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Article Summary: This special issue surveys important topics in Czech-American history and indicates how they are interpreted by several academic disciplines. It includes revised versions of seven papers presented at the September 1992 Symposium on Czech Immigration at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

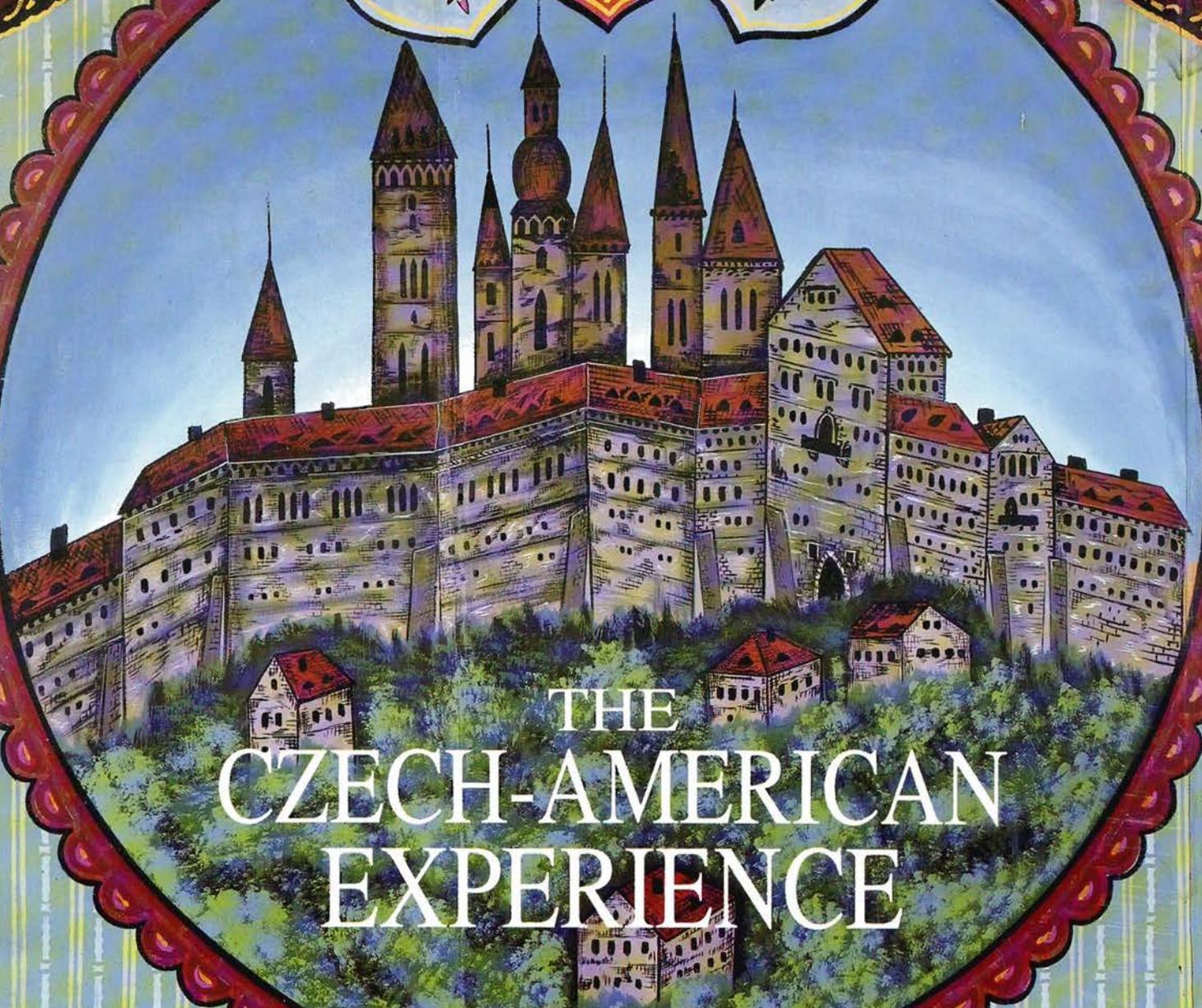
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THE
CZECH-AMERICAN
EXPERIENCE

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ON THE COVERS:

The painting on the front cover is a detail from the proscenium curtain in the National Hall built by ZČBJ lodge Slavín 112 near Ord, Nebraska. It shows the Hradčany or Prague Castle in the capital of the Czech Republic, as seen from the Málá Strana or Lesser Town below. The curtain is one of many in Czech theatres throughout Nebraska that depict symbolic scenes important in Czech history and culture. (P. Michael Whye, NSHS C998.1-428)

The recruiting poster on the back cover encouraged Czech-Americans to serve in the armed forces of their ancestral homeland during World War I to help free it from Austro-Hungarian rule. Designed by Vojta Preissig of the Wentworth Institute in Boston, the poster carries an imprint of the Czechoslovak Recruiting Office in Omaha at the bottom (not visible). (Courtesy University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Archives & Special Collections; NSHS C998.1-417)

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Nebraska History quarterly publishes well researched articles, edited documents, and other annotated primary materials relating to the history of Nebraska and the Great Plains. Submissions may focus on political, economic, social, and ethnic themes, as well as on institutional and architectural history and biography. Manuscripts should reflect research in primary sources. Family histories or personal reminiscences, unless of exceptional historical value or statewide interest, are rarely published. More detailed recommendations will be sent upon request.

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FOREWORD

The rich history of Nebraska owes much to the many immigrants who have made the state their home. Among the most numerous were the Czechs, who in the nineteenth century left the heart of one continent to begin life anew in the heart of another. Lured by land and freedom, Czechs brought a distinct culture to the Great Plains, where they settled by the thousands. Pride in their Old World heritage was equalled only by devotion to their new country. Today this legacy enriches us all in the form of Czech festivals, foodways, museums, library and archival collections, and historic buildings.

In celebration of the Czech contribution to Nebraska life, the Nebraska State Historical Society is proud to present a new exhibit at the Museum of Nebraska History entitled "The Heart of Two Continents: Czechs and Nebraska." Accompanying the exhibit is this special double issue of *Nebraska History*, "The Czech-American Experience." The issue offers new perspectives on immigration, and on Czech life in Nebraska and the United States. Many of the illustrations are drawn from the exhibit, and several illuminate themes in more than one article. They can be enjoyed by referring to the figure numbers in the text, or they can be viewed throughout the issue as a kind of catalogue for the exhibit.

Special thanks are due Bruce M. Garver, professor of history at the University of Nebraska at Omaha and guest editor of "The Czech-American Experience," whose expertise was crucial in assembling this issue. The Society is also grateful to the authors, whose thorough scholarship and thoughtful insights have helped illuminate "The Czech-American Experience."

Lawrence J. Sommer
Director
Nebraska State Historical Society

INTRODUCTION

by Bruce M. Garver

In conjunction with its mounting of a special new exhibit, "The Heart of Two Continents: Czechs and Nebraska," the Nebraska State Historical Society authorized the publication of this extraordinarily large issue of *Nebraska History* in order to survey important topics in Czech-American history and indicate how they may be interpreted somewhat differently by several academic disciplines. Twelve articles testify to the richness and diversity of the Czech-American experience past and present and to the difficulties one encounters in trying to distinguish what is typical from what is not in that experience. These articles and the new exhibit at the Museum of Nebraska History aim to facilitate popular understanding of the Czech-American experience and, incidentally, to dispel the notion that Nebraska Czech culture consists entirely of kolaches (*koláče*), beer, and polka music.¹

Czechs came to the United States for economic, political, and personal reasons and voluntarily embraced the values and institutions of their adopted country without losing interest in the welfare of their relatives and friends in the Czech lands of Bohemia and Moravia.² The Czech-American experience in Nebraska closely resembles and has always been conditioned by the larger Czech-American experience in the United States. For a century, Nebraska has ranked fourth or fifth among American states in the number of its citizens of Czech ancestry and first in the percentage of all citizens of Czech descent.³ Up to 1920 the Czech-American community in Nebraska was distinguished primarily by the large majority of its members who lived on

farms or in small towns and by a slightly larger number of freethinkers than Catholics. In the first instance, Nebraska did not differ much from Texas, Iowa, Minnesota, and the Dakotas; in the second, Nebraska resembled Illinois, Iowa, and New York. Since 1920 the inexorable advance of acculturation and urbanization has rendered these and other late nineteenth-century distinctions much less important. But visitors to Nebraska are still struck by its ethnic diversity and the strong sense of ethnicity to be found in many small towns founded by continental European immigrants and still inhabited by their descendants. Representative of those communities with a lively sense of their Czech heritage are Abie, Brainard, Bruno, Clarkson, Dwight, Lodgepole, Milligan, Prague, Verdigre and Wilber.⁴

Seven of the twelve articles appearing in this issue of *Nebraska History* are revisions of papers presented at the September 1992 Symposium on Czech Immigration sponsored by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) and organized by Joseph Svoboda and Bruce Garver. One is a revision of an article first published in 1976, and four were prepared especially for this issue.⁵ The twelve articles are arranged chronologically and within that framework move from the general to the particular. The first three (by Svoboda, Opatrný, and Ference) treat broad historical topics, beginning with the mid-nineteenth century. The next five (by Konecny, Šolle, Garver, Murphy, and Machann) address more specific subjects, only two of which exclusively discuss the period before 1914. Three of the last four (by Pichlík, Dubovický,

and Šašková-Pierce) conclude by examining twentieth century developments. The last (by Luebke) is historiographical and suggests subjects for future scholarly research and publication.

Various disciplinary approaches are presented. Eight of the twelve articles are primarily works of history. Machann's is a study in literary criticism and cultural ethnicity. Murphy makes a contribution to the new and growing scholarly field of detailed studies of material culture. Dubovický employs ethnological and anthropological methods; and Šašková-Pierce uses those of historical and comparative linguistics.

Joseph Svoboda, creator of the Czech Heritage Collection of the UNL Archives and until July 1993 the archivist of UNL, writes about the "love of liberty" that persuaded so many Czech immigrants to come to the United States and that conditioned their establishment of benevolent and fraternal institutions and their participation in American politics. Svoboda examines the historical roots of this "love of liberty" and cites many Nebraska Czech examples in discussing its consequences for the development of Czech-American society. He concludes by assessing the ongoing acculturation of Czech-Americans and what this may mean for the future.

Josef Opatrný, a specialist in U.S. and Latin American history at the Charles University and head of the Ibero-American Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences, addresses some "Problems in the History of Czech Immigration to America" from 1865 to 1914. One problem is how to uncover

and interpret the abundant information to be found in official Habsburg government documents and other primary manuscript or printed sources. Another is how to distinguish between and reconcile political, economic, and personal motives for emigration. Opatrný further delineates many of the social and ideological differences among nineteenth-century Czech immigrants and indicates how these differences conditioned the development of a Czech-American community. He is most original and explicit in discussing the different responses of Czech-Americans toward the Cuban insurrection and the subsequent Spanish-American War.

"Slovak Immigration to the United States in light of American, Czech, and Slovak History" is the ambitious topic chosen by Gregory Ferenc of Salisbury State University. He concentrates on the four decades before 1914 when one in every five Slovaks emigrated to the United States. In doing so, he emphasizes differences and similarities between the motives, experiences, and achievements of Slovak and Czech immigrants, with a view to advancing scholarly and popular understanding of both immigrant groups. Among the distinctive qualities of the industrious and nationally conscious Slovak immigrants were their poverty and their having recently experienced severe national and political repression by the Hungarian authorities. Three other central themes are the religious life of Slovak immigrants, their understanding of themselves as an overseas branch of the Slovak nation, and their sense of responsibility for the welfare of fellow Slovaks in northern Hungary.

Lawrence Konecny and Clinton Machann have teamed up to produce a thorough study of the Bremen to Galveston route as a conduit for Czech and German immigrants into Texas during the years 1880-86. Their study is in some ways a model for what can

be done for other routes and ports used by American immigrants, granted that Galveston is well suited for such examination given its modest size and the relatively short time it served immigrants as a port of entry. This study reaffirms the many close connections between Czech and German immigration from points of departure at Hamburg and Bremen to places of settlement in the United States. It also clearly illustrates the very large part played by American railroad systems and by trans-Atlantic steamship lines in encouraging immigration as well as in transporting immigrants. Finally, it helps explain the timing as well as describing the means of mass German and Czech immigration into Texas and the southern Great Plains.

Zdeněk Šolle, director of the Archives of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences during 1990 and 1991, surveys "Czech Political Refugees in the United States During the Nineteenth Century." This article is the fruit of his four-and-one-half decades of scholarly research and publication devoted to understanding the development of the Czech Social Democratic movement at home and abroad and the extraordinary career of Vojta Náprstek in public service and journalism on both sides of the Atlantic.⁶ Many Czech socialists fled to America to escape Habsburg persecution and became simultaneously active in the American labor movement, in international socialism, and in the politics of Social Democracy in the Czech lands of Bohemia and Moravia. An appreciation of Náprstek is essential to any understanding of the nineteenth-century Czech immigrant experience and the advent of American political and cultural influence in the Czech lands. This advocate of democracy and women's rights was the father of Czech-American journalism during the 1850s and thereafter for three decades the unofficial American consul and generous host of

visiting Czech-Americans in Prague.

Bruce Garver addresses the history of Czech-American Protestants, a small, little known, and denominationally diverse "minority within a minority." He identifies five distinct types of Czech-American Protestantism and delineates their different relationships to mainline American Protestant denominations. For the period of mass immigration, he devotes some attention to conflict and cooperation within Czech-American communities among the many freethinkers, the almost equally numerous Catholics, and the very tiny Protestant minority. He also examines some ways in which the Czech-American Protestant experience differed in Europe and America from that of other immigrant Protestants. In discussing the pre-1914 organization and the post-1920 acculturation of Czech-American Protestants, he cites many examples from Nebraska and other Midwestern states.

David Murphy of the Nebraska State Historical Society ventures into the fascinating new field of material culture studies in meticulously describing and interpreting the remarkably distinctive theatre curtains created in Nebraska by Czech immigrants and their descendants. Murphy also relates the Czech-American promotion of Czech-language drama to contemporary developments in Anglo-American theatre and to the Old World Czech tradition—dating from the early nineteenth-century National Revival—of using popular theatre to stimulate national consciousness and advance national political and cultural objectives.

Clinton Machann of Texas A&M University summarizes and analyzes one of the best-selling Czech-language American novels written by one of the most popular turn of the century Czech-American novelists, Jan Mucek, who wrote under the pen name of Pavel Albeiri for audiences in Europe and North America. Machann shows how

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Bride for Fifty Dollars, written in Chicago and published in Prague in 1897, not only reveals certain problems and expectations of Czech-American society but reflects many typical interests and themes of American "ethnic literature." His discussion of the novel's content and structure indicates why it appears to have been composed primarily for a Czech audience in the Czech lands. Machann also assesses the extent to which a careful reading of *Bride for Fifty Dollars* facilitates our understanding of the aspirations and acculturation of Czech immigrants.

Karel Pichlík discusses one of the central and most controversial experiences in the history of Czechs and Slovaks and of Czech-Americans and Slovak-Americans—their successful struggle for an independent Czechoslovak state during the First World War. He clearly delineates how they overcame many differences of opinion in mobilizing the popular support and achieving the unity necessary to win Allied support for Czechoslovak independence. He also indicates how later conflicts between Czechs and Slovaks grew out of compromises or misunderstandings dating from this wartime cooperation of necessity. His article is based in part upon his own extensive scholarly research and publication, including what has been for twenty-five years the best Czech-language book on the subject, *Zahraniční odboj bez legend* (The Resistance Movement Abroad without any Legends). Karel Pichlík has also helped make modern Czech and Slovak history. For having been an honest and outspoken historian during and after the "Prague Spring," he was in 1969 expelled by "normalizers" from all academic employment. After eight years of persecution, he became one of the original signers and steadfast members of Charter 77. Since the "velvet revolution" of 1989, he has been director of the Memorial of National Liberation, Institute for the

History of the Czech (through 1992 Czechoslovak) Army.

In "Czech-Americans: An Ethnic Dilemma," Ivan Dubovický, professor of ethnology at the Charles University in Prague, examines four broad themes: the gradual and partial "proletarianization" of Czech emigrants during the third quarter of the nineteenth century, the origins and consequences of the ideological disputes that further divided the Czech immigrant community, the changing nature and rate of Czech-American acculturation, and the continuing involvement of some Czech-Americans in the politics of their ancestral homeland. Subtopics based on archival research include the class structure and material assets of emigrants from Tábor, Bohemia, during the 1850s and 1860s; the development of Czech-American Catholicism before and during World War I; factionalism among Czech-American socialists from the turn of the century through the First World War; and efforts of the Czechoslovak government to support and influence Czech-American organizations during the 1920s and 1930s. Dubovický concludes by explaining how Czech-Americans have gradually "identified themselves with American attitudes, values, and historical experience."

Míla Šašková-Pierce of UNL indicates why efforts to perpetuate use of the Czech language have been so central to the experience of Czech immigrants and their descendants in the United States. This is primarily to be explained by historical developments beginning with the Habsburgs' obliteration of Czech political independence in 1621 and by their replacement of Czech with German as the administrative language of Bohemia and Moravia in 1627. Later generations of Czechs attributed the survival of the Czech nation primarily to the maintenance of the Czech language by peasant farmers and townspeople during the seven-

teenth and eighteenth centuries. Codification and clarification of the Czech language and its reintroduction as a means of sophisticated communication in literature, science, and the arts were among the great achievements of the nineteenth-century Czech National Revival. In discussing "Czech-Language Maintenance in Nebraska," Šašková-Pierce emphasizes not only the work of individuals and ethnic organizations but that of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the only Nebraska institution of higher learning to have had a long commitment to the teaching of Czech and related courses in Czech studies.

The authors and editors of this issue of *Nebraska History* are well aware that their articles touch on only a few of the many important aspects of the Czech-American experience. Frederick Luebke's concluding essay clearly delineates many large topics in Czech-American history that still await scholarly exploration. One is a study of the detailed as opposed to the broad pattern of immigration from points of departure to places of settlement. Another is a systematic study of the primary sources of Czech immigration and their selective publication in translation. Professor Luebke further urges students of Czech immigration to apply to their research and writing the methods and concepts recently and successfully employed by historians of other immigrant groups including the English, Germans, Italians, Norwegians, and Swedes. Thanks to the demise of communism in the Czech and Slovak republics in 1989, abundant opportunities to undertake ambitious research projects are at last available in the recently reopened Czech and Slovak archives on modern history generally and on emigration in particular.⁷

Four papers at the fall 1992 UNL Symposium on Czech Immigration surveyed the vast holdings of manuscript and published materials available

in leading American and Czech archives. It is hoped that a revision and combination of these papers may soon be made available to readers of *Nebraska History*. Jakub Karfík discussed the creation and growth of the largest of all repositories of information on Czech emigration, the Náprstek Museum in Prague. Joel Wurl reviewed the materials on Czech immigration in the comprehensive Immigration Archives of the University of Minnesota. The enormous extent of valuable private papers, newspapers, and periodicals in the University of Chicago's Archive of Czechs and Slovaks Abroad was indicated by that archive's founder and curator, Zdeněk Hruban. Joseph Svoboda, the archivist of UNL, surveyed the principal manuscripts and publications in the Czech Heritage Collection of the UNL Archives. Especially the latter two archives have preserved and organized materials relating to the three struggles for Czechoslovak independence waged abroad by Czech and Slovak emigrés and by Americans of Czech and Slovak descent (1914-18, 1939-45, and 1948-89). Particularly for the third struggle (*odboj*), these archives have preserved private papers and publications available nowhere else which contain information and opinion essential to understanding not only recent Czech and Slovak immigration but most contemporary Czech and Slovak history.⁸

Three important topics in Czech-American history are addressed by articles developed from other UNL symposium papers and recently published by the *Czechoslovak and Central European Journal*. There, Claire E. Nolte explicitly examines the development of Sokol, the best-known of all Czech-American organizations, in her account of "Our Brothers Across the Ocean: The Czech Sokol in America to 1914." Nancy M. Wingfield discusses "Czechoslovak Jewish Immigration to

the United States, 1938-1945." And Bruce Garver takes a broad view of the important part played by "Americans of Czech and Slovak Ancestry in the History of Czechoslovakia."⁹ Other fascinating aspects of the Czech-American experience not explicitly covered in this issue of *Nebraska History* include the second struggle for Czechoslovak independence during World War II, the much longer third struggle against communism, and detailed studies of fraternal organizations, journalism, poetry, fine arts, and folk arts.

A large part of Czech-American history involves the development of Czech-American Catholicism, a topic whose thorough discussion would have required several additional articles. In this issue of *Nebraska History*, that topic is treated tangentially by Bruce Garver and Joseph Svoboda and more directly by Ivan Dubovický. These authors are well aware of the extent to which the principal early twentieth-century English-language works on Czech-American history have been strongly colored by Czech freethought. They also recognize that Czech Catholics played a larger part in the early nineteenth-century Czech National Revival (*Česká národní obrození*) and in Czech-American support for Czechoslovak independence than contemporary freethinkers chose to acknowledge. With the exception of Jan Habenicht's encyclopedic pioneering study and a shorter survey by Joseph Cada, no one has yet attempted to write a thorough and synthetic scholarly study of Czech Catholics in the United States.¹⁰

All articles in this issue accentuate positive features of Czech-American and Slovak-American history without glossing over problems and shortcomings. Known to many readers are three examples of controversial issues not directly addressed here and little studied elsewhere. First, the relatively high

rate of suicide among Czech-American immigrants and their descendants, especially among freethinkers, is alluded to but not explicitly explained in contemporary newspaper reports and *belles lettres*.¹¹ Second, no one has yet thoroughly examined the activities or motives of the few Czech-American apologists for Czechoslovak Communism or precisely ascertained how the Czech-American community was divided by the question of how to deal with Communist Czechoslovakia. Finally, further study should be made of the complicated relationship between Slovak-Americans and the Slovak Republic of 1939-45, considering both opponents of and apologists for that wartime ally of Nazi Germany.

The fall of communism in November 1989 and the division of Czechoslovakia in January 1993 into independent Czech and Slovak Republics have occasioned, as Karel Pichlík points out in this issue, both a critical and an emotional reevaluation of all recent Czech and Slovak history.¹² Inevitably the history of Czechs and Slovaks abroad and their participation in the making and remaking of Czechoslovakia will be an important element in all future reassessments of what it means to be a Czech or a Slovak and of what interests and aspirations Czechs and Slovaks have had or should have in common. Similarly the history of Czech and Slovak immigrants in the United States is bound to attract many more students on both sides of the Atlantic as the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic continue to develop closer economic and cultural ties to the United States.

All of this argues for the continued need on both sides of the Atlantic to maintain appropriate archives, libraries, and scholarly publications. If in the future, the Czech-American heritage is to be preserved and understood in the United States, some of those charged with this task will have to know the

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Czech language. This will in turn require at least a few American colleges and universities to continue the teaching of Czech as a second language. If Czech studies are to prosper in American colleges and universities, they must be taught by professors who read and speak Czech and who have demonstrated through scholarly or literary publication their understanding of and enthusiasm for what they teach.¹³

The recent development of close ties between the United States and the Czech Republic has already increased travel abroad and interest in genealogy and family history on the part of Czech-Americans and seems likely to stimulate among their children a greater appreciation of the European Czech heritage. But acculturation has simultaneously proceeded apace; and a generation or more has passed since most Czech-Americans last learned Czech at home, with the consequent loss of a Czech-language literary and journalistic heritage. Also, as Míla Šašková-Pierce points out, if the Czech language is to survive in the United States, it will be as a second language learned through formal instruction at a college or university. Therefore in the long run, Czech-American ethnic festivals and cultivation of folk arts, however instructive and entertaining, appear to be insufficient means with which to maintain an ethnic heritage.

As the Czech Republic and the United States continue to reestablish close economic, cultural, and political ties, the already large dissimilarity between Czech and Czech-American popular cultures is likely to increase, particularly as the former becomes ever more international in style and content.¹⁴ Already one may contrast a fossilized, but nonetheless attractive, Czech-American popular culture—the remnant of the folk culture of nineteenth-century Czech immigrants—with the vibrant and modern European

Czech literary and material culture—one in part cultivated by Czech exiles of 1968, some of whom have returned to their homeland.¹⁵

In interpreting the Czech-American experience, many areas of agreement have emerged among the authors of articles in this issue of *Nebraska History*. One is an appreciation for the enormous diversity of opinions expressed and occupations chosen by Czech-Americans past and present. A second is an understanding of the origins and outcome of many of the ideological disputes that have divided the Czech-American community. A third is recognition of the continued interest shown by Czech-Americans in the welfare of their friends and relatives in the Czech lands, an interest most evident during the three struggles for Czechoslovak independence (1914-18, 1939-45, and 1948-89). Fourth is an understanding that acculturation has varied in speed and intensity, has been voluntarily chosen, and is in any case neither objectionable nor to be halted. Finally, all authors applaud the reopening after 1989 of direct personal, commercial, cultural, and political contacts between Americans and Czechs, contacts that should inaugurate a new and perhaps happier chapter in the history of relations between Czechs and Americans and in the process of Czech-American acculturation.

Notes

¹ Nebraska, of course, is noted for its many fine Czech-American orchestras (or polka bands). In English, kolaches are always spoken of in the plural, perhaps because they are so tasty. Identification of Czechs with beer drinking sometimes crosses the fine line between sociological generalization and ethnic stereotyping or prejudice, as in references to predominantly Czech-American "Saline County" as "Saloon County."

² The Czech (or Bohemian) crownlands of Bohemia, Moravia, and (after 1740) Austrian Silesia were within the Habsburg Monarchy from 1526 to 1918 and were the European homeland of the Czech people. From the 1700s until 1945, Czechs comprised approxi-

mately 2/3 of the population of Bohemia, 3/4 in Moravia, and about 1/3 in Austrian Silesia. In this issue of *Nebraska History*, "the Czech lands" is synonymous with the three crownlands above or with "the Old Country." Crownlands are also mentioned individually. On the history of the Czech lands during the period of mass emigration to the United States, see Bruce M. Garver, *The Young Czech Party, 1874-1901, and the Emergence of a Multi-Party System* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978).

³ Since the 1860s Illinois has been in first place followed distantly by Ohio, New York, Nebraska, and Texas, usually in that order. No other state comes close to Nebraska in the percentage of its citizens of Czech origin.

⁴ On Czechs in Nebraska, see Bruce Garver, "Czechs in Nebraska as reflected in their History, Arts and Letters," a published lecture and bibliography of eleven pages in the series of ten titled *The Frontier Heritage in Nebraska Arts and Letters* (Lincoln: Nebraska Literary Heritage Assn. and Lincoln City Library Foundation, 1985). Nebraska is the only state in which I have lived where people have asked "What is your nationality?" and been surprised when I responded "American" and thereby appeared not to understand what they wanted to know. I soon discovered that such Nebraskans use the word "nationality" in the sense of "ethnic origin."

⁵ Joseph Svoboda's 1976 article titled "Czechs: A Love of Liberty," has long been out of print and in much demand. Gregory Ference, Bruce Garver, Frederick Luebke, and David Murphy prepared new articles for this issue. The Conference on Czech Immigration was sponsored by the UNL Department of History and was funded by the Frank Belousek Fund of the University of Nebraska Foundation.

⁶ Dr. Zdeněk Šolle belongs to the generation of Czechoslovak scholars who began research and publication in the early 1950s. For his honest appraisal of such controversial subjects as Czech Social Democracy and the politics of T. G. Masaryk, he was, after the advent of "normalization" in 1969, dismissed from the Historical Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences and obliged to earn his living as an archivist. After the "velvet revolution" of 1989, he served as the head archivist of the Academy of Sciences until his retirement early in 1992.

⁷ I encountered typical difficulties in doing research in Czechoslovak archives for ten months in 1967, one month in 1971, and five months in 1973. All materials on history after 1914 and most materials on emigration to the United States were for "technical"

reasons inaccessible. I very well remember a conversation in February 1973 with the late Václav Král, who informed me that my projected study of the Czechoslovak Social Democratic party from 1878 to 1914 would not be possible because the pertinent archive was "closed for technical reasons (*podle technických důvodů*).” I remember having been rather miffed and having responded: "Please, *pane doktore*, don't you mean 'for political reasons (*podle politických důvodů*)?'" At that he became angry and replied: "But you must understand, Professor Garver, that some of our historians misused those archives." I ran into similar difficulties at that time when I tried to gain access to the Náprstek Museum.

⁸ Jakub Karfík (director of the Library of the Náprstek Museum), "The Development of the Náprstek Museum as a Repository for Materials on the History of Czech Emigration"; Joel Wurl, "Documenting the History of Czech and Slovak Immigration from Materials in the Immigration Archives of the University of Minnesota"; Zdeněk Hruban (Professor Emeritus of Pathology, U. of Chicago Medical School), "Documenting the History of Czech and Slovak Immigration in the Collections of the Archive of Czechs and Slovaks Abroad"; and Joseph Svoboda, "Documenting the History of Czech Immigration in the Czech Heritage Collection of the Archives of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln." In addition to these scholars, those who presented papers included Professors Claire Nolte, Nancy Wingfield, and Bruce Garver, whose contributions are cited in note 9, and all of the authors of articles in this issue of *Nebraska History* except Professors Ference and Luebke, who served as commentators. Also helping to make the conference a success were other commentators and session chairpersons: Prof. Jana Bischofová of the Agriculture University in Prague; Prof. C. Winston Chrislock of the College of St. Thomas; Prof. Robert Fiala of Concordia College; Prof. William Gleason of Doane College; Prof. Dennis Mihelich of Creighton University; Professors Walter Bacon, Oliver Pollak, Roger Sharpe, and Andris Skreija of UNO; and Professors Lloyd Ambrosius, David Forsythe, Edward Homze, James McClelland, and Dean Rugg of UNL. Senator and Mrs. Roman Hruska were among the many observers who attended every session.

⁹ *Czechoslovak and Central European Journal* 11 (Winter 1993): 1-14 (Garver); 15-37 (Nolte); and 38-48 (Wingfield). Information on the sale of back issues or subscriptions may be obtained from the editor, Dr. Paul I. Trensky, 2 Fordham Hill Oval, Apt. 9G, New York, NY 10468.

¹⁰ Jan Habenicht, *Dějiny Čechů amerických* (A History of American Czechs) (St. Louis: Hlas, 1910); Joseph Cada, *Czech-American Catholics, 1850-1920* (Lisle, Ill.: Benedictine Abbey Press, 1964).

¹¹ An absence of religious faith and an exaggerated sense of individualism among free-thinkers were the causes of Czech suicide most often identified by Czech-American Catholics and Protestants. But these at best only partially explain what must have been complex motives for behavior with unhappy and often tragic consequences. The author is working on a study of suicide among Czech-Americans and would be very pleased to receive any information on specific cases. If confidentiality is requested, it will be respected.

¹² On the current debate over the meaning of modern Czech history, see Miloš Hájek, et al., *Křížovatky 20. století: Světlo na bílá místa v nejnovějších dějinách* (Crossroads of the 20th Century: Shedding Light on the Blank Areas in Our Most Recent History) (Prague: Naše vojsko, 1990); Jan Křen, *Bílá místa v našich dějinách* (Blank Areas in Our History) (Prague: Knihovna Lidových novin, 1990); Josef Kroutvor, *Potíže s dějinami: eseje* (Difficulties with History: Essays); Jan Obrman, "Havel Challenges Czech Historical Taboos," *RFE/RL Research Report*, 2:24 (June 11, 1993): 44-51; Jan Patocka, *Co Jsou Češi?* (What are the Czechs?) (Prague: Panorama, 1992); Petr Pithart, *Dějiny a politika* (History and Politics) (Prague: Prostor, 1990); and Tomáš Staněk, *Odsun Němců z Československa, 1945-47* (The Expulsion of the Germans from Czechoslovakia, 1945-47) (Prague: Academia & Naše vojsko, 1991).

¹³ In the future in the United States, Czech-language instruction and Czech cultural and political studies seem most likely to thrive in large, prestigious, and well-endowed private and state universities with comprehensive Slavic studies programs and international reputations for scholarly excellence and public service.

¹⁴ I have developed this theme at greater length in Garver, "Americans of Czech and Slovak Ancestry," 8-10, 13-14.

¹⁵ This dissimilarity was well illustrated in Nebraska in August 1992 when the talented Czech musicians, composer and pianist Zdeněk Merta and vocalist Zora Jandová, presented three concerts of contemporary, cabaret, and traditional Czech music. A very few Nebraska Czechs claimed that this modern music composed by Czechs and sung by Czechs in Czech was "not Czech music"

on the grounds that it did not sound at all like the tunes passed down through the generations from immigrant forebears. In August 1992 I heard a few such comments when appearing on a KFAB talk show with Zora Jandová and both before and after the Zdeněk and Zora Concert at Sokol Omaha. With these few exceptions, all comments from ticket holders and reviewers were very laudatory. Thanks to James Keene of the Keene Foundation, Zdeněk Merta and Zora Jandová will again perform in Omaha and Lincoln in 1994.