

**Pavučina Corner – By Tony Kadlec****SILVER LAKE FAMILY SPOTLIGHT: THE JOSEF JANCIK FAMILY – Part 2**

This is part two of the autobiographical story of former Silver Lake resident, Josef Jancik, which he recounted to the editors of the periodical *Hospodář* (*The Farmer*).

**Josef Jancik**

**Silver Lake, Minnesota**

***Hospodář*, 5 February 1925, p 41-42**

“Esteemed editors! I have already sent you my life story from childhood to sixteen years, and now I will continue on from the year 1875, when I was seventeen years old. That year, I drudged at weaving at home, making shaggy coats at one gold piece and 50 kreuzers a week, if only I had actually received the money. Sometimes the factory would give me only the gold piece and keep the 50 kreuzers and sometimes I’d get even less. Besides, I had to carry the coat there, which was an hour’s walk, but in the end I got nothing, because I had to turn over everything to my parents and which they spent on our livelihood. I worked this way for a year-and-a-half, and then my father found me work in Olešnice, in a silk factory, and I worked there from spring to fall. There I earned two gold pieces a week. I went to my aunt’s to sleep, and they always gave me supper and wanted nothing for it, no money, but my breakfast and dinner I bought. Sometimes I had nothing but a pickle for my dinner; they were from Znojmo, and they were often quite large. The rest of my money I had to give my parents.

In the fall, I stayed home again, as the weaving business had picked up. I was making pieces almost two yards wide, and since it was going so well for me, I thought I could make three pieces in a week, but I had to renew the design and the warp, which was hard work, as each piece was 50 meters. On Monday and Tuesday I saw how it was going, so on Wednesday morning I got up around 4:00 and didn’t go to bed until Friday night. I worked three days and two nights without stopping, and I did finish those three pieces. But it was not worth it because the Jews found flaws and penalized me for each piece so I was paid the same as for only two pieces. One piece was 2 gold pieces and 90 kreuzers, so I received 5 gold pieces and 80 kreuzers. As you can see, these were grand earnings, but because I had strained my legs, I couldn’t weave for another two weeks. In the spring again, there was less demand for weaving, so I went to work in the factory in Olešnice. I was given a miserable honey-comb pattern to work on, and again my earnings were poor, about 1 gold piece and 50 kreuzers a week. I was going to my aunt’s house like before.

Then in 1879, again I was working at home. My mother was reaping barley and when she came home at noon she said, “There is a dog, walking around in the field.” The nobility in Svan castle had bought a dog in the Tyrol and it had run away; whoever caught it would receive a reward of 30 gold pieces. I had two brothers, one was 14, and the other 11. The older one was daring, so I said to him, “Frankie, don’t you want to go catch it?” He said he would so I advised him, “Take along a cooked potato and a rope” He did, and the dog ate the potato, but when my brother tried to put the rope around its neck, it bit my brother’s hand,

right in the wrist. He came home quite frightened, but the arm healed and he was all right. Then, nine weeks after the dog bite, my brother developed madness. This I would not wish on anyone, it is such a horrible illness. My parents hired a teamster to take him to the doctor an hour away. The doctor immediately asked if he had been bitten by a dog, and when my parents said that he had been, the doctor told them it was madness. When they went to the doctor's it was a cool October day, and my mother had put woolen stockings on my brother and when they got there she had put them on herself. After this she came down with madness herself, all winter she was laid up, saying she felt like she had ants crawling on her calves, but finally she came out of it. My brother died the same night he went to the doctor.

Then everyone thought the rest of us would come down with madness, and no one came near us out of fear. Once my mother's brother came over. He barely opened the door, and when he saw my mother coming toward him, he shut the door and ran away. To this day I can see him, how he turned and dashed down that road toward home. But it turned out well, none of us got it, and there were six of us, four children and parents. After our brother died, there were five of us. My sister, who is two years older than I, is still living. She had four sons in the war, and they all returned home. My brother, who is ten years younger than I, is living, but his oldest son remained in Russia in some cemetery. I went to the doctor in Polička every week from Christmas into spring. From Hlasnice it is quarter hour walk.

I bought a pipe and smoked along the way. I kept it hidden for a year so my parents wouldn't know that I smoked. My neighbor had suggested I try smoking, I was always coughing and spitting, and he said if I smoked my lungs would dry out, and he was right. I stopped coughing and spitting and I was healthier. Ever since then I have smoked and it has benefited me.



**Gravesite of Jozef Jancik and his wife Jozefa, Faith Presbyterian Church Cemetery, Silver Lake, Minnesota.**

My father went to the doctor on account of my mother and there he met a man from Kobyli who told him that in Krone there was a doctor who was particularly good in treating madness, so my father headed after him and returned home with him. It was 1:00 at night, and in the morning before the sun came up he went to the stream and blessed mother, but

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we didn't sleep all night. He told us about all the different people he had helped out of their madness, and how he was always being sought after by doctors. My mother recovered, and lived another 13 years.

I will also tell you how my mother prepared me for a pilgrimage to Svratouch. She had a sister living there with the Venzar family. The Sunday before John the Baptist Day there is a pilgrimage there. She told me which villages to go to, and I wrote them all down. I started out Saturday morning at 5:00 and walked to Jimramov. Then which road to Javorek? Instead of going to Javorek, I went to Borovnice. I asked which was the road to Javorek, and ran all the way. When I got there I stopped in a tavern and drank half a liter of beer, and then dashed off as fast as my legs would carry me, first to Daňkovice and then to Nemecky. When I reached Nemecky there was a storm, and to escape it I ran all the way to Milovy, but I could go no further. My clothes were soaked, and I went into a tavern and drank some strong beer because I was afraid my strength wouldn't hold out. Then I set out for Krizanky and then to Cikanka and Svratouch. By then it was 4:00 in the afternoon, so I had been hiking 11 hours. I was warmly greeted, but my feet were sore. I certainly slept well after the long march.

In the morning, it was Sunday and we went to church. After dinner, I went with my uncle to look over the fields to see how nicely everything was growing. Then I went to look around the village of Svratouch and found that there were 11 taverns there. I went into one and then a couple started fighting. Then the parents from both sides got into it—what a row. In the evening my aunt wanted to go hear the music. I didn't want to because my feet hurt, but I had to go. My aunt gave me 20 kreuzers for the musicians and told me to dance, so I did go, but I sat because I couldn't stand. I looked over the town and the pottery making there and I would have liked to go home, but I was worried about finding my way. Monday morning, I got ready, and when I got to Cikanka, they were still celebrating like at the pilgrimage. I did find my way home, but it took me all day. If I keep writing like this, I won't be finished even after I've written twice this much, and I have already covered several sheets. But the more I write, the better it goes, and this letter covers about five years."

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.

### **Mluvíte Česky? Do You Speak Czech?**

**zlý pes!** (bad dog!)

**Starého psa novým kouskům nenaučíš** (You can't teach an old dog new tricks)

**V noci každá kočka černá** (Every cat is black at night)

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](mailto: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