

Pavučina Corner – By Tony Kadlec

SILVER LAKE FAMILY SPOTLIGHT: FRANK AND ERNEST DUDEK

Certainly there are some *Silver Lake Leader* readers who may remember the Dudek family from back in the days when the town of Silver Lake had the need for a tailor shop and blacksmith shop.



Photos of the Ernest Dudek blacksmith Shop and Frank Dudek tailor shop.

Even my family has a Dudek story: in about 1941-42 my grandmother Rose (Bednar) Kadlec and her mother-in-law Josephine (Micka) Kadlec were having an excited discussion on how to alter a garment, that apparently caught the attention of my aunt Joan (Kadlec) Ahrens, who was only about two or three years old at the time. Little Joan interrupted the argument by exclaiming, “OH just rip off the pockets and take it to Dudeks!”

I have recently been in contact with Alvin Dudek of Watertown, MN, who is the son of Frank Dudek the tailor and Bill Dudek of Albany, Oregon, who is the grandson of Arnost (Ernest) Dudek, the blacksmith. Frank and Ernest were first cousins. Here is a recollection of their story:

Frank Dudek (The Tailor)

Excerpt from “History of McLeod County Minnesota” (Chicago and Winona, H. C. Cooper Jr. & Co. 1917)

“Frank J. Dudek, a well known tailor doing business at Silver Lake, was born in Bohemia, May 15, 1885, a son of Frank and Josephine (Schwab) Dudek. The father is a farmer, still residing in his native land and now 65 years old. His wife, who is also living, is aged 62. The subject of this sketch, with the laudable design of bettering his condition, came to this country in 1905, first stopping in Chicago, where he worked four years. He then came to Minnesota, opening a shop at Silver Lake, McLeod county where he has since carried on business, doing tailoring, cleaning and pressing.

He is a member of the Catholic church and of St. Joseph’s Society. Mr. Dudek was married, February 13, 1912, to Anna Lorenz, a daughter of John and Katherine (Wosmek) Lorenz, her father being a farmer in Rich Valley township. Mr. And Mrs. Dudek have three children: James, born October 25, 1912; Mabel,

born July 2, 1914; and Raymond, born May 18, 1916.” (p. 669) [note another son, Alvin Dudek was born later, on September 29, 1926].

The Dudek tailor shop was formerly located at the Southwest corner of Main Street and Lake Avenue in Silver Lake, where the Maresh funeral home is presently located (source Silver Lake Centennial Book, p. 43, map item #38).

Frank Dudek emigrated to the United States from Bremen, Germany aboard the Vessel Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse. This vessel was nicknamed “Rolling Billy”, as it was top-heavy. Frank talked of falling out of his hammock several times, because of this swaying motion. He arrived in New York on October 5, 1904. He then lived at 1208 Washburn Ave, Chicago, Illinois.

Frank Dudek's Declaration of Intention of becoming a U. S. citizen is dated November 29, 1907, in Cook County, Illinois. Age: 23 years; height: 5 ft 6 1/2 inches; weight: 150 lbs; brown hair; blue eyes. Renounces allegiance to: Francis Joseph Emperor of Austria, to travel to the United States. Frank became a U. S. citizen on Nov. 15, 1920 in Glencoe, Minnesota, at the age of 36 years.

Frank's sewing equipment is still being used today by his granddaughter Jean (Dudek) Buehl!

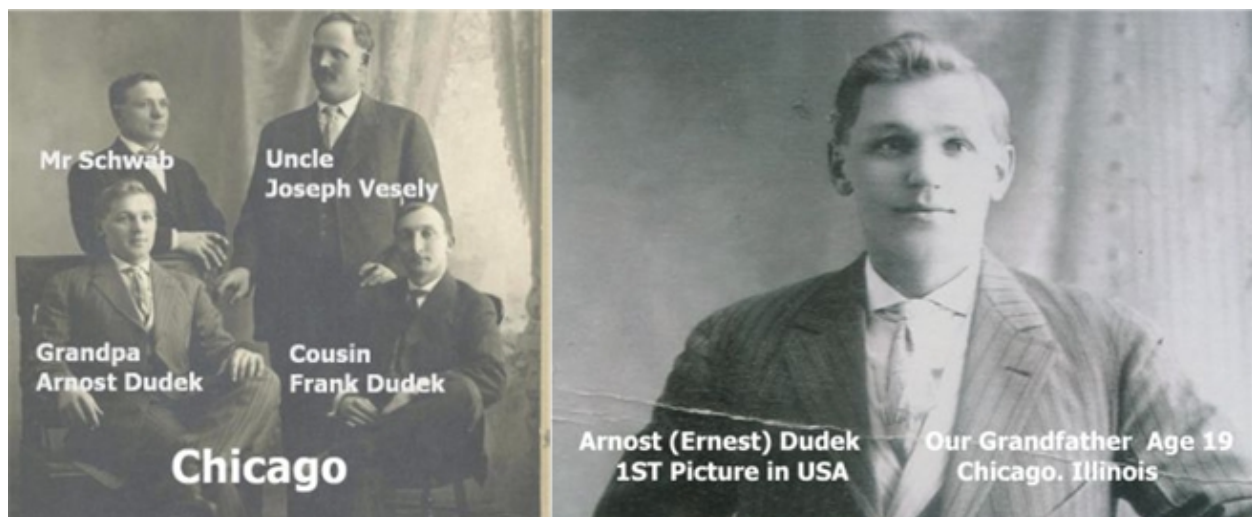
(Source of the above information: George Buehl, husband of Jean and son in law of Alvin Dudek)

Ernest Dudek (The Blacksmith)

From Bill Dudek of Albany, Oregon:

“I am the grandson of Ernest who was my father's (Alois) dad. My dad had three brothers and one sister. Only the sister is still alive and lives in Vancouver Washington. My dad married and had five children. Dick, Joan, Me (Bill), Jane and finally Bob. I am 70 years old and live in Albany, Oregon.”

The following pictures show Ernest Dudek when he first arrived in the USA, sometime after October 5, 1904. The other picture was taken in Chicago in 1905 and includes: Ernest Dudek, his cousin Frank Dudek, their uncle George Vesely, and Mr. Schwab.

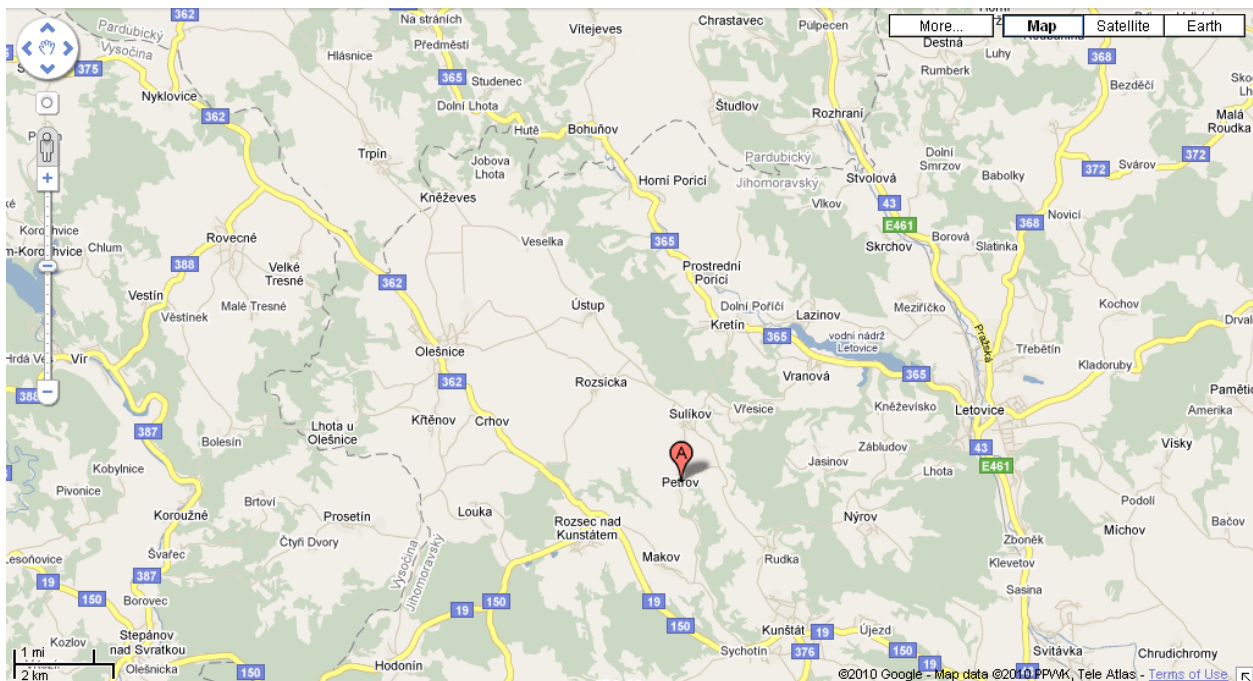


Dudek Family Photos, Courtesy of Bill Dudek, grandson of Arnost (Ernest) Dudek

Frank and Ernest stayed with their uncle Vesely in Chicago for a time and then migrated to Silver Lake perhaps as early as 1906. Frank opened a tailor shop and Ernest a blacksmith shop.

Frank stayed in Silver Lake but Ernest moved to Olivia, MN after his blacksmith shop burned to the ground. Henry J. Navratil learned the Page blacksmith's trade under Ernest Dudek and worked at it until 1912 as a helper." (p.662, "History of McLeod County Minnesota" (Chicago and Winona, H. C. Cooper Jr. & Co. 1917)

The Dudek blacksmith shop is believed to have been rebuilt by Henry Navratil, whose shop was formerly located to the South the current Fire Hall, off Tower Avenue (Silver Lake Centennial Book, p. 38, map item #2). If anyone would like to correct the exact location of the Dudek blacksmith shop for the record, please let me know.



The Dudek family ancestral village is Petrov near Kunštát, where the Jihomoravský kraj (region) meets the Czech Moravian highlands known as the Vysočina kraj.

Mluvíte Česky? Do You Speak Czech?

krejčí ('KRAY-chee'): tailor

kovář ('KO-varzshe'): blacksmith

Jen odpárat kapsy a vzít to k Dudkovi! ('YEN OD-pah-raht KAHP-see VH-zheet TOH K DOOD-ko-vee'): Rip off the pockets and take it to Dudeks!

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. Děkuji! Tony Kadlec