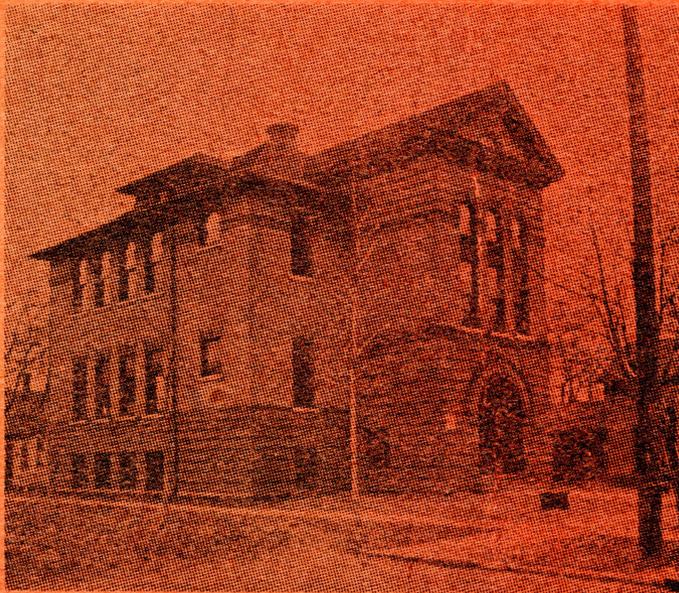


75th
ANNIVERSARY

1892 - 1967



Sbor Dámské Matice Školské

75th ANNIVERSARY BANQUET
SBOR DAMSKA MATICE SKOLSKA
OCTOBER 13, 1967

MENU

Broasted Chicken
Caraway Potatoes
Salad--Vegetable
Ice Cream--Cake
Coffee--Mints

OFFICERS

SBOR DAMSKA MATICE SKOLSKA

Elsie Smrcek, President
Bessie Dochterman, Vice-President
Libbie Fields, Vice-President
Mildred Drahovzal, Recording Secretary
Bela Henderson, Financial Secretary
Lillian Vyskocil, Treasurer

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Martha Kralik
Anne Machacek
Mildred Drahovzal

*This history compiled by reading
the Czech minutes from Sept 1892 (the
initial meeting) and Oct 1892. the actual
Founders Day. Written + translated by
Mildred Drahovzal (libal)*

OUR DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY

1892--1967

Many who read this account, will find they are familiar with most of what is in it. This is due to the fact that the history of the Sbor Damska Maticе Skolska has been proudly given many times. This then, is a record for the benefit of those who are newer and for those hardworking members of many years. It is a written testimonial of their devotion to a cause and a dream.

The first Czechs are thought to have arrived in the Cedar Rapids vicinity in 1850. With these immigrants came a fierce determination to make good in this promised land. Their love for their former home was evident everywhere. We are concerned with the mothers and children of these new Americans.

Czech churches, lodges, clubs, folk dancing and dramatic groups along with classes in Czech were soon started. In the classes, the children were taught to read and write, also some history and drama. But it was soon found that the places used for classes were inadequate. It is here that our history starts.

From the records available, on September 26, 1892, a small group of women headed by Sarka Hrbkova and Marie Skvor Matyk, met and talked of a dream. This dream was to have a school building that would house the Czech classes and would also be a headquarters for the Czech youth. As a result of this, an organizational meeting was held on October 12, 1892 with thirty charter members present. The officers elected were President Marie Matyk and Secretary Marie Lesinger. The enthusiasm was great and their courage something to marvel at. These were not easy times and most of the women were not women of means but they buckled down to work and starting out with no money at all, they held

bazaars, fairs, apron dances, and card parties. Food and prizes were donated by the members and the merchants. To give due credit to any one or two women, would not be right, since it was the combined efforts of all the members, plus the Czech lodges and other Czech groups who all made it a successful project.

On January 1, 1901, the formal dedication was held. One cannot but wonder at what their personal feelings were. After nine years of hard labor and sacrifice, the building was a reality. It was designed and built by Frank Brown, but there are no records available. There were three classrooms, one on the first level, two on the second and a large room on the third floor which later had a stage and became the home of the Czech Reading Society and also housed it's library. The Building Committee was composed of three women, Sarka Hrbkova, Emilie Houserova and Marie Stankova.

The first registration brought over 200 children. For a time classes were held only during the summer months. Later winter classes were conducted on Saturday and Sunday. First teachers were Miss Sarka and her brother Jeffery. Desks for the classrooms were donated by W. F. Severa, the great Czech philanthropist, as also were the tables and chairs for the library upstairs.

The children appeared in many programs, on Christmas, Mother's Day, and on Decoration Day. On the last mentioned, they took part in a parade dressed in Czech costumes, if they had them, along with all the other Czech lodges, Sokols and other groups that marched to the Czech National Cemetary to Jansa's Band and later to the Kubovec Band. Many an eye must have filled with tears of pride, when the voices of these children filled the grassy vale, where the program was held, with songs of their home-

land.

All through the years, the women maintained the building, caring for it by washing and cleaning it weekly and purchasing necessary equipment. It was only after many years that a custodian was considered. Many served in this capacity, fine people who served for a small wage. This was a work of love, as was all of the other work of our members.

Minutes are available from October 14, 1910. In reading them it was discovered that their problems were the same each month. They now had a school board, Ustredni Matice Skolska, which took over managing the school business, while they maintained the building. Interesting items on the monthly expense were, 45¢ for gas for the lights and 50¢ for a new broom. Much of the activity was not reported so we rely on memories and newspaper clippings for our information.

It was at the Twentieth Anniversary of the Sbor that the first President, Marie Matyk spoke of the difficult beginnings. The personal sacrifices made by the members in those early years. She said that such work deserved praise and recognition. It had all been done to preserve the beautiful Czech language, keep the Czech youth together, by giving them a place to meet.

The building did indeed become a center and was used for many worthwhile purposes. Among these were meetings of the Youth Group, lectures by prominent people, among whom was Thomas G. Masaryk who was studying in the U.S. and later became the first president of the Czechoslovak Republic. Bazaars and citizenship classes were held here as well as various board meetings and in later years, the Wednesday Czech Group. The Czech Reading Society met here on Sundays and loaned out it's books from the beginning to the

end. So it served a multitude of purposes and people through the years, besides the Czech classes for the children and adults.

Through the years, interest in the Czech school waned and support formerly given by lodges and other groups, gradually became very small. The building was in need of repair, the walls were considered unsafe and the plumbing would have had to be replaced. There just wasn't enough money to do all this work, plus the fact that interest had died down. It was decided that the building would be sold and classes resumed elsewhere. The invitation of the Sokols to hold classes in their building was accepted with gratitude.

On January 12, 1951, it was announced that the building had been sold to Andrew Polehna. The last meeting in the building was held on February 10th with a farewell dinner hosted by Mr. Polehna. The Sbor then made arrangements to hold their meetings in the Sokol Hall. Attorney Joseph Mekota was in charge of all legal matters concerning the sale of the building.

This was a time for revising of the Constitution and By-Laws and a committee was appointed to do this. Much time and thought went into these, since we would not have other duties. Serving on this committee were Pavla Hromadka, Marie B. Svoboda, Anna Valenta, Pearl Tlusty and Rose Kubovec. These By-Laws were adopted in the regular meeting on December 12, 1952 and signed by the President, Anna Bohac, and Secretary Marie Machovsky. The translation of Sbor Damska Matice Skolska was made---Women's Society for the promoting of Czech Language Education. Very impressive and indicative of the work of the group.

In the year 1954 on February 12th, we became life members of the Council of Higher

Education. The Sbor has given generously to many organizations. These include the Czech School, Camp Good Health, American Red Cross, Council of Higher Education, March of Dimes and when available, two children from Czech School were sent to Sokol Camp for one week. There were many other contributions such as bundles to D. P. in Europe and helping them in other ways. From the time of the sale of the building, a fund was started for the purpose of giving scholarships to deserving students of Czech descent. When the fund was large enough, the first scholarship was awarded.

RONALD J. DOSTAL was presented with the first one during Cedar Rapids Centennial in Kingston Stadium on June 17, 1956. Received it also for 1957-1958. Attended Iowa State University at Ames, Iowa. Attained Bachelor of Science in Aeronautical Engineering. Awarded six honors. Commissioned as an Ensign in the U.S. Navy and assigned duty on Escort Destroyer, CLAUDE JONES (DE-103). Now living with his wife in Martinsville, Indiana where he is with the Allison Division of General Motors Corporation of Indianapolis, Indiana as Coordinator, Systems Development. Future ambition is establishment and administration of modern travel particularly with Aerospace.

ROGER L. MACHA received second scholarship 1957-1958. Attended Iowa State University. Obtained B.S.--M.S.-- and PH.D Degrees. Received Agriculture honoraries, was on Dean's List, Senior with highest grade point in Horticulture. Received Luther Vinton Rice Advanced Curriculum Scholarship, Federated Garden Clubs of Iowa and Zimmerman and Klopps Awards Scholarships. At present is College Professor in Agriculture Dept. at Murray State University in Murray, Kentucky.

GERALD E. CHARIPAR was awarded the third scholarship 1959-1963. Attended Loras College

and University of Iowa. Received his B.A. Degree in History in 1963. Was on the National Staff of College Young Christians Student Movement for two years. Works with emotionally disturbed children at the State Hospital in Waltham, Mass. Member of National History Honor Society and National Catholic Honor Society. Graduated Magna Cum Laude. Married on June 6, 1967. Now living in Dorchester, Massachusetts.

ROSE ERENBERGER was presented the fourth scholarship in 1959. Attended State University of Iowa. Did not complete her education. She married and is living in Los Angeles, California.

GARY BARTA was presented the fifth scholarship 1961-1965. Attended Iowa State University. Received Bachelor of Science Degree in Landscape Architecture and City Planning. Entered U. S. Army Reserve in 1963 and Active Duty for six months in 1967. At present is associated with Colloredo Associates, Inc. of Memphis, Tennessee. Work involves urban renewal, subdivision, design, park and shopping center design.

JANET VOSATKA RANSOM presented with sixth scholarship 1962-1964. Attended State College of Iowa, now University of Northern Iowa. Majored in lower elementary education. Was student teacher at Waterloo Longfellow School where 65% of students were Negro. Received Bachelor of Arts Degree in 1966. Married in June, 1966. Teaching at Grant Wood School in Cedar Rapids.

RICHARD SADIIEK received the seventh scholarship 1964-1967. Attending Coe College. Majoring in Mathematics and Psychology of Human Relations. On Dean's List four times. Received Phoebe Sherman Music Award for a year's study in piano and the Williston Jones Presidential Scholarship for one year.

LINDA FEIEREISEN presented eighth scholarship 1965-1967. Attending University of Northern

Iowa. Enjoys playing violin in College Symphony Orchestra. Plans to become a mathematics teacher at high school level.

CHARLENE SKRIPSKY was presented with scholarship 1965-1967. Attended State College of Iowa, now majoring in music education at Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois. Studied voice with Julliard School of Music in New York. Won voice scholarship in her Junior year.

Since the beginning of the scholarship fund, the following have served faithfully, with no compensation, John Vosatka, George J. Novak and Jaroslava Holub Wheatly. The Board of Trustees to first serve on this committee were Pavla Hromadka, Martha Kralik and Rose Kubovec. Theirs was the final decision and they have chosen well.

The oldest members of the Sbor are Anna Valenta, Emma Cuhel, Victoria Liskovsky, Betty Krob, Karoline Mikulasko and Anna Paidar of California. There are many who are close in years of membership and service.

Sbor Damska Matice Skolska has been very fortunate. It has had members who have been loyal workers through the years. The elected officers have served faithfully and for long terms without complaint. In the last few years, many of the former students of the Czech School, their families now grown, are taking an interest and so the future of the Sbor is assured. They are learning to carry on the work of their Mothers with the same love and devotion.

So on this, our Seventy-fifth year, we can look back with unashamed pride and look forward with eyes lifted to a bright and fruitful future.



30.1.31.4

Donor Unknown