
Pavučina Corner – By Tony Kadlec

SILVER LAKE: 1933 TIME PASSAGES: PART 4 OF 4

I am pleased to present a series of articles contributed by Ron Pulkrabek written from the perspective of a visitor to the Village of Silver Lake at the end of the year 1933.



“Here are some notable things that happened in Silver Lake over the past year of 1933:

- Woman gets kicked in face by a cow;
- Henry Klima’s band will broadcast a program over Radio Station WNAX, Yankton, S.D., 4:30 to 5 PM. The Silver Lake Kolaches, a newly formed basketball team of recent High School graduates will play the Flying Aces of Young America;
- Steve Reml completed 85 miles of new road and reconstruction this past year with 13 men and 7 trucks. His wife Marcile cooked for all of them in the traveling cook shack;
- More than \$35,000 is allotted to McLeod County from the Civil Works Program to pay wages to 350 unemployed men to do work for County projects;
- Silver Lake Shipping association shipped 44 car loads of livestock last year;

Bohemian Reading and Educational Society at Bohemian Hall, ca. 1915, formerly located on Highway 7, between Silver Lake and Hutchinson, McLeod County, Minnesota

- Joe Popelka shipped an 845 pound hog. His return proceeds were \$9.11. Frank Wesely shipped a hog weighing 952 pounds;
- Frank Mallak of the Silver Lake Coal Yards will have a train car of Roco Coal on the tracks. Come and buy as much as you need;
- The Silver Lake Baseball Club had a benefit Dance at the Swan Lake Pavilion. Music was by Rau’s Troubadours. Admission was 40 cents for gents and 10 cents for women. An up-coming dance at the Swan Lake Pavilion will have the Syncopated Kolaches playing;
- Albrecht’s Indoor Circus is coming February 18th;

- Starting December 18th, all Silver Lake stores will be open evenings to afford customers every opportunity to do their Christmas shopping and buy toys for their children.

The last store on the block is the former Daylight Store ran by Emil Jerabek and now called The Red and White Grocery store owned by Richard and Doris Stacey. They recently had “Bloomer Days”. Ladies jersey underwear at 39 cents and rayon underwear at 25 cents. This summer swim suits were on sale for 49 cents to \$1.25.

This past summer the Victoria Elevator burned to the ground. Seven thousand bushels of grain and 120 tons of coal were lost.

Also this summer Gould’s Million Dollar Gems from Glencoe, performed at the Silver Lake Community Fair. It included a road show, vaudeville and revue acts, featuring 17 people, performing dancing, singing, impersonations, comedy acts, musical novelties, a circus band, and acrobatic acts. A one-man band played many instruments at one time. It was a mechanical contraption with the player having to squeeze himself in between a dozen instruments. Rau’s Troubadours and Dietzel’s 7 piece Orchestra played for the dances in the evenings. Over 2500 people attended the 3 day event.

Some gleanings from the old city council books:

1893-1933--two intoxicating liquor licenses were issued at \$500 each. Joe Ruza was hired to tighten the screws on the city windmill and oil it once per week. J. J. Totusek was hired to light and clean the streetlamps each night for \$2 a month. Ordered a new roof ladder for \$1.50. Moved the jail for \$5. Put a new steeple roof on the city hall for \$5.75. Dogs are taxed at \$1 per year. A new well pump cost \$12. A 9 PM curfew was imposed on children. A dance license will be \$3. Ten dollars was approved to start a new library at the school. An ordinance forbidding riding bicycles on the sidewalks was approved. It was decided to gravel some of Main Street. A new windmill was ordered at \$91. Saloon operators were ordered to stay closed on Sundays. In 1917 Silver Lake had started to receive electricity from Northwest Light and Power. Two pool tables licenses were issued. Bids were taken for cement sidewalks in 1929.

One mile south of Silver Lake on the Great Northern Railroad Line, is a former village called South Silver Lake or Little Chicago. At the turn of the century it boasted three grain elevators, a saloon, two general stores, a railroad depot, a lumber yard and a livestock shipping area. Trains would stop at 7:30 AM and return from Minneapolis at 7:30 PM. Supplies would come to South Silver Lake and were hauled to Silver Lake. Little by little Silver Lake grew larger and today in 1933, South Silver Lake is practically faded away. Just this year on July 22, the Great Northern no longer carries for passengers.

Four miles south of South Silver Lake is the former community of Koniska. Many Bohemians settled here along the banks of the Crow River. In 1856 a town was planned with mapped streets. An earthen dam with a grist mill and saw mill was built in 1858. It was planned to be a thriving town. The railroads by-passed the town and now only the creamery and cemetery remain.

The Bohemian Hall is located 4 miles West of Silver Lake. It is the home of the ZCJB lodge. Their main objective is selling life insurance, mainly started out to help widows and children in case something happens to the husband. They are keeping the Czech Heritage alive by teaching and reading Czech to the young people and keeping people informed about the old country of Czechoslovakia. Many functions like the Czech Choir and Dramatic Club, plays, picnics and dances are held there. They celebrated their 50th anniversary a few years ago. This is a busy place. Just last year The ZCJB Lumir Lodge #34 sponsored a 5-act Bohemian drama entitled “Trestanci na Spilbecka”. Jerry’s Bohemian Dance Band played for the Easter dance. The Bohemian Reading and Educational Society sponsored the Thanksgiving

dance with music by O'Henry's Concertina Dance Band. The Bohemian hall contains a reading room, a library of Czech books, a kitchen and a bar.



View of Komensky, McLeod County, Minnesota

The Komensky Store, owned by Frank Totusek, is located one mile north of the Bohemian Hall on the Luce Line Railroad. It is a general store selling groceries, kerosene, gas, dry goods, coffee beans, and tobacco products. The train picks up car loads of sugar beets during the fall.

Located one mile north of the Komensky store was the former John Hus Affiliate Church. It was called "Spolek Cesko Nedelni Skola" or Czech Sunday School Society. After 30 years of use it was closed down in 1930 and parishioners joined the Presbyterian Church in Silver Lake. Henry's Corner or "Devils Island" is located about four miles northwest of Silver Lake. It sells grocery goods and meats, but mostly is a 3.2 tavern where hot, thirsty farmers come to cool off. Sometimes they stay too long and forget to come home for chores. Their wives have termed it "Devils Island".

Silver Lake is a friendly, thriving, lively community with everyone busy, new buildings and additions going up. The streets and sidewalks are full with people shopping and attending the various activities. What a great town! I can see many good things happening in Silver Lake in the near future. I wonder how large it will grow over the next 75 years and what it will look like by 2011?"

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. See this article online at: www.kadlecovi.com Děkuji! Tony Kadlec