

Pavučina Corner – By Tony Kadlec

Thank all of you for the positive feedback that you have sent regarding this column so far. As for the working title of this column, the word 'pavučina' is the word for 'spiderweb' in the Czech language. It is my affectionate nickname for what the family tree diagram would look like for the Silver Lake community, given all of the family links and connections that have developed over the years. Would you be interested to see a family tree diagram that showed the familial connections of Silver Lake families going back 150 years? If so, please read on.

For this column, I am pleased to be able to reprint the first in a series of articles that were written by Mr. Gene Aksamit, a member of the Board of Directors of the Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International (CGSI) and resident of the Twin Cities. Gene's roots are in the very Czech community of Wilber, Nebraska, which is located about forty miles Southwest of Lincoln, NE. These articles, initially written for publication in the Czech culture newspaper, *Czech Slavnosti* of Wilber, NE have been adapted slightly to also highlight the genealogical research resources available to us in McLeod County, Minnesota.

INTRODUCTION TO CZECH GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH

By Gene Aksamit, Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International

Certainly many readers of the *Silver Lake Leader* have at least some Czech ancestry. More and more people of Czech ancestry are becoming interested in learning about their ancestors - who they were, how they lived and where in the old country they lived. This is reflected by the popularity of genealogical organizations that have sprung up in recent years. Among these is the Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International (CGSI) which is the oldest and largest U.S. organization devoted to Czech and Slovak genealogy.

This article introduces a series that will be published in future issues of the *Czech Slavnosti* and the *Silver Lake Leader*. These articles will outline a process for learning about your Czech ancestors through the information that can be found in the Czech archives as well as in other sources. The archives in the Czech Republic have done a magnificent job of preserving records from the 16th – 19th centuries and these records include information on your ancestors! A process that individuals can follow to obtain information from the Czech archives has been developed and refined by CGSI over a period of 20 years and will be the basis for the series.

The birth, marriage and death registers (matriky) provide the starting point for Czech genealogical research. These registers are stored in the Regional Archives and usually extend back to the early 1700's, but in some cases extend into the 1600's. Several generations of your family tree can be constructed from information found in these registers. However, it is essential to know the name of your ancestral village to access these registers as all are preserved by parish and/or village. Future articles will discuss how to identify and locate the ancestral village and provide examples of the matriky.

Land registers that record transactions involving sale and purchase of property are also available. It is not unusual for these records to extend into the 1600's. For those whose ancestors were farmers or owned property such as a blacksmith shop, land registers can provide very interesting detail on change in ownership transactions. And, in some cases, a family tree can be extended one or more additional generations based on these registers.

While information in the above registers enables you to develop your family tree, other lesser-known sources will help you learn about individual ancestors. Although a complete list is too lengthy for this article, some examples include: marriage contracts (one set of my great-great grandparents had such a contract), permission to emigrate, school records, apprenticeship certificates, census records, passports, cadastral maps of villages, 17th and 18th century tax cadasters, 1651 religious census. Unlike the matriky, not every person will be found in these records, but the exciting possibility makes the search worthwhile.

We hope you will join us on this journey into the world of Czech genealogy. Na shledanou!

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Mluvíte Česky? Do You Speak Czech?

Pavučina - spiderweb

Dobrý den – Good day, general salutation, widely used

Dobré ráno – Good morning (used only during the early morning)

Dobrý večer – Good evening

Dobrou noc – Good night

Na shledanou – Goodbye / See you later (formal)

Letter of the day:

Č ě makes the sound 'ch' as in Czech. For example: český (Czech) is pronounced 'CHES-kee'

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

Research and Networking Resource: Czechoslovak Genealogy Society International (CGSI)

CGSI is a non-profit, all-volunteer organization comprised of more than 3,000 members from across the US, Canada and the Czech and Slovak Republics. This large group provides a vast networking opportunity for sharing information with fellow members.

CGSI is headquartered in St. Paul, MN and its extensive library collection can be accessed in person at the Minnesota Genealogical Society Library in South St. Paul, MN, through a mail-in

research request, by catching its traveling library, or by utilizing its Lending Library. For more information please call (651) 450-2322 or see their website: www.CGSI.org .

You may be interested to know that some of the earliest members involved in the establishment of CGSI were Silver Lake natives: Irene (Svanda) Micka, Lucille (Radtke) Micka, and Wallace Oliva.

The Pavučina Project

A special thanks to Pat (Eischens) Mahon for her enthusiastic offer to help coordinate a grassroots project of collecting and compiling local history and family tree information for the Silver Lake community (this includes the Czechs, Polish, Catholics, Protestants, and the Free Thinkers alike!). Please stay tuned to this column for more information as this project unfolds.

If you are interested in contributing your information or talents towards the Pavučina Project or otherwise 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