? The answers to these questions had never survived in the written or oral history of our family.

“Forming a pathway of recollection, we know ourselves by inventorying our family’s deaths. However deeply we bury the dead below the monuments of stones and words, they rise back up.” (Joseph Amato, Jacob’s Well, p. 128).

Like many genealogists, I found myself walking through cemeteries of all shapes, sizes and locales—walking and searching headstones for familiar names or clues to find relatives whose stories were either untold or at the very least, just waiting to be found by me, perhaps even sleeping in the pages of some book or journal on some shelf in a building that I have driven past at least a thousand times, in my car.

Through my genealogy research efforts, I have come to relearn a universal lesson; there is so much to be learned, if you only take the time to learn how and where to look. The answers can be right under your nose.

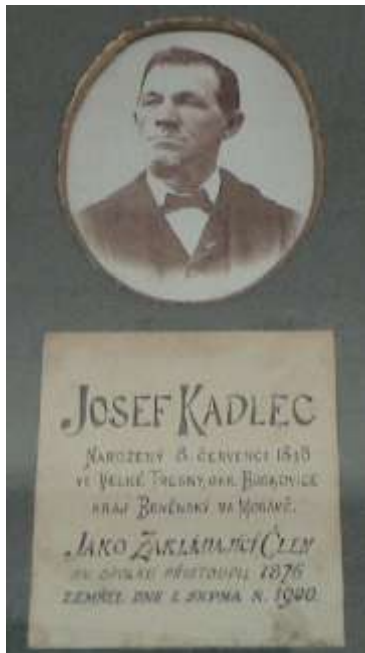


Figure 10-20. Photo of Josef Kadlec taken in Komensky Schoolhouse, August 2004.

Perhaps the most important milestone in my family history research occurred in August of 2004, when my family attended a Czech cultural festival held at the Komensky school house, located between Hutchinson and Silver Lake, Minnesota about two miles west of the Kadlec farm. This was the first time I had the opportunity to walk through the Komensky school house where my grandma Rose Kadlec (née Bednář of Věchnov, CZ) had taught for six years before she was married in 1936.

To my surprise, high up on the wall was a photo of my proud looking great-great grandfather, Josef Kadlec—and documentation of his involvement in the Czech community of Komensky and co-founding of the nearby Bohemian National Cemetery (in 1873) and Bohemian Reading and Educational Society (in 1876).

The digital photo of Josef, that I had taken in the Komensky school house included a caption in the Czech language and sat silently in my computer for nearly two years before I had realized it held the clue to help me solve this mystery.

Yes, I had driven by this school hundreds of thousands of times and the clue was right under my nose!

With an online Czech to English translation tool and Google.com I was finally able to identify and locate the home village of the Kadlec family, Velké Tresné! With great excitement, I typed and sent an email message in English language to the village of Velké Tresné website, not being sure what to expect.

Meanwhile, on the wintry Sunday afternoon of January 29, 2006, a good natured Czech man by the name of Jiří Petr cross country skied along the steep hillsides facing his village of Velké Tresné, in the Czech Moravian highlands known as the Vysočina. Nestled into a small and deep valley, the first historical reference to the village of Velké Tresné dates back to 1351 and it is still home to some one hundred citizens. This is one of those peaceful, out of the way places on Earth that you will never have the pleasure of finding, unless you have a strong, compelling reason to look for it.



Figure 10-21, Main Entrance Roadway of Velké Tresné, in Wintertime. Photo courtesy of Jiří Petr.

Mr. Jiří Petr is mayor of the Velké Tresné and a grade school teacher. On this day his cell phone compelled him to glide to a stop on the main hillside which overlooked the snow-topped roofs in the village below. He asked himself, “Why have I received an email from ‘tkadlec’, my student Tomáš Kadlec, on the weekend?”

However this email was written in English and was from an altogether different “tkadlec”, yours truly, a Czech-American descendant from villagers of Velké Tresné who had left their homeland in 1856. With great interest on behalf of both parties, a friendly email relationship ensued, developing into a strong friendship between two men who would eventually come to realize that they shared the same DNA from their common third great grandfather, František. In other words, Jiří’s great great grandmother Anna Kadlec Petrová and my great great grandfather Josef were sister and brother.

It only got better from here. Jiří Petr, who through his own kindness, enthusiasm and the help of his next door neighbor Erika Cacková (for English translation help) and local historian Vladimír Kovář (for his research work) were able to help me fully document eight additional generations of my Kadlec family who were previously unknown! This information included not just the vital (birth, marriage, death) records of my direct ancestors back to 1655, but also that of their siblings and siblings’ children, real estate

purchase records, and digital photos of the homes where these people, my family once lived.

Subsequently, my wife Marata and I traveled to the Czech Republic in November 2007 to meet Jiří Petr, who with his lovely wife Vera, hosted us in their home and arranged a meeting in the town hall with the villagers. That trip set the stage for a follow-up trip to Velké Tresné in August 2008 with my parents, brother, uncle, and two cousins.

After days of looking up at it with wonder, my brother Andrew and I decided that we had to climb up the steepest hill overlooking the village, to walk the very same field that was owned and farmed by generations of my Kadlec ancestors for hundreds of years.

We found the beauty of the highlands to be breathtaking, both figuratively and literally as we climbed this hill. Certainly the flat and fertile farmlands of Minnesota were a welcome relief from working the steep, infertile fields of the Vysočina.

Upon reaching the upper hillside where my people once labored, my brother and I stopped and took our pictures of the village below. Jiří came up the hill a few minutes later, to meet my brother and I where we had chosen to stop for this peak experience. My brother and I were amazed at the perfect acoustics of the valley below that enabled us to have a conversation with my parents who sat on a bench down in the village some 500 meters away (we yelled down in Czech to 'bring more beer!').



Figure 10-22 Third Cousins Anthony Kadlec and Jiří Petr, August 2008.
Photo by Andrew Kadlec.

At this moment, my cousin Jiří turned to me, smiled, and said:

“Tony do you remember when you sent me your first email to contact the village?”

This is exactly the place where I was skiing when I got your message!”

Over the course of the last 150 years, these two branches of the Kadlec family tree had grown apart, to survive and thrive on opposite sides of the Earth, each without knowledge of the other and now they have been rejoined. I'd like to think that it was fate or some kind of synchronicity at work, which compelled this reunion between family and life in the Kadlec ancestral village with the man who was my closest relative there, a man summoned to answer the call just at the very instant he was crossing the land of our mutual ancestors. And I imagine that our ancestors were smiling down from above.

I hope you have enjoyed this journey too and if you share my Kadlec blood that you may someday have the opportunity to visit the village, darken the doorway of house #13, and toast a pivo to our Kadlec family!