

CGSI 2010 Lincoln Symposium Overview:
They Came to the Heartland

Friday, April 30 – Research and Tours

- CGSI Traveling Library – experienced researchers will be available to assist participants using this unique set of Czech genealogical research materials.
- Nebraska State Historical Society Library – located next door to the Nebraska Union, this Library will also be available for personal research if the renovation currently underway is completed in time.
- An all-day tour, *The Czech Spirit Survives in Saline County, Nebraska*, led by historian and Czech heritage enthusiast, Janet Jeffries, will visit historic sites in Saline County, Nebraska with the destination of Wilber, the U.S. Czech Capital.
- The exhibition, *Back to One's Roots – Our Ancestor's Everyday Lives Shown in Archival Documents*, prepared by the Czech National Archives, will be available for viewing.
- The CGSI sales table featuring unique Czech maps and books will be available all day.
- 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. Social mixer for all symposium registrants, light snacks provided/cash bar.

Saturday, May 1- Speaker Sessions

8:30 – 8:45 a.m.	Opening
8:45 – 10:15 a.m.	S1 - Czech Immigration Passenger Lists – Leo Baca S2 - Homestead Records as a Genealogical Source – Homestead Historian
10:30 – 11:45 a.m.	S3 - Czech-American Freethinkers – Dr. Bruce Garver S4 - Searching for Your Czech Ancestors – Emphasis on Nebraska Czechs – Margie Sobotka
12:00 – 1:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:00 – 2:15 p.m.	S5 - Genealogical Research Using the Internet – Tom McFarland S6 - Czechs in Kansas – Steve Parke
2:30 – 3:45 p.m.	S7 - Czech Language for Genealogists – Dr. Mila Saskova-Pierce S8 - Czechs in Iowa – Mike Prohaska
4:00 – 5:15 p.m.	S9 - DNA and Genealogy – Leo Baca S10 - Traditions and Customs in Czech Rural Life – Dr. Mila Saskova-Pierce

Also available all day on Saturday will be:

- CGSI Traveling Library
- CGSI sales table
- The exhibition, *Back to One's Roots – Our Ancestor's Everyday Lives Shown in Archival Documents*.
- **Saturday Evening Dinner and Entertainment (7 – 9:30 p.m.):** A dinner featuring pork roast with an ethnic twist, beverage and dessert will be served at the Nebraska Union on Saturday evening (optional for symposium attendees) and entertainment will be provided by The Kramer Sisters. The Kramer sisters perform harmony vocals on a wide variety of songs and have a Czech repertoire that includes Czech vocals and various folk instruments.

Speaker Topics

S1 - Czech Immigration Passenger Lists (By Leo Baca) - Invariably, Czech American genealogists and family historians reach the point of asking how their ancestors came to America. Many questions come to mind. What was the name of the ship? When did they immigrate? How long was the voyage? What did the ship look like? What was the port of entry? These and other questions will be addressed in this presentation.

S2 - Homestead Records as a Genealogical Source (By Jason Jurgena) - The Homestead Act of 1862 offered land grants of 160 acres to settlers in 30 different states. The claimant did not have to be a U.S. citizen as long as the intent to become a citizen was declared. In an effort to begin preserving and providing wider access to the information in the estimated 2 million homestead case files stored at the National Archives and Records Administration in Washington, D.C., Homestead National Monument of America along with several other partnering organizations has begun a project to digitize these records. These files contain important historical, social, demographic, agricultural, and genealogical information that we hope to make more widely available for historical and genealogical research.

S3 - A century of Czech-American freethinkers, 1848 – 1948 (By Dr. Bruce Garver) - During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Czechs were the only European immigrants to the U.S. among whom a majority did not affiliate with any organized religion. This presentation will discuss the origin of Czech free-thinkers (*svobodomyslní Češi*) in Europe, their institutions and periodicals in the U.S. after 1848, and the extent to which they conditioned Czech-American acculturation, politics, and society up to 1948, by which time their influence was rapidly diminishing. All aspects of the history of Czech free-thinkers remain controversial.

S4 - Searching for Your Czech Ancestors – Emphasis on Nebraska Czechs - Margie Sobotka will cover the Czechs in Nebraska and their localities of settlement. (The word 'Czechs' refers to those coming from the Czech Lands). She will cover the immigration patterns into and out of Nebraska and back again. She will also speak about the language and the obstacles it raises for those who are searching for their Czech ancestors. Also, she will discuss how the phonetics of the language impacted the spelling of names and even led to complete changes in the spelling of some.

S5 - Genealogical Research Using the Internet (By Tom McFarland) - Internet databases and web sites often contain information that is complicated to find. We will explore search techniques on how to better find what you need in these sources. We will also examine ways to find additional databases and other researchers to further your genealogical enquiry.

S6 - The Czechs of Kansas: Border Crossing Frontier Farmers and More (By Steve Parke) - A survey overview of about 15 historic Kansas Czech settlements from Brown County in 1857, to the 1870's Central Kansas corridor settlements, west to Rawlins County in 1884, and back to the early 1900 industrial Czechs and Slovaks in the Kansas City area. Presentation components will include maps, photos, local histories, 1900 census tidbits, and cultural observations.

S7 - Czech Language for the Genealogist (By Mila Saskova-Pierce) - Czech genealogical researchers deal with a stylized language that is often frustrating, because the language of the documents is archaic. Yet, there are a limited number of lexical items (vocabulary) and stylized expressions that can be easily learned. A limited number of grammatical rules occur in the genealogical texts as well. These will be reviewed and commented upon. A sample of a language lesson based on genealogical material will conclude the lecture.

S8 - Czechs in Iowa (By Mike Prohaska) - This presentation will focus on the historical settlement of the Czechs in Iowa, including when they arrived, where they settled, what attracted them to Iowa, where they were from and what forces were in play that inspired them to leave their homeland. Also, comments will be made about those that left Iowa for other destinations. A brief review of my Prohaska ancestors will present an atypical path to ultimate settlement in Iowa, the "exception to the rule". Present day locations of Czech heritage and culture as well as resources available to the researcher will also be mentioned.

S9 - DNA and Genealogy (By Leo Baca) - What do genealogists do after they've traced their ancestors as far as written records will take them? Recent and continuing advances in molecular genetics hold some very interesting possibilities for further research. Results from the ongoing Czech American DNA Study will be presented and discussed.

S10 - Traditions and Customs in Czech Rural Life (By Dr. Mila Saskova Pierce) - The Czech calendar year revolves around traditions that cement family and community life. These traditions, however, often have roots in the pre-Christian past. Some of them have surprising origins and humorous variations.

Hotel Accommodations

A block of rooms at the Holiday Inn Downtown – Lincoln has been reserved for symposium attendees. As the number of rooms is limited, we recommend that you make your reservations by March 1, 2010 by calling 402-475-4011. The block of rooms is under “CGSI” and the rate is \$104 per night. The Holiday Inn is located in the Historic Haymarket District near downtown Lincoln and is 7 blocks from the Nebraska Union, the site of the symposium. CGSI will provide shuttle transportation between the hotel and the Nebraska Union on Saturday, May 1.

CGSI Tour, April 30, 2010 *The Czech Spirit Survives in Saline County, Nebraska*

This tour will give participants a taste of the Czech culture that is still very strong in this part of Nebraska. The itinerary features stops in the town of Crete and at a Czech country cemetery before arriving in Wilber, the nation’s Czech capital, for lunch and an afternoon visit. Saline County was second only to Douglas County (Omaha) for the number of 19th and early 20th century Czech settlers. Attendance will be limited.

8 a.m. Depart Lincoln for Crete.

9 a.m. Visit the Benne Memorial Museum in Crete to view the regular collections and two special exhibits -- Czech *kroje* and vintage musical instruments, featuring a variety of button accordions. Have a kolače and coffee break here before departing for Wilber.

10:30 a.m. Travel on to Wilber with a short stop enroute at Big Blue Bohemian Cemetery. This small historic cemetery still features an old world aura and has tree-lined allées and curbed plots reminiscent of the Old Country.

11:30 a.m. Arrive in Wilber and tour historic Hotel Wilber, built in 1895. The hotel, listed in the National Register of Historic Places, has been renovated to serve as a bed and breakfast. The sleeping rooms were sponsored by, and are furnished with, family heirlooms from various Wilber families giving each a distinctive look. The restaurant, beer garden, and cellar bar are popular gathering places during the annual Czech Festival and year round.

12:30 p.m. Have an authentic Czech luncheon, complete with musical entertainment at Wilber Sokol Auditorium. This building is also listed in the National Register and has undergone significant renovation in recent years. The hall is thriving as a venue for various community activities, major events and other course, numerous Czech activities.

2 p.m. Visit the Wilber Czech Museum and have free time to explore Wilber shops, including the Czech Cottage, Wilber Meat Market, Frank’s Smoke House and the Czech Craft Shop. Also see the Dvoraček Memorial Library, that boasts a Czech Heritage Room.

4:15 p.m. Depart Wilber for Lincoln.

Sunday, May 2 – Festival Day

Although not a part of the CGSI Symposium, the Nebraska Czechs of Lincoln will hold their 41st Annual Czech Festival on Sunday at the Moose Lodge Center, 4901 N 56th Street, Lincoln. The festival is open to the public, admission is free and will feature Czech food, demonstrations, exhibits, music, etc.

Speaker Bio's

Leo Baca is a fourth generation Czech Texan whose primary interests lie in documenting the arrival of Czech immigrants to America. Leo's other interests include researching Valachian history and the application of genetics to traditional genealogical research. Leo has conducted Czech genealogical research for over thirty years. He has published the nine volume series- *Czech Immigration Passenger Lists, Volumes I-IX* and a translation entitled- *Moravian Wallachia: Its Origin and Development*.

Bruce Garver received a Ph.D. in history from Yale University in 1971. Since 1976, he has been Professor of history at the University of Nebraska at Omaha and has taught Czech immigrant history on eight occasions at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln. He was a student in Prague for ten months in 1967, returned to do research in 1971, 1973, and for short periods in eight different years after 1990. He taught American history in Czech at Charles University in the fall of 1990 and Czech history to American students at Palacký University in Olomouc the fall of 1995. He is the author of a book, *The Young Czech Party, 1874-1901, and the Emergence of a Multi-Party System* (Yale Univ. Press, 1978) and many articles, book chapters, and reviews about modern Czech and Slovak history. Currently, he is doing research on Czech-Italian relations from 1848 to 1918.

Jason Jurgena has been the Museum Curator at Homestead National Monument since March of 2009. Prior to working for the National Park Service Jason's museum career has included working at natural history, archaeology, and historic home museums. Jason received his Master's degree in museum studies and anthropology from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and has taught Museum Studies courses at the University of Texas at El Paso.

Tom McFarland is a longtime avid genealogist, university librarian, and local historian. Over his genealogical career he has published a family history and served in various genealogical societies. He has presented on various genealogical topics, including internet, Irish, and beginning genealogy, plus disseminating and preserving your genealogy.

Steve Parke grew up on the rural Voda Road in Trego County, Kansas, and has been researching family and community history since 1987. After working 20 years in various State of Colorado institutions as a chaplain, he's turned his attention to Kansas history and culture, and immigrant groups like the Bukovina German-Bohemians and the Czechs. He also released a singer songwriter CD in 2009 entitled "Seasons".

Mike Prohaska is a fifth-generation Czech whose Iowa heritage is from Duncan, a Czech hamlet in northern Iowa with connections to Spillville, Iowa. A member of *CGSI* since 1997, his involvement includes six years on their Board of Directors. His successful quest for his roots culminated by a 17 member family tour of Bohemia, was featured in the 2008-2009 winter edition of *Slovo*, the biannual publication of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library. A trust real estate manager for Wells Fargo in Des Moines, he and his wife reside in Huxley, Iowa and are blessed with the challenge of keeping up with their children and grandchildren who all live nearby.

Mila Saskova-Pierce, Associate Professor of Russian and Czech, and Head of the Minor Languages Section, has been at UNL since 1989. Her research interest is in cultural history, teaching methodology, and Slavic linguistics. She has published articles on learning processes; American Czechs' cultural history; Russian, Ukrainian, Slovak, and Czech languages in the United States. At present, she is researching the modalities of teaching foreign languages over the Internet. Under her advising, the Czech Komensky Club, a student club at the University of Nebraska received the prestigious *Gratias Agit Prize* from the government of the Czech Republic for its cultural programming at UNL.

Margie Sobotka has conducted research on her and her husband's Czech family for over 50 years. She is a charter member of Eastern Nebraska Genealogical Society (ENGS) and is the treasurer at the present time. She is also a member and board member of CGSI. She has authored several articles on Czech research and family stories for *Journal of Genealogy, Nase Dejiny, Nase Rodina* periodicals. Margie has abstracted and compiled names from *History of Czechs in Nebraska, Nebraska and Kansas Czech Settlers, ZCJB* obituaries and death claims, and other periodicals. Margie has been a speaker at many historical and genealogical workshops over the years.