THE TEXIANS AND THE TEXANS

THE CZECH TEXANS

INSTITUTE OF TEXAN CULTURES

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS
INSTITUTE OF TEXAN CULTURES
AT SAN ANTONIO
THE TEXIANS AND TEXANS


The Czech Texans
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Inside Cover: Boys’ Baseball Game
Courtesy of Sister M. Andrea

Back Cover: Picnic by the Creek, Dubina, 1900
Courtesy of Edwin Peter
INTRODUCTION

The Czechs are a Slavic people who have lived in the provinces now called Bohemia and Moravia since about the fifth century. Their homeland is a crossroads, lying in paths of invasion from east to west and from north to south. The land has been overrun by Mongols, Huns, Germans, Poles, Tartars, and many others. Usually, the invader attempted to impose his own religious and political views on the Czechs.

Despite brief periods of freedom, the Czechs usually have been ruled by a foreign power. Their unity has been cultural rather than national. From 1620 until 1918 they were ruled by Austria. During most of this time, their social, intellectual, and religious institutions were revised by the Austrians.

Czechs began coming to America quite early; Augustine Hermann reached New Amsterdam in 1633. Among the first to enter Texas was Frederick Lemsky, who was a musician with Sam Houston’s little army at San Jacinto. Few others followed until the 1850’s. The first organized Czech immigrant group of sixteen families arrived in Galveston in 1852. By 1900 there were more than 15,000 Czechs in Texas.

Most of these newcomers to the Lone Star State had been farmers in the old country. They settled in the rich blackland areas and the Gulf coastal plain. From these areas they have spread out over the state. From the panhandle to deep East Texas one finds evidence of Czech settlement: names on mailboxes, Czech churches and fraternal organizations, Czech festivals, and Czech-language radio broadcasts.

ANTHONY MICHAEL DIGNOWITY

1833

Anthony Michael Dignowity, patriarch of a well-known San Antonio family, had great courage and a spirit of adventure which admirably equipped him for a frontiersman’s life. His childhood in early 19th century Bohemia was filled with hardship. His father was a musician, poet, and man of trades. Unfortunately, he was not a good businessman. He lost what little money the family possessed in a series of ill-advised business ventures. Young Anthony was determined to improve his
situation. He first tried selling homemade hooks-and-eyes with which to fasten clothing. When this failed, he made and sold sulfur matches. He became absorbed in reading and studying. At 17 he began traveling. Three years later, when he was 20, he joined the 1830 Polish uprising against Russia. When the revolt collapsed, Dignowity fled to Hamburg, and sailed for America. He arrived at New York harbor in October, 1832.

The young immigrant headed southwest—to Natchez, Mississippi, where he remained briefly, before continuing on to San Antonio. Satisfying his wanderlust for the moment, he returned to Mississippi and studied medicine. He began his practice there, but soon tired of the surroundings. For the next few years he was a doctor in Indian Territory and Western Arkansas. When the Mexican War began, he hurried to Texas with ten Arkansas volunteers for General Taylor's army. When he reached San Antonio, he found his medical services so in demand that he decided to establish his practice there. As the Civil War approached, he became outspoken in his anti-slavery and anti-secession views. Hearing that an attempt would be made to hang him, Dignowity fled North, where he remained for the duration. In 1869 he returned, to find his home and lands confiscated. He spent the last six years of his life recovering his losses. He died in 1875 at "Harmony House" on Dignowity Hill. This landmark was torn down in 1926, and today the site is a San Antonio city park.

Mrs. Amanda McCann Dignowity, the daughter of an Irishman, had been on her way to a career as a lady doctor, when marriage to Anthony Michael Dignowity intervened. She maintained her interest in medicine by assisting her husband with his research. In old age she recalled exciting adventures as a bride on the Texas frontier. On her trip to San Antonio in 1847 the traveling party was frightened by a great war-whoop at the Salado Creek crossing near the city. "The men seized their guns, pistols, and Bowie knives and prepared for battle. I slid to the bottom of the wagon, covering my babies with the carpeting. Soon a voice called out:

"'No fightie, mucho amigo; plenty whiskey; plenty drunk.' What a relief!

As we descended the hill we saw in the bend of the creek over a hundred Indians. They had been to San Antonio for rations and all were beastly drunk except the three watchers."

Mrs. Dignowity was impressed with San Antonio's cosmopolitan atmosphere. On her first evening in the city she heard seven languages spoken at the dinner table. It was, at the beginning, a pleasant life. "All visiting was done after sundown. The Plaza from ten o'clock in the morning until four o'clock in the afternoon was empty. All doors were closed. Everyone took a siesta. After four o'clock and on until midnight, the Plaza and streets were gay with men and women in full dress and elegant toilets engaged in shopping, visiting and enjoying the evening air."

Later, her two eldest sons were conscripted into the Confederate army. While
on furlough, they swam the Rio Grande and joined the Union forces at Brazos de Santiago. In later years the oldest boy, Anthony Francis, became an engineer and surveyor. It was he who layed out the towns of Brackettville and Del Rio. Frank, as he was widely known, died at San Antonio in 1921. Another Dignowity son, Albert Wentzel, became an officer in Benito Juarez' Mexican liberation army, and was killed, at Piedras Negras, on February 25, 1872.

FREDERICK LEMSKY
1836
Frederick Lemsky came to Texas in February, 1836, and was a fifer in the four-piece Texas Army "band" at San Jacinto. The musicians played "Will You Come to the Bower," as the Texans charged the Mexican encampment. Lemsky later taught music in Houston. There, at his boarding house, the German Union was formed in the winter of 1840-1841 to aid newly arrived immigrants. In March, 1842, he was one of the contractors responsible for digging the Brazos and San Luis Canal system. He was last known to be living at Houston in May, 1856.

THE REVEREND BOHUMIR MENZL
1840
Probably the first Czech Catholic priest in Texas, the Reverend Bohumir Menzl arrived with a group of German soldiers in 1840, and began working in the vicinity of present day Castroville and D'Hanis. Menzl served here for 16 years, returned to his homeland in 1856, and remained there until his death. Today, he is honored in his hometown of Frylandt, Czechoslovakia, for his pioneering work in early Texas.

KARL A. POSTL
San Jacinto Museum of History

KARL ANTON POSTL
1841
Karl Anton Postl, born in Moravia and educated for the priesthood, was a hot-headed liberal unsuited to the discipline of the monastery. He fled to Switzerland in 1823, and became a writer under the pen name of "Charles Sealsfield." In 1826, he sailed to New Orleans, toured the lower Mississippi, then settled briefly in Pennsylvania. He returned to Europe to write a book about his travels. While in Mexico in 1828, he first heard about Texas from United States Ambassador Joel Poinsett, who was trying to buy the territory for his government. Postl journeyed back to Switzerland in 1832. Although he prob-
ably never came to Texas, he cribbed information from other writers and produced several early articles which interested Czechs, Germans, and Englishmen in migrating to Texas. In 1841 he published Das Kajutenbuch ("The Cabin Book"), which presented an idealized account of life on the Texas frontier. It ran 14 editions in German and English, and probably had more influence on European migration than all of the colonization schemes combined. Postl, the author, died in 1864.

REvolution
1848
The unsuccessful Revolution of 1848 caused most Czechs to give up hope for the establishment of a free Slavic state under the Hapsburg monarchy. In the cities and towns of Bohemia and Moravia they fought the soldiers in the streets and from behind barricades. When the rebellion was ruthlessly crushed, many began to look toward the New World for the freedom and opportunity which they had scant hope of achieving in their homeland. Migration increased sharply in the next few years.

* * * * * * * *

"In the Old Country, one was never able to get away from being a cabinetmaker if his father before him had been one."—Dr. Henry Maresh, Czech Pioneers of the Southwest.

Arnost Bergmann
1858
Arnost Bergmann was another whose writings greatly influenced European mi-
immigration to Texas. He was born in Zapudov, Bohemia, on August 12, 1797, and—after studying for the Protestant ministry in Germany and Czechoslovakia—was ordained in 1830. In 1850, he landed at Galveston and proceeded to the German settlement at Cat Spring. Not knowing what else to do, he farmed. He also established a church and a school, and when the Cat Spring Agricultural Society was conceived in 1856, Bergmann was one of the organizers. He was highly enthusiastic about the opportunities to be found in Texas, and wrote open letters to his countrymen urging them to follow. These letters appeared in Moravske Noviny, a Moravian newspaper, and are credited with bringing many Czechs to the new land.

EARLY CZECH IMMIGRATION 1852-1853

The first Czech immigrant group, 16 families, arrived at Galveston in 1852. They were fleeing the oppression which followed the unsuccessful revolt of 1848. These people had chosen Texas as a refuge in response to the glowing letters sent to Bohemia and Moravia by the Reverend Arnost Bergmann of Cat Spring. Their voyage from Hamburg, Germany, to Texas lasted a miserable 17 weeks. The ship was a leaky tub, the food was raw, and the party had been victimized by unscrupulous immigration agents. After landing on the Texas coast, many of these new arrivals came by ox cart to the area between Cat Spring and New Ulm in Austin County. This came to be known as the New Bremen Settlement, one of the first Czech centers in Texas.

During 1852-1853, over 32 Czech families arrived in Texas. Among these early immigrants was Joseph Lidumil Lesikar, who had come at the bidding of the Reverend Bergmann. Lesikar was a tailor by trade, but he is remembered for having laid the groundwork for Czech journalism in Texas. He contributed articles to journals both in the United States and in the Old Country until his death in 1887. Lesikar's home, built about 1854, still stands in remarkable condition near Nelsonville.

JAN REYMERSHOFFER 1854

As a youth, Jan Reymershoffer had exceptional artistic talent which he had hoped to cultivate, but a career as a merchant interfered. Once in Texas, however, he followed the example of his neighbors and became a part-time cattleman. At this point, he discovered an excellent use for his drawing skill: in his herdbook he recorded not only brand marks, but sketched with great accuracy each cow in the bunch.

Reymershoffer, his wife, and their five children arrived at the Port of Galveston
in 1854. They were anchored there for eight weeks while their ship was placed under a smallpox quarantine. With them the Reymershoffers brought enough goods to stock a small mercantile store. When they were released from quarantine, they made their way to Cat Spring, where they opened their business. This was a new beginning for Jan, who was a member of an old and prominent family of Holesov, Moravia. He had been a successful merchant and member of the Austrian Reichstag.

After five years at Cat Spring, Reymershoffer moved his store to Alleyton in 1859. Following the Civil War, he entered the import business at Galveston, dealing in glass- and porcelain-ware. Later, this enterprise was sold and the family established a flour mill, exporting to Europe.

Many an old settler could remember the time when the Reymershoffers had provided him and his family with lodging and food before the long trek to the interior of Texas. Jan Reymershoffer, Sr. died in 1876, and his son, Jan Jr., took over the family businesses, also acting as Texas Consul for Austria at Galveston. Jan Jr. died in 1899.

**FAYETTEVILLE AND HOSTYN**

**1850's**

Fayetteville, in eastern Fayette County, is often called the “cradle of Czech settlement in Texas.” Here, the pioneer immigrants of the 1850’s stopped to rest and obtain information before scattering to lands in surrounding counties. Although it was originally a German community, Fayetteville today is predominantly Czech. The language, music, and customs of the Czechs are a part of daily life. It is the home of the first lodge of the Slovan- ska Podporujici Jednota Stata Texas—or SPJST—the widely-known Slavonic benevolent association.

Some of the Czech travelers through Fayetteville ultimately settled at Hostyn on land formerly held by Father Michael Muldoon, Irish “parish priest” of all Anglo Texas during Mexican times. Founded in the early 1840’s, the village lies five miles southwest of La Grange. Originally called Bluff, and later Moravan, the present name was conferred after the arrival of Czech immigrants in the 1850’s. Hostyn was the birthplace of the Katolicka Jednota Texaska, the other principal benevolent organization of Czech Texans.
DUBINA, TEXAS
1856
In the 1850's a town originally called "Navidad" sprang up on the east bank of Navidad Creek about five miles northeast of Schulenburg. Czech immigrants began settling in this blackland farming community in November 1856. Soon, Augustin Haidusek's father renamed the place "Dubina," which in the Czech language means "oak grove." In the beginning, these pioneers had only crudely constructed grass shelters in which to live. Only after crops were planted could thought be given to permanent shelter. In 1858, Joseph Peter, Sr. built a log house in which Roman Catholic services were conducted until 1877, when the first church was built. The parish soon counted more than 600 families, including many from nearby Weimar, where no church had yet been erected.

CZECH FARMERS
Life for the immigrant Czech farmer bore little resemblance to romantic visions of the sturdy yeoman tending picture-book fields of luscious grain, or watching over herds of fat sheep and cattle. In reality, it was a hard, grueling, monotonous life. The farmer, his wife, and all the children worked from sunup to sundown, just to survive. All necessities were grown or made right on the farm. The family raised one cash crop, usually cotton or corn. The proceeds for its sale were spent on necessities which could not be grown or manufactured at home.

It was a life of constant struggle against the elements. After the crop was planted the farmer had to contend with insects, which could bring ruin overnight. A drought could defeat a year's labor; a hailstorm could flatten a field of cotton or corn in minutes. And even after the crop was harvested, the chances of selling it for an adequate price were usually quite poor.

Despite the hardships, the monotony, and the toil, the Czech farmer managed not only to survive, but to prosper. Many Czechs began their life in Texas as tenant farmers. After a few years in their adopted land, almost all managed to acquire their own land, build sturdy homes, and educate their children.
By 1900, Dubina was a thriving community with a cotton gin, a grist mill, a general store and saloon, a blacksmith shop, a church, and a school. But Dubina suffered a tropical storm in 1909, which destroyed the church. And in 1912, a fire devastated the cotton gin, grist mill, blacksmith shop, and general store. The store was rebuilt, but the old volume of business was never again attained. The community never recovered from these disasters. Today Dubina is a ghost town.

**JOSEPH PETER, JR.**

Moravian-born Joseph Peter, Jr. was eleven when his father brought his family to Texas in September, 1856. The group stopped briefly at Cat Spring and La Grange, and finally settled at Dubina. Young Joseph first learned the blacksmith trade, and opened his own shop at Dubina. A Confederate sympathizer, he was too young for military service, so he was engaged hauling cotton to Mexico. After the war, he established a well-known store, saloon, post office, and cotton gin in his community. Later, he donated land for a church building. In 1890, he was elected to the state legislature as the representative of Fayette County. Peter's spirit of public service continued until his death on March 26, 1924.

**MORITZ KOPPERL**

**1857**

In 1877, the Gulf Coast and Santa Fe Railroad was on the verge of collapse. After years of struggle, the lines extended only
a few miles beyond the Galveston city limits. The tax collector was threatening to seize and sell the property for the payment of back taxes. At this point, a distinguished Texas banker of Czech ancestry stepped in to retrieve the situation. Moritz Kopperl was elected president of the railway, and devoted his total energy to its successful construction.

For the last two and one-half decades of his life, Kopperl made an impressive contribution to the business life of Galveston, through his activities as a merchant, cotton trader, and importer. Born October 7, 1826, in Trebitsch, Moravia, his education had begun there at the Capuchin Institute, and was completed later in Vienna, Austria. In 1848, he came to the United States to enter business with his uncle, Charles Kopperl, in Mississippi. In 1857, young Moritz arrived in Galveston with A. Lipman, a Mississippi associate, with whom he formed the firm of Lipman and Kopperl. This enterprise continued until 1861, when Union troops succeeded in closing the Port of Galveston. This business was ruined, but when the war ended, Kopperl sought out his creditors and paid them in full. In 1865, he entered the cotton commission business, and later, the coffee trade. He soon made Galveston a major unloading point for coffee imports. Kopperl became president of the Texas National Bank in 1868, and built it into a sound and prosperous institution.

In addition to his efforts in behalf of the railroad, Kopperl also found time to serve as director of two insurance companies, and as a member of the Galveston city
council in 1871 and 1872. In 1876, he was elected to the 15th Legislature. During those years, he became an early advocate of Pan Americanism— influenced no doubt by his own South American business ties. Kopperl married Isabella Dyer in 1866, and they had two sons—Herman B. and Moritz O.; the latter became a widely-known attorney. The elder Kopperl died on July 3, 1883, at Bayreuth, Germany while traveling for his health. He is buried in Galveston.

**PRAHA, TEXAS**

1858

Praha, in southern Fayette County, was an Anglo-American settlement called “Mulberry”—then, for a time, was nicknamed “Hottentot,” after an outlaw band who stayed there. In 1858, a Czech group settled in the vicinity and changed the name to Praha (Prague), after the capitol and cultural center of their homeland. Mattias Novak was the first Czech settler, in 1855. When Father Joseph Bittowski formed a congregation in 1866, Novak gave the land for a church and a parish cemetery. The church which stands in Praha today was built in 1890, and is reminiscent of Old World architecture translated into the means and materials of the new. Praha became the mother parish for surrounding towns and was called **Maticka Praha** or “Mother Praha.”

Each year, on August 15, the little hamlet bulges with more than 5,000 Czech Texans and their friends. The...
Praha Festival begins with the celebration of mass. After the religious aspects of the occasion, the participants get down to some serious eating, drinking, dancing, and socializing. When the festival concludes near dawn the next morning, one cannot help but feel that most of the celebrants will return for another round the next year.

CZECHS AND THE CIVIL WAR
The Czechs were generally opposed to slavery. Although a number served in the Confederate Army, most were recent immigrants to Texas, and had little or no stake in the war. In addition, many had left their homeland to avoid serving in the Austrian Army, and had no burning desire to serve in anyone’s army. Many escaped conscription into Confederate service by hiding in the woods and river bottoms, sometimes for as long as two or three years. Others, who were drafted, deserted to the Union forces.

Czechs frequently avoided military duty by serving as teamsters, hauling Confederate cotton to the Mexican port of Matamoros. On each of these trips there would be six or seven wagons, each drawn by four or more yokes of oxen. The sturdy animals moved so slowly that, on many occasions, the teamsters—after a hard day’s travel—could look back and see their previous campsight. The trip was long, slow, and dangerous, and many Czech drovers were never heard from again.

With their menfolk away—fighting, hauling cotton, or hiding from Confederate conscription parties—the women assumed all the duties of managing a farm. They tilled the fields, harvested the crops, and somehow managed to keep their families together. During the Civil War, even the necessities were almost non-existent. Many of the families lived on homegrown bacon, homemade molasses, and home ground cornmeal. Sugar and coffee were unobtainable; roasted and ground corn or acorns were used as a replacement. At times even bacon and lard were scarce, and beef tallow was substituted.

JOSEF AND JOHN LIDIAK 1860
During the Civil War many Czech families suffered the terrible pains of a house divided. The Lidiak family of Hostyn was one of these. In 1860, Josef Lidiak and his family left their home in Moravia and made the long voyage to Texas. He settled in Fayette County near the little community of Hostyn, then known as Bluff. He farmed until 1863, when he enlisted in Martindale’s Company, Confederate Army. Most of his service was completed in Texas. After the war, he returned to the peaceful pursuit of farming and continued until his death in 1869.

John Lidiak, son of Josef, was still a youth when the war began. In 1863, he made the long, slow, dangerous trip to Brownsville, with a friend who was hauling cotton for the Confederacy. The friend, after selling the cotton, also sold the team, thus leaving the boy stranded 365 miles from home. While in Brownsville, John met some friends who were enlisting in the Union army. Having no way to get home, and probably not very much in sympathy with the cause of the Confederacy, John was persuaded to join. For the rest of the war he served in Hambett’s Company, First Texas Cavalry, United States Army.
THE ORDEAL OF FERDINAND DOUBRAVA,
BY BRUCE MARSHALL

THE DOUBRAVA FAMILY, ONE THAT DID NOT STAY

One day, early in the Civil War, a recently arrived Czech Texan was working in his field, when suddenly he was surrounded by a pack of bloodhounds. In a moment, a Confederate guerrilla captain stepped into the clearing and told young Ferdinand Doubrava that he was being inducted into the Confederate Army. The problem was complicated because Doubrava did not speak English. Finally, after a lengthy exchange of documents, the immigrant proved himself to be a subject of the Austrian Empire. The captain and his dogs left. The incident sealed the young Czech's dislike for Texas. When the war ended, he and his family moved to Wisconsin.

The arrival of the Doubrava family in Texas was unpromising at the outset. They came from Moravia after a particularly difficult voyage of fourteen weeks and two days. The vessel in which they sailed was later described as a "two-masted tub." The trip must have been a first-rate disaster. Almost as soon as they arrived, the family determined to return to their native Moravia. However, the Civil War interfered. Ferdinand Doubrava had never held a plow in his hand and had never driven a yoke of oxen. In fact, he said later, "I knew less about plowing than did the oxen themselves." During the war, the family suffered from typhoid fever and malaria. Doctor calls were $25.00 apiece, and medicine cost a small fortune. Flour was a dollar a pound and scarce, even at that price. Sugar, tea, and coffee were simply nonexistent. Throughout the conflict, Doubrava continued growing cotton, which he somehow managed to conceal from the Confederates. When peace came, he sold his four-year cotton crop to a northern firm for a large sum of money, paid in gold. He quickly departed for Wisconsin.

IMMIGRATION RESUMES 1865

After the Civil War, immigration resumed. Austria stood in an almost constant threat of war from other powers and sought to conscript young men from the Czech-speaking provinces. Many Czechs thought differently. It was bad enough to be under the heel of Austrian oppression; serving in the oppressor's army was intolerable. Service in the Austrian army frequently lasted eight years, and parents with sons looked to Texas for their deferment. Of those who did serve, many left their homeland as soon as their tour of duty was complete.
Most Czech immigrants to Texas were Roman Catholic. Of the ten to fifteen percent who were Protestant, most were United Brethren. Their first church on Texas soil was erected at Wesley, ten miles southwest of Brenham, in 1866. The area had begun filling up with Czech settlers shortly before the Civil War. The community, first called Veseli, was soon Anglicized to Wesley. The Reverend Joseph Opocensky arrived there in 1864 and began conducting services in private homes. The members felt that they were financially unable to provide a church building; so, Opocensky made an unsuccessful trip to Europe in search of aid. On returning empty-handed, he received an offer of aid from the Reymershoffer family of Galveston, but the Wesley settlers refused it! Opocensky called this behavior “obstinate.”

A church finally was erected in 1866. The center foundation log was cut from a huge oak. It is still in perfect condition.

A brass oil-burning chandelier gave light for evening services. Until about 1900 the little building doubled as the local school house. The pastor usually served as teacher, and the lessons were copied on slates resting on the narrow, slanted tops of the pews. In 1883, the sanctuary was expanded by one-third, and a steeple with a bell was added. The night before the dedication of the bell, someone stole the clapper. Fortunately, the local blacksmith forged one on short notice and the service went on as scheduled. In 1888, the Reverend B. E. Lajac became pastor. It was he who painted the unusual decorations which are preserved on the walls and ceiling of the church today. Since 1901 the Wesley Brethren Church has been served by non-resident pastors; but the congregation has prospered. A new building was completed in 1963. The old one is still used for occasional meetings. It is kept in good repair and is open to the public.

The first Czech reading club in Texas was formed at Veseli in 1867. Ceskoslovensky Ctenarsky Spolek (Czechoslovakian Reading Club) aroused great interest in the community. In a short time, the club had amassed a considerable library of Czech-language books. A fire swept the building in which the books were housed, and ended the club. The idea spread, however, and similar clubs were formed in the 1870’s. These early reading clubs stimulated an intellectual interest, which
eventually brought about the demand for schools in Czech communities.

WENZEL MATEJOWSKY
In 1867, Wenzel Matejowsky established a country store which preserved an authentic 19th century atmosphere—through four generations of family ownership—until its destruction by fire, early in 1971. Matejowsky had come to Texas in 1850 from Nechanitz, Moravia, where his merchant-father had served as mayor. Two older brothers had occupied important offices in Prague. Young Wenzel might have had similar opportunity, but at 29, he decided to sail for Texas. First, he farmed near East Bernard, then, by 1852, became owner of a cigar factory in Bastrop. He remained there a few years, then returned to farming, this time at Long Prairie, north of La Grange. When a post office was established at the store in 1873, he was designated postmaster. The settlement was renamed Nechanitz, after the town of Wenzel’s birth.

In 1888, Matejowsky was elected to the 20th Legislature. Aside from his duties as merchant, postmaster, and leading political figure in the county, he was also a successful tobacco grower. But, the store was the focal point of his interests. For a time the Nechanitz community boasted a cotton gin. The farmers brought their crops to the Matejowsky store, where they were weighed, and a price agreed upon. The farmers then received trade tokens redeemable in merchandise. When
the store burned in 1971, little had changed since the doors were opened a century earlier.

**Augustin Haidusek**

1870

Through his career as a newspaperman and politician, Augustin Haidusek was likely the best-known and most influential of the Czech pioneers in Texas. Born in Moravia in 1845, he was brought by his parents to Texas when he was eleven. The immigrants landed at Galveston in October, 1856, and proceeded to an oak grove on the east bank of the Navidad River in Fayette County. Here, the village of Dubina took root. In later years Haidusek remembered some of those early experiences:

"With shelter provided, all began clearing the land, made rail fences and prepared the land for tilling. In the following fall only one small bale of cotton was made by the whole group. It was loaded on a sled and pulled by oxen to La Grange, where it was sold. Indeed this first struggling effort at making a living was filled with forebodings. By now, the savings brought from Europe were spent. Flour was $20.00 a barrel, and an epidemic broke out, caused by hard work and contaminated water. It was truly a fight for survival. But God was with us. The following year crops were better and with the kind help of those of English speaking extraction, we became firmly established."

Four years after their arrival in Texas the Haiduseks were visited by a family...
friend newly arrived from Moravia. “My dear Valento,” the friend told Augustin’s father, “you had a better pig-sty at home.” The father replied, “I had rather live in this hut as an American citizen, than to live in a palace and be under the Austro-Hungarian oppression.”

In 1863, Haidusek enlisted in the Confederate army and was stationed at Fort Velasco. After his discharge from service in 1865, he spent most of his time farming and teaching school until 1869, when he began the study of law. The next year he became the first Texan of Czech origin licensed to practice law in the state. In 1875, he was elected mayor of La Grange. In the 1880’s he served in the Texas Legislature and as judge of Fayette County. From 1901 to 1910 he was a member of the Texas A&M Board of Directors. He became owner of an effective Czech-language newspaper, Svoboda, at La Grange in 1890, and six years later became president of the First National Bank there.

Augustin Haidusek encouraged assimilation into the Texas culture, and insisted that only English be spoken in the Czech classrooms. He did much to end the distrust of other groups toward the Czechs, and helped his countrymen secure new opportunities in Texas society and politics.

FATHER JOSEF CHROMCIK
1872

The Reverend Josef Chromcik, pioneer Czech missionary and parish priest, was born January 25, 1845, at Olomouc, Moravia. He attended the seminary there, and distinguished himself as a scholar and linguist. Six years after his ordination he was assigned to the Diocese of Galveston. He arrived Christmas Eve, 1872. In 1873, he re-established St. John’s parish in Fayetteville and built the Chromcik School, where he taught for many years. His knowledge of several languages enabled him to represent the German and Bohemian nationalities as their spokesman. He remained in Fayetteville until his death, although he returned to Europe in 1894, to celebrate the 25th anniversary of his ordination.
The first Czech newspaper in Texas was established at La Grange in 1879. Prior to that time, many Czechs subscribed to native language newspapers published in northern cities. F. J. Gleckman published the La Grange weekly, and called it simply, *Texan*. His ownership lasted five months— from February through July. The paper was sold then to Frank Lidiak, who renamed it *Slovak*. The journal was published in a magazine-type format, and was devoted to fiction, laws and customs of the country, and current international topics. After five years under Lidiak's direction, Joseph Cada, a new owner, moved the press to Bryan, where it ceased publication in 1889.

Probably one reason for the decline and death of *Slovak* was the establishment of another Czech-language newspaper, called *Svoboda*. It, too, was founded in La Grange in 1885, the same year that *Slovak* was moved to Bryan. Augustin Haidusek was the first editor of *Svoboda*, serving until a New Yorker arrived to assume charge. During the career of this gentleman, *Svoboda* went increasingly in debt, until Haidusek was forced to take control again. After three years of hard work, the paper was free of debt, had over 2,000 subscribers, and was the most influential Czech language newspaper in the state. Editorialy, Haidusek supported the Democratic Party, urged that Czech children be educated in the English language, and preached the ideals of responsible citizenship.

Czech journalism began to devote itself profitably. Several other papers followed shortly. They were the most accessible news and information for a large minority group which largely was literate only in its native tongue. As its younger generation became fluent in English, the need for Czech newspapers declined steadily. Today there are only a handful of survivors: *Bratrské Listy*, published by the Czech Brethren in Texas; *Nasinec*, organ of the K.J.T.; and *Vestník*, spokesman for the SPJST. But only one, *Hospodar*, published at West, Texas, is printed entirely in Czech.
There is a saying that “every Czech is born with a violin in his hand.” Although the instrument varied, the musical instinct was exhibited in Czech Texans as early as 1836 at San Jacinto. Baca’s Band of Fayetteville, generally considered the first Czech band in Texas, was formed in 1882. Baca’s Band was definitely the first to gain widespread popularity and is the oldest in Texas. It is still in existence.

Frank Baca organized the original eleven musicians from the Fayetteville area. The band was so successful that, in 1907, it was about to embark upon a national concert tour, when plans were cancelled because of Frank Baca’s death. The band made its first out-of-state appearance 61 years later at the Smithsonian Institution’s American Folklife Festival. The musical group also has some popular record albums to its credit. The Baca family has trained its descendants to develop their inherent musical ability. A Slavic folk instrument, the dulcimer, is still played today by Ray Baca, son of the original band leader, and father of the present leader, Gil Baca.

ALOIS POLANSKY
1886
Alois Polansky and his bride, Johanna, began their married life with total assets of a small farm bought on credit, a horse, three cows, two calves, and a slab of bacon. During their first year of marriage their store-bought purchases consisted of two dollar’s worth of coffee and a dollar’s worth of flour. The two young people lived largely on cornbread and cornmeal mush. They worked in the fields trying to make a crop, until Alois’ health failed. He was told that he had tuberculosis, and was given only a short time to live. In his native Moravia—where he was born in 1849, and from which he had migrated in 1871—he had worked for a doctor and had learned the medicinal value of cer-
The Texas delegation to the 1896 C.S.P.S. (a national Czech fraternal insurance organization) convention in St. Paul, Minnesota, objected to lack of distinction in assessing dues to the miners and industrial workers in the north and east and the farmers from the west and the south. The southerners and westerners felt that miners and other industrial workers had a shorter life span than did farmers and agricultural workers. They proposed that their dues be reduced to accommodate the difference. The convention rejected their proposals. The Texans responded by withdrawing from the C.S.P.S.

On December 28, 1896, 25 delegates representing most of the C.S.P.S. lodges in Texas met at the La Grange courthouse and determined to establish Texas's own fraternal organization—Slovenska Podporujici Jednota Statu Texas (Slavonic Benevolent Order of the State of Texas). The society began operation July 1, 1897. The first chapter was chartered at Fayetteville. Today the SPJST is a multimillion-dollar fraternal society and has lodges in most parts of the state. The lodges provide a place for members to gather for dances and theatricals; some offer courses in Czech language and culture. For older members the SPJST has built two modern retirement homes, one in Taylor and another in Needville. The organization also supports, through scholarships, the study of the Czech language at The University of Texas and at Texas A&M University, and courses at a number of high schools in central and south Texas.

**THE CZECH WEDDING**

The traditional Czech wedding was a memorable event, which required long and careful preparation. First, the young couple had to rent land on which to farm. Next, the all-important wedding feast required the raising of additional chickens, turkeys and geese, and perhaps an extra calf and hog. Well in advance of the celebration the couple selected their attendants. The groom would choose two of his groomsmen to dress in their Sunday best and ride around from house-to-house extending formal invitations.

A few days before the ceremony friends of the family would gather to assist in the preparations. There had to be not only food for the feast, but plenty for the guests to take home. Numerous kegs of beer were also provided. Much of the baking was done two or three days ahead of time, but the meat was usually cooked on the morning of the wedding. Breakfast was then served to the couple, their attendants and immediate families. A groom was not permitted to see his bride in her wedding dress before two o'clock in the afternoon, when the guests gathered in the church parlor. On the arrival of the bride and her parents, a man called the *starosta* stepped forward and presented her to the groom. He admonished the groom to be kind, gentle and worthy; and the bride to be moral, obedient and submissive. Both were told to honor their parents. After this came the procession to the sanctuary.

Following the ceremony, the crowd returned to the bride's home for the feast. Perhaps they would be stopped by friends who would stretch a ribbon across the road and ask for a donation. The proceeds might be given either to the newlyweds, or to the musicians—who had doubtless earned it! At the
reception the bridesmaids would pin on
each guest a sprig of rosemary, which
symbolized fidelity and constancy.
Sometimes a collection would be taken
up to buy a cradle for the first child.
Then came a virtual orgy of eating,
drinking, dancing and visiting. It
required great stamina to survive a
Czech wedding, but few invitations
were ever turned down.

THE ROLNICKA
PODPORUJICI JEDNOTA
Sv. ISIDOR
1901

The SPJST and the K.J.T. fraternal
orders appealed to large segments of
the Czech community. There were
others that were more specialized. The
Rolnicka Podporujici Jednota Sv. Isidor
(Agricultural Benevolent Society of St.
Isidor) was organized by farmers in
Lavaca County in 1901. The society
had two purposes. It would encourage
agriculture and horticulture through
fairs and livestock exhibitions; it would
provide low cost life insurance through
periodic assessments. The Society of St.
Isidor opened its membership to men
between the ages of 18 and 55 who
spoke the Czech language. The society
was never large; at its peak in the
mid-1930's it had only 37 lodges and a
total of 1,020 members.

UNITY OF THE
BRETHREN IN TEXAS
1903

In 1855 at Ross Prairie, between
Ellinger and Fayetteville, Czech
Protestants held the first Unity of the
Brethren service in Texas. The
Brethren's history dates back to the
Czech reformer John Hus in the 15th
century. Although the Hussite reforms
were swept away by a series of religious
wars, Czech Protestants continued to
practice their religion in secret. When
the Brethren came to Texas they estab-
lished independent churches, but no
denominational organization. They
built their first church at Wesley in
1866. The Brethren prospered, but
efforts to create a cohesive organiza-
tion failed.

It was not until 1903 that the
Reverend Adolph Chlumsky suc-
ceded in organizing the separate con-
gregations. Born in 1842, Chlumsky
studied for the ministry at seminaries
in Silesia, Hungary, Switzerland and
Vienna, where he also received medi-
cal training. Ordained in 1866, he
served a number of congregations
before coming to Texas in 1889. He
farmed to supplement his pastor's
income, and in 1893 began his efforts
to forge the various congregations into
a union. Ten years later the dream was
realized at Granger, Texas, where
conference delegates created the Unity
of the Brethren in Texas.

STANLEY L. KOSTORYZ
1906

To Stanley L. Kostoryz must go the
credit for the establishment of the large
Corpus Christi Czech community.
Born in Prague, Kostoryz came to the
United States as a young man and set-
tled in Nebraska, where he owned and
edited a Czech-language newspaper.
About 1904 he sold the paper and
immigrated to Texas, settling near
Corpus Christi. Using the proceeds
from the sale of the paper, he pur-
chased 7,700 acres southwest of the
town, then known as the Rabb Ranch.
Kostoryz had the land surveyed and
subdivided, and named it the "Bohe-
mian Colony Lands." He advertised his
colony in Czech-language newspapers
throughout the United States.

In the fall of 1906 the first five
families moved in and began clearing
the brushland. More families moved in, the colony prospered, and a school was built and named for the colony's founder. Bohemian Colony settlers were not greenhorns recently arrived from Europe. Most came from the older Czech settlements in central Texas or from the Midwest.

In 1912 Kostoryz enlarged upon his colonization scheme by purchasing an additional 2,200 acres. Settlers continued to come to the Nueces County settlement, but the costs of promoting the colony were greater than the income from land sales. The enterprise was not financially successful for Kostoryz. He eventually sold his holdings and returned to Czechoslovakia, but he did leave an indelible mark on the Corpus Christi area. There is now a major thoroughfare named in his honor. The original Kostoryz school is gone, but in its place is a modern structure built in 1964 and also named for him.

The tightly knit Czech community supports an active Sokol gymnastics club, and the major Czech fraternal organizations have lodges in the area.

SOKOL
1908

Sokol (Czech for falcon) is an organization which is said to be in close harmony with the ancient Greek concept of life “which combines music, literature and artistic culture for the mind and systematic training for the body.” In Austria-Hungary many Czech social, political and cultural organizations were forbidden. But the authorities allowed the Czechs to establish gymnastic societies. The result in 1862 was the establishment of Sokol, a cultural organization whose motto was “A Sound Mind in a Sound Body.” Under the guise of massed formation gymnastics, Czech leaders taught their young people physical fitness, Czech history and Czech culture.

Sokol came to Texas in 1908. Activities continued to follow the pattern originally set in Europe. The units emphasize physical training, dancing, singing and the teaching of Czech culture. Members of the units, found in virtually all Czech communities, perform at various feasts, festivals and parades across the state.

CZECHS IN WEST TEXAS
1910

Shortly after the turn of the century Czech pioneers from central and south Texas began moving to the newly opened plains of west Texas. Farmland was much cheaper on the south plains than in the older, more settled areas of the state. By 1910 Czechs were established in settlements in the Panhandle and in far northwest Texas.

JOHN PLISKA
1912

John Pliska, a Czech from Austria, built an airplane in his blacksmith shop at Midland, Texas, in 1912 and flew it over the Staked Plains. This was one of the first airplanes to be built and flown in Texas. In 1910 William Randolph Hearst had offered a $50,000 prize to the first pilot completing a coast-to-coast flight in 30 days. Late the following year Robert G. Fowler—competing for the jackpot—set his Curtiss plane down on the outskirts of Midland. John Pliska was watching along with an ex-cowboy named Gray Coggin. Pliska had served in the Austrian balloon and glider corps before emigrating to America. Together the two men built a flying machine, with a few innovations of their own. The Curtiss plane had two propellers; they used one. They also faced the prop edge with metal—probably the first time this was done. They used muslin on the wings instead of canvas.

In 1912 Pliska and Coggin hitched a ride on a cattle train to Sandusky, Ohio, where they conferred with officials of the Roberts Engine Company, the only enterprise in America then building airplane engines. Later, on a test flight near Midland, the muslin-covered wings “leaked” air, so shellac was applied. Also, the engine could not
really deliver enough power to lift the aircraft high enough into the dry west Texas air. The test flights ended a month later near Odessa, when the plane could do no more than skip along the improvised runway. The machine was dismantled and preserved in Pliska's blacksmith shop until 1965, when it was reassembled and installed in a museum at the Midland-Odessa airport.

Dr. John J. Shiller (left) in his drugstore at Rowena, c. 1915.

JOHN JAROSLAV SHILLER, M.D.
1913

In 1903 when John J. Shiller, M.D., opened his first office in Praha, Texas, an office visit cost $1.00; a house call was $2.00. When he closed his practice in Rowena 56 years later, the price of an office visit had skyrocketed, and doctors no longer made house calls.

The son of immigrant parents, John Jaroslav Shiller was born on a farm near Rice's Crossing in Williamson County on January 23, 1877. His parents were determined that their son would not be a cotton farmer. John began his studies in a one-room rural schoolhouse. He progressed to business college and prep schools in Austin before entering The University of Texas Medical Department in Galveston. After the school was washed away in the hurricane of 1900, he transferred to Tulane Medical School in New Orleans where he received his degree in 1903.
During his first year of practice in Praha in southern Fayette County, Dr. Shiller charged patients a total of $180. He managed to collect only about half of that, including some corn for his horse and some farm produce—pigs, chickens, eggs—to help feed his family.

After seven years in Moravia, Texas, and a brief time in Victoria, Shiller and his wife Annie Louise moved to the thriving west Texas Czech community of Rowena, located in Runnels County. There he set up an office, opened a pharmacy which he later sold to his brother, and remained an active citizen until shortly before his death in 1975.

Soon after his retirement Dr. Shiller recalled those early days in Runnels County. The charge for delivering a baby—and he delivered 1,400 in his lifetime—was $10.00, plus $1.00 per mile for out-of-town visits. The surcharge was well deserved, considering the times his car mired in the muddy roads and he had to dig himself out.

In 1971 Dr. Shiller donated his office equipment, medical library and medical saddlebags to the SPJST Museum in Temple. For him these items were a historic legacy, a reminder of the strength and courage of those Czechs who left Europe to build new homes in Texas.

HUS MEMORIAL SCHOOL
1914

Near the turn of the century Czech Moravian Brethren minister Adolph Chlumsky and his wife began instructing a few young girls in Bible study, music and the Czech language at their home near Brenham. As an outgrowth of this program, the Reverend Josef Barton and the Reverend Josef Heger officially founded and named the Hus Memorial School (Husova Skola) in January 1914. The school—named for the 15th century Czech reformer and martyr John Hus—opened in Granger under the tutelage of its founders. In 1924 the institution moved into permanent quarters in Temple. Students who received Hus School training assisted pastors in Czech Moravian Brethren churches in Granger, Taylor, Caldwell, West, Temple and other Texas towns.

SLAVIC LANGUAGES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS
1915

The Department of Slavic Languages of The University of Texas at Austin is considered to be one of the best in the nation. However, it had not been for the intense interest and shrewd lobbying efforts of a determined band of Czech students, creation of the department would have been delayed many years.

The effort to create a chair of Slavic languages began in 1909. Five Czech students organized the club, Cechie. The group met twice a month to study Czech history, sing Czech songs and speak the language. Their first efforts were unsuccessful. In 1913, under the leadership of Charles Knizek (later changed to Kinzek), the club revived their lobbying efforts. The students pointed out that some 100,000 Texas Czechs would look with favor upon the establishment of a course in the Czech language. It was not until Knizek took his case to the campus of the opposition and convinced its leaders that the battle was won. An $1,800 appropriation was added to the university budget, and Knizek became the first adjunct professor of Czech and Russian languages.

Today The University of Texas at Austin, Texas A&M University and a number of high schools and junior colleges offer courses in the Czech language. Czech remains a living language among the descendants of the pioneers of 1851.
In 1914, at the age of 22, Dominik Naplava came to Houston. When World War I broke out Dominik was one of the first to try to enlist. Rejected because he lacked complete citizenship, Naplava went north and enlisted in the Canadian army. In November of 1917 he was killed in France, the first Texan to die in World War I. A memorial table commemorating his devotion stands at the City Hall in Houston.

1919

The Southern Pacific train rolled into the station shortly after 2:00 a.m. on a sultry July night. The sleepy soldiers were welcomed with the sound of martial music and the voices of 500 Czech Texans shouting, “Nazdar—Vitame Vas” (To success—Welcome). Czech girls dressed in festive costumes escorted the somewhat bewildered men. The Red Cross and other volunteers passed out food, drink, cigarettes and gifts to the soldiers. The mayor’s representative and a committee of Houston Czechs officially welcomed the famed Czech Legionnaires to Texas.

The men of the legion were the embodiment of the long-held hopes of the Czech people for a nation of their own—a free and independent Czechoslovakia. In two years the Czechoslovak Legion had achieved worldwide fame. The unit’s chronology was familiar to all Czech Texans—drafted into the Austrian army, deserted to the Russians, fought on the Eastern front, engaged in armed battles with Red forces along the Trans-Siberian railway, guarded allied supplies at Vladivostok during the allied intervention in Siberia, and now on their way home via the United States.

After a two-hour stopover the soldiers enttrained. The train pulled out of the station to the strains of the Czech national anthem. The words had a special meaning for the soldiers—they had been away for several years; their old country was no more; a new nation awaited them.

The anthem also had a special meaning to the hundreds of Czech Texans who stood, some with tears streaming down their faces, on the train platform. They too had been away; the empire they left no longer existed. The closest many of them would ever come to the new Czechoslovak Republic was that meeting in the early hours of July 15, 1919. Their home now was Texas.

1930’s

In the 1930’s it was estimated that 95 percent of the Czechs in Texas were farmers. From the beginning they had settled in the rich, blackland cotton belt of central Texas. As a family moved into an area, they would find agricultural work until they could scrape together enough money to purchase their first piece of land. Thrift and hard work enabled them to expand their holdings quickly. The Czechs were progressive farmers who used the most improved implements and methods of cultivation. They were recognized for many years as the backbone of the Texas cotton industry.

FOLK DRESS
AND COSTUME

The colorful folk dress commonly associated with Bohemia and Moravia was worn only on special festive occasions in Europe. When they came to Texas many Czechs left these costumes behind. The few that were brought were worn infrequently. For a time during the early years of this century their use was extremely rare. The feeling in the Czech community was that if they were going to be Americans, they would dress like Americans.

In the last two decades this trend has reversed; the use of folk costumes has increased dramatically. The ladies’ clothes generally consist of a skirt in a multicolored pattern or solid hue; a vest, usually black with gold or lace trim; a blouse with a large collar, ruffles on the sleeves and embroidery all over; and a brightly decorated cap. The men are no less brilliantly attired.
Their pants are nearly always a solid shade, but decorated or patterned to suit the individual gentleman’s taste. More so than ever before, the Czechs bring out their costumes, adding the cheerful color of a festive European village to the Texas countryside.

**DR. HENRY R. MARESH—HISTORIAN OF THE TEXAS CZECHS 1934**

Dr. Henry Maresh, according to all accounts, was a fine doctor and skilled surgeon. But perhaps his greatest contribution was his collaboration on a history of the Czech people in Texas. The *Czech Pioneers of the Southwest* is one of the most accurate and informative books dealing with the history of a Texas ethnic group. Dr. Maresh traveled across the state in the early 1930’s, gathering first-hand information from interviews with surviving pioneers and their descendants. He conversed with fellow Czechs in their own language and took notes in longhand. Henry Maresh was such an unassuming person, that after the book was completed, he was reluctant to have his name listed as coauthor, feeling that such an act would seem pretentious. The volume was published in 1934.

Maresh, the son of immigrant parents, was born in Caldwell, Texas, in 1890. As a youth he wanted to become a minister, but as he grew older he set his sights on a medical career. Henry and his brother, Rudolph E. Maresh, taught public school in Czech communities to save money for medical training. They attended The University of Texas at Austin, where Henry became the first student to sign up for Charles Knizek’s Czech language course. In 1919 the brothers graduated from The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston. After a stint in the army, plus an internship, Henry and Rudolph opened a medical practice in Houston in 1921. They retained the joint practice until Henry’s death in 1957. In addition to his medical service, Henry was a prominent businessman. He was president of the Liberty Loan and Building Association, and owner of the Maresh Machine and Welding Company. He was also a widely-known Methodist layman. Dr. Maresh remained active in Czech affairs and in medicine until shortly before his death.

**CZECH PASTRY BAKE AT TAYLOR**

The Czech people are famous for their pastries, one of which is the *kolache*. Baking this pastry is a skill practiced several times a year by a number of Czech women’s groups. The Christian Sisters of the Taylor Brethren Church hold a *kolache* bake quarterly to raise money for the church. The fillings—poppy seed, pineapple, apricot, cottage cheese and prune—are prepared the day before the bake. Several women arrive as early as 4:00 a.m. to begin making the first batch of dough. No one uses a recipe. *Kolaches* are made from a formula handed down from generation to generation in Czech families. The Christian Sisters work in assembly-line fashion. Some make the dough, others cut it into the desired round shape, a third group puts in the filling, and one woman operates the large oven which holds 14 pans of *kolaches*. After the *kolaches* are baked, each is given a generous brushing of butter. By mid-morning people are waiting in lines to buy the more than 8,000 *kolaches* which will be baked before the day ends.

**THE ENNIS POLKA FESTIVAL**

On the first weekend in May of each year, the town of Ennis, Texas, entertains over 30,000 visitors celebrating the National Polka Festival. Czechs, mostly of the third and fourth genera-
Czech pastry bake at Taylor in Texas, comprise between 35 and 40 percent of the local population in this town southeast of Dallas. They provide much of the food, music and street dancing which leave participants in a state of happy exhaustion. Activities also include a main street parade, performances by Sokol tumblers and gymnasts, and the blare of many, many polka bands. The bands play continuously from 8:30 on Saturday night until the early morning hours, beginning again at 2:00 on Sunday afternoon. The restaurant of Ennis offers typical Czech dishes for the weekend. The offerings include klobasa sausage, zapecene veprovi (cooked pork), kysely zelí (sauerkraut), damaci chleba (homemade bread) and pečivo (pastries)—including the famous Czech kolache. Begun in 1967, the Ennis Polka Festival has become a much-anticipated event for Texas Czechs and others who enjoy good music, good food and good fun.

FRANK J. MALINA—TEXAN ON THE NEW FRONTIERS

One of the most spectacular frontiersman of our time is Dr. Frank J. Malina, who pioneered in rocketry and space exploration when these were merely topics in science fiction. Then, in true pioneer style, he left this field to go in search of new worlds to conquer. For several years he worked in the area of international cooperation, achieving a position of leadership in this field. Again he moved on, to explore the relationship between art, science and technology, so that modern man can begin to understand, through art, the strange new world into which he has been thrust so suddenly.

Malina's father came to Texas from his native Moravia at the age of 16, in 1897. He became a musician and, eventually, director of the Brenham High School band. In 1920 he took his family back to Czechoslovakia on a visit, bought a small hotel and decided to stay there. Young Frank's teachers soon discovered his exceptional mind and advised the family that he should be given every educational opportunity. The family moved back to Texas in 1925, in order to accomplish this end. In 1930, after graduating from Brenham High School, young Malina entered nearby Texas A&M. In 1934 he received his bachelor of science degree in mechanical engineering. At the California Institute of Technology he won two advanced degrees and a Ph.D. in aeronautics in 1940.

While still in college young Malina became fascinated with the possibilities of rocket propulsion. From his pioneering projects came the jet-assisted takeoff which presaged true jet flight, the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, our earliest rocket-propelled missiles, and the WAC Corporal, America's first successful high-altitude sounding rocket. Then, with this field successfully opened, Malina turned his attention to the Natural Sciences Department of UNESCO at Paris, working on the problems of overly humid and arid lands. By 1951 he was head of the Division of Natural
Concerned by the lack of communication between artists and the growing chasm between the arts and sciences, Dr. Malina, in 1967, founded *Leonardo, The International Journal of the Contemporary Artist*. He has been its editor from the beginning.

At present Frank J. Malina of Brenham and Paris is convinced that man must understand this new world of science and space in order to survive in it, and that this understanding must be both intellectual and emotional. His kinetic art is a tool for accomplishing this purpose.

**CZECH TEXANS TODAY**

The exodus of Czechs from rural communities began during World War I and accelerated during and after World War II. The small farming communities, though they possessed a certain amount of rural charm and pastoral atmosphere, did not offer job or career opportunities for the younger generation. A number of the towns established by Czech pioneers in the 19th century are virtual ghost towns, many marked only by a highway sign. Often a few older people remain, but the young ones are now concentrated in the great urban centers of Texas. Today one can look in vain on a highway map for communities which were once vital centers of Czech economic and cultural life: Anton, Dubina, Frydek, Praha, Haiduk, Hostyn, Kovar, Kutna Hora, Marak, Mikeska, Moravan, Moravia, Nechanitz, Pisek, Novohrad, Ratibor, Roznov, Smetana, Tabor . . .

But if one looks in the telephone directories of any Texas city or town, he will find a good sprinkling of Czech names: Breska, Cervenka, Houdek, Jalufka, Matula, Labaj, Skrabanek and many others. In these cities and in some of the smaller towns as well, Czech pride and traditions are kept very much alive by Czech social and fraternal organizations, and through such annual festivities as the Czech celebration, at Dallas, Ennis, New Braunfels, Praha and Corpus Christi. The thread of Texas's Czech heritage has been woven into the cloth of the general Texas experience. It still remains a distinctive thread, which can be seen and traced by those who look with knowing eyes.
INDEX

Italic numerals identify illustrations.

Agricultural Benevolent Society of
St. Isidor
see Rolnicka Podporujici Jednota
Sv. Isidor
Alexander (ship) 5
Alleyton, Texas 7
American Folk Life Festival 14
Anton, Texas 23
Austin County, Texas 6
Austin, Texas 18, 19
Austria-Hungary, Peoples of (map) 3
Baca, Frank 14
Baca's Band 13-14, 13
Barton, Rev. Josef 19
Bastrop, Texas 11
Batla, Tom 7
Bergmann, Ernst 5-6
Bluff, Texas
see Hostyn, Texas
Bohemia 3, 4, 5, 6, 20
Bohemian Colony, Texas 16-17
Brackettville, Texas 5
Bratislavs Lity (newspaper) 13
Brethren Church
see Katolicka Jednota Texaska
Cadiz, Joseph 13
Caldwell, Texas 19, 21
Cat Spring, Texas 6, 7, 8
Cechie (student club) 19
Cerma, Bohemia 6
Ceska Katolicka Jednota Texaska
see Katolicka Jednota Texaska
Ceskoslovensky Ctenarsky Spolecn
Chlumsky, Rev. Adolph 16, 16, 19
Christian Sisters of the Taylor
Brethren Church
see Taylor Brethren Church
Chromcik, Rev. Josef 12-13, 14
Chromcik School 12, 13
Civil War, U.S. 4, 5, 7, 9-10, 12
Coggin, Gray 17
Cooking, Czech 21, 22, 22
Corpus Christi, Texas 16, 23
Costumes, Czech
see Folk dress, Czech
Cotton farming and industry 8, 9, 10,
11, 12, 14, 20, 20
Czech Catholic Union of Texas
see Katolicka Jednota Texaska
Czech language and literature 3, 11, 13,
15, 19
Czech Parliament 5, 6
Czech Pioneers of the Southwest 5, 21
Czechoslovak Legion 20
Czechoslovakian Reading Club
see Ceskoslovensky Ctenarsky Spolecn
Dallas, Texas 23
Del Rio, Texas 5
Dignowity, Albert, Wentzel 5
Dignowity, Texas (McCann) 4-5, 4
Dignowity, Anthony Francis (Frank) 5
Dignowity, Anthony Michael 4, 4
Doubrava, Ferdinand, 10, 10
Dress, Czech
see Folk dress, Czech
Dubina, Texas 8, 9, 12, 23,
Back cover
Ennis Polka Festival 17, 21-22, 22, 23
Ennis, Texas 21-22, 22, 23
Farming 8, 8, 20, 20
Fayette County, Texas 7, 8, 9, 12, 19
Fayetteville, Texas 7, 7, 13, 14, 15, 15,
23
Folk dress, Czech 20-21, 21
Fredericksburg, Texas 4
Frydek, Texas 23
Galveston, Texas 3, 9, 13, 18
Germans in Texas 3, 4, 6, 13
Gleuckman, FJ. 13
Gangler, Texas 16, 19, 20
Gulf Coast and Santa Fe Railroad 9
Haiduk, Texas 23
Haidusek, Augustin 12, 12, 13
"Harmony House," San Antonio,
Texas 4
Hegar, Rev. Josef 19
Hermann, Augustine 3
Holesov, Moravia 7
Holik, J.J. Cose
Hostyn, Texas 7-8, 9, 14, 23
Houston, Texas 20, 21
Hus, John 16, 19
Hus Memorial School (Husova Skola)
19
Immigration to Texas, Czech 3, 5,
6-7, 10
International Academy of
Astronautics 23
Jet Propulsion Laboratory 22
K.J.T.
see Katolicka Jednota Texaska
Katolicka Jednota Texaska 8, 13, 14,
14, 15, 16
Kinzek, Charles
see Knizek, Charles
Knizek, Charles 19, 19, 21
Kolaches 21, 22, 22
Kopperl, Charles 9
Kopperl, Herman B. 9
Koppril, Isabella (Dyer) 9
Koppril, Moritz 9, 9
Kostoryz, Stanley L. 16-17, 17
Kovar, Texas 23
Kreuzburg (Cross Mountain) 4
Kutna Hora 23
Lacjac, Rev. B.E. 11
La Grange, Texas 8, 12, 13, 15
Lanskrone District, Czechoslovakia 6
Lavaca County, Texas 16, 16
Leonardo, The International Journal of the
Contemporary Artist 23
Lesikar, Josef L. 6-7, 6
home at Nelsonville 7
Lesikar, Therese (Schiller) 6
Liberty Loan and Building
Association 21
Lidiak, Frank 13
Lidiak, John 9-10, 10
Lidiak, Josef 9, 9
Lipman, A. 9
Long Prairie, Texas
see Nechanitz, Texas
Malina, Frank 22-23, 23
Marak, Texas 23
Maresh, Henry R. 5, 21, 21
Maresh, Rudolph E. 21
Maresh Machine and Welding
Company 21
Marshall, Bruce (illustrations) 8, 10
Matejowsky, Wenzel 11-12
store 11, 11, 12
Menzl, Rev. Gottfried 3-4
Mexican War 4
Midland, Texas 17, 18
Mikeska, Texas 23
Moravan, Texas 23
Moravia 3, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14,
20, 22
Moravia, Texas 19, 23
Moravsko Novej 6
Muldoon, Fr. Michael 7
Naplava, Dominik 20, 20
Nasinec (newspaper) 13
Navidad River 8, 12
Nechanitz, Moravia 11
Nechanitz, Texas 11, 23
Needville, Texas 15
Nepomuk, Bohemia 6
New Amsterdam (New York City) 3
New Braunfels, Texas 3, 23
New Ulm, Texas 7
Newspapers, Czech-Texan 3, 12, 13
Novohrad, Texas 23
Odessa, Texas 18
Olomouc, Moravia 12
Opocensky, Rev. Joseph 10
Peter, Joseph 8
Peter, Joseph, Jr. 8-9, 9
Peter, Mrs. Joseph, Jr. 9
Pisek, Texas 23
Pliska, John 17-18, 18
Polansky, Alois 14, 14
Polansky, Johanna 14
Polish uprising, 1830 4
Prague, Czechoslovakia 5, 6, 11, 16
Prana, Texas 18, 19, 23
Rabb Ranch, Texas 16
Ratibor, Texas 23
Revolution of 1848, Czech 5, 5, 6
Reymershoffer, Jan 7
Reymershoffer, Jan, Jr. 7
Reymershoffer family 10
Rice's Crossing, Texas 18
Rolnicka Podporujici Jednota Sv. Isidor
16, 16
Roman Catholicism on the Texas
frontier 3-4
Ross Prairie, Texas 16
Rowena, Texas 18, 18, 19
Roznov, Texas 23
Sv.
Runnels County, Texas 19
SPJST
see Slavonic Benevolent Order of the State of Texas
St. John's Parish, Fayetteville, Texas 13
San Antonio, Texas 4
Shiller, Annie Louise 19, 19
Shiller, John Jaroslav 18-19, 18, 19
drugstore 18, 19
Slavonic Benevolent Order of the State of Texas 15, 15, 16
Smetana, Texas 23
Sokol 17, 17, 22
Strouzny, Silesia 6
Sloboeda (newspaper) 12, 13, 13
Tabor, Texas 23
Taylor Brethren Church 19, 21
taylor, Texas 15, 19, 21, 22
Temple, Texas 19
Texas (newspaper) 13
Texas National Bank 9
Tuberculosis cure 14
UNESCO 22-23
Slovakia Benevolent Order of the State of Texas 13, 15, 16
Museum, Temple, Texas 19
Slovan (newspaper) 13
Texan (newspaper) 13
Texas National Bank 9
Tuberculosis cure 14
UNESCO 22-23
Slovanska Podporujici Jednota Statu Texas
Unity of the Brethren 13, 16
University of Texas at Austin 15, 19

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