

Pavučina Corner – By Tony Kadlec**SILVER LAKE FAMILY SPOTLIGHT: THE JOSEF JANCIK FAMILY – Part 1**

This is the story of a former Silver Lake resident, Josef Jancik, whose family name no longer survives in the Silver Lake area. Josef and his wife Josefa were members of the Faith Presbyterian Church of Silver Lake at the turn of the twentieth century and are interred in the Presbyterian cemetery at the Southeast part of town. His childhood story was one full of adventure and hardships that he recounted to the editors of the periodical *Hospodář (The Farmer)*.

One of the keys to advancing the genealogical research on your own family is to look for other families from the same village or region and to look for any possible connections or information linking back to your own family members. And so in the course of researching my own family, I came across the interesting story of Josef Jancik, who originally came from the same village as my Kadlec family (Malé Tresné), as documented in the book, [Pioneer Stories as Related by Minnesota Czech Residents](#).

This book, composed of abstractions and translations of stories by Czech pioneer residents of Minnesota, is from the periodical *Hospodář (The Farmer)*, covering the years of 1906 to 1930 (February issues only). It is the result of a joint effort of Karleen Chott Sheppard of St. Paul, Minnesota, and Margie Sobotka, of Elkhorn, Nebraska.

The *Hospodář (The Farmer)* was printed in Omaha, Nebraska, by the National Printing Company, whose editor and owner was John Rosicky, well known in the Czech community not only in Omaha, but throughout Nebraska. It was the only agricultural and horticultural journal published in the Czech language, and it also contained many articles to help the Czech housewife as well.

It disseminated information about American ways of farming that many Czechs could get no other way. It was of great value to the old Czech pioneers, many of whom were somewhat acquainted with the American farming methods by this time, but could not and were not too familiar with the English language. It also helped the 'new' farmer with his problems in beginning to farm the land.

It began publishing in March 1891 and at that time, was printed in newspaper format. Its first four years of issue contained maps of counties and Czech residents throughout Nebraska, and printed their names, locations, and also their residence in 'old country', prior to coming to Nebraska. (This section of the paper has been translated and printed in book form, and is known as the ('Nebraska –Kansas Czech Settlers')). It had a national circulation, and copies were also mailed to readers in foreign lands. It was changed to a magazine format in 1906 and from that time, articles appeared that were written by subscribers and sent to the editors.

These articles written by the people living in America and some from other countries, wrote about their lives, their biographies, and some historical sketches, and even their ideas of raising certain kinds of animals or crops. Most of the articles written to the editors, were

printed under the section called ‘Dopisy’ (Letters). Some stories were very philosophical in nature, but all were written with sincerity to the editors of the *Hospodář*. Generally, the longer stories were contained in what was the first issue of the year, which was printed in the first week of February.

The book contains over 100 separate articles from Minnesota Czech residents in that period of time. Some of them are very short and some are very long in text, but as you will note, they have a variety of information. The names in the articles were spelled as they appeared. Given names were also spelled as written in Czech as many individuals took on either Americanized names or nicknames after arriving in America. There is an index at the end of the ‘All Name Index’, giving some translations to given names. Some names do not translate well into the English language or some not at all. It is noted that quite a number of the residents moved often, and lived in other states as well as living in Minnesota at the time of writing the article.

Without further ado, here is the childhood story of Czech immigrant and Silver Lake resident Josef Jancik:



Photo of Josef Jancik.

Josef Jancik
Silver Lake, Minnesota
***Hospodář*, 5 February 1919, p 36**

“I was born on 17 August 1858 in a small village of eighteen households, Malé Tresné in Moravia, region of Kunstat.

When I was a year old, I was cared for by my father’s sister, a 12-year-old. She set me on the heater, crawled after me into the corner, leaving me on the edge. What did I do? I fell on my head and was unconscious for an hour. Until I was three years old, I neither walked nor talked.

When I was six years old I went to my grandfather’s, who had a chopping block and ax in his yard. I began chopping and accidentally cut through my shoe. I ran home and, in fear, I took off the shoes and tossed them under the bed. But grandfather came after me, and told my father everything. Father turned me over his knee and whipped me with a belt until my underwear was red. What should have been a lesson to me was retribution.

Grandfather had a son the same age as I. He was therefore my uncle, but a step-uncle. Once, we made balls out of brick and a wooden bowling pin. Uncle was below and I was above; I rolled the ball, and it flew up and hit uncle in the forehead and nearly killed him. Again, I ran home in a fright, with grandfather after me, and I was thrashed again.

When I was 12 years old, father sold our cottage and bought another one in the Czech village of Hlasnice. There I learned to read and write and count, but only in winter and only on Sundays, at that, because week days there wasn't any time.

Father was a weaver, and I had to wind spools, and in the summer I pastured our animals. There are old monuments around Hlasnice which were of great interest to me. When I was 16, I worked for a year in a factory, one day until 8:00 in the evening, and the next day until midnight. For this, I earned one-and-a-half gold pieces a week, sometimes even two. I bought potatoes and some flour and butter thickening from home, and three times a day I would cook myself soup. If I wrote up everything, it would be too much.

I remember the war from 1866, and that there were two German soldiers in our town, but they were lazy. There were also two Poles, and they were better. One night there was music which was arranged by some German soldiers from a neighboring town. Around midnight, one of the girls ran away from them and hid herself behind a barrel in the cellar. They couldn't find her, but they knew which house she was in, so they smashed all the windows. The next day the owner was compensated for all the damage. When the Germans left for Vienna, I stood on Jancik's hill from 9:00 in the morning until 4:00 in the afternoon, and during all that time the soldiers marched. The Germans had said that if they had to run, they would damage everything in their path, but if they triumphantly marched, nothing will happen to us."

Source: [Pioneer Stories as Related by Minnesota Czech Residents](#), Abstracted from *Hospodář (The Farmer)*, August 2003. Copyright Czechoslovak Genealogy Society International, St. Paul, Minnesota. To order a copy of this book, go online: <http://www.cgsi.org/store/item/40272> or call CGSI at (651) 964-2322.

NEXT WEEK: Find out what happened to the Jancik family when they lured the local landowner's rabid dog with a cooked potato to return it for the reward of 30 gold pieces...

Mluvíte Česky? Do You Speak Czech?

Vstávat se slepicemi (To get up with the chickens)

Ranní ptáče dál doskáče (An early bird will hop farther)

As a rule, you should always stress the first syllable of a Czech word!

If you have any contributions or suggestions for topics for future columns, please contact me by email: tkadlec@gmail.com or call me: (651) 271-0422 or send your letters to my attention: 1408 Fairmount Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55105. Thanks! Tony Kadlec