



*Nebraska History* posts materials online for your personal use. Please remember that the contents of *Nebraska History* are copyrighted by the Nebraska State Historical Society (except for materials credited to other institutions). The NSHS retains its copyrights even to materials it posts on the web.

For permission to re-use materials or for photo ordering information, please see:

<http://www.nebraskahistory.org/magazine/permission.htm>

Nebraska State Historical Society members receive four issues of *Nebraska History* and four issues of *Nebraska History News* annually. For membership information, see:

<http://nebraskahistory.org/admin/members/index.htm>

## Article Title: Czech-Language Maintenance in Nebraska

Full Citation: Míla Šašková-Pierce, "Czech-Language Maintenance in Nebraska," *Nebraska History* 74 (1993): 209-217

URL of article: <http://www.nebraskahistory.org/publish/publicat/history/full-text/NH1993CALanguage.pdf>

Date: 3/19/2015

Article Summary: The author explains why efforts to perpetuate use of the Czech language have been central to the experience of Czech immigrants and their descendants. The Habsburgs had replaced Czech with German in 1627. The nineteenth-century Czech National Revival reintroduced Czech as a means of sophisticated communication.

### Cataloging Information:

Names: Vladimír Kučera, Joseph Svoboda

Keywords: Thirty Years War, Counter-Reformation, National Revival (*Národní obrození*), dryland farming, Komenský Club, *Komenský*, Sokol, Nebraska Czechs Incorporated, Western Fraternal Association (ZČBJ), University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Photographs / Images: fig 85: University of Nebraska chapter of the Komenský Club, 1911; fig 86: Jan Amos Komenský portrayed on the Kollár Hall proscenium curtain, DuBois; fig 87: young women members of Sokolice South Omaha in the 1890s; fig 88: Dr Vladimír Kučera at a festival in Wilber; fig 89: Joseph G Svoboda; fig 90: artwork by August Petryl for a 1916 cover of the *Hospodář* agricultural journal; fig 91: Dwight Czech dancers performing in 1991; fig 92: immigrants' trunk owned by Ignác and Marie Šebesta; fig 93: Irma and Lumir Ourecky of Wilber, shown in costume

# CZECH-LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE IN NEBRASKA

By Míla Šašková-Pierce<sup>1</sup>

The first Czech emigration started during the Thirty Years War (1618-48) after the Catholic Habsburgs defeated the army of the predominantly Protestant Czech Estates in 1620 at the battle of the White Mountain (fig. 2). The Habsburgs' execution of the rebellion's leaders and their confiscation of the property of Protestant nobles prompted a Protestant exodus from the Czech lands to the Netherlands, England, Scandinavia, several Protestant German states, and later to the English colonies in North America.

The victorious Catholic Counter-Reformation, supported by the Habsburgs, largely identified the Czech language with what Catholics considered to be a heretical religious literature written in Czech by Hussites and Protestants (fig. 34). By suppressing Czech as a language of political administration and Protestant religious expression during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries' "period of darkness" (*Doba temna*), the Habsburgs laid the foundation for the Czechs' subsequent persecution complex and protective relationship toward their language. Throughout this "darkness" and the subsequent period of National Revival (*Národní obrození*) (1780-1848), Czechs identified preservation of their national consciousness with maintenance of the Czech language.

Nebraska's first Czechs began to arrive in the 1860s, with the majority arriving during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Czechs came to Nebraska because there was cheap land available, which allowed them to im-

prove their economic status and support families. The first Nebraska Czech villages and towns were settled by people who learned of the settlements and available land through friends and relatives or from newspaper advertisements or American railway land agents (figs. 24, 92).<sup>2</sup>

Czech immigrants were highly literate, in the upper ninetieth percentile.<sup>3</sup> Very quickly they turned to self help and founded Czech-language periodicals through which they disseminated information about the new country and its many opportunities, including—very necessary for settlement in Nebraska—dryland farming, with which Czechs were not familiar (fig. 90).<sup>4</sup> As soon as Czech farmers experienced a rising level of economic well-being and believed that their immediate dream of economic prosperity was in sight, they turned their eyes to the cultural realm.

Czechs brought to the United States political opinions as well as cultural interests from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, in which an authoritarian imperial government proved increasingly unable to maintain its great power status or to moderate domestic nationality and class conflicts. American Czechs, like the Czechs in Austria-Hungary, perceived the maintenance of the Czech language to be a guarantee that the Czech nation would survive as a distinct entity. Knowledge of Czech language and culture became the best indicator of membership in a national Czech community. A person was deemed to belong to the Czech nation because of the following criteria: she or he was born in the Czech lands to parents of Czech origin who spoke Czech and who could read and write in

Czech. But, in the multi-national Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, identification of nationality according to territory of residence was not always possible because many Czechs resided outside of the Czech crownlands; and conversely, in the same lands lived other nationalities, notably a German minority in northern Bohemia and Moravia. Consequently, use of the Czech language became for all Czechs the strongest symbol of their national identity.<sup>5</sup>

Even in the Czech lands, where Czechs constituted more than two-thirds of the population, the Czech language had an inferior position to German in governmental administration. Higher educational opportunities were mostly in German as well. Under these conditions of cultural inequality, Czech intellectuals perceived the cultivation of the Czech language through educational, fraternal, and civic organizations to be a fundamental condition for the survival of their nation.<sup>6</sup>

Czech immigrants adapted to their new American situation some of the strategies they had used in their struggle for national autonomy against the politically dominant German and Hungarian nationalities in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The settlers established many Czech-language organizations and periodicals. It is estimated that in 1900 about 150,000 Czechs subscribed to one Czech newspaper or another. According to the 1900 census, there were 156,891 Czechs in the United States.<sup>7</sup> However, this census much underestimated the number of Czechs because it classified many of them as Austrians in accordance with a policy of identifying immigrants by country of origin.<sup>8</sup> Yet

*Dr. Míla Šašková-Pierce is assistant professor of modern languages and literature at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.*



Fig.85. University of Nebraska chapter of the Komenský Club, 1911; Club co-founder Šárka Hrbková is front row, second from right. (Courtesy Czech Heritage Collection, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Archives & Special Collections; NSHS C998.1-567)

even these numbers indicate that the readership of Czech periodicals must have been considerable.

Everyday use of the Czech language played several functions in the lives of the first generation of settlers in the United States. It facilitated the transmission of knowledge among Czechs about new American conditions, since few understood English well (fig. 22). Czech-American newspapers disseminated information concerning the new milieu, farming practices, health, and much other important information that newly-arrived settlers needed to become successful citizens. Of course these periodicals were also read for entertainment. The Czech language further provided Czech immigrants with a sense of cultural continuity and fostered the preservation of their Old World heritage. Knowledge of the language gave these immigrants intra-group identification and greater opportunities for mutual support.<sup>9</sup>

The Czech immigrants who settled in the Great Plains states constituted a functioning society. There were few significant social disparities among these settlers, and their sharing of the difficulties in making a new home in

America enhanced their social contacts and sense of solidarity. As a group, they were committed to carrying on a meaningful Czech life, that is, cultivating their Czech heritage and identifying with the Czech nation while working to integrate themselves successfully into the economy and politics of the United States. They consciously became producers and consumers of Czech culture and considered themselves an overseas part of a Czech cultural world centered in Bohemia and Moravia. Their need to adapt to their new American environment, while maintaining Czech culture as an enjoyable part of their lives, conditioned their development of private Czech schools and organizations as well as their interpretation of their American experiences through writing Czech-language literature and history. Their efforts to build a Czech scholarly community also took an interesting path, which will be treated elsewhere. Their publication of hundreds of Czech-language newspapers and periodicals also testifies to their desire to communicate with one another over great distances within Nebraska and across the United States.<sup>10</sup>

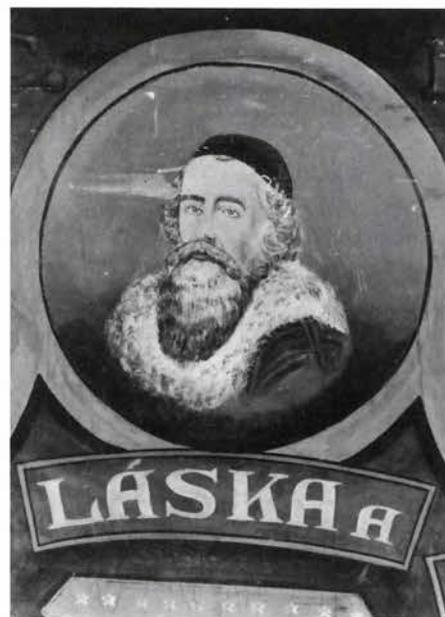


Fig.86. Jan Amos Komenský (Comenius), portayed on the Kollár Hall proscenium curtain, DuBois, Nebraska. (P. Michael Whye, NSHS C998.1-494)

Czech-Americans in Nebraska organized their social life either around churches or within numerous fraternal benevolent associations, which offered life insurance and space in their meeting halls for stage productions, language classes, and other amusements or educational activities.<sup>11</sup> There were forty-two Western Fraternal Association lodges in Nebraska.<sup>12</sup> The Sokol

gymnastic associations also built halls with stages for theatrical productions and other cultural activities perceived as necessary to the cultural health of Czech communities (fig. 7).

Education ranked high on the agenda of Czech settlers both for self-improvement and the preparation of their children for success in an English-speaking world. As a result of free and universal primary and secondary English-language education, the second Czech-American generation became bilingual, and more comfortable with English as a language of higher culture. Some members of this generation used English exclusively, although many others, unwilling to lose their uniqueness and cease to belong to Czech culture, maintained or created opportunities to improve their knowledge and use of the Czech language. At the same time, they felt that they must look to the future welfare of their children by helping them integrate into American society.

Czech-Americans addressed these educational concerns and objectives by founding in 1907 at the University of Nebraska the first Komenský Club, which was named after Jan Amos Komenský, the world-renowned seventeenth-century Czech philosopher and educator (figs. 85, 86). Before 1918 twenty-nine additional Komenský Clubs were founded in Nebraska and other states, which adopted programs similar to those of the club at the university.<sup>13</sup>

The function of the Association of Educational Komenský Clubs was

to help clubs in their educational work towards (cultural) elevation and cultivation as well as unification of American Czechs; to help cultivate the Czech language and Czech music; perfecting of knowledge of Czech history and literature; to promote higher education for Czech youth; the general improvement and upgrading of social conditions among Czech people in the moral as well as in the spiritual aspects; to inform Americans about the achievements of

Czechs; and in general to do everything which can lead to a greater honor of the Czech people.<sup>14</sup>

Articles published in *Komenský*, the periodical of this association of Komenský clubs, expressed such goals as (1) disseminate news concerning the intellectual achievements of Czech-Americans, (2) spread culture to the wider masses of Czech-Americans, including the farming communities of

history subjects in the Czech language.

These and other attempts by Czech-Americans to advertise the achievements of their ethnic community were mainly responses to those English-speaking Americans who had long looked with misgivings or open hostility and prejudice on that community's efforts to preserve its language and Old World culture.<sup>16</sup>

Other Czech organizations also



Fig.87. Young women members of Sokolice South Omaha with their instructor in the 1890s. (Courtesy Sokol South Omaha and Czechoslovak Museum; NSHS C998.1-631)

the Midwest, (3) collect money for financial support of needy Czech youngsters who exhibited the potential to study at universities or higher schools, and (4) keep the ties between the Czech lands and the Czech communities in the United States alive and intellectually fertile through intellectual and literary works produced on both continents, introduction of contemporary literature published in the Czech lands and its translation into English, and organization of public performances of arts by Czech authors.<sup>15</sup> The publication also offered American

strove to promote the unity and cultural life of Czech-Nebraskans. The teaching of the Czech language and other subjects in Czech constituted an important part of their activities. For example the Sokol gymnastic organizations offered instruction in the Czech language for children, and so did some rural schools and churches (fig. 87).<sup>17</sup>

During the twentieth century, Czech-Americans' knowledge of the Czech language decreased with each passing generation. In 1977 the University of Nebraska-Lincoln decided, for lack of funds, to offer its Czech classes only



Fig.88. Dr. Vladimír Kučera, teacher, author, and enthusiastic promoter of Czech language and culture, at a festival in Wilber, Nebraska. (NSHS K90-16)

every second year, thus spurring public protest and renewed interest in Czech-language instruction. The university in 1980 reinstated annual Czech classes, in part as a result of lobbying by Nebraska Czech organizations and their umbrella association, Nebraska Czechs Incorporated. Participation at the university in Komenský Club cultural activities also increased, thanks to more

imaginative and varied programs, to growing student enrollments in Czech, and to the attractive personalities of the Czech instructors, Věra Stromšíková and Bruce Kochis. However, during the next ten years, enrollments once again declined and the activities of the Komenský Club ceased temporarily after the departure of the two instructors. In 1990 the club was revived and

has continued to function ever since.<sup>18</sup>

It has been estimated that only about 500 Czechs came to Nebraska out of the third and fourth Czech emigrations from Czechoslovakia—following, respectively, the Communist coup of 1948 and the Soviet invasion of 1968. Several among these emigrants, however, have played a catalytic role in the maintenance of Czech language and culture in Nebraska, primarily because teachers of Czech were recruited from among them. Dr. Vladimír Kučera, who came after 1948, and Věra Stromšíková, who came in 1977, represent two examples of how much individuals can accomplish. Dr. Kučera taught the Czech language through the extension division of the University of Nebraska, edited and published a series of booklets on Nebraska Czech life, and helped to organize Czech festivals (fig. 88). Another emigrant from 1948 is Joseph Svoboda, former archivist of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, who in 1968 founded the Czech Heritage Collection of the university archives. This collection, which contains extensive publications and manuscripts on the culture and history of Czechs in North America, is one of the five largest of its kind in the United States and Canada (fig. 89).<sup>19</sup>

In 1992 residents of Czech communities in Nebraska exhibited various levels of knowledge of Czech. In Hastings, for example, there are at least two native speakers of Czech, both born in Czechoslovakia and married to Czech-American soldiers who had helped liberate Czechoslovakia in 1945. They know of no one in town with whom they can converse freely in Czech. As a rule, they use English for communication. In Clarkson, Seward, and Wilber, one can still hear Czech spoken daily in local inns and stores (sometimes with discomfort) by people in their sixties or older. In all communities identified as Czech settlements, the youngest generation (three to

twenty-five years of age) has no functional knowledge of Czech.

In 1975 eight of forty-two Western Fraternal Life Association (ZČBJ) lodges conducted meetings in Czech.<sup>20</sup> In 1993 not one of this organization's lodges in Nebraska still conducts meetings or keeps minutes in Czech.<sup>21</sup> Association members who are proficient in Czech believe that the continued use of the language would constitute a barrier for younger generations and thus accelerate a decline in membership.

The first generation of Czech immigrants cultivated the Czech language with a certain pride. This seems to be a specific trait of Czech and Slovak immigrants—speakers of Czech or Slovak are proud of their ability to use their mother tongue and to pass their knowledge of it on to their children.<sup>22</sup>

The second (first American-born) generation, especially in Nebraska, was very proficient in Czech. These Czech-Americans strove consciously to maintain the purity of their language. This generation organized Czech classes in elementary and high schools and supported the Czech-language classes taught by people such as the poet Jeffrey Hrbek and the social historian Šárka Hrbková at the University of Nebraska. Still-living members of this generation are often involved in one or more Czech organizations and in the promotion of Czech festivals and other ethnic activities (fig. 91).

Members of the third generation of Nebraska Czechs were born during or immediately after the 1920s, and their relationship to the ancestral language was colored by having experienced American hostility toward the “new immigration” and most foreign influences that characterized the period from World War I through the 1930s. Some members of this generation do not know any Czech beyond a few familiar expressions, and they use it infrequently. Among the few Czechs

of this generation who are fluent speakers, most can neither read nor write the language.

The fourth and fifth generations of American Czechs, with minor exceptions, do not know any Czech. They have grown up in front of English-language television, often for more than forty hours a week. They choose



Fig.89. Joseph G. Svoboda, University of Nebraska-Lincoln archivist, who established the extensive Czech Heritage Collection there. (Courtesy Joseph G. Svoboda)

not to avail themselves of opportunities to become even passive listeners to Czech, preferring the company of English-speaking friends or of television to that of Czech-speaking older friends or relatives at family gatherings.

Czech-language instruction is no longer available in any Nebraska public elementary or secondary school, even those in the state's many predominantly Czech towns like Abie, Clarkson, Dwight, Milligan, Prague, and Verdigré, where citizens are proud of their

Czech ancestry. In Wilber, “the Czech capital of Nebraska,” there have been no classes in Czech since Mrs. Irma Ourecky retired more than a decade ago (fig. 93).<sup>23</sup>

Four Nebraska post-secondary educational institutions have recently taught the Czech language to adults: the University of Nebraska at Omaha, Metro Technical Community College in Omaha, Southeast Community College in Lincoln, and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. But only UNL has ever offered Czech regularly as an integral part of the undergraduate curriculum. The other three institutions have employed part-time instructors, either through continuing education programs or with grants from federal agencies; consequently at none of them can students be sure from year to year whether or not Czech will be offered.<sup>24</sup>

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln has provided Czech-language instruction continuously since 1907, with the exception of the years 1919-23. However, the university board of regents, upon the recommendation of the chancellor, decided in June 1993 to eliminate funding for the Czech-language program and offer Czech in the future only as an extension course.

When the program was terminated, the university had the largest Czech-language enrollment of any college or university in the United States. Typically, fifteen students enrolled in the first semester of Czech and ten in the second semester; usually the third semester had five to eight students. Each fifth-semester course typically had four or five students who planned to study or travel in the Czech Republic. These statistics fairly accurately reflect the average enrollment in Czech-language courses at the university over the past twenty years. All other college and university Czech programs in the United States outside of Nebraska typically have five to fifteen students in their undergraduate

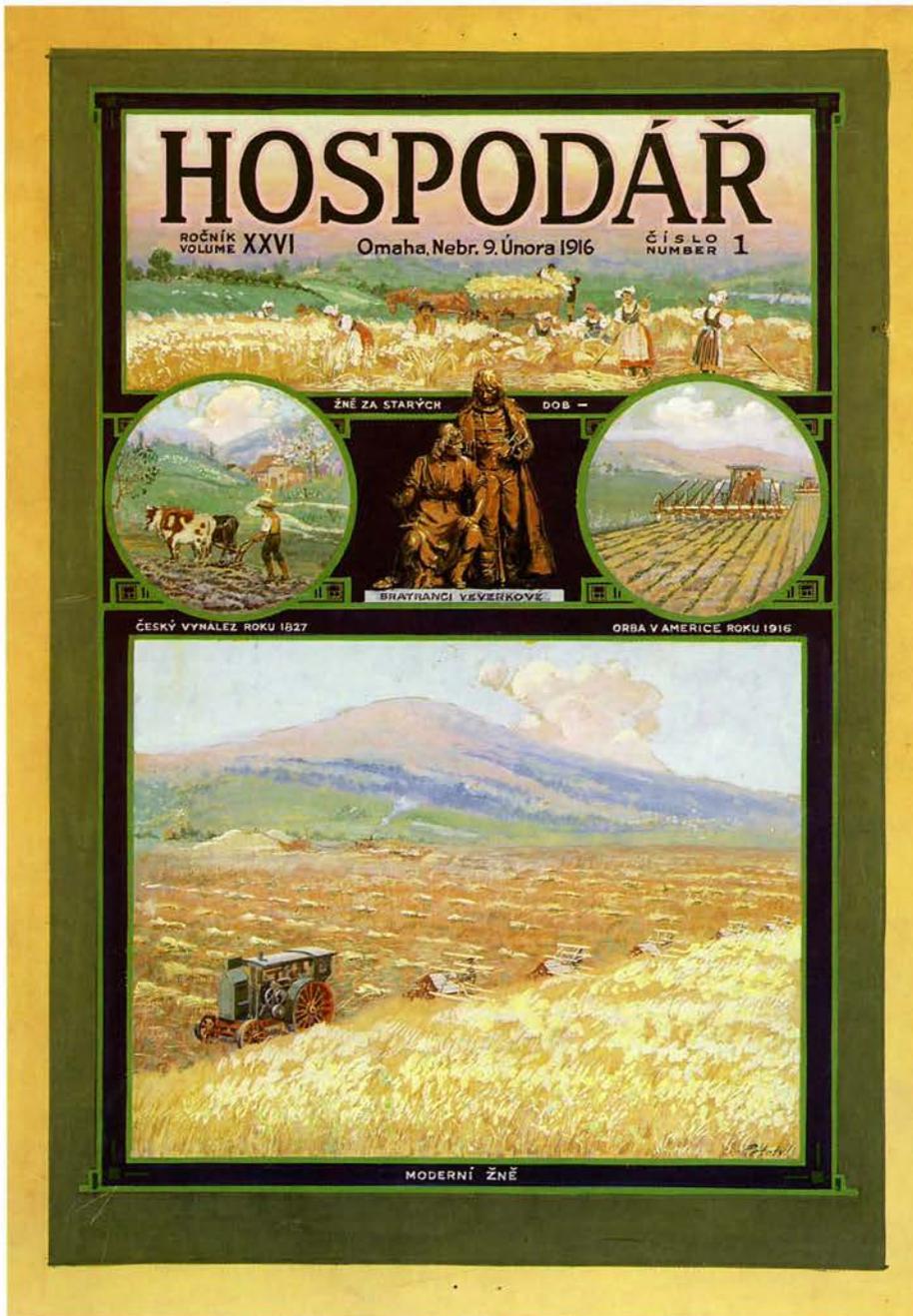


Fig.90. One reason for peasant emigration was social and economic opportunity. The fruits of this opportunity are shown in the artwork by August Petryl for a cover of the *Hospodář* agricultural journal. The journal provided valuable advice to immigrant farmers. (NSHS Museum 638P-11, C998.1-608)

and graduate programs combined.

Czech-language classes offered privately under the sponsorship of Nebraska Czech organizations like Sokol South Omaha or the Omaha Czech Cultural Club nicely complement but are not intended as substitutes for the more intensive and demanding courses taught for college or university credit. This private instruction caters well to beginning students and those who wish to brush up on Czech learned at home or abroad. In any given year, all private classes together enroll approximately thirty-five students in Omaha alone. Those few beginners who decided to learn Czech thoroughly often later did so at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln or another institution of higher learning.

A questionnaire distributed by the author in 1991-93 to thirty-six students enrolled in the Czech-language program at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln reveals a composite portrait of the average student. He or she belonged to the fourth, fifth, or sixth generation (the immigrant generation being the first). Only two students during the past five years were of the second generation. Eleven percent of the students were not of Czech origin at all and studied Czech as a second language.

In the students' extended families, only the third generation with one exception (the fourth or fifth) could still speak any Czech. Only the first and second generations were or are able to read Czech. Thirty percent of extended family members who could speak Czech preferred to use it less than daily, sometimes only when attending Czech festivals. Every family member who spoke Czech occasionally used it when talking to relatives or friends of their own generation but never when speaking to their grandchildren. Even when grandchildren were able to learn Czech at college, their grandparents often would not

speak to them in Czech. The grandparents felt that the variety of Czech they knew was “incorrect.”<sup>25</sup> This attitude remains an obstacle to the intergenerational transmission of the knowledge of Czech as a native language. It recognizes the considerable differences between the literary Czech taught in American universities and the somewhat Anglicized Czech informally passed along from one Czech-American generation to another. Ninety-two percent of all students interviewed thought that very few high school students would take Czech in the unlikely event any high school would offer it.

The reasons why University of Nebraska-Lincoln students enrolled in Czech-language classes were the following, in order of importance: (1) to study or work in the Czech Republic



Fig.91. *The Dwight (Nebraska) Czech Dancers performing at their hometown festival in 1991. (D. Murphy)*



Fig.92. *Many Czech peasants wrapped their few belongings in featherbeds for the voyage to America. Others, especially later, used simple trunks, such as this one owned by Ignác and Marie Šebesta. (NSHS Museum 11055-1237, C998.1-609)*

(eighty-three percent); (2) to talk to relatives (forty-five percent); and (3) to fulfill language requirements (fifty-five percent). Some students gave more than one reason. The establishment and cultivation of an inexpensive exchange program was mentioned as the best way to maintain or stimulate Czech-language enrollment.

Just as the citizens of ethnically Czech towns in Nebraska still identify themselves as Czech, the author found from her survey that university students of Czech origin consider themselves to be Czech. From this evidence and the numbers cited above, one may conclude that knowledge of Czech has ceased to be the main indicator of membership in the Czech-American ethnic group. Ancestry is now the determining factor, as Nebraska Czechs continue to organize and patronize ethnic festivals and belong to ethnic associations. In their eyes, an inability to speak and read Czech does not disqualify anyone of Czech ancestry from participating in these associations.



Fig.93. Irma Ourecky of Wilber, Nebraska, shown in costume with her husband Lumir in the late 1960s. She received the Henry Fonda Nebraskan Award for her work in preserving Czech-American history and culture. (NSHS K90-105)

Czech as a native tongue (i.e., learned from parents) is disappearing in Nebraska. The youngest Czech-Americans of the third generation are in their sixties. Twenty years from now, there will be very few native speakers of Czech in the state, although there will surely be people who will know it by having learned it as a second language.<sup>26</sup>

Nebraskans of Czech origin seem likely to continue to consider themselves to be Czech-Americans, even in the absence of their having any knowledge of the Czech language. The low enrollment of college and university students of Czech during the last ten years proves that there is no widespread desire to study Czech, and that

ancestry alone is perceived as sufficient to qualify one for membership in the Czech ethnic group or in any Czech-American organization.

Czech ethnicity, however, is alive and well in Nebraska. With the restoration of political democracy and a market economy to the Czech Republic, many Nebraskans of Czech ancestry are now eager to reestablish or reaffirm connections with their ancestral homeland.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> The author thanks Professors Jana Bischofová and Bruce Garver and former UNL Archivist Joseph Svoboda for their comments on the substance and style of earlier drafts of this article.

<sup>2</sup> Studies of Czech immigrants in Nebraska include Vladimír Kučera and Alfred Nováček, eds., *Czechs and Nebraska* (Ord, Nebraska: Quiz Graphic Arts Inc., 1967); and Růžena Rosická, *Dějiny Čechů v Nebrasce* (The History of Czechs in Nebraska) (Omaha: Czech Historical Club of Nebraska, 1928).

<sup>3</sup> Tomáš Čapek, *The Čechs (Bohemians) in America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1920). The question of Czech literacy and education is discussed at greater length in Joseph Svoboda's article, "Czech-Americans: A Love of Liberty," in this issue of *Nebraska History*.

<sup>4</sup> On the American Czech-language press see Tomáš Čapek, *Padesát let českého tisku v Americe* (Fifty Years of the Czech Press in America) (New York: Bank of Europe, 1911), and V. N. Duben, *Czech and Slovak Periodical Press Outside Czechoslovakia* (Washington, D.C.: SVU, 1962).

<sup>5</sup> A large minority of Czechs lived in Vienna and small minorities of Czechs lived elsewhere in the western half of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. For a thorough discussion of the relationship of the Czechs to this monarchy (1867-1918), see Bruce Garver, *The Young Czech Party, 1874-1901, and the Emergence of a Multi-Party System* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978).

<sup>6</sup> On nationality conflict and the use of Czech language in the Czech crown lands, see Garver, *Young Czech Party*, 88-120.

<sup>7</sup> Joseph Svoboda, "Czechs: The Love of Liberty," in *Broken Hoops and Plains People*, ed. Paul Olson (Lincoln: Nebraska Curriculum Development Center, 1976), 161.

<sup>8</sup> This can be seen on the wedding certificates brought by Nebraska Czechs to the author. Population studies useful in any investigation of language maintenance include D. J. Bogue, *The Population of the United States* (New York and London: The Free Press, 1985); U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Subject Reports: National Origin and Language, U.S. Census of Population 1970*, (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1973); and *Supplementary Report: Ancestry of the Population by State, U.S. Census of Population 1980* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1983).

<sup>9</sup> Scholarly articles pertaining to Czech-language maintenance and its part in sustaining Czech-American ethnic identity include: J. B. Dudek, "The Bohemian Language in America," *American Speech* 2 (1927): 299-311; Eva Eckert, "Lexicon of the First Generation American Czechs," *Review of Applied Linguistics* (Lueven, Belgium) 76 (1987): 25-41; R. B. Klymasz, "From Immigrant to Ethnic Folklore: A Canadian View of Process and Transition," *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 10 (1973): 131-39; J. S. Roucek, "The Passing of American Czechoslovaks," *The American Journal of Sociology* 39 (1934): 611-25; and G. L. Trager, "The Slavic-Speaking Groups of the United States and Canada," *American Council of Learned Societies Bulletin* 34 (1942): 58-63.

<sup>10</sup> There were thirty-four Czech newspapers or periodicals published in Nebraska at one time or another. Both the Nebraska State Historical Society and the Czech Heritage Collection at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Archives hold extensive files of these publications. Finding aids are available in both repositories.

<sup>11</sup> Some of these halls are still standing. The use of drama in Czech-language maintenance and in cultivating popular understanding of Czech history and culture is discussed by David Murphy in his article, "Dramatic Expressions: Czech Theatre Curtains in Nebraska," in this issue of *Nebraska History*.

<sup>12</sup> For further discussion of Czech fraternal benevolent organizations see Bruce Garver, "Czech-American Freethinkers on the Great Plains," in Frederick C. Luebke, ed., *Ethnicity on the Great Plains* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), 147-69; and Joseph Svoboda's article, "Czech-Americans: The Love of Liberty," in this issue of *Nebraska History*.

<sup>13</sup> *Komenský*, The Periodical of the Educational Komenský Clubs, 10 (1920): 352.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 6 (1913): 18.

<sup>15</sup> The possibility to publish both in Czech and in English gave the Czech associations and groups a means for "double talk." While

the Czech periodicals exhibited a degree of nationalistic fervor, the English-language Czech periodicals, such as *The Bohemian Review*, which became *Czechoslovak Review* in 1918, published informational articles. These articles promoted the knowledge of the Czech culture, and later of the Czechoslovak idea, without the open nationalism characteristic of the periodicals in Czech, such as the club periodical, *Komenský*.

<sup>16</sup> Efforts by immigrant groups generally to cultivate ancestral language use in the United States are discussed by J. A. Fishman, ed., *Language Loyalty in the United States* (The Hague: Mouton, 1966). Karel Kučera, *Český jazyk v USA* (Czech Language in the U.S.A.) (Prague: Univerzita Karlova, 1990) discusses the status of the Czech language in the United States today and in historical perspective.

<sup>17</sup> The periodicals of the Komenský clubs discuss a few of these activities. Also see Svoboda, "Czech-Americans," and Garver, "Czech-American Freethinkers."

<sup>18</sup> The author of this article helped revive the Komenský Club at UNL in 1990. The club's modest archives are deposited in the Czech Heritage Collection at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Archives.

<sup>19</sup> In contrast to the Nebraska Czech experience is the somewhat similar experience of Czech immigrants and their descendants in the state of Texas. See, for example, E. Hudson and H. R. Maresh, *Czech Pioneers of the South-West* (Dallas: South-West Press Inc., 1934); Clinton Machann and James W. Mendl, *Krásná Amerika: A Study of the Texas Czechs, 1851-1939* (Austin, Tex.: Eakin Press, 1983); Clinton Machann, *Czech Voices: Stories from Texas in the Amerikán národní kalendář* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1991); and three articles by Machann, "Texas Czechs Preserve a Proud History," *The Texas Humanist* (December 1978): 2-3; "The Czechs in Texas," *Continuum* 43 (1979): 21; and "Czech Folk Music, Orchestras, and Assimilation in Texas," *Kosmas* 7 (1988): 107-112.

<sup>20</sup> Svoboda, "Czechs: The Love of Liberty," 186.

<sup>21</sup> Personal communication of 1993 from Western Fraternal Association representative Glenn Riensche.

<sup>22</sup> The first generation in Nebraska is from the period between 1870 to the end of the century.

<sup>23</sup> Some Czech communities have offered classes on an irregular basis, whenever there is a teacher of Czech available or there is enough interest (as there was in Hastings in 1993). Personal communication to the author by the instructor, Mrs. Hula.

<sup>24</sup> The University of Nebraska at Omaha, thanks to a series of visiting Fulbright professors from Czechoslovakia (through 1992) and from the Czech Republic (for five months in 1993), was able to offer Czech-language instruction through a period of eleven years. Metro Technical Community College occasionally hired some of the same instructors to teach Czech on a part-time basis. No visiting Fulbright professor has been sent to UNO to replace Dr. Jana Bischofová, who returned to Prague in July 1993. UNO will not offer Czech in 1993-94.

<sup>25</sup> It is interesting to compare these students' experiences with those of others discussed in broad studies such as J. S. Phinney and M. J. Rotheram, *Children's Ethnic Socialization* (Newbury Park-Beverly Hills-London-New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1987).

<sup>26</sup> To compare the declining use of Czech in Nebraska to the diminishing use of other foreign languages in the United States, see P. Schach, ed., *Languages in Conflict* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), and U. Weinreich, *Languages in Contact: Findings and Problems* (The Hague: Mouton, 1968).