

CZECH LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS FOR GENEALOGY

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2026 CGSI Symposium @ NCSML



AGENDA

- History of Native Language Press in America
- Types of Genealogy Goldmines
 - Obituaries and Death Announcements
 - Social Columns and Local News
 - Fraternal and Religious Periodicals
 - Letters to the Editor
- Digital Repositories
 - US sources: Library of Congress, State-specific and CGSI.org
 - Czech sources: Kramerius (NDK), Narodni Muzeum, Registr digitalizace
 - Commercial sites: Newspapers.com, OldNews.com and others
- Case Studies & Virtual Tour



History of the Native Language Press in America

- 1860-1869: The Pioneer Era
- 1870-1889: Urban Expansion and Rural Outposts
- 1890-1919: The Golden Age and Ideological Fractures
- 1920-1950s: Convergence and Decline
- 1960-Present: Legacy Publications



1860-1869: The Pioneer Era

The Socio-Cultural Landscape: Why Pioneers Needed Print

- Before 1860, Czech immigrants relied entirely on word-of-mouth or letters from home. The sudden boom of immigration to the Midwest (Wisconsin, Iowa, Missouri, Illinois) created an urgent need for an ethnic press.
- These early papers did not just report news; they acted as survival guides. They explained American laws, homesteading techniques, farming conditions, and how to navigate the English-language school and political systems.
- Key Publications:
 - 1860 – Racine, WI: *Slowan Amerikánský* (František Kořízek)
 - 1860 – St. Louis, MO: *Národní Noviny* (Jan Bolemil Erben)

1861 – Racine: *Slavie*



1870-1889: Urban Expansion

The Big Split: Freethinkers vs. Catholics

- By the mid-1870s, a major cultural rift divided the Czech-American community.
- Many immigrants had grown deeply distrustful of the Catholic Church due to its historical ties to the oppressive Habsburg monarchy. They identified as Freethinkers.
- Meanwhile, devout Czech Catholics fought to preserve their faith in the New World.
- **Key Publications:**
 - 1875 – Chicago: *Svornost & Duch času* (August Geringer)
 - 1883 – Chicago: *Katolík* (Bohemian Benedictine Press)
 - 1871 – St. Louis: *Hlas* (Bohemian Literary Society of St. Louis)



1870-1889: Rural Outposts

The Western Expansion: Feeding the Homesteaders

As the Homestead Act of 1862 drew thousands of Czechs out of Midwestern cities and into the Great Plains, a new breed of agrarian and regional papers emerged to connect scattered rural communities.

Key Publications:

- 1871 – Omaha: *Pokrok Západu* (Edward Rosewater/Jan Rosický)
- 1891 – Omaha: *Hospodář* (Jan Rosický)



1890-1919: The Golden Age and Ideological Fractures

Golden Age of the Czech-language press in the United States

- Driven by a massive second wave of industrial workers and laborers, Czech communities in cities like Chicago, Cleveland, New York, and Omaha grew exponentially.
- While previous eras relied heavily on weekly or bi-weekly papers, the massive density of Czech neighborhoods in this era allowed daily newspapers to flourish. This period saw the rise of the independent daily, which aimed to transcend the bitter Freethinker vs. Catholic religious wars to deliver neutral, community-wide news.
- By the onset of World War I, it is estimated that over **100 active Czech periodicals** were printing simultaneously across the country, serving a highly literate, politically passionate immigrant population.

Key Publication:

- 1891 – Chicago: *Denní Hlasatel*



1920-1950s: Convergence and Decline

Structural adaptation, convergence, and ultimate decline.

- Following the triumphs of World War I and the establishment of independent Czechoslovakia, the immigrant press faced a changing demographic landscape that forced long-running publications to adapt or fold.
 - **The Omaha Consolidation:** In 1920, the iconic *Pokrok Západu* ceased independent publication and was consolidated into other regional variants managed by the National Printing Company to save on overhead costs, while its agricultural sister publication, *Hospodář*, absorbed smaller farming papers to maintain its national footprint.
- The single greatest blow to the longevity of the Czech-American press came from US federal legislation. The **Emergency Quota Act of 1921** and the **National Origins Act of 1924** established strict immigration ceilings.
- To survive the dwindling subscriber base and the economic devastation of the **Great Depression**, once-bitter rival newspapers were forced to consolidate.

Types of Genealogical Goldmines

- Obituaries and Death Notices
 - Maiden names, birthplaces in the old country (villages often missed in US records).
 - Lists of surviving relatives, lodge memberships, and migration timelines.
- Social Columns & Local News
 - Visits from relatives, community gossip, and milestone anniversaries.
 - Accidents, legal notices, and farm/business advertisements.
- Fraternal & Religious News
 - Activity logs from fraternal organizations (Sokol, čSPS, ZČBJ).
 - Parish news, confirmations, and community fundraisers.
- The "Letters to the Editor" Phenomenon
 - Immigrants writing back to Czech-American papers about life in Nebraska, Texas, or Chicago, often mentioning old neighbors from Europe.



Genealogy Goldmines: Obituaries & Death Notices

The Scenario:

- You are looking for the origins of a Josef Novák who died in Chicago in 1898.
- Official Illinois state death certificates from this era often only lists "Bohemia" as the place of birth.

The Goldmine Value:

- It identifies the **exact village** (*Veselí nad Lužnicí*), allowing you to immediately bypass US brick walls and locate the correct parish registers (*matriky*) in the Czech regional archives.



Yesterday passed away Mr. Josef Novák, a native of Veselí nad Lužnicí...

Genealogy Goldmines: Social Columns & Local News

The Scenario:

- You want to know when their ancestors moved from their initial settlement in Iowa to their permanent homestead in Nebraska.

The Goldmine Value:

- This provides a **precise migration timeline** and establishes ancestral locations between federal census years, which only occur every 10 years.

18. března 1891.

ÚMRTÍ: Marie Černá (83 let),
až na oren a zanechala manželku
několik dětí.

Pan Jan Svoboda se svou chotí
a dětmi přijel minulý týden
z Iowa do naší osady v Wilbur,
kde si zakoupil pěkný pozemek.

Mr. Jan Svoboda with his wife and children arrived last week from Iowa to our settlement in Wilbur, where he purchased a nice piece of land.

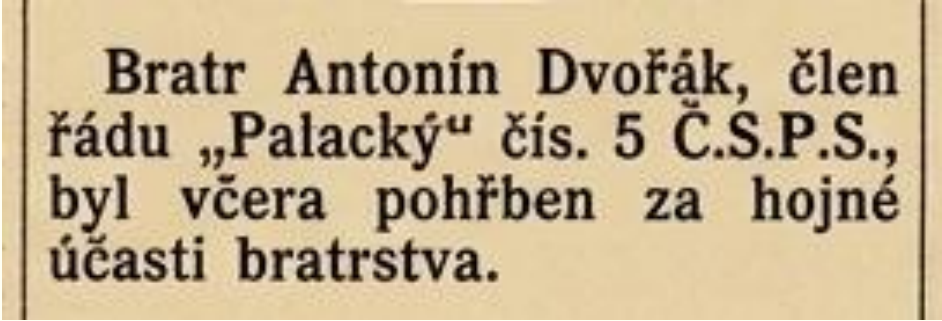
Genealogy Goldmines: Fraternal & Religious News

The Scenario:

- An ancestor has a non-religious gravestone at Bohemian National Cemetery, but you cannot find any church marriage or funeral records.

The Goldmine Value:

- It proves membership in a fraternal insurance society. This unlocks a new avenue to hunt for the ancestor's original lodge application files, which may contain age, health, and birthplace data.



Bratr Antonín Dvořák, člen
řádu „Palacký“ čís. 5 Č.S.P.S.,
byl včera pohřben za hojné
účasti bratrstva.

*Brother Antonín Dvořák, a member of
Lodge 'Palacký' No. 5 of the Č.S.P.S.
[Czech-Slavonic Benevolent Society], was
buried yesterday with a large attendance
from the brotherhood.*

Genealogy Goldmines: Fraternal & Religious Items

The Scenario:

- You are tracking a family that went out into remote western territories where no Czech community infrastructure or local Czech press existed.

The Goldmine Value:

- This establishes extended family networks (**cousin Václav**), details raw daily hardships, and links the isolated pioneer back to both an existing immigrant network in America and an exact hometown in Europe.



A letter sent from a remote sod house in North Dakota: Dear Editor! This year's wheat harvest was poor. I greet all compatriots from our native village of Nepomuk near Plzeň, especially my cousin Václav.

Digital Repositories

- US sources:
 - Library of Congress: Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers
 - State-specific settlement hubs
 - CGSI.org
- Czech sources:
 - National Library of the CR (Národní knihovna ČR - NKP)
 - Narodni Muzeum,
 - Registr digitalizace
- Other Commercial sites:
 - Newspapers.com
 - OldNews.com



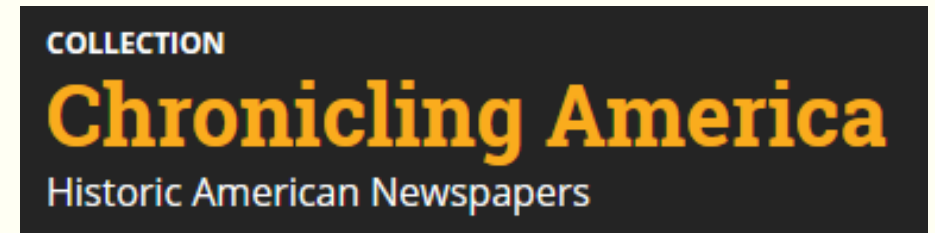
Digital Repositories

Library of Congress:

Chronicling America - Historic American Newspapers

<https://www.loc.gov/collections/chronicling-america/>

- Illinois: 410 issues
 - Pokrok (1874-1876), Týdenní Hlasatel (1892-1893), Hlasatel (1920)
- Maryland: 1,774 issues
 - Telegraf (1917-1951)
- Minnesota: 500 issues
 - Minnesotské Noviny (1904-1914)
- Nebraska: 1,881 issues
 - Pokrok Západu (1871-1920)
- Ohio: 1,814 issues
 - Svět (1918-1924)
- South Dakota: 900 issues
 - The Bon Homme County Independent (1904-1913)
 - The Tabor Independent (1913-1922)



All Digitized Titles

[View all Titles on a Map](#)  [Direct link to TXT \(all titles\)](#) 

Filter By:

Select States



Czech



Digital Repositories

State-Specific Sources

- Nebraska: [Nebraska Newspapers](#)
 - Excellent open-access scans for rural Bohemian papers like early Omaha and Saline County issues.
- Texas: [Texas Digital Newspaper Program on The Portal to Texas History](#)
 - Free full-text access to Czech-Texan regional publications (such as *Svoboda*, *Nový Domov*, and *Čechoslovák*)
- Illinois: [Illinois Digital Newspaper Collections \(IDNC\)](#)
 - Free repository maintained by the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign; complements the microfilmed Chicago ethnic press.
- Minnesota: [Minnesota Digital Newspaper Hub \(MNHS\)](#)
 - Searchable interface for ethnic and regional papers; public access for pre-1923 and select later issues.
- Iowa: [State Historical Society of Iowa Newspapers Directory](#)
 - Directs researchers to digitized Iowa runs on Chronicling America and local county-level digital preservation collections.
- Kansas: [Kansas Newspapers.com Historical Open Content](#)
 - Provides anyone with free online access to nearly 12 million historic Kansas newspaper pages spanning from **1854 to 1923** through their open partnership portal



Digital Repositories

Czech-Specific Sources (Kramerus)

- National Digital Library (NDK)
 - Enter specific historic Czech-American newspaper names directly into the search bar (e.g., Amerikán, Pokrok západu, Slávie, Hospodář, or Duch času).
 - Search type newspapers and keyword Krajan
- Digitization of Charles University
 - Sokol Americký (1879-1948)
- Digitization from the National Museum (Naprstek)
 - Search by Krajanská periodika
- Registr digitalizace
 - The Digitization Registry of the Czech Republic is a national registry of digitized documents, which could help the librarians to avoid unwanted duplicities in the process of digitization and to enable sharing the digitization results across the Czech Republic.



Národní digitální knihovna



**Univerzita
Karlova**



**NÁRODNÍ
MUZEUM**

Digitální knihovna Kramerus

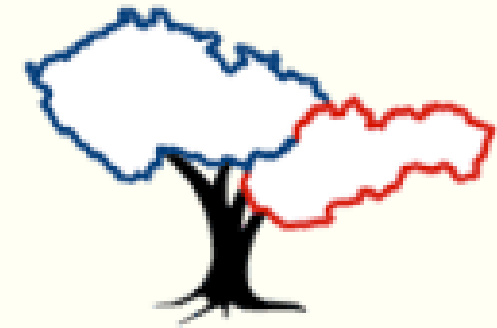
Registr digitalizace

documents digitized in the Czech Republic

Digital Repositories

CGSI.org & Commercial Sites

- **CGSI Periodicals and Digital Library**
 - Denní Hlasatel – beta search tool (*coming soon*)
 - Hospodář – multiple indexes
 - ZCBJ Bratrský Věstník – index of death records
 - CSA Organ Bratrstva
 - Amerikán Národní Kalendář - indexes
 - Sokol Americký
- **Newspapers.com \$\$\$**
 - OCR and searchable versions of many publications
 - Often free when using a local library login
 - Clipping feature available
- **OldNews.com \$\$\$**
 - OCR and searchable versions, including Bratrský Věstník
- **NewspaperArchives.com**
 - Part of your NGS membership



Newspapers[™]
by  **ancestry**[®].com

OldNews[™]
by MyHeritage

 **NewspaperArchive**
by  **Storyed**[®]

Case Studies & Virtual Tour



Amerikán Národní Kalendář Research Help

Amerikán Národní Kalendář was a magazine published annually from 1878 thru 1958 by the Czech newspaper Svornost through August Geringer Press, Chicago, Illinois. The issues contained articles in Czech about U.S. locations with Czech populations, Czech heritage, and about famous and accomplished Czechs. The [Kramerius website](#) provides access to all issues. By accessing the indexes below, you can gain access to various articles that may be of value in your research.

Also included below are a few translations to demonstrate the types of articles you will find.

Publisher: Judy Nelson and various

 [Index Sorted by Resource Magazine Location](#)

 [Index Sorted by Subject](#)

 [Index Sorted by Subject's Location](#)

 [Index Sorted by Year of Issue](#)

 [Aksamit 1910](#)

 [Luk 1886](#)

 [Pribyl as Trubac 1880](#)

 [Shimerda, Anton 1896](#)

 [Urban Martin 1894](#)

 [Vilimek Vaclav 1896](#)

 [Vochoska John](#)

 [Vosoba M.B. 1896](#)

 [Vyborny 1887](#)

How to Use the Czech Heritage Newspaper *Hospodář*



Kate Challis
CGSI Conference 2025

How to Use the Czech Heritage Newspaper *Hospodář*

The *Hospodář*, a Czech heritage newspaper about agriculture and horticulture, played a major role in preserving and promoting Czech language and culture in the United States. Not only does it contain valuable genealogical information about early immigrant ancestors, including births, marriages, and deaths, but it can also help fill in details about the rich lives and experiences of what it meant to be Czech in America. Newspapers were the social media of the early 20th century, and the *Hospodář* is no exception.

This presentation focuses on how English-speakers with Czech heritage can use this Czech-language resource, available in its entirety in digital form to CGSI members.

Year Published: 2025

Presenter: Kate Challis

<https://cgsi.org/digital-library/how-use-czech-heritage-newspaper-hospodar>
<https://cgsi.org/digital-library/index-hospodar-issues-published-1906-1961>

Denní Hlasatel Archive

The *Denní Hlasatel* was a Czech-language daily newspaper published in Chicago from 1891 to 2006, making it **the longest-running Czech serial in the world**. Its pages offer a rich chronicle of the Czech immigrant experience in the United States, featuring community news, cultural events, and an estimated 100,000 obituaries invaluable to genealogists and historians.

In 2023, the Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International (CGSI) acquired the rights to digitize and share the entire 115-year run of *Denní Hlasatel*. This monumental project aims to make these historical records accessible to our members, preserving them for future generations.

Denní Hlasatel Years

1891 | 1892 | 1893 | 1894 | 1895 | 1896 | 1897 | 1898 | 1899
1900 | 1901 | 1902 | 1903 | 1904 | 1905 | 1906 | 1907 | 1908 | 1909
1910 | 1911 | 1912 | 1913 | 1914 | 1915 | 1916 | 1917 | 1918 | 1919
1920 | 1921 | 1922 | 1923 | 1924 | 1925 | 1926 | 1927 | 1928 | 1929
1930 | 1931 | 1932 | 1933 | 1934 | 1935 | 1936 | 1937 | 1938 | 1939
1940 | 1941 | 1942 | 1943 | 1944 | 1945 | 1946 | 1947 | 1948 | 1949
1950 | 1951 | 1952 | 1953 | 1954 | 1955



<https://cgsi.org/resources/denni-hlasatel>

Fraternal Herald



Západní Česko-Bratrská Jednota (ZCBJ) Death Index

Index of Death Records: The following seven volumes contain digital images of alphabetized index cards recording the death information extracted from the ZCBJ journal covering an approximate timeframe of the 1890's through the 1990's. Please note that this index shows information about deaths and life insurance claims filed as extracted from the ZCBJ/WFL magazine, either from a claim payout listing or an actual obituary. If there is an obituary, you may need to search issues of the magazine for a number of months following the death date as they were not always published in the first issue following the individual's death. For more information, read the Instructions and Abbreviations. These rolls/volumes contain roughly 6,000 images each and are best viewed on a computer as file size is significant. The Instructions will help you understand the abbreviations used, how to identify the lodge to which the individual belonged, and other information.

3592

NAME: KRIZ, FRANK - age 71 - farmer
Date of Death: 6 March 1930 - diabetes
Place of Death: Burwell Neb
Lodge No. 112 Became Member: 1901
Date of Issue:
Death Claims: April 1930
Obituary Notice: April 1930
FRATERNAL HERALD - BRATRSKY VESTNIK

3618

NAME: KRIZ, MARIE - age 49 - housewife
Date of Death: 13 June 1905 - tuberculosis
Place of Death: Comstock Neb
Lodge No. 112 Became Member: 1901
Date of Issue:
Death Claims: July 1905
Obituary Notice:
FRATERNAL HERALD - BRATRSKY VESTNIK

FRANK KRIZ.

Bratři a sestry řádu Josef Jungmann truchlí nad ztrátou našeho br. Franka Kříže a to tím více, neboť na něm záviselo velkou měrou udržení našeho řádu. Byl účetníkem po 18 let, velmi bedlivým a starostlivým. Byl milé a přívětivě povahy a byl též zakládajícím členem našeho řádu, k němuž přistoupil od řádu Slavin. Narodil se r. 1858 v Radlicích, okr. Dačice na Moravě. Do této země přijel r. 1889 přímo do Fillmore Co., Nebr., pak r. 1889 se přestěhoval do Valley Co., kde v 72 letech věku svou životní pout' ukončil. Zanechal manželku, syny Josefa, Emila a Václava a dcery Karolínu Trojanovou, Annu Cadkovou a Jirmu Kamarádovou (z druhého manželství), dále sestru Fr. Viškovou a bratra Jana Bártu od Comstock a několik vnoučat. Předešla jej první manželka, syn Frank a dcery Marie a Louisa. Zemřel v Ord v nemocnici a s doprovodem našeho řádu a Amerických Dřevařů a mnohých známých jsme jej z řádové síně pohřbili do lůna země k věčnému odpočinku 8. března 1930, s řečí rev. Filipiho z Clarkson. Zesnulému buďte země lehkou. — Za řád Josef Jungmann č. 161, v Burwell, Nebr.,
Vác. Stř. taj.



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Ord, Neb.

Ctěná redakce! — Musím opět něco napeati, jak se v Ord máme. Až do 6. ledna bylo moc pěkné počasí, ale pak udeřily prudké mrazy, až 28 stupňů pod nulou a napadlo asi 6 palců sněhu, jenž zůstal ležet. Pak zase nastalo příjemnější počasí. Též se musím zmínit, že klub Komenský v Ord připravuje krásné divadlo, které bude do března dobře nacvičeno a uvedeno na jevišti. Máme se tedy opět na co těšit. Ještě musím sdělit, že v zdejší nemocnici se nalézá p. Fr. Kříž od Burwell, trpí delší čas

Pan John Skala z Ord podává nám tyto zprávy: V noci na čtvrtek, 6. března dotrpěl krajan Fr. Kříž, o němž jsem dříve sdělil, že trpěl cukrovkou a před třemi týdny mu lékař v zdejší nemocnici odejmul nohu v koleně. Lékař se domníval, že mu tím zachrání život, ale vše bylo marné, p. Kříž zemřel. Dosáhl věku 72 let a jeho pozůstatky byly v sobotu 8. března dopraveny do Jungmanovy síně u Burwell, kde vykoná smuteční obřady a pozůstatky zesnulého uloženy na tamním hřbitově. Pozůstalým platí má nejhlubší soustrast.