



Czechoslovak Area Genealogy Club of Southern California Newsletter

Newsletter Jan 2024

The Czechoslovak Area Genealogy Club (CAGC) is a non-profit, volunteer organization, dedicated to genealogical research of peoples of the geographical area formerly known as Czechoslovakia. This includes Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, Slovakia and Ruthenia. CAGC encourages cooperative research, but does not provide professional (fee) research services. Website: www.Cagc-ca.org/

Meetings are usually held bi-monthly on the first Saturday of the month at 1:30pm, Zoom hybrid meetings, in-person & Zoom at the Orange FamilySearch Library (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints/Mormon) on Yorba St. If you aren't doing any research but just want to meet some very nice people from the Czech and Slovak lands attend meetings anyway! We try to make the programs fun and interesting for everyone. We hope to see you all at future meetings.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

Looking ahead to our 2024 meeting dates:
Feb 3rd, Apr 6th, Jun 1st, Aug 3rd, Oct 5th;
Dec 7th Annual CAGC Christmas Face-to-Face Luncheon.

Member Highlight Edition

FUTURE EVENTS:

- **RootsTech: Feb 29-Mar 2, 2024** Free virtual event. (No new Czech specific classes, but can still see church records from 2022 and this 2023 class on Moravia research: <https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/moravia>)
- **Appleton WI Public Library: Feb 10th @ noon PST.** This presentation examines a combination of family stories, photographs & to rebuild the journey of an immigrant Czech family in Ohio and Nebraska. (must register in advance for this program by clicking the link www.bit.ly/3EC3JgS)
- **Genealogy:** www.conferencekeeper.org/conferences/
- **Southern Calif Jamboree:** was held in Oct 2023 and plans for the 2024 conference are on hold due to resignation of 2 co-chairs Alice Fairhurst and Diane Adamson.

BOARD MEMBERS 2024

- President: Annette Gathright
 Vice President/Secretary: Mary Shade
 Treasurer: Farah Takriti
 Webmaster: Mary Shade
 Virtual Coordinator: Linda McMahon
 Board Member: **Vacant** (any Volunteers??)
 Board Member; JoAnn Jones
 Board Member: Emeritus: Frank Vogel

President's Message:

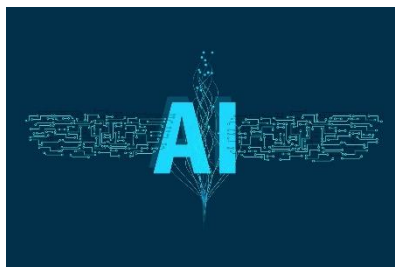
Happy New Year to all of our members! Those of you who came to our Christmas party know we had a good turn out and a good time. I hope we can continue to see all of you at our meetings. Mare has been doing a great job arranging for speakers and editing our newsletter! But remember, your help with these talks is always welcome.

Don't forget RootsTech is coming next month. You can attend in person (for a conference fee) or online (for free). Attending in person is always an exciting thing to do, but I understand that the large number of attendees and resulting crowded conditions is not fun! There is likely to be many topics on the hot items of the day among them A.I. and DNA. You can sign up by going to <http://www.familysearch.org/en/blog/rootstech-2024-registration> . The online presentations are listed so you can plan your viewing. If you find a particularly good presentation, let us know so we can share with the other members.... They will be available for later viewing.

Are you ready to write your family history? For most people it is a daunting task. For those whose goal is to write something, help is on its way which may ease the effort. Since our last newsletter where I talked about the use of A.I. tools, there is more information about A.I. tools. Many webinars are now available to describe their capabilities and help users use them effectively. The big difference between a web browser and an AI tool is that the browser gathers and presents all information it finds on the search subjects, and AI essentially manipulates the information in a requested manner. It is an organizer, extractor, translation and transcriber tool. It focuses on specific use of gathered information. Currently there are several varieties, Microsoft's Copilot, Edge AI, Google's Bard, Perplexity and OpenAI's ChatGPT (discussed in the July CAGC Newsletter). Additional versions are being developed, among them a version by Amazon.

Recently, I watched a webinar by Steve Little, AI Program Director, National Genealogical Society. He has training and background in applied linguistics (natural language processing and computation linguistics, two foundations of artificial intelligence), language and literature, computers and programming, writing and storytelling, and genealogy and family history. His talk was "A.I. and Genealogy: The Basics and a Bit Beyond". he discussed the power of Artificial Intelligence, its limits and how it can be harnessed for genealogy. He explored how AI's Large Language Models (LLMs) enhance efficiency, productivity, and creativity through its ability in OCR cleanup, data extraction, narrative report cleanup and translations. He also talked about the future of A.I. in genealogy.

James Tanner, of the BYU Family History Library, provided a virtual class entitled "Writing a Family History Using AI Chat". He available at the BYU Library; it is video would be available in their



indicated that a handout would be also possible that eventually a collection of instructional videos.

President's Message (cont.):

Thomas MacEntee has lectured to numerous Genealogical groups on "AI and Genealogy: Trouble Ahead?" His presentation reviewed what AI is and why you should be concerned. He also listed some of what A.I. can do and how to use it. Below is some of the info he provided.

As I indicated, these tools have numerous applications that uses existing data. Those who are writers have been using it for years for spelling and, grammar check. MyHeritage uses it to colorize images, photo enhance, photo dating, photo animation, and voice simulation. Photo identification is also an A.I. tool used now in security applications.

We all know how quickly the 1950 census indexing occurred. This used OCR techniques with A.I. tools to transcribe the census much faster than the 1940 manually transcribed index was generated. A.I. can also translate from a language to another... many of us have been using Google's translation tool to translate online pages and various text from one language to another. So, what A.I. can't yet do is transcribe, and then translate, scanned images in other written languages! I think it is just a matter of time to have A.I. perform that function to generate documents from written in a foreign language that are fairly accurate in translation.

A.I. also has the ability to generate images from a description of the desired result. No longer does one have to use photo enhancement tools to get a desired image... A composite photo for a specified time frame can be generated with separate images taken at various times.

As far as writing is concerned, A.I. can generate narratives based on facts, or write to a selected style (so your family story can be written in the style of Shakespeare or Hemingway) if you desire, or to the narrative level of a 5 year old). You can ask it to generate a specific format (listing data, in columns or formatting it in a matrix).

You can ask it for suggestions, request it provide information as a poem, and ask questions of it. The smart thing to do, if it is the factual kind, is to verify it by checking the resource it used. A.I. has a tendency to "hallucinate", or lie! But if you ask it what it can be used for in genealogy, it can provide a useful list of applications.

You "talk" to it like you were conversing with a cohort. By giving it "prompts", you guide it to perform the tasks you want. You have to learn a structured way of asking it to perform effectively to get the results you want.

Your process is as follows: a) Be specific in what you want as results, b) Provide performance context on 'how' you want it to act (want to act like a professor in genealogy.. an award winning author); c) Define the output format - text, list, image style;

So, what is future for A.I.? How about DNA triangulation? And the transcription/translate handwriting already mentioned; generation of source citations for those who want to cite everything; for the fans of the F.A.N. club, use records to discover connections; identification of ancestors in old

President's Message (cont.):

photos having no other samples of a person; suggesting non yet digitized records to search: and mapping event dates to locations and events.

Another A.I. application I recently heard of is "Emulate Me" this software package integrates several of the tools available on MyHeritage. It uses a photo of your choice, and animates it and activates a vocal capability. When you provide a voice sample, and text (like a bit of your family history), the app applies a synthesized voice to reading the text and animates the photo appropriately. While I have not used it, I have seen the results when someone I know provided the necessary items to the emulation software. It looked quite realistic. What I saw that could be improved is the synchronization of the lips to the words being read, and a smoother movement. It looked like a video with the audio and video out of sync. <https://www.emulateme.ai/> If anyone experiments with it, please provide a review (and maybe a video of your results to share with our members).

What are trouble spots with A.I.? While records can be found, finding data references is still difficult and users may not ID A.I. generated data for their references. Copyright issues are of concern; US courts have ruled A.I. generated content cannot be copyrighted, but content creators have sued A.I. platforms for using A.I. content in lieu of authors and performers; using A.I. for tracking searches and using private data is possible; A.I. is costly in terms of hardware costs and power use related issues.

A.I. is not going away and the use of its capabilities are promising. The trick is to keep it from becoming a trouble while its benefits are used.

Some resources for learning more about this topic are available here:

- Carole McCulloch: Chat GPT-4 and DALL-E3: an AI Genealogist

Tip: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qni_AR9qiKU

- Mark Thompson: Simplify Complex Family Tree Searches Using

ChatGPT: <https://makingfamilyhistory.com/simplify-complex-family-tree-searches-using-chatgpt>

- Ontario Genealogical Society 2024: Artificial Intelligence and Genealogy

Day: <https://conference2024.ogs.on.ca/2023/10/10/artificial-intelligence-and-genealogy-day/>

- Steve Little: First Blush: ChatGPT Plus with DALL-E 3: <https://aigenealogyinsights.com/2023/10/13/first-blush-chatgpt-plus-with-dall-e-3>

- Thomas MacEntee: A Genealogist's Guide to Artificial

Intelligence: <https://familytreemagazine.com/resources/software/ai-and-genealogy/>

- Bard https: <https://bard.google.com/chat>

- ChatGPT <https://chat.openai.com/>

- How do I cite generative AI in MLA style? - Modern Language Association of America <https://style.mla.org/citing-generative-ai/>

- Perplexity <https://www.perplexity.ai>

- SHOCKING RESULTS! Should you use AI Chatbots for Genealogy? - Genealogy

- Gems <https://lisalouisecooke.com/2023/06/22/ai-chatbots-genealogy/>

[AI Update: And should you use ChatGPT or Bard for genealogy research lisalouisecooke.com/2023/07/15/ai-chatgpt-bard-genealogy-episode-278/](https://lisalouisecooke.com/2023/07/15/ai-chatgpt-bard-genealogy-episode-278/)

President's Message (cont.):

So, get started in using one of the A.I. programs to write your family history.

Until I have a tool to translate handwritten foreign language documents, I will work at translating printed resources. When I was in the Czech republic last April, I went to a museum close to one of my ancestral homes. I specifically asked for what books they had for places in that area. One they had was a history of the ancestral town. I thought only a heartbeat before I decided I had to have it. Unfortunately, it was in Czech, but I thought maybe I'd find help in translating it.. and then thought it would take a while for anyone to read it to me, translating as they read. That would take a long time, and a long effort for my translator. Then I remembered my son pulled out his phone to read a tourist sign while we were in Rome....but I didn't know what he did to be able to do that. At Christmas when I saw my daughter, she showed me the trick... if you have an I-phone, you can do it to..... so, when you find the search function, start to type in "translate'. When options come up 'translate', select Google Translate, and on next screen, you will see the languages you can select from. Select Czech and close window. You will see a screen with the two languages - if not Czech select left button, and in a new window, select Czech and close window. Back in the Google Translate window you will see buttons for verbal and video translation at bottom. To read the translation, select the **camera** button. Use You should see "Google Lens" on your screen, and whatever your camera sees along the Czech to English indicator. If you point the camera at Czech text, your screen will show the translated text. Of course, you can translate any language and also set up the translate direction to translate from English to Czech! Have fun playing with the app.

This is from of friend of mine who is a genealogist and lives in Washington where it is pretty frosty and wet now. "Dwell on the beauty of life. Watch the stars, and see yourself running with them." - Marcus Aurelius.

I hope you see yourself running with your family members who are the stars in your life and make them shine as you write about them.

Annette Gathright
President CAGC

WELCOME NEW CAGC MEMBERS!

- John B.**
- Joni S.**
- Barbara**
- Monika**
- Sarah**
- Nikko**
- Shanina**



USCIS Update-Good News!

According to Rich Venezia, founder of www.Records Not Revenue U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) www.final rule that included a reduction in fees for the USCIS Genealogy Program, where an Index Search will drop from \$65 to \$30, if filed online. Also, Record Requests filed online will now cost \$30 per record. This is a 54% cut in fees to access the historical records held by USCIS. (Thank you Melanie!)

2023–REVIEW- PAST CAGC MEETINGS

Feb 4, 2023, We had a round-table type discussion of those who had “Hired a Researcher in the Czech or Slovak Republic”.

Apr 1, 2023, Speaker: Iveta Blahutova, Midwest Genealogy Society and CGSI Educator on Czech/Slovak Genealogy methods. Her information was so detailed we were all ready to dive in and use her links.

Jun 3, 2023, "Self-Publishing: Sharing Your Family History with Relatives", Speaker/Author Nancy Carlberg. Nancy provided research tips for preparing your family history to either publish it on-line or in print. She helped us find the best way to make our family histories available for our relatives.

Aug 5, 2023, Brickwalls meeting where members share their issues and resources.

FACEBOOK BOOK CLUB:



By Farah Takriti

CAGC member Farah Takriti had an inspiration and started a Czech and Slovak Culture book club on Facebook!

<https://m.facebook.com/groups/667259275344121/?ref=share&mibextid=S66gvF>

Czech and Slovak Culture virtual book club to read and discuss books in English, about Czech and Slovak culture and heritage, as well as translated books written by Czechoslovak authors. It is open to anyone who is interested in learning about our beautiful culture. Feel free to join on Facebook!

Farah Takriti, our new Treasurer discussed the Zipbooks program where a book is purchased off of Amazon by the library and loaned to the user. M. Shade demonstrated the use of GenTeam and the Czech Archive for M.Abbett.

Oct 7, 2023, “Mysterious Codes- Passenger Manifests” , speaker Christine Cohen. Christine provided a very detailed presentation helping us to see all of the extra information we may have been missing from our passenger lists.

Dec 3, 2023 CAGC Christmas Luncheon at Mimi’s café we were honored to have special guests from both the Czech and Slovak Republic Consulates: Czech General Consul Jaroslav Olsa, Jr and Honorary Consul of Slovak Republic Ben Lyon. An excellent time with 27 attendees!

Zipbooks

Farah Takriti gave us an overview of the Zip Books program (in California only) to obtain books from Amazon on Czech and Slovak culture at the August CAGC meeting.

Zip Books Link: www.Zip Books - California State Library

Under the Zip Books program, patrons request books that the library does not own. The library then orders the book from Amazon, and the book is shipped directly to the patron's home. When the patron is finished with the book, (or 6 mos.) the book is returned to the library and added to the collection. Note, some libraries in San Diego or Los Angeles may not be participating. What a great way to spread the Czech & Slovak culture!

In Honor of International Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January 2024

www.Mapotic.com/Stolpersteine [Prague \(map\)](#)

From CAGC member Timothy Hall

Prague's Stolpersteine the book:

www.jewish-eshop.stolpersteine-Book Stumbling-stones-defiant-in-their-memory/

What are Stolpersteine?

Stolpersteine is an art project created by German artist **Gunter Demnig**. It commemorates the victims of National Socialism between 1933 and 1945. These brass-capped blocks bear the name of the victim, their year of birth, date and place of deportation and fate. They are placed outside the person's last chosen place of residence.

Demnig installed the first Stolperstein in Kreuzburg, Berlin in 1996. Today, more than 80,000 are located in over 1,600 towns and cities in 26 countries, making it the largest decentralized monument in the world.

Prague's first Stolperstein was installed on 8 October 2008. The city's 400th was laid on 22 June 2021.

About me: My name is **Trevor Sage**. I was born in London and visited Prague for both business and pleasure many times over the years. During these visits, I fell in love with the beautiful city, and when I retired, I decided to move here. I was introduced to Stolpersteine on a walking tour through Prague's fascinating Jewish Quarter when a guide pointed out the small brass cobblestone-like monuments

placed in the sidewalk. The guide explained that these were memorials to victims of the Nazi Regime, placed where the victims once lived. He said they were originally called in German 'Stolpersteine, stumbling Stones; or in Czech 'Kameny zmizelych', 'Stones of the Disappeared'. This translation seemed sadly accurate as many of the stones I saw were dirty, and it wasn't easy to read the names. In my mind, it appeared as if the names were disappearing for a second time. I felt an urge to clean the brass plaques, but I didn't feel it was my place as a foreigner in my adopted home.

Then, in July 2018, I read an article on the BBC about a gentleman in Salzburg, Gerhard Geier, who cleaned all the Stolpersteine in his city. Like me, Geier is not Jewish, nor was his family affected by the Holocaust. Gerhard's action gave me the inspiration and motivation to follow his example and clean the stones in Prague.

I found the location of 284 stones through research, which I then plotted on a [map](#) (see links) & set about cleaning each one. So many people became interested in my project I set up the Facebook page [Stolpersteine Prague](#).

I felt all the information I had gathered about the Stolpersteine: details about the victims and their deportation(s), photographs of the person, and many touching background stories should be brought together into one single publication. The result of my effort is the book: '**Prague's Stolpersteine – Stumbling Stones – Defiant in their Memory**': www.Googlemaps Stalperstein locations



COOKS CORNER:

Mary Shade's Medovníky cookies

You may have seen Slovak Medovníky at the holidays, spiced, decorated gingerbread-style cookies made with honey, cinnamon and cloves. This was my first attempt at decorating them. The Slavic countries also have a popular Medovník Honey Cake.

Czech/Slovak Culture & Dance Lawn Program Balboa Park, San Diego, Oct 2023



Farah Takriti with Martina Nemecek at the House of Czech & Slovak Republics (HCSR) Cottage Annual Lawn Program in Balboa Park Oct 2023. Martina is a member of the HCSR board and performs dances with the Karicka Folklore group. Mary Shade volunteered at the event and it was nice to see the public enjoying

the food, music and all of the dances. Photos can be seen at the link below:

[www.czechandslovakcottage.com 2023 Lawn Program Oct-14](http://www.czechandslovakcottage.com/2023-Lawn-Program-Oct-14)

www.czechandslovakcottage.com/2023-lawn-program-october-15

WEBINARS:

Southern California Genealogy Society has Jamboree free webinars each month. Here's the link.

<https://www.scsgenealogy.com/webinar/jes-index.html>

Legacy Family Tree Webinars has a webinar list showing: Familytreewebinars.com-Future The Legacy webinars are free for a week after live presentation.

www.Familytreewebinars.com

www.conferencekeeper.org/conferences/

LANGUAGE COURSES:



By Farah Takriti

These are 2 schools that I have taken a Czech classes at before and really enjoyed and benefitted from them. The North Carolina school offers Slovak and Czech classes for adults and kids and they are very economical.

<http://www.czechslovakschoolnc.org/>



SPRING 2024

Register now!

www.czechslovakschoolnc.org
CzechSlovakSchoolNC@gmail.com

Slovak in-person
classes for
CHILDREN
in Charlotte

ONLINE classes:

- Czech for children
- Slovak for children
- Czech for adults
- Slovak for adults



Beginner's Czech Language & Culture I

Learn to read, write, and speak in Czech!

Vítáme Vás (We welcome you!)





CZECHTALK.COM

Translate. Interpret. Connect.

March 29th – June 7th, 2024

Skip the Friday of Memorial Day weekend, May 25th!

Fridays 3pm-4:30pm (Central Time)

10-week, 15-hour group online courses with
Instructor Anna Cooková

Cost: NCSML Member: \$230 • Non-member: \$255
(Compare to Private lessons at \$550)

Become a member at NCSML.org/membership

Contact Anna Cooková for a registration form:
AnnaCookova@gmail.com or 715-651-7044

- Easy online access
- All course materials included
- A systematic approach using parts of speech
- Maximum of 25 students

www.List of Online Group Czech Lessons | czechtalk

Teacher: Anna Cookova only for adults & only for the Czech language

Email: AnnaCookova@gmail.com

CAGC Member Highlights:

By Kathy Bouchard

When I began researching my Slovak roots online in about 2017, I had few expectations, and I had no idea it would lead me to discovering over 50 living cousins. My reason for beginning the research was to honor my deceased mother by finding out more about her background. I was intrigued by something I read about her grandmother, and I wanted to know more about her. Growing up in New York City, I was always told I was Czechoslovakian. I had no idea I was Slovak until I began researching the village of Vrbovce where my grandparents and all my ancestors came from. What a surprise! A series of amazing synchronicities led me to this Journey of the Heart when I visited Slovakia for the first time in June 2018, warmly greeted by “new” family members. I found an advertisement in the newsletter of the “CGSI” regarding a trip to Slovakia in summer 2018. It was a group of people from Little Falls, NY (“Sister City of Myjava, Slovakia”) and all the people on the tour had a family connection to Myjava. When I looked on the map and saw that Myjava was just about 5 miles from Vrbovce, I knew I had to go on this trip!! The trip was already full, so I was placed on a wait list. Within a week or 2, there was a cancellation, and I knew I was meant to be going to Slovakia! My visit to that village in 2018 was the trip of a lifetime where I met a second cousin and a couple of distant cousins. Finding my ancestral home where my grandfather, great grandfather and others before them were born was the highlight of that trip. The house is no longer in my family, but the current owners let me walk around the yard and barn. They live in Bratislava and only come to Vrbovce on weekends. If I had visited

Vrbovce one day before, as originally planned, they would not have been there, and I would not have been able to walk around the property. It was an incredible feeling to walk on the ground where my ancestors had walked! Everything fell into place for me! Slovakia is even more beautiful than I had imagined. I loved the forests, rolling green hills, castles on many hilltops and quaint villages that make you feel like you’re back in the 1700s. The people hung on to their culture, religion, foods and traditions, no matter who was occupying their country.

Now that I’ve been in Slovakia, I feel a strong sense of pride and a much deeper connection to my Slovak heritage. Walking where my ancestors walked, being in the town square of the village where they gathered for marketplaces, sitting in a church pew where they may have sat, walking through the cemetery where they are buried all sparked something inside that generated such a strong feeling of connection to my ancestors. My time in Eastern Europe gave me a better understanding of where and how my ancestors lived, and a great admiration for their perseverance during all the hardships they experienced. They suffered during long journeys to America so they could make a better life for themselves and future generations. I know them better now. They are no longer just names on my Family Tree. They are now very real to me. After returning from that trip, I put together a flash drive for my Slovak cousins, with a short family history,

By Kathy Bouchard (cont.)

details of what I had learned up to that time, copies of photos and videos from my trip to Slovakia, links to my family tree on Ancestry.com, and contact information for people in Slovakia. I continued my research and discovered more second and third cousins through DNA matches at Ancestry.com. In 2019 I spent a month on the East Coast and met many of the “new” cousins I had found. I did a slide show for a group of about 10 of my Slovak cousins in 2019 in NJ, showing them our ancestral village and the beautiful country of Slovakia. I also met “new” cousins in PA. They drove me around Lansford, PA where my mother was born, but the house is no longer there. Still, it made me feel closer to my grandparents and great grandparents who lived there for several years.

I accomplished much of what I set out to do when my research started. I learned a lot more about my great grandmother (my mother’s grandmother). She was born out of wedlock in Vienna, raised as a foundling by a family in Vrbovce, where she lived to be 84! She was an amazing woman who had her last child in 1903 at the age of 43 at a time when many women

didn’t survive childbirth at all! In 1907 her older daughter died, and a year later her husband died, leaving her to raise a young child alone. She outlived him by 36 years, dying of old age in 1944. She must have been an extremely resilient and strong person. I wish I could have known her. What hardy farming stock I come from!

I’m a retired paralegal, so I love research, enjoy investigating mysteries and pouring over documents to find clues about my ancestors’ lives. When I discover something new, I get very excited and happy! I expect I’ll continue with this research long into the future. The FamilySearch records provide me with such detailed information, giving me a much greater insight into how my ancestors lived in Vrbovce and in the U.S., in PA, NJ and NY. I’m so grateful for all that I’ve learned and for having met new cousins who are now part of my life. And I’ll always cherish the sweet memories of my visit to Slovakia. It gives me great joy to continue this journey of discovery, to see what more treasured details I might uncover about my family.

HISTORY:

Czechoslovak Independence Day

On October 28, 1918 that Czechoslovakia was created as the first independent country of Czechs and Slovaks after almost 400 years of being part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. US and Americans of Czech and Slovak ancestry played a crucial role in the creation of the new country. Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, the first president of Czechoslovakia, spent the months leading to the Czechoslovak independence in the US lobbying for the new country. Czechoslovakia later split on January 1, 1993 into two countries: the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic.

CGSI 19th Conference Experiences in Milwaukee Oct 2023:

(1)By Laura Pitvorec

This was my first experience at the CGSI conference. Being honest I was a little overwhelmed with all of the information and found myself asking if I really want to invest the time to find lost relatives in Slovakia, who's church records were burned during the war. We had fun following the Milwaukee Historical tour bus as tickets were sold out. I understand DNA a little more, found many resources and how to document what I find, set up a lunch table for Everything Slovak, met many fellow travelers searching for history and learned about my ancestors. Evening dinner and entertainment with others topped our fun. We were worn out by the end of the evening. In the end it was a fabulous experience and I look forward to continuing my search.



Don & Laura Pitvorec

(2)By Rosemary Ford

I had attended two prior conferences; Pittsburgh in 2001 and Madison, Wisconsin in 2008. The next one will take place in Kansas City in 2025.

I made both day trips before the conference began. It was very interesting to learn that the first Czech immigrants to the US actually settled the Racine area. For those of you whose ancestors initially settled in Wisconsin, I learned of several resources for your genealogy search. This includes the Milwaukee County Historical Society which has an extensive Research Library including naturalization and county records and city directories with archivists available to assist. Contact them at library@milwaukeehistory.net. The Racine Heritage Museum and Archives and the Caledonia Historical Society may also be resources. The Bohemian National Cemetery is also in Caledonia.

The program was very comprehensive from hands-on making kolace and making jewelry from Czech glass beads to a session on document translation and a traveling library with books having been brought from CGSI headquarters as well as numerous workshops each day.

I attended a session on AI and genealogy and learned about Andi, a free AI powered genealogy search tool to help find relevant records and information. The speaker also referred to an article in Internet Genealogy September 2022 issue "AI Tools for Family History Writers."

I was pleased to meet Zusana and Gabriella the founders of Global Slovakia as I have watched many of their programs on zoom over the past two years. See www.globalslovakia.com. They presented several workshops. I attended the one Rooted in Ancient Legacy: Seasonal Traditions in Slovakia. I learned of the tradition of putting a

CGSI 19th Conference Experiences (cont.)

coin under the plate and plan to add that to our Christmas Eve traditions.

I attended another workshop presented by Jan Dus All You Should Know Before Visiting Your Ancestral Village. I got information on services he provides in Slovakia and the Czech Republic and I am planning to request he go to my grandmother's village to take pictures and see if any descendants still live in the house. I was planning to do this but cancelled my trip when the war broke out in the Ukraine. See www.revjan.com

Another interesting workshop was entitled Before the Boat; it explored the role of the shipping industry in ports of Bremen and Hamburg with subagents being found in most villages booking passage of 1.8 million passengers to America between 1885 and 1923. I found it interesting to learn that train routes in the late 19th century were fairly far reaching in most of Austria-Hungary as I had often wondered how my grandfather made the journey from his village to Bremen. There was a bibliography with each workshop and I could provide this if interested.

I had lunch at a table designated for participants from Cleveland where I met John Sabol who wrote a book on Cleveland Slovaks which I purchased. He also wrote The Cleveland Buckeye Neighborhood. That's where my grandfather's house was and I lived there until I was nine years old. He said he would send me a copy and I am interested to learn more about it.

I had found a paperback book in my father's belongings celebrating the Golden Jubilee of St Cyril and Methodist Church in Minneapolis and brought it to the conference. I was connected to the 1st Vice President of the Czech Genealogical Society and he was so appreciative to get it. He

knew all about this church and the architect. He said they are doing a project on churches and this will be very useful.

I also had a funeral card I came across in the past year on a person I did not know and he said a family by that name were founding members of Czech Genealogy Society and he would get it to a descendant. Making this connection was so gratifying.

The evening entertainment included the parade of Kroje with traditional Czech and Slovak costumes from the collection of Helene Cincebeaux modeled by approximately 100 of the conference participants. Helene provided commentary on which area the costumes were from and in many instances how they had been acquired over the years. The models circulated throughout the ballroom to give the attendees a closer look at the folk dress. Helene had presented a workshop earlier in the week on Czech and Slovak Folk Dress.



I met Laura Pitvorec from Louisville, Kentucky; We had an opportunity to get to know each other better.

CGSI 19th Conference Experiences (cont.)

Another Experience from CGSI conf from Rosemary's friend Carol:

(3)By Carol Margaret Mihel

I learned the conference was to be in the town of Waukesha, where I attended Carroll College. This is an unbelievable connection to my heritage and birth in Racine, Wisconsin!

Upon registration and viewing the workshops and tours, I decided my life would be enriched in an unbelievable way!!! (Rosemary and I met at a workshop in the 80's and discovered our fathers were of Czechoslovak heritage. We also learned we both had type A Negative blood. Only 15% of the population has RH negative blood type. Could this be a cultural connection?

There was a tour to Racine, the first day. How could this be, the town where I was born. My parents, Henry who was Czech and my mother, Mary Ann who was German divorced when I was two. As ties to information was limited because my father was in WWII overseas and visitation limited by location. Before the tour, I researched the addresses of my parents and grandparents. My Czech grandparents and four children came to America in January, 1913. The naturalization papers of 1921 provided my grandparent's address.

The day of the tour, I learned the ship agents provided booklets of the occupations of various states to Czech villages. One of the talks provided details of the process of obtaining trains to the port of Bremen, Germany, the health inspection, and the length of the journey

once you had a PASS. (Pass was like a passport without a picture so the pass could be mailed back to relatives to use again.)

The tour included lunch at St. John Nepomuk church. Ladies of the church prepared traditional Czechoslovak food, Pork roast, sauerkraut, dumplings and gravy. We toured the church and crafts, cookies, needlework was available to purchase. When we returned to the bus, our tour of Racine continued. Oh, the church was six blocks from my grandparents' home. Could I have been baptized at this church? I have a birth certificate, but not a certificate of baptism.

Now that I have returned from the conference, I looked at the items which I brought back. Yes, the literature from St. John Nepomuk listed an email for more information. I sent an inquiry and the reply stated if I could provide the complete name of both parents, someone could search the records.

Today, exactly one month after the close of the conference in Wisconsin, I have a document of my official baptism. The visit to the town and church opened information regarding who I am. As an 80 year old, I feel found and rejoice in the opportunity to learn more about who I AM.



RESOURCES:

Online

FamilySearch.org offers free lookup for “locked” records: [www.Record Lookup Service • FamilySearch](#)
Austrian research guide — [www.feefhs.org/sites/default/files/guide/austrian_research.pdf](#)
Austrian Genealogy & History Society — [www.familia-austria.at/index.php/en/](#)
ICARUS church books & local history — [www.icar-us.eu/en/](#)
Moravian Heritage Society — [www.czechusa.com/index.html](#)
FEEFHS Slovakian page — [www.feefhs.org/resource/slovakia](#)
FEEFHS Czech Republic page — [www.Czech Republic Resources | FEEFHS](#)
Salzburger family names — [www.salzburger.homepage.t-online.de/Fam-name.htm](#)
Literature list on Salzburg emigrants (German) — [www.tinyurl.com/jz9dlnu](#)
Archives: Austrian-focused genealogy database — [www.genteam.at](#)
Czech Archives webinar: [www.Introduction to Czech Archives - YouTube](#) (Sokol Milwaukee)
Austrian genealogical forum — [www.forum-ahnenforschung.eu](#)
Pilsen-Munich archives Sudetenland project (English) — [www.tinyurl.com/mj6v6r7](#)
[www.Holocaust.cz](#)
Passenger lists Bremen: [www.Bremen Emigrants \(passengerlists.de\)](#)
Czech newspapers —
[www.digitalniknihovna.cz/](#)
[www.tschechien-online.org](#)
[www.prag-aktuell.cz](#)
[www.pragerzeitung.cz](#)
Slovakia Newspaper — [www.spectator.sme.sk/](#)
Slovak dictionary: [www.slovake.eu/en](#) or [www.Slovak dictionaries \(savba.sk\)](#)
Slovak genealogy website Bill Tarkulich: [www.iabsi.com/gen/public/](#)
Beginner’s Slovakia Research: [www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Slovakia_Beginning_Research](#)
Google translator for websites: [www.itools.com/tool/google-translate-web-page-translator](#)
German newspapers for South Tyrol — [http://www.stol.it](#) & [www.suedtirolnews.it](#)
Goethe Institute Triest — [http://www.goethe.de/ins/it/de/tri.html](#)
East German Gen. Assoc. (German) — [www.agoff.de](#)
Austrian National Library — [www.onb.ac.at](#)
Bohemian church registers — [www.tinyurl.com/gsp6ykr](#)
Surname database [www.SlovakPride.org](#)
[www.PODCAST » Slovak Ancestry \(slovak-ancestry.com\)](#)
[www.Arolsen Archives.org](#) for Holocaust
[www.Mapy.cz](#) for both Czech and Slovakia locations
[www.Arcanum Maps - The Historical Map Portal](#)
[www.zanikleobce.cz](#) website for vanished towns
[www.slovník.juls.savba.sk](#) Historical dictionary for Slovakia
[www.kdejsme.cz](#) for places where Surname is common.
[www.portafontium.eu/](#) for PILSEN records or German Bohemians (Bavarian)

MEMBERSHIP

Members receive the newsletter, meeting notices, periodic mailings from the club, handouts from meeting presentations and programs, and receipt of genealogical research assistance from club members. Donations are suggested at \$5.00 per year, mail to Treasurer: Farah Takriti. Please email Annette Gathright with questions: anetka@aol.com or Mary Shade: meshade@gmail.com

CZECHOSLOVAK AREA GENEALOGY CLUB

We support the Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International (CGSI). Visit them at www.cgsi.org.

And we support the Southern California Genealogical Society (SCGS). Visit them at www.scgsgenealogy.com.

