

Chippewa Falls, Wis.
November 16, 1958

Dear Vojta:

I promised you that I will send you the book that I wrote and I will do so during the week. Today, being Sunday I cannot mail it as the post office is closed and tomorrow morning I have to leave for Madison at six o'clock in the morning, before the post offices opens; therefore I will not be able to mail it until I get back on Wednesday.

I am enclosing some pictures that I received from our relatives in Bohemia. You may keep them as they are reproductions of the original pictures which they sent me. I was quite thrilled to contact some descendents of grandma Tlachac's brother. I have other pictures but did not get reproductions of them because it costs quite a little to have others made of them. Next summer when I come out there I will take them along for you to see if you are interested.

When reading the book I hope that you will overlook the fact that it has been written by an amateur. I had four copies made, one for each of our children and the other for myself. It took me two years to gather the material and it is quite authentic, however at the time that I wrote the book I was not aware that grandma had more than one brother Matt. She had ^{other} brothers Jacob, John and Vojta; sisters were Katherine and Anna. This I learned from the Hadač people in Bohemia. I also learned that grandpa Tlachac had a sister Rose not mentioned in the book. So those are two errors that I am going to some day correct. Some of the historical facts of the Tlachac family I learned from your father when ever I saw him. He was quite well posted on such affairs which you probably did not know and I recall one time I stopped to see him and we visited in the yard for a long time where he told me many interesting things. At that time I told him that I was planning to write up that family history but I did not get at it until after he passed away. There is another error in the transfer dates of your farm from old man Cisar to grandpa but of course I do not know when it was transferred to your father. You spoke of an old deed. I am sure it might contain some hidden information of interest and for that reason I would be very pleased if you would be so kind as to send it to me for study. I will return it to you insured. About a year ago I found an old clock that my parents bought when they were married, it was in the attic by Walter so I cleaned it up, had some repair work done on it and it "runs to beat the band". That's what gave me the idea about grandpa's old clock. I thought perhaps it might be somewhere in your house because when we moved grandpa to our house, we did not take the clock.

Well Vojta, I will bring this to a close. When you are through with the book, kindly return it. It gave lots of work but some day I am going to re-write it and make corrections and additions. It should then be very interesting.

As ever,

Matek

Chippewa Falls, Wis.
December 8, 1958

Dear Vojta:

I was gone all this week and have your letter which I found on my desk upon my return. I want to tell you how pleased I was to hear from you and I am glad that you liked my write up about the Tlachac ancestry. I know the language is not a "polished" one and if I would be doing it over I could add more information that I learned after it was written. In another four years I will be slated for retirement if the Lord lets me live so long, and then I want to re-write it. Next summer I am going to Chicago to visit the graves of grand pa's brother and sisters as I have learned where they are buried. Perhaps I might be able to get some pictures of their graves.

I was particularly interested in dad's name which you cut out of his old spelling book. I would like to make myself believe that it was dad's signature but I am afraid that it is not. If it would be, and if you would have put that autograph up for sale, you can be sure that I would have paid a high price to get it. My father was 14 years old in 1885 when that name was written and Frank Gregor was the teacher in the Lincoln Graded school. I compared that writing with that of an old deed that I found at Walter's and had a photostatic copy made and there is a similarity of writing. Gregor was a good penman and no doubt he wrote my father's name in that book when dad got it. Nevertheless, I am glad that you sent me that piece of the old spelling book and I cherish it very much. As you know I am interested in any historical information or anything that has to do with history. Sometimes I am sorry that I did not take a course in history and become a history teacher instead of a country pedagogue, a cheesemaker and later on a cheese inspector. Just because you were one of my pupils who I remember as a bright student in school, I appreciate the nice letter that you wrote me.

Since I wrote you, I received a letter from the Hadač people in Bohemia telling that Jan Hadač, who used to write to me, passed away on November 18. Soon after harvest he started to get a pain in his stomach that the local doctor could not cure so they took him to Prag where he was operated. They found cancerous ulcers and about a week after the operation he died. However his wife continues to write, she said that she would write giving the details about his passing but so far I have not received a letter. I get quite a kick writing to them and my Bohemian came back very fast to me. I am enclosing a letter received from them during the past year so that you can see what it looks like. He was a pretty good penman, considering that he was 74 years old. You may keep the letter for a keepsake as I have others. During your spare time, evenings, you can try and translate it.

I was also interested in the deed which you so kindly sent me. It contained dates which I had been looking for so I copied it down and I am returning it to you. Many thanks for it.

This past week, I was gone all week from Monday morning until Friday night. The Department of Agriculture is making an area farm survey and Folk county was selected as the county in this part of the state for the survey. Usually that is done by dairy inspectors in our department but there are not enough of them so because of my agricultural background, I was asked to help out in the survey. I still have another week to go. This week, I called on 67 farms, of course not all of them have dairy cows. Many sold their cows and put their farm in the soil bank and are working elsewhere. I came across some nice A grade farmers but those were few. I did come across several very bad farm conditions such as very poor and dirty barns, dirty milking machines, etc. Of course, such a farmer I had to shut off from the market until corrections are made. They whine but we cant allow them to sell milk from such bad conditions. I think the farmers in the eastern part of the state are better where dairying is an older occupation.

I hope that all of you will have a nice, merry Christmas. Norbert will be coming home from Milwaukee to be with us between Christmas and the New Year. I have several days of vacation which I did not take so I will take them during the holiday season. We usually spent a quiet Christmas period. Norman and his family of six children in Michigan are getting along good and the daughter, Sister Mathew, is teaching in Bay Settlement this year. Wasn't that terrible about that fire in the Catholic school in Chicago where about ninety children and three nuns were burned to death? I am wondering what kind of fire inspectors they had there.

When I started this, I planned it to be just a short letter but I see it is a long one. My mail piled up during the week and I had about a dozen letters from our department relative to my work that I had to answer so it has kept me busy all this afternoon. I better go at the rest of them, so I will bring this to a close. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all of you.

Your cousin,

Math

PATERNAL AND COMMUNITY HISTORY
by Mathias S. Tlachac, III

P R E F A C E

This history and story of the life of my paternal grandparents is written primarily for my children. During their formative years, curiosity prompted them to make inquiries about their Tlachac ancestry, how and where they lived in Bohemia, about their immigration to America and subsequent life in the New World. My memory reaches back fifty years when, as a lad, I visited my grandparents often. At such times, I heard them speak of their lives and those recollections have motivated me into writing this book.

As I begin the manuscript, time lacks only two years of being the one hundredth anniversary of the arrival of my grandfather to America as an immigrant. He was followed three years later by my grandmother and little son, Mathias, my uncle. History has always been a fascinating subject to me and I derive considerable interest in its study. The struggles and hardships endured by these pioneers has left me with a deeper sense of appreciation of the heritages that are ours to enjoy. I, too, was interested in paternal genealogy and the accounts of life in Bohemia, the trip to America and life in the New World-- all fascinated me! They aroused my interest, even at an early age, and left lasting impressions on my mind.

Grandfather could not speak English but fortunately I spoke the Bohemian language quite fluently in my youth which made it possible to carry on conversation very well with him. During the last few years of his life, when I was a young man at home, he lived with my parents. This gave me the added opportunity to learn much from him on which I am able to base the main context of this book. He seemed to enjoy telling about his life in Cep to someone who was interested in it. Grandmother passed away in 1911 but grandfather lived to an advanced age. He was in possession of a clear mind and sound memory until the end of his life in 1924. Such being the case, he was able to inform me clearly and authentically on many matters of my inquiry about life in Bohemia.

In preparing the material for this book, I have relied considerably on memory of the experiences I heard my grandparents relate. Other information was provided from time to time by my uncles, Mathias and John Tlachac, when they were alive. Some of it was as recent as two months prior to the death of my uncle John in 1949 when I visited him for the last time when he was a sick man. From my father, who was the youngest of the family, I learned about the life

histories of my grandparents, from the 1880's on to their retirement from active farming near the turn of the century. Research came up with that portion of my book which relates to Bohemian history and the manoral system that was rapidly passing out of existence about the time grandfather was a boy. Local and community history was gathered when neighbors came to our house for a visit and during the long winter evenings talked about the "old days." At such a time I was sure to be found seated nearby listening, sometimes late into the night until my father sent me to bed.

Additional information came from a contemporary of my grandfather who lived as a neighbor to him in Cep. She was Johanna Herda, maiden name, Jan-- my wife's grandmother. She grew up with my grandfather and knew his people well. During occasional visits to her house in Casco, conversation frequently turned to her girlhood days. Although she was 92 years old, advanced age has a unique way of recalling youth. Then she would tell me about grandfather as a boy and young man, how at some neighborhood frolic she danced with him to the tune of some village fiddler. She also spoke of his father, always referring to him as "Lopatarz" which has something to do with shovels or shovel making. She passed away at the age of 95 years and she, too, knew the strenuous pioneer life.

At this writing more than 150 persons can count themselves as descendants of my paternal grandparents. Because of my life-long interest in history, I feel that I have a backlog of historical information about paternal ancestry and although I do not possess the ability nor training necessary to produce a learned treatise, nevertheless, I shall make an attempt to put this knowledge in some kind of historical form. All events in this book are actual, some of them have been authenticated from sources. Dates are accurate with perhaps one here and there but those are very near to the date of actual happening.

Thirty years have gone by since my grandfather passed away, while others who provided the nucleus of information have also departed. To those informants who are alive, special acknowledgement of their help is made on a page especially reserved for them. All during my life from young manhood on, it was my hope to write this book. However, as I grew older and married, family responsibilities and cares of life have left little or no time. I can hardly realize that I am entering my 57th year of life and a grandfather myself-- time has slipped by so rapidly. But this paternal history is as vivid in my mind as the day I heard it told and it is for that reason that I write it, lest it fade away from memory. And I dedicate this book to my children and grandchildren.

(1956)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This page is specially reserved in acknowledgment to those persons who willingly aided in my search for authentic material or who helped in preparing this book. I hereby name them as follows:

EMILY TLACHAC, my cousin, who loaned me the original documents of my grandparents which included their passport, birth certificates, naturalization papers and other data. These I high point as being the greatest help in my search for authentic dates, names and places.

REVEREND SIGFRIED ECKERT, assistant pastor in Notre Dame Parish in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin, for his time and patience in translating the documents from the German language in which they are written, to English.

BERNARD C. SLEGER, a native of Cooperstown, now living in Stanley, Wisconsin, and operator of the Chippewa Cheese Corporation. Through his effort, I was able to locate a survivor of Joseph Cerny, the man who made it possible for my grandfather to immigrate to America in 1856.

MRS. EMMA ZEMAN, a grand-daughter of Joseph Cerny, her maiden name, Emma Cerny. Her letters told me about the life of her grandfather in Cooperstown and resurrected some family history that had been dormant for almost a century.

SISTER MARY MATTHEW, my daughter, for taking time out from her busy schedule to proof-read my story, retype and mimeograph it. Hers was a big undertaking and a great help to me. Sister Bernard's permission to have her do that for me is not being overlooked.

To all the above mentioned persons, I am most appreciative of their help. They are a part of this book.

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CHAPTER 1

BOHEMIA

My paternal grandparents, Mathias Tlachac and Mary Hadac were people of pure Czech extraction. Although the main purpose in writing this book is to tell about their life, a history of Bohemia provides some interesting sidelights by which the characteristics and nature of the Czech people can be understood. While these and other added portions of this story may appear to be a departure from the intended content of this book, they are merely written as interesting supplementary material to the story of their lives.

Czechoslovakia is comprised of the provinces of Bohemia, Slovakia and Moravia. It is 53,000 square miles in area or slightly smaller than our own state of Wisconsin. Frontiers are among the oldest in central Europe and go back to the Middle Ages. In the western part of Czechoslovakia is the province of Bohemia with an area of 23,000 square miles. Bohemia means the "land of the Boii," a Celtic tribe who lived there in very early times. Nature has favored Bohemia perhaps more than any other part of Europe. The soil is fertile, the climate favorable and more than half of the country is cultivated and produces richly. Its high table land, shut in by mountains, is rich in metals and precious stones. Before the first World War, its manufactures were the most important in Europe-- linen, cotton, woolen, leather and paper goods and a great deal of glass-ware were made. The proper use of all natural resources

by the skillful and thrifty Czechs enabled the country to prosper faster than any other European state after the first World War. This enabled Czechoslovakia to be one of the first countries to fulfill its monetary obligation to the Allied Nations in less than twenty years after the termination of the war.

Early history of Bohemia is obscure until the ninth century when King Wencelaus (Vaclav) ascended the throne. At once he instituted liberal reforms to the people and as a result, the country was able to make some progress for the next five hundred years. King Wencelaus became the patron saint of Bohemia and was held in reverent esteem by many of the people. The peasantry quickly adapted themselves to his reforms but jealousy from outside plunged the country into war. In 1526, the throne of Bohemia became vacant. Quickly, Archduke Ferdinand of Austria claimed Bohemia on the basis of hereditary rights and succession pacts. Bohemia fell into economical ruin and became a vassal state under the Hapsburgs of Austria. It was destined to remain so until it was liberated by patriot Thomas Masaryk during the first World War and became a democracy. He became the first president of the republic of Czechoslovakia.

The early reign of the Austrian Hapsburgs plunged Bohemia into darkness during which there was religious persecution, limitations of privileges and strangulation of constitutional and intellectual rights. This caused much unrest among the common people of the country which resulted in a

rebellion in 1620 but it was suppressed in Praha, capital of the country in November of that year. Because of their intense desire for freedom, such rebellions were usually led by patriotic Czechs who paid for them dearly when the rulers finally suppressed them. The rebellion was followed by wholesale execution of Bohemian leaders, confiscation of property, the exiling of nobles and the virtual enslavement of the people to serfdom.

For another one hundred and fifty years the Czechs lived under the yoke of the Hapsburgs. Centuries of living under tyrannical rule developed certain characteristics in the Czechs for which they are noted. By nature, the Bohemian is kind, yet can be willful; he is musical, loves songs, poetry, art and native fellowship. He is an intent thinker and a restless seeker of the truth. He is ambitious and covetous of freedom. These are traits of character which the rulers of Austria could not easily suppress. I saw many of them in my own grandfather.

When King Joseph II of Austria ascended the throne in 1741, he found much unrest among the people of Bohemia and for that reason found it necessary to inaugurate certain reforms in 1781 in order to pacify the people and prevent an uprising against him. In these reforms the burdens of serfdom were lightened to the extent that the peasants were no longer required the consent of their masters to marry, learn a trade, to attend school or to change their occupation. This is known as the "Reformation of 1781" and it occurred ten years before the birth of my great grandfather. Can you imagine, that only five generations ago our very own paternal

ancestry lived under such wretched economic conditions as existed in Bohemia prior to 1781? Well, they did and the fact should make us ever more appreciative of the material blessings we have in America.

The Reformation of 1781 was gradual in effect so that it took many years before all of the people in Bohemia felt its benefits, small as they were. Actually, the old system of serfdom was still in effect in certain parts of the country and this was true around the village of Cep where my grandparents lived in their youth, although there, too, it was disappearing for the better-to-do inhabitants. However, my great grandfather was in effect a serf, and by serf is meant one who was economically bound to some landlord or baron for his livelihood. He was too impoverished to strike out for himself and if he did, there was no opportunity. So he remained in status quo; there was little else he could do.

All through the centuries during which time Czechoslovakia was a vassal state of Austria, the rulers constantly tried to Germanize the people. For that reason, schooling was in the German language, chiefly to hasten the Germanizing of the country. All such official documents as birth certificates, marriage licenses and others were printed in the German language. Neither did the rulers want the people to know too much because they would be able to think for themselves and an educated peasantry would be difficult to guide. So the people were constantly kept in ignorance. Strangely, at this time religion was not suppressed for the reason that they were Catholics and in the majority, as was the case in Austria.

While the Reformation Act did provide more liberties to the common people, it was not entirely satisfactory to the Bohemians but it was much better than living under previous rule. In economic and governmental affairs the common people had no voice but because of their spirit of independence, their modesty, their frugality and their competence, it made the Czechs a middle-of-the road people. They chose, rather wisely, to live their own lives free of interference. This then, portrays the turbulent times in which the Czechs lived. We can easily understand why many of the people were constantly looking elsewhere for a land where they might settle and live in peace.

CHAPTER 2

LAND OWNERSHIP AND THE FEUDAL
SYSTEM

In grandfather's day in Bohemia, the lords and land barons were still in existence to some extent around Cep. The expression on grandfather's face when speaking of them left no doubt in my mind of the contempt he held for their system of land ownership. Land, of which we have an abundance in America and of which we give very little thought, was the closest thing to the heart of every European peasant. To own the land he worked has been a coveted hope of every peasant since the dawn of civilization and in Bohemia it was no exception. Land was an integral part of the common people.

Ever since very early times in Europe, the common man had no protection, men who may have been fortunate enough to own a small parcel of land were in constant danger of losing it to the more powerful landlords or nobles. They could not defend their property against the strong and greedy land barons. In Bohemia it was especially true before the time of the Reformation of 1781 and for decades after. Many of these small land owners went to some stronger leader whom they entrusted and said they would give him their land if he would protect them and their families, let them work the land and use it. In time, these leaders came to own nearly all of the land. Some of them maintained themselves in good standing with the common people but most of them exploited the peasantry and took advantage of them in every way they could, resulting in wretched living conditions. They were known as lords or "barons" and it was these land barons

that I used to hear grandfather talk about. They became the real rulers of the country. All the pieces of land which they owned, great or small, were called fiefs. A man who worked under the protection of some lord or baron, like grandfather's father was called a vassal or serf. These vassals or serfs became the fighting men for the lord or baron in times of war. They paid taxes to him and paid many of his expenses, as, for example, the marriage of a daughter or funeral expenses, etc. In grandfather's boyhood days most all of the lands in Bohemia were divided into these fiefs which were cultivated by vassals. Most of the inhabitants of Cep were under the vassalage system although a few of the wealthier inhabitants were able to rent a land piece and work it themselves or perhaps own it. If a vassal was fortunate enough to own a piece of land or small fief, it was inherited by the oldest son, other children received nothing according to the law. If the fief was inherited by a woman, she was expected to choose a husband at once so that a fighting man would be available to support the lord or baron.

This way of dividing the country into fiefs and ruling the people under a system of vassalage was called the "feudal system." It was still in existence during grandfather's time in Bohemia, in some parts. In Cep a few of the better-to-do inhabitants were out of the vassalage class. This system of government and land ownership was not conducive to progress. Under it a few improvements were made. There was little interest in building better roads or in learning better methods of tilling the land. There was a great deal of quarreling and

fighting among the lords who were jealous of each other's power. The king was not powerful enough to make them keep the peace. Besides he dared not strip them of their power or curtail their activities too much because he was dependent on them for large tax revenues besides running the risk of their turning against him. So, in such times, the king usually kept himself considerably in the background for his own good.

In times of war, the common people were the first ones to be called upon to do the fighting and scarcely any generation was spared the sufferings imposed by war. At such times additional and heavy taxes were imposed upon the people to wage a war which they did not start. It is little wonder that many of them looked to lands across the Atlantic where they hoped to settle and be able to live their own life as they pleased. My grandfather was one among them.

CHAPTER 3

THE VILLAGE OF CEP

The most important city in Bohemia is Prag, the capital of the country. This beautiful city is one of the most highly cultured centers in Europe. Its main street, "Vatslavshy Namesti" was famous even during early times and travels when people who visited there were numbered in the thousands. The famous Czech university, a seat of higher learning, is located there. It is this seat of learning that kept alive the Czech customs and culture during critical times in Czech history. Without its influence upon the people of the country of Bohemia, they might have passed out of existence centuries ago and become a lost nationality during critical periods in their history.

Directly south of Prag and in the southern part of Bohemia is the rural farm village of Cep in the district of Budweis or Budejovice as they spelled it in Bohemian. The little village was situated on a small stream or river. It no doubt had been the home of several generations of the Tlachac ancestry prior to the time of my grandfather. Throughout Bohemia one could find similar farm villages in those days and some of them have no doubt grown in size while others may have disappeared from existence. The village system was an outgrowth of the early peasants' desire to live in groups, which was brought on by wars, revolutions and other economical disturbances. They felt more secure and better able to defend life and homes if living in a group.

It may be of interest to the reader to learn that in Bohemia distances were measured in hours of travel instead of miles as is done in our country. According to grandfather

it was estimated that a man could walk three or four miles per hour and a given point that was five hours walking distance away was approximately seventeen miles distant. The village of Cep was three hours journey from Budweis (Budejovice) or about ten miles. Budweis was the county seat in the area where Cep was located and people journeyed there when transacting some official business. I heard grandfather speak of going "du Budejce" meaning going to the county seat as we would say. Prag was a three day journey from Cep.

The little Cep village was situated on a large land estate and with the exception of farms that were owned by the better-to-do inhabitants, the land was controlled by the land barons. "Baruns"-- like I used to hear grandfather say. On the edge of the village stood the manor house of the landlord, conveniently located from which he could administer his affairs. Cep was a small village consisting of about one hundred and fifty homes exclusive of the school, church, grist mill, cobbler, etc. It was situated on a small river which was a tributary of the Elbe River that I heard grandfather speak of. Many of the homes were of stone construction for the reason that lumber was not to be had for building purposes. Being of stone construction, they lasted from one generation to another. Some of the houses had thatched roofs. The home usually had only one room where the family ate and slept although some had two rooms or more. In some of the poorer homes, the ground pounded hard served for the floor while in others the floor was of flat stones carefully laid to form a smooth surface. Furniture was very

scanty and primitive of simple style. There was a bed, chairs, cupboards, table and other articles, all hand-made. Lighting consisted of a candle or wick burning lamp containing animal fat. Oil was unknown in Cep in grandfather's day. Fire places provided heat while in some homes they had a stove for heating and baking. The housewife had a heavy iron kettle, knives and forks, wooden ladle, glassware and some chinaware. No home was without a spinning wheel and the girls learned early in life how to use it although the carding of wool and spinning the yarn was usually left to the mothers and grandmothers.

In cold weather the cow, pigs, chickens or geese were housed in a pen under the same roof that sheltered the family. In grandfather's home they kept a cow in a stable under the same roof. Water was supplied from a community well or wells and was carried home in wooden buckets by means of a yoke. The group of houses in Cep were not located in any particular pattern so that what we would call streets were not always straight. Most of the inhabitants were on the same standard of living, therefore there was not much difference in the type of home. This verbal picture, with only a slight modification, was given to me by my grandfather and it occurred one Sunday afternoon in summer when we sat in the shade of an apple tree, not too many years before he passed away. It is difficult for us to realize that our grandparents lived in such primitive dwellings. But there was no "living like the Joneses" in those days; the people were impoverished and were glad to have any kind of a roof over their heads.

Near the manor house stood the village church but there was no resident pastor. There's was a mission church. Not all, however, were church attendants; there were a few non-believers. At this point in my story, I should like to relate about some turbulent times through which the Czechs passed which affected the life of the people for hundreds of years. Prior to the founding of the Czech University of higher learning in Praha in 1343, the country was predominantly Catholic. One of the professors in the university was John Huss, a dynamic figure. Soon Huss began active writing and teaching about what he claimed was persecution of some of the common people by the clergy and hierarchy of the Catholic Church. His teachings and writings influenced some of the people, changed their thinking and led them away from their church. As a result, he was excommunicated from the church on the basis of heresy. He was ordered to appear before a great Council of the Church at Constance. However, he had to pass through country that was hostile to his teachings, but the king promised him safe passage. Huss accepted the invitation but the Council told the king that he ought not to keep his word with a heretic and after the Council meeting Huss was stranded. It was a dangerous situation and rather than attempting to return home, Huss remained for several months. He was captured by his enemies, put in prison and burned alive at the stake.

This rash act had repercussions among his followers and instead of aiding in the downfall of his movement, it had the opposite effect. It united them, incited uprisings and retaliation against some of the innocent clergymen. Many of them were subjected to persecution. These followers formed groups

and held religious services of their own in some hall and meeting houses without the aid of the clergy. Some of them fell away from the church and became non-believers entirely.

This religious upheaval in Bohemia contributed to an already weak and unstable economy which played into the hands of the Austrian rulers. They issued other decrees making the lives of the people even more difficult and insecure. This weakened internal condition drew the attention of Emperor Sigamund of Germany who was covetous to bring Bohemia under his kingdom but they would not accept him as a ruler. Then he started a war to subjugate them but fortunately the Czech army was under the command of John Ziska, a brilliant general. Although Ziska was a follower of the Hussites, the people forgot religious differences and rallied to his support in the war. In his youth Ziska lost the sight of one eye and later in manhood he lost the sight of the other one by an arrow. He was totally blind but he knew the country so well that he was able to lead his armies to victory. He was offered the governorship of Bohemia but died before it came about. These turbulent times in the history of Bohemia are known as the Hussite rebellion and it lasted for hundreds of years in one form or another.

Of course, this took place five-hundred years before the birth of my grandparents but the evidence of it was carried down into their time. Those who were non-believers were always critical of the Church and its teaching. Even in the early pioneer times in America some of these settlers grouped together for their own religious services. I have in mind a group of Bohemians north of Cadott, Wisconsin which

is about 15 miles northeast of Chippewa Falls. The settlement there was predominantly Bohemian and still is. These people have religious services of their own in a hall located in their midst. They do not have a church and they call themselves "Zapadne Bratranec" which means Western Brotherhood or something to that effect. In their church cemetery can be seen such Bohemian names as Motika, Slama, Smetana, Nasvachil and Petrlík. They are peace loving people and prosperous farmers.

However, most of the people in Bohemia remained Catholic in spite of the Hussite rebellion. In Cep this was also true and my grandparents were among them. The women, especially, were devoted to their little village church and this was clearly exemplified to me on several occasions by my grandmother whom I saw praying her rosary when I visited her as a boy. In the little village churchyard one might find the names of ancestors who for generations past were buried there. Upon the death of a member of the family, there was a six week mourning period by the rest of the members and close relatives. During this period they refrained from festive activities.

There was a school in Cep to which the boys went during the winter months. It was usually taught by a stern school master and surprisingly the teaching was all in the German language instead of Bohemian. Like in colonial days in America, the scholars were expected to recite their lessons in class out loud and in unison. It had one advantage over present day methods, for the dull scholar. If he did not know his lesson too well he at least could go through the facial expression of reciting

it even if his voice was not heard over that of his classmates. Usually, the one who shouted the loudest knew his lesson the best. So it was that the Czechs were allowed to go to school but they were not permitted to study in their own language. The feeling could be comparative to our own if we here in America, where we study in the English language would be required to study a foreign tongue. German was taught exclusively in the little Cep village school and that is where my grandfather learned to speak it. It often seemed curious to me when I heard grandfather, a full-blooded Bohemian, speak German to someone of that nationality until he told me why he was able to do so. Even under this handicap due to Austrian rule, the Czechs always fought illiteracy and sought in every way to perpetuate their own Bohemian language. Because of their love of learning, they were able to maintain their language, their customs and traditions from one generation to another. The mothers played an important part in teaching their children at home to read and write their own language.

The priest and village schoolmaster were important personages in the village but the miller (mlejnar) contributed greatly to the sustenance of the inhabitants. The little grist mill was built on the bank of the small stream that flowed through the village. The crude mill with its water wheel, wooden cogs and shafts turning the stone burrs would be an object of curiosity for us to behold. The stone grinding burrs were circular in shape about three feet in diameter and six inches in thickness. The lower burr was stationary while the top one rotated, the grain being fed through a hole in the center of the upper one. The grinding surfaces were roughened and cut into a certain pattern as a

means of crushing and grinding the grain. When the grinding surfaces were smoothed from use, the burrs were dismantled, recut and put back into position for more grinding. All the villagers brought their rye to this mill to be ground into flour. Grandfather spoke of carrying a sack of rye now and then to the mill to be ground into flour.

Since the bread grains never were too plentiful, the bran and middling were not separated from the flour, they were all used in baking bread which accounts for the fact that the bread was dark in color and commonly known as "black bread." During the fall season the miller was a busy man as most peasant farmers brought their rye to be ground into flour, soon after the harvest time. During the winter months the stream was frozen so that the mill could not run and there was no other power to operate it. For his pay the miller usually was allowed to keep a portion of the grist. Like other trades, the miller learned the art from his father to whom it was handed down from preceding generations.

The "kovar" or blacksmith also had his little shop in the village. Here he shod the oxen for the landlord or perhaps for those farmers who were wealthy enough to own a piece of land and also had a team of oxen of their own. Most of his work, however, was done in wood because there was not an abundance of iron. He usually made or repaired such farm implements as a wooden plow, flail, grain cradle, or farm wagon. Farther down the Cep village the "obuvnik" or shoemaker had his little shop where he made boots and shoes, also did some repairing of them.

Since the people obtained their living from the land,

most of the inhabitants of Cep were farmers with the exception of the schoolmaster, priest, miller, etc. A few of the better educated ones helped the landlord to manage the farm land around the village and keep certain records for which he was responsible to authority above him. In the early days prior to the Reformation of 1781, the serfs were not permitted to go to some other manor to seek employment, they were compelled to stay where they were but in grandfather's boyhood days, the rules were already relaxed. A few of the farmers were free to move away or seek employment elsewhere, or were permitted to rent land and work it, or buy a parcel if they were financially able to. Very few of them were able to acquire ownership of land.

Since most of the lands around Cep belonged to the landlord or baron, the peasant farmers who worked them were under the direction of a steward or bailiff who managed the farm lands. He gave each farmer a strip of good soil. Here the farmer planted rye, the chief grain for bread, he also planted potatoes, beets, cabbage and other garden truck. Some wheat was also planted but very little, as the Bohemians preferred rye bread. Only such crops as provided the basic necessities for sustenance were raised. Perhaps, next year he would be given a different strip of land. The peasant, like my great grandfather, did all of the farming by hand. In the spring he had to wait his turn to have the land plowed by means of oxen owned by the land baron.

The farmer could spend only a part of the time on his own strip of land, the rest of the time or about three days a week in planting or harvesting time was spent on the baron's

land which he kept for himself. Besides the work he did on these fields, he had to give a part of the things he raised to his landlord. This was carefully set down in a big book kept in the manor house. As a typical example he had to give to his lord, besides other things, "three hens and one rooster, and five eggs at Easter-time." Grandfather spoke of this as being "podeprite" meaning support. Then at certain times, according to grandfather, the baron would visit the farms for inspection and at such times the people would have to bow down in homage as he passed by. This manner of paying homage was very distasteful to grandfather as the expression on his face indicated to me. "Pfuey na tu" was a Bohemian expression of his when he talked about it. Failure to pay homage in this manner often resulted in some kind of punishment.

Beyond the rich Cep lands were the wide, rough and poorer parts of the manor lands. Here the farmer was permitted to give pasturage to his pigs, sheep, cows or geese. These lands were called "common pasture." Adjoining the common pasture was the common forest where the farmer could cut what firewood he needed for his fireplace or stove from a woodlot free to all of the people of the village. However, conservation was strictly practiced and no trees could be felled without the permission of the landlord or bailiff. Failure to obey this rule could deprive the farmer of his share of wood. Nothing went to waste, even the branches were cut into stove wood, bound in bundles and carried home. Grandfather often spoke of wood gathering and how he helped to carry it home on his shoulder, tied in bundles. Leaves were carefully gathered and piled with stable litter to form a compost

which was used to fertilize the land in the spring.

The inhabitants of Cep had no voice in governmental affairs and some of them voted in grandfather's time. The village manor house was also used as a courthouse for the people. Here all the records about the land were kept, people owning a parcel of land or a home had their deed to their property recorded there. Others who may have owned only personal property also could have it recorded there and all this was used for tax purposes. People suspected of having committed some crime or wrong doing were tried before the lord who presided at these sessions. Usually he settled all cases and fixed the punishment which in most instances was in the form of a fine. The fine went to the landlord. He was both master and administrator of the village affairs. Books and newspapers were scarce and the people did not know the real meaning of liberty and freedom as we understand them.

If we were to call upon some of the neighbors who lived in the vicinity of grandfather's home we would find such Bohemian names as Jakob Hadac, Prokop Cadka, Honza Cisar, Frantisek Herda, Martin Svoboda, Vaclav Kropa, Josef Vanecek, Josef Cerny. All of these were living in Cep when grandfather was a young man. Many of them immigrated to America and settled in Manitowoc, and Door counties in the 1850's. Other Bohemian families settled in Chicago where they obtained employment.

In Bohemia, like in other European countries, no generation of young men escaped conscription for military service. When a young man attained the age of eighteen years, he was subject to draft but only the fittest were conscripted. These

inductees had to meet rigid standards of physical health, weight, and height. Army life was very strenuous and exacting. The Austrian army officers were very severe in their military orders and commands but it made the Czech army a well-trained one and among the best in Europe. In time of war these Austrian commanders usually sent the Czech army ahead especially where the fighting was the severest. These men marched into battle and scarcely a home was spared a casualty. These were times of much anxiety for the family of a fallen son. Many a family experienced such a loss in the little Cep village at sometime or other, and my grandfather's home was one of them.

CHAPTER 4

PATERNAL ANCESTRY

In the early days in Bohemia, there was very little migration from one place to another. For that reason, many families could trace ancestry several generations in the same little village. It is interesting how some family names originated. In some cases the family name was a derivative of some other. In other cases in Bohemia, a family name was a derivative of the kind of work that was handed down from father to son, like for example, "mouka" meaning flour. Perhaps for generations the family operated a little grist mill. When the father passed on, his son continued in his footsteps and in time was referred to as "mouka." This may have continued for generations before he took "Mouka" for the family name but that is the way some of these surnames originated. Not so with the name of Tlachac which appears to be one of real Slavic origin.

Cep was the home of several generations of my paternal ancestry. Grandfather's parents lived there, his grandparents lived there and no doubt their parentage before them. Grandfather's account of ancestral parentage started with that of his father Bartholomej Tlachac, born about 1792. Here in America George Washington was just completing his first term as president of the young republic. Perhaps grandfather could have acquainted me with earlier parentage than that of his father but I failed to ask him. Later on when my curiosity was aroused to learn more, he had already passed on and there is no other source where that information

can be obtained.

After being accustomed to hearing such names as Mathias, Frank, John or Stephen in connection with the surname of Tlachac, the name of Bartholomew or "Bartholomej" in the old Bohemian spelling, seems like being out of the ordinary. But in Bohemia, Bartholomew was a saint's name of quite high order and the name was not an uncommon one there. Since great grandfather was christened Bartholomew it gives conclusive evidence that his parents were of the Catholic faith.

Great grandfather, Bartholomej, or "Bartol" as he was commonly called, had been a descendant of ancestry that was always impoverished and with no formal education outside of being able to speak their own language and perhaps read it. His people lived before the time of the reformation when the life of the individual was regulated by the state. Poverty was a hand down from one generation to another and there was no opportunity for his people to escape peasantry or serfdom. When Bartol's parents passed away, he inherited the little home in the village. According to the law of inheritance in Bohemia, only the oldest son could inherit any property, therefore it can be presumed that he was the oldest son of the family. If he had any other brothers or sisters, I never heard my grandfather mention any.

According to my grandfather, his father was a strong man in good health and when he reached the age of eighteen years, he was drafted into the army where he remained for eight years. Upon his discharge he married a village girl

in 1817 or 1818 and her maiden name was Theresa Cadka. She was the daughter of Procop Cadka, an inhabitant of the village of Cep. Their marriage took place in the little village of Cep, in the mission church that was without a resident pastor. She, too, came from parents that knew the impoverished life. She brought no endowment to her husband except a willingness to assume the responsibilities of married life that are even greater where frugality is to be found. A certain kind of expression that I noted on grandfather's face when speaking of his mother, indicated that she was a kindly person.

The married life of Bartolomej and Theresa Tlachac began in humble circumstances in the small two room house which was mostly of stone construction. One room was where they ate and rested while the other one provided the sleeping quarters. Under the same roof in a stable is where the cow was kept. One may wonder how the people avoided sickness and disease where farm animals were housed amidst the homes but the women were neat and clean housekeepers. They were noted for their clean homes. On the Tlachac house there was a lean-to where Bartholomej made wooden shovels and other wooden ware. He was handy in woodwork and for that reason he was known throughout the village as "Lopatarz." This authentic information was given to me by grandmother Johanna Herda. She had recollections of seeing "Lopatarz" trudging to the village market with several shovels strapped together on his shoulder where he sold them, then homeward bound for more shovel making. More than a hundred years have passed since that event took place.

It was a simple life. Great grandfather Bartol tilled the patch of land that was allotted him on the outskirts of the village in addition to working in his little shop. Great grandmother Theresa helped in the planting time besides keeping house, making the clothing, etc. Then in 1819 a son was born and he was named Joseph, no doubt after the grandfather, to keep the name in the family as was the custom then. He was followed by two other sons, Jacob and Martin, then a girl, Anna, and lastly by my grandfather, who was the youngest of the children.

This family of five children no doubt was a care for the mother. The oldest son, Joseph, grew up and learned early in life to be helpful to his parents. He attended the village school and learned the German language. During his early manhood he was a laborer around the village and when he was eighteen years old he was drafted into the army from which he never returned. He was killed in battle. The loss of her first-born son affected the mother, now in failing health.

Jacob was also a farmhand but according to my grandfather, he was of a more or less irresponsible nature and prone to be somewhat shiftless. He had no schooling, although he served in the army. He returned from the army and very little is known about his life afterward, except that he worked as a farmhand, did not marry and passed away rather early in life.

Martin was the third child and five years older than my grandfather, he was born in 1824. For some reason, not known to me, he did not serve in the army. As he grew up, he was much dissatisfied with life around Cep and often spoke of

leaving for other parts. However, there were his parents who were in need of help. In those days, children who failed to provide for their aging parents were looked upon with contempt and this parental responsibility no doubt kept Martin in Cep. He attended school for a short period when he was a boy and worked as a farmhand at home and among neighbors who were in need of help. Later on he immigrated to America some years after the arrival of my grandfather.

Anna, the fourth child was the only girl in the family and her lot was a difficult one. When she was ten years old the mother passed away in 1837 at the age of about 42 years. My grandfather was a boy eight years old when his mother passed away but he remembered the incident and told me about it. The body was prepared for burial by kind and sympathetic women of the neighborhood. The casket was homemade, most likely in the little family workshop. The black crepe was hung on the kitchen door with its heavy iron latch. The coffin was carried by pall-bearers to the village church from which she was interred in the little cemetery among her ancestors. The death of his mother, when my grandfather was only eight years old, was a greivous loss to him young as he was. From then on Anna became the mother of the house which accounts for the fact that she never worked out as a "devecka" or servant girl as most girls did who were not needed at home.

When the father was 55 years old another tragedy came into the family. Bartol lost his sight from illness and his blindness continued for twenty years when he passed away, in

1867 when he was 75 years old. During the years of his blindness he was unable to work so it fell upon my grandfather, his brother Martin and their sister Anna to provide the living. My grandfather's support was of short duration because he immigrated to America ten years before his father passed away.

Soon after the passing of his father, Martin's opportunity for leaving for other parts presented itself. Together with his sister it was decided to sell the little homestead and join my grandfather in the New World. This was done and they departed for America in the year 1868.

CHAPTER 5

LIFE IN THE VILLAGE OF CEP

Life in Cep, as I heard my grandfather speak about it, would seem strange to us if we were one of the inhabitants. The people who worked the soil were of the peasantry class and most of them were poor and always in want. There were many unsatisfactory conditions which the people did not like but there was little they could do about correcting them. In times of war, which was frequent, young men were forced into the army and in some cases had to provide some of the supplies. Then there were heavy taxes. The manoral system under which most of the common people worked the land was not an entirely satisfactory system. The plan of giving out strips of land to the farmers made it difficult to improve the way of farming. Often workers became careless. They did not like to work the baron's land because they did not get any of the crops raised on those fields.

In time some of the landlords saw the need of getting more efficient workers for their farms. During grandfather's life in Cep a few changes were rapidly taking place and more freedom was being given to the common people. The poor people on the land were helped in their struggle by the growth of towns. The little shops like the shoemaker, blacksmith and others needed workers and were willing to give jobs to the farm boys. Boys often ran away from the great farms and villages where they had been born, to seek work in these towns. It became the rule that if a boy or young man stayed away for a year and one day, his former landlord

could not drag him back to the farm. Sometimes other landlords were kinder and paid better wages which was an inducement to run away.

In order to keep up with the change in working conditions, many landlords began offering better wages but they were still pitifully low and provided only the meagerest standard of living. As the years passed by traders began visiting some of the farm villages and were willing to pay the inhabitants cash for such produce as hides, wool, chickens and other things that the people could supply. In some of the towns weekly markets began to be held. Some of the farmers could carve well or were handy with woodwork or perhaps make shoes and other articles which they could sell. Some of the farmers' wives knitted or wove garments not needed by the family. All such articles could be taken to the market and sold. That is where grandfather's father sold his shovels. In time some of the people were able to save some money in gold denominations which they stored away. The monetary unit was the crown or "Korona." With that money the farmer could buy freedom for himself and his family. This freedom was bought from the landlord by paying him a certain sum. After that he could move to some other town to seek work and live. Or he could rent a piece of land from the owner and work it as he pleased or perhaps if he had enough money he could buy a piece of land. These are some changes that took place in grandfather's youth but because his parents were poor, they could not take much advantage of them, particularly in the ownership of land.

This change of farming methods and land ownership affected the lives of the Cep inhabitants. Those who were fortunate were able to own their land and work it. One of these who had a great influence on the life of my grandfather was Joseph Cerny. It was through his wealth, that grandfather was able to migrate to America. At this point in my story, I should like to devote this special paragraph to Joseph Cerny. They came to America together and in my search for a possible descendent I was directed by my good friend, Bernard C. Sleger of Stanley, Wisconsin to contact a one Mrs. Anton Zeman of Maribel, Wisconsin since she might be in a position to be of help to me. Incidentally, Mr. Sleger was born and raised near Cooperstown and knew this lady all of his life. Her maiden name was Emma Cerny. I wrote to Mrs. Zeman and received a letter in reply in which she stated that she is a granddaughter of Mr. Cerny and a lone survivor. In her letter she stated that her grandfather owned land in Bohemia, was a married man with three daughters and one son, had considerable wealth and came to America where he settled in Cooperstown. All this coincides with what grandfather used to tell me about Joseph Cerny. Mr. Cerny had wealth in Bohemia, owned land and was able to farm it with hired help. When my grandfather was twenty-five years old, he hired out to work for Mr. Cerny in Bohemia and continued to work for three years. More of this will be told in another chapter.

The growth of the school system in grandfather's day was also taking shape. Originally, it started out to Germanize the Czechs but as farming and ways of living

changed the school changed with it. The small merchants in the towns and villages grew more interested in education. They found it hard to get the help of intelligent young men in their growing business so they encouraged the growth of schools. In later years, the school in Cep, as well as others elsewhere, were taught by private school masters who charged some tuition. This, again, worked to the disadvantage of the poorer families. They could not afford to pay tuition so their boys could not go to school. The rich had private tutors to teach their children so the school drew its pupils from families who were neither very poor or very rich. The poverty of my paternal grandparents and the passing of his mother when my grandfather was only eight years old accounts for his extremely limited education.

No one could see any reason why girls should go to school in those days so the girls in Cep did not go to school. Instead of knowing how to read and write, the parents saw more reason why the girls should know how to cook, spin, weave and care for the house. What possible use could they make of any more education than that thought the people of Cep? But many of the girls were eager to learn and became quite well-educated for that day. Books were scarce and expensive and very few text books were available for use. If they went to school, they would have to learn their lessons in German so in order to educate themselves in the Bohemian language, it had to be a self-taught education.

Strange as it may seem after hundreds of years of turbulent times in Bohemia, the people were faithful to

their church religious practices and beliefs, especially the women. It may seem strange to us but religion was woven into the lives of the people like threads into cloth and in Cep it was no exception. Starting with the soil, which very early became a part of their lives, there was religion. For example, there was the day of St. Mark with a procession into the fields around the village where the priest blessed the soil and sprinkled it with holy water to make it give forth a good crop. To the younger generations in America, such a custom may be difficult to understand. But in Bohemia and elsewhere in Europe where there was a scarcity of planting space and where the common people for centuries were constantly oppressed and in want, they turned to anything that might help them in their poverty and religion seemed to them to be the answer. Even in the pioneer days in America, many an early settler knelt down and asked Providence for a good crop before he started seeding a field. Such holidays as Ascension, Christmas, Easter, or Pentecost were significant feast days in the lives of most people in Cep. Often on Sunday small groups of women could be seen walking to their little church chanting their prayers as they marched. It was a beautiful custom which has died away with the changing times. In times of illness, the words of the village priest were comforting and reassuring to the common people. Religion to the people meant some happy occasions like festivals. When harvesting was completed, came November first, the day of All Saints, when the people faithfully gathered together and attended their little church

to give thanks for the harvest. This was followed by festive activities when many fat geese were roasted and there were lots of "kolatches" and "buhty" to satisfy the appetites created by this activity.

Home life of the farmer inhabitants of Cep was very simple. Most of the people, by force of necessity, worked and there was very little time left for recreation, simple as it might be. The men were busy tilling the soil, while the housewife kept the home, did the baking, cooking, washing, spinning, weaving, sewing and caring for the family besides working in the fields. The thrifty housewife cooked the simple meals such as "knedliki and zeli" (dumplings and sour kraut). At other times many a meal was made from dark bread, sour milk and potatoes. The Czech housewife is noted for such pastries as "kolatches, buhty, rohlicky" and other baked goods. Poppy seed was grown and used abundantly in baking pastries. The housewife also roasted barley from which coffee was made, it sometimes was made from roasted wheat. In the winter months, spinning wheels were busy turning out yarn which was knitted into stockings, mittens and head gear. In many homes men also knitted during the long winter months. Weaving of cloth was done in grandfather's time although yard goods could be obtained from peddlars who traveled from one village to another selling their goods. Clothing was made by hand, sewed with thread and needle and the housewife became very dexterous in its use.

Most farmers kept some ducks and geese and when these

were killed for meat, the feathers were saved, washed and hung on the line in bags to dry out. Then came the stripping bees, usually enjoyed by the women. I recall my grandmother speak of the "dracke" or going "na dracke," which means stripping or going to a stripping bee. These stripping bees were held in the various homes that had feathers to strip. Neighborhood ladies assembled in some home, sat around long tables stripping feathers, talking as they stripped, sometimes late into the night. Many a weary farmer in Cep slept peacefully on a feather tick. This custom of feather stripping was brought to America by those early pioneers and even in my boyhood days I remember them in our neighborhood, a fine custom that is gone forever.

The style of clothing was quaint as we know it today, for holiday wear the men usually wore black suits with rather tight fitting trousers. Coat lapels were rather small and usually the coat was buttoned at the top only. The neck tie was unknown in grandfather's day in Bohemia or even in America, men wore a "cravat" around the neck. For dress wear the women wore several petticoats ankle length over which was worn a black skirt also ankle length. A rather tight fitting waistcoat was worn over which they sometimes wore a shawl, waist length. Over their heads, the grandmothers wore a "shatek" while younger women wore bonnet like head gear which were tied under their chins with ribbons or cords. Needless to say, that clothing was made to last almost a lifetime and extremely good care was taken of it. When holiday clothing was worn out there was no

clothing shop where new ones could be purchased, they had to be all made by hand.

There was a strong feeling of neighborliness in the little Cep village. Being on the same standard of living, there was no class distinction among the common folks. Times of sorrow, such as a death in the family was not only keenly felt by the family but by the neighbors as well. Everyone helped in any way he could. Most every neighborhood had a lady who acted as a midwife and attended the birth of a baby. She cared for the newly born and mother until she was able to be about her duties. There was no thought of recompense, it was all done from the goodness of the heart.

When the winter snows melted and the gentle spring rains came, it was a busy time for the Cep farmers. The planting season was at hand. The landlord plowed the strip of land for each peasant farmer by means of oxen which the lord owned. All the planting was done by hand. Since the farming lands were on the outskirts of the village, the farmer walked to his field. Lunch was carried in a basket and groups of farmers left their homes in the morning, worked in the field all day and returned in the evening. The largest part of the land was seeded to rye. This was followed by potatoes, cabbage, poppy seed and other garden truck. Such common garden vegetables like tomatoes were unknown at that time. All during the summer months the farm was carefully tilled and the farmer usually spent four days on his land and the rest of the week on the landlord's land. With favorable climatic conditions the crops

usually were quite good.

Then in the fall came the harvest time. The cutting of grain was done with a scythe or grain cradle. The reaper, invented by McCormick in 1831 in America, was unknown in Bohemia in grandfather's time. Even there it could not be used because the fields were too small. As the grain was cut it was carefully laid in swaths or rows and bound into bundles which were tied in a unique way. It is from my grandfather that I learned of the method enabling me to describe it. To form the band, a small sheaf of grain was held near the heads with the left hand and was parted in two with the right one. A quick twist was given with the portion held in the right hand over the left thumb. The bundle of grain was picked up from the ground, the sheaf wrapped around it, the two stem ends drawn tightly, given a twist and tucked under the band. It made a durable tie. When the bundles were shocked the gleaners came to pick any loose heads of grain that may have fallen on the ground. The women helped in this kind of work and it made little difference in what direction one might look, they worked beside the men, dressed in calico dresses and sun bonnets.

Following the cutting and shocking of grain, it was hauled home and then began the flail threshing which some times lasted late into the fall. All the threshing was done by flail and at this point in my book I should like to acquaint my reader with a flail, in case he does not know, and how it was used in Cep. The flail consisted of a handle of tough wood like oak or hickory, about five feet long and perhaps one and a half inches in thickness. To this, on

one end was fastened another stick of tough wood perhaps three inches thick and two feet long. A hole was made on one end to which was fastened a tough strap which in turn was fastened to the end of the handle. Then bundles of grain were laid in a row, heads together, on a hard surface. The object was to take the flail in hand and pound the heads to separate the kernels from the hull. In some cases as many as three or four persons flailed the same row of bundles and this required a rhythmic way of doing it so that each person brought his flail down at a precise second so as not to interfere with the next one who was doing the same thing. Where there were a number of persons threshing the same row of bundles grandfather stated that it was done in a rhythmic manner. One would chant to rhythm and it sounded like "Hus-Pech Hus-Pech." The women as well as the men, helped to wield the flail. Grandfather was dexterous at flail handling and was in demand among the villagers at threshing time. The grain was separated from the chaff by sifting it in the wind. The straw was carefully stored away in the stable for use as bedding for the farm animals. Sometimes it was used in straw ticks. As a young man my grandfather did much of this kind of work.

Winter was well underway when the threshing was completed and then followed the gathering of wood from the common forest and brought home to be used as firewood. When a tree was cut down every part of it was used, even the branches were cut in stove wood length, tied in bundles and brought home. Even in that day conservation of forest was practiced. Leaves from the forest were gathered and

brought home where they were carefully piled to form a compost to be used to fertilize the soil in the spring of the year. The landlord also obtained his supply of firewood from the forest and the common people were expected to supply it. Usually the best wood was kept for himself. All this was hard work for the people of Cep but they were accustomed to it and had no other choice.

In spite of the frugal life of most of the people and their long hours of work, there were no periods of enjoyment. On Sunday or other holidays the people often gathered together in some sport or other. There were the customary dances and when we speak of dances we are apt to think of such as waltzes, two steps, etc. These are of American origin and were unknown in Cep in grandfather's young manhood. The dances were then of the folk style or group dancing, customary dances that were to be found all over Bohemia. Grandfather enjoyed frolic in his youth and this was noticeable to me even in his old age when he heard some tune that he liked. He often amused himself blowing in a ten cent mouth organ when he lived with my parents. These dances in Bohemia created much fun and enjoyment. It is of these that grandmother Herda often spoke and how she danced with grandfather. At other times the young folks went picnicing in the woods where they ate their lunches, took long walks, in groups, and gathered wild flowers and some herbs for medicinal purposes. These few forms of amusements were simple but were appreciated by the people. It did not take elaborate forms of amusements to satisfy their desire for recreation after a hard day's toil.

CHAPTER 6

BIRTH OF MY GRANDPARENTS AND THEIR
EARLY LIFE IN CEP

Grandfather was born in January 19, 1829 and possessed poverty from the very day of his birth. If by chance he had been born in America, as a three year old child he could have shaken the hand of Charles Carrol, surviving signer of the Declaration of Independence, still alive.

Of the five children in the family, grandfather was the youngest. His people were unable to progress beyond the stage of common laborers; they never owned land and their only possession was a small home which was passed down from father to the eldest son. They made their living farming rented land and by working out among farmers who owned their farms. The study of grandfather's baptismal certificate provides some interesting and authentic information. His father, Bartholomej married Theresa Cadka who was a daughter of Procop Cadka. Thus Procop Cadka was my grandfather's grandparent on his mother's side of the family-- all of these ancestors were inhabitants of Cep which was located in the District of Budweis in the Dominion of Wittinghau and about 100 miles south from the city of Prag, capital of the country of Bohemia. They were Catholics and grandfather was baptized the same day he was born. It appears that it was a religious custom for baptism to be performed the same day that the child was born. It took place in the little village church that had no resident pastor and was a mission of St. Nicholas Parish in Suchenthal.

The pastor who performed the baptismal rites was Charles Schoenauen and the record of his birth was in the German language. Thus we can see how little chance the Czechs had to perpetuate their own language in civil affairs. Grandfather's sponsors were Jacob Hadac and his wife Anna, who incidentally were the parents of my grandmother. Prior to grandfather's time the name of Tlachac was written Tlachatsch and the house number of grandfather's home in Cep is listed as N.C. 5.

With the other children in the immediate neighborhood, he grew up rapidly and under the guidance of his mother he learned early to prepare for a life of frugality such as was being experienced by many who had no other means of support, than that provided from common labor. His early childhood days were uneventful until he was eight years old when his mother passed away in 1837 after failing health and sickness. It was his first great sorrow and disappointment and from then on he was mostly in the care of his sister Anna.

Then came the day when it was time for the boy to attend the village school and he marched off with the other children. Within the school room was the school master who greeted the lad in the German language. The method of teaching was unlike as we know it, lessons were learned from and recited in unison. Special stress was placed on the laurels of German statesman and military leaders. Nothing was taught of Czech culture. Although grandfather's schooling was only about one term in all, he learned enough of the German language to satisfy the schoolmaster. He never learned to write the Bohemian language even in its simplest form, but he read the language well.

The necessity of going to work to help supplement the family income, compelled grandfather to seek employment early in life. In the spring of 1838, when he was nine years old, the lad took his first job as a sheep herder with a farmer in Cep who raised sheep. It was his task to tend the flock that none should go astray in the common pasture during the day. It meant following the flock early in the morning and returning with it in the evening. This continued late into the fall until the sheep were corralled in the sheep fold within the village. He spent two years in this kind of work and he often spoke of the sheep sheaving time in the spring. It was always done after the evening meal and sometimes late into the night. At such times, it was his job to hold the candle lighted lantern while the farmer sheared. Often the boy was tired from the long hours of work and retired hungry only to arise early the morning for more work. His pay was equivalent to nine cents a day.

When grandfather was a teenager, he worked as a hired hand among the farmers of Cep. As such he helped to prepare the soil for planting, he assisted with the harvesting and flail threshing. Being strictly an agricultural populace, there was not a varied choice of employment and with no formal education, grandfather was destined to be only a laborer. In the fall it was necessary to help his father to thresh the rye. He once told me of a bountiful year when they threshed eight scruples of grain, a scruple corresponding to an American bushel except that it was slightly larger. Then he helped to carry the

sacked rye to the village mill to be ground into flour. The cow needed care and grandfather learned early in life to milk. During the winter months the supply of stove wood was made and brought home. There was work in the little woodworking shop, helping his father to make shovels. In the winter evenings he helped his sister to spin yarn. These and other forms of work occupied most of his early life until he reached manhood. As a young man, grandfather was of medium height, a full face, dark brown hair, blue eyes and ordinary mouth and a rather stumpy nose. He retained all of these physical features into old age, except that his hair whitened but did not fall. I never heard grandfather speak of army life but his application for a passport states that he served the required time in the military.

When he was 25 years old, grandfather hired out as a farm hand to Joseph Cerny, a man who owned his farm and was known in those parts as a "bohach" or wealthy man. Cerny was a married man with three daughters and one son whose name was Vaclav. Being of means, Cerny farmed his land with hired help and did not do any of the work himself. In nature, he was something of a landmaster and because of his wealth and independence he was of a dominating nature but he paid good wages to his help.

During the 1850's, there was much migrating to America from western Europe which reached Bohemia and surrounding countries. Some of the inhabitants of Cep spoke of leaving for the New World or perhaps had already departed. John Cisar was one of them. Grandfather knew Cisar very well

and they were good friends. He was born in 1822, served in the army, then left for the new world and settled in Brussels town. The decision of Cerny to immigrate to the new world had a profound effect upon the life of my grandfather. Cerny's decision to immigrate to America was motivated by his wealth. In America land was cheap and with his money he could purchase a large tract and farm it with hired help as he did in the old world. To make such a trip as a family unit was no hindrance to Cerny but it affected my grandfather who did not have the passage money and consequently would have to remain in Bohemia. All around he saw others who, like himself, had labored year after year for a mere pittance. Opportunity was virtually non-existent for the common man. Human nature in those days was much like it is today for those who desire, to progress, to feel the need of their services, to acquire something of value, to enjoy the fruits of some of their labor and best of all to be free to pursue their own way of life. Grandfather was almost twenty-eight years old and still virtually penniless. Then they made a bargain, Cerny offered to pay grandfather's passage to America on condition that he would work for Cerny on his large farm in the New World and in this way work off the indebtedness. As we may well imagine, grandfather must have given this matter great thought. To decline Cerny's offer would mean that perhaps he might never be able to immigrate. On the other hand there were some drawbacks, there was his blind father who was unable to work and care for himself. There was grandmother and her little son, Mathias, who would be left behind, could he ever make it possible for them to come to the New World? No doubt

these thoughts weighed heavily on his mind as they no doubt have on others who planned to immigrate and had problems of their own and perhaps months of thought was given to the Great Plan. Would he find success in America? He could only hope to-- but the final decision was made and the trip to America became reality early in 1856.

Not far from the Tlachac ancestral home lived the Hadac family (sometimes spelled Hadatsch) from which my grandmother descended. There was Jacob Hadac, her father, who was married to Anna Vanecek. In turn his wife Anna was a daughter of Joseph and Mary (Maria) Vanecek and the maiden name of the latter was Ramus. Then on January 24, 1832, a daughter was born to Jacob and Anna Hadac and she was christened Mary who became my grandmother. She was named Mary after her grandmother, Mary Vanecek. My grandmother was also baptised in the little village mission church by Martin Charvat, assistant priest of the St. Nicolaus Parish in Suchenthal. Andrew Nowak and his wife, Katherine, were the sponsors and the midwife is listed in the baptismal certificate as being Rosina Kostecka.

My grandmother's people were from farm stock who owned their farm. Her father Jacob Hadac and her grandfather, Joseph Vanecek owned their little farm from which they obtained their living-- as such, her people did not feel the effects of impoverishment as was the case with my grandfather and his people. My grandmother's people were more of the better-to-do class of farmers although they were not rich in the meaning of the term. Grandmother had only one brother and no sisters. Her brother, Mathias, was

a self-educated man, he spoke the Bohemian language like a scholar and wrote it very well. He also was able to write the German language and as such he usually held some official position in civil affairs. He was well liked in the community. He also was a connecting link as a letter writer for the neighbors who sought his assistance in writing to their kinsfolk who were settled in America. When my grandparents were in America, he wrote letters to them.

In her youth, grandmother was a beautiful girl with a full round face, clear complexion, dark hair, grey eyes and she was of rather short stature. Like my grandfather, she retained these physical features into old age. In those days it was the hope of most girls to be able to "work out" when they grew up and this same desire was possessed by my grandmother. When she became a teenager, she worked out in homes about the village where they could afford a hired girl. She was a servant girl or "devecka" for many years.

In her early twenties, she became my grandfather's wife and on January 29, 1855 their first son was born, my uncle Mathias. Like his parents before him, he was baptized in the little village church. The baptismal rites were performed by Charles Mutter, assistant pastor and his sponsors were John Hadac, an uncle of my grandmother, and his daughter Anna. My uncle Mathias was a lad not quite five years old when he made the trip to America with his mother to join grandfather, but I heard him speak of having faint recollections of their home in Cep.

CHAPTER 7

THE START OF THE TRIP

Now that the great decision was made, actual preparations were begun in the early spring of 1856 for the trip to the New World. It required months of preparations before legal formalities were completed with military and civil authorities. Prior to 1832 no one could leave the country, no passports were issued and to try to slip across the border that was heavily patrolled by military police meant the risk of being shot. The new Immigration Law which went into effect on March 24, 1832 eased the requirements enabling people to leave the country under certain conditions. It shortened the term of forced military service. However, not many people took advantage of it because some form of prosperity came upon Bohemia after the Napoleonic wars. Everything was cheap but there was plenty of work. This continued until 1840 when there was a severe crop failure, particularly a potato failure. It had a severe effect on the people which lasted for several years. Suffering actual want, the Czech people then talked of migrating to America.

The wonderful stories of the discovery of gold in California in 1849 excited the Czechs no less than they agitated the other Europeans. Newspapers published highly colored articles about the rich California gold fields, while emigration agents in Bohemia magnified what was already exaggerated by the press. With these glowing accounts about California, came equally good reports of prosperity in other parts of America. They made the people virtually

believe that money grew on trees in America. This naturally excited the Czechs and most every peasant hoped at some time or other to be able to make the trip abroad. Warnings by authorities against immigration and false hopes had no effect on the people. In a like manner admonitions by the powerful church authorities proved futile. It was America and nothing but America that was uppermost in the minds of the common man. It spread like wildfire, engulfing many, including my own grandfather. The exodus became so great that from the Budejovice (Budweis district) in which my grandparents lived, 1,009 persons left for America in 1853 and the following year, 1,386 people left their home land. The same was true of other districts such as Pilsen, Chrudelin or Czeska Hora. Emigration reached its height in 1856, which was the year my grandfather left Bohemia, until it began to decline in 1859, just before the start of the Civil War in the United States.

Tens of thousands were lured by the prospective high wages, as compared to wages in Bohemia, and by land grants offered to the settlers. On the contrary, the common man in Bohemia had no future to make something of himself. The elementary schools taught little more than reading, spelling and some arithmetic and even that was not taught to them in their native language. The rulers desired, not educated citizens, but loyal and obedient subjects. For centuries, the ruling class drummed into the heads of the peasants its theories: to obey the Church; obey the lords; obey the government no matter how wrong some of them might be. The

archbishop claimed a prior lien on the peasant's soul, the emperor held a chattel mortgage on his body and the lord usurped the fruits of his labor-- thus the peasant had little left that was not encumbered. Regimented from childhood to obey and never to command, knowing little or nothing of constitutional liberty, it was little wonder that the old time Czech immigrant appeared backward and servile. The fault was not his, the blame rested on the shoulders of those who for centuries held captive his intellect, who sought to retain their hold on him by teaching him that dumb obedience and unreasoning faith were his only hope of salvation. Once, given a chance the Czech has shown his superiority in such fields as music, journalism and literature, medicine, dramatic art and others.

Most of the thousands of immigrants who came to America were between the ages of 17 and 40 years and in the best productive years of their life. From Bohemia, there were two distinct kinds of immigration; the political one which had its origin in the revolution disturbances of 1848, the other immigration due to economic causes. My grandparents belonged to the latter. Notwithstanding strict police regulations, advertisements appeared telling of the great opportunities in America, giving instructions how to travel and other advice. Our own state of Wisconsin advertised the opportunities settlers would enjoy by locating here. In the 1850's the state maintained in New York a salaried official called an Immigration Official, whose duty it was to divert the flow of newcomers to Wisconsin. The commissioner advertised extensively in the foreign language press, particularly in the German press which had a large circu-

lation in Bohemia. Besides he sent generous quantities of material such as posters etc. to Germany and Bohemia. Settlers from these countries were much desired in Wisconsin because of their agricultural background, their hardiness and because they made good citizens. This intensive advertising lured many Czechs to Wisconsin and with the exception of Nebraska there are more Bohemians in Wisconsin than in any other state in the union. The largest settlement of Bohemians is in Manitowoc and Kewaunee counties, other settlements are located in Cadott in Chippewa county, Phillips in Price county, Brill and Haugen in Barron county and around LaCrosse. I have traveled in all of these communities and derived much interest reading the Czech names on some of the rural mail boxes as I passed by them.

The printed circulars created much interest in Bohemia in the 1850's. One of them from Wisconsin read something like this, "Come! In Wisconsin all men are free and equal before the law. Religious freedom is absolute and there is not the slightest connection between church and state. Good land can be bought for \$1.25 an acre. The soil is adapted to the raising of corn, rye, wheat, oats, and vegetables, all products with which the Czech husbandman is familiar!" Some of these advertising folders were read by the Cep villagers and it was through these and from friends that already had immigrated, that they chose to settle in Manitowoc County. Cerny and grandfather were two of them.

Ship companies took full advantage of this huge exodus of emigration across the Atlantic. For them it was a lucrative business. These ship companies made it a business.

transporting immigrants to lands beyond the seas. They made it easy and simple to travel, after obtaining permission to leave the country, all the immigrant had to do was to tell them where he was bound for and they saw to it that he arrived at his destination. Immigrants from Europe came to America by the four ports of Hamburg, Havre, Antwerp and Breman. My grandparents came by way of Breman. The large ship company in Bremen at that time was the S.H.P. Schroder with a fleet of sailboats which made scheduled trips across the Atlantic. They had several agents scattered throughout Europe recruiting immigrants and one of these agents, C. Poppe, was stationed in Prag in the 1850's. It was his job to help the immigrant obtain a passport, advise him on other matters pertaining to the trip, inform him of mailing schedules, etc. It was to him that people went for final details about immigrating.

Joseph Cerny sold his farm in the summer of 1856, the proceeds, when added to his money, amounted to about 10,000 crowns, according to what I heard grandfather say. It was a sizeable sum for a farmer in those days. There were several requirements which an immigrant had to fulfill before he could leave the country. His character had to be such that he was in no way obligated to the state, he was required to give proof of his birth, he had to show that he was financially able to pay his way and he had to obtain a passport. All this took time.

Grandfather started early in the spring of 1856 and made plans for the trip. First he journeyed to Suchenthal where he obtained a certified copy of his birth certificate

from the pastor of the church. It was printed in German and was issued to him on the 29th of April, 1856. Translated into English, it reads as follows:

Kingdom of Bohemia
 District of Budweis
 Dominion of Wittingau
 BAPTISMAL CERTIFICATE

No. 81

I hereby certify that Mathias Tlachac, a of Bartholomons Tlachac from Cep N.C. 5 and his wife Theresia, daughter of Procop Gadka, both Catholics, was born in the village of Cep, District of Wittingau, on January 19, 1829 and was baptized the same day by Charles Schoenauen in the presence of sponsors Jacob Hadac, farmer of Cep N. 5 and his wife, Anna, according to the Roman Catholic Rite.

Issued and provided with the seal of the parish of Suchenthal on the 29th of April, 1856

Martin Nowak,
 pastor

(SEAL)

The first part of the preparation for the trip was now completed with the issuance of the birth record. It is hard to realize as I write this line that within a few days it will be exactly one hundred years since grandfather made the trip to the rectory for his baptismal record. One day while he was walking through the village, a friend of his remarked, "I hear that you are going to America, I would not go. There everything is strange, full of Indians and it's dangerous. You might be killed by them." Grandfather replied, "I am going." His decision had been made.

More than three months passed before the next step was taken and that was to obtain an Emigration permit. This was more difficult as one had to journey to Prag, the capital of the country to obtain it from the Emigration

Bureau. Prag was a three day's journey from Cep, according to grand father. He never stated in what manner the trip was made but research came up with the fact that railroading in Europe, like in America was in existence actually only about 25 years, therefore traveling by rail was not very common. There was much river travel by river barges and also by canal barges. Since Cep was not far from Budweis which was located on the Elbe River, it is most probable that grandfather made the journey from Cep to Budweis, boarded a river barge and thence proceeded to Prag. Grandfather often spoke to me about the Elbe River which would indicate that it was a common avenue of travel, in those days. Often these river and canal barges were towed by horses hitched to a long rope which was tied up to the riverboat. On each side of the river or canal a road was built along the waterway for the horses to travel on. When the barge was started, it did not take much power to pull it and as much as forty miles a day or more could be traveled. This same method of travel was employed on our own Erie Canal for many years and it was a common mode of inland travel prior to extensive railroading. It must have been quite a thrilling journey for grandfather, who up to this time had never ventured far from Cep.

At the end of three day's travel, he was in Prag. With his birth certificate in hand he went to the Immigration Office to make application for an Emigration Permit. Like his birth record, the permit was printed in German and translated it reads as follows:

EMIGRATION PERMIT

Since there is no reason why Mathias Tlachatsch of Cep, District of Wittingau, laborer, cannot leave the country, particularly since he served his military service, permission is granted to the above mentioned to emigrate from Austria-Bohemia and to immigrate to North America. This permission is granted in accordance with the emigration law of March 24, 1832.

By the Governor of the Kingdom of Bohemia
Prag, August 4, 1856

For Heir Hatthalter

Frogal, deputy

The Emigration Permit was the second step and it was issued only after careful scrutiny by the immigration officials who carefully examined his Birth Certificate. Everything was found to be in accordance with legal requirements and his passport was issued to him. Translated it reads as follows:

13248

/9526
AUSERO-IMPERIAL

EMPEROR-ROYAL
GOVERNMENT PASSPORT

Year of Birth
1829

For-
Mathias Tlachatsch

For
Himself

Religion-
Catholic

Character-
Satisfactory

Stature-
Medium

Face
Full

Place of Residence-
Cep-Dominion of
Wittingau

Destination-
North America

Hair-
Dark-brown

<u>Eyes-</u> Blue	<u>Purpose-</u> To settle in North America. Permission to immigrate to North America is granted, August 4, 1856	<u>This Pass is</u> <u>Approved.</u> Heir Monte
<u>Nose+</u> Stump		
<u>Undersigned-</u> Mathej Tlachac		

In the name of his Austrian-Imperial, Hungarian-Bohemian Royal and Apostolic Majesty, etc., etc.

All Civil and Military authorities are requested to permit the bearer of this passport to pass through all places freely and without any restrictions and to be of assistance, whenever such is needed.

Prag, August 4, 1856

For His Excellency by Heir Hatthalter
Anton Graf Frogal
Deputy

The issuing of the passport completed the main legal formalities with the Immigration authorities. The next procedure was to make reservation of the boat. Usually a schedule of sailings was kept in the immigration office and grandfather's boat was to leave the port of Bremerhaven about October 30, according to information from his passport. Now he returned to Cep to await the day of actual departure. During the intervening time there were more preparations. Friends were visited for perhaps the last time. Clothing and footwear were procured and packed into a trunk and many an early settler in America had one of these trunks stored away in their home. Grandmother and little son Mathias, could not accompany grandfather to the New World at this time. They were to remain in Cep until grandfather could provide funds for their immigration.

At last came the day when grandfather and Cerny and his family left the little village. There, no doubt, must have

been a feeling of sadness, perhaps mixed with some anxiety as they said farewell to relatives and friends and ventured into a future that was unknown. It must have taken a stout heart and determination to make the break away. It was on the 23rd day of October in 1856 when they left Cep and arrived in Prag three days later. Before they could board the train for the port, passports had to be approved by the military police and grandfather's was approved on October 26 by Police Commissioner "Janurek" of Prag. The party now boarded a train and arrived at the Austrian border the next day.

On the Austro-German border, the train was halted for customs inspection as nothing of value could be taken out of the country except personal belongings such as would be needed for the trip. The regulations were much more rigid in regard to emigration out of Czechoslovakia or Austria then they were, for example, in France, Belgium, Norway, or Sweden where many people were also leaving their land of birth for the new world. Passports were again examined for approval by the military police and grandfather's pass was approved by V.F. Ossert, police commissioner, on October 27, 1856. This is another indication of the military police being in control of the movements of the people and they could scarcely travel from one town to another without interference from military officers.

They were now permitted to proceed to the city of Bremen in Germany which is situated on the River Weser about forty miles from the seacoast. From there they were transported to the port of Bremerhaven on the North Sea where they boarded the vessel.

CHAPTER 8

THE OCEAN VOYAGE

In Bremmerhaven, grandfather and his party saw for the first time the large wooden ocean vessel that was docked in the harbor ready to take them across the ocean. The overland trip from home was now completed and they, no doubt, stood in amazement as they saw the waters of the North Sea stretching as far as the eye can reach. There were many immigrants congregated in the port waiting to board the boat, some with a look of excitement while others probably saddened and perhaps distressed, wondering if they made the right decision in leaving their homeland.

The wharf was buzzing with activity as passengers made final preparations to board the boat. At the ticket office they obtained their tickets. Perhaps passports were again examined to make sure that no one was trying to slip through. Trunks and other personal effects were carried aboard.

These sailing vessels were so constructed wherein passengers were assigned quarters where they could eat and sleep during the weeks of voyaging. Some of the immigrants took along food for at least a part of the journey while those who were better-to-do paid for their meals on the vessel. Drinking water was provided. An ordinary sailing vessel provided quarters for fifty to one hundred passengers and the fare to America was one hundred dollars, according to grandfather. It was a long, dull journey and no provisions were made for recreation, perhaps the immigrants were not in the mood for it.

There was much activity in the port of Bremershaven where vessels were readied for the ocean voyage. There

immigrants congregated to board the vessel and the ship's crews were busy loading on supplies. At last the day came when the wind was in the right direction and the tide was high, then the gangplank was lifted, sails hoisted. The creaking vessel slowly moved out of the harbor into the North Sea. Men, women and children stood on deck to watch the slowly receding shoreline, many with heavy hearts at the thought of leaving relatives and friends behind perhaps never to see them again. My grandfather was among them that October day. What is it that made these brave Czechs leave their home for the new promised land in America? The Austrian rulers often treated them badly. It was difficult for them to gain positions of importance in the country. Let us go back for one moment and look in on a band of these poor people making ready to take the long risky voyage to America. First we see them in their homes talking about the Great Plan. Some of them had received posters advertising America. They gathered in the house of some neighbor to hear about the new country. One man reads the German printed folder and translates it into the Bohemian language while the others listen. They hear that there is plenty of work to be had in America. The wages are so high that the listeners fairly gasp. But best of all they like to hear about the chances for owning farms. In Wisconsin, where some of their friends have already settled, they hear about the abundance of land with no one living on it. Much of this land bore a fine growth of timber. (Think of being able to cut down a tree without having to obtain permission

of some landlord). A new law was being talked of (the Homestead Act) that would give to any man one hundred and sixty acres of that land. All he has to do is to become a citizen, move his family on the piece of land, stay on it and farm it for five years, then the generous American government would give it to him. They learned there were free schools and freedom of speech. In five years of upright living, after obtaining their naturalization papers they can vote-- something unknown to them in Bohemia. In five years time they can gain every right held by the people who lived in America all their lives. What a contrast this was to their life in their land of birth and what an inducement it was to come to the New World. These are the reasons why we find my grandfather on board the ship bound for America. These people are pioneers coming to make a better living for themselves and their children.

The vessel sailed through the English Channel out into the deep blue waters of the vast Atlantic Ocean. Many of the women prayed and asked Divine assistance for a safe voyage. Day after day the vessel sailed on and one may wonder how it could sail westward in a region of prevailing westerly winds or so to speak "sail against wind." It was accomplished by sailing in a so-called zig-zag manner. The sails were set at an angle which permitted the vessel to sail in a north westerly direction for several days. Then the angle was reversed and the vessel sailed in a south westerly direction. By doing this day after day, progress was made. It was a case of maneuvering the boat and the crew had to be well trained in this work. Fortunately, there were no storms but there were days of calm when the

vessel was practically at a stand-still. At other times there were gales when the sails had to be lowered to prevent the ship from sailing backwards and the vessel bobbed and creaked on the waters of the ocean like a huge cork.

Passengers mingled among themselves and all were friends embarking for a common destination. For seven weeks the wooden vessel sailed on and by this time every passenger scanned the western horizon for signs of land. According to grandfather, food was running short and drinking water was being rationed. On the 52nd day land was sighted and this was the most exciting moment for the passengers. Many gave a sigh of relief to be able to set foot on dry ground. On the 53rd day the vessel moved into the harbor of New York. There was no Statue of Liberty to welcome the foreigners, it was not to be erected until 29 years later. There were no immigration quotas, no Ellis Island where they were detained for processing. Formalities were quite simple, baggage was examined, passport looked over by Customs officials and the immigrant was permitted to proceed.

It would be interesting to know what thoughts ran through grandfather's mind as he walked the gangplank and set foot on American soil. This was America, the hopeful and the promised land. Here he was, a penniless immigrant in company with Cerny and his family and entirely dependent on them for continuation of the journey to Wisconsin.

CHAPTER 9
ON TO COOPERSTOWN

It was in the middle of December, 1856 when grandfather and Cerny landed in the port of New York. The city must have looked strange and vast to them with its 750,000 people. It was scarcely larger than our own city of Milwaukee at the present time. Today, a hundred years later, we know it as a metropolitan city of more than eight million. In those days there were no sky scrapers in the city, buildings were mostly of wooden construction although many were built of red brick and patterned after those of New Amsterdam in Holland from which New York originally took its name.

Customs inspection having been completed, they left the wharf and their next objective was to find the railroad which was to take them to Chicago which was their next destination. How prosperous the city looked as compared to the tiny farm village of Cep where no noticeable advancement was made year after year. Here grandfather saw progress that he never knew existed. Here were crowds of workers traveling to and fro; people were free to come and go and to pursue their own way of life. It certainly must have seemed to him like a "New World." This was America!

Grandfather stated that two days were spent in New York (Novi Yorku, as he used to say), to transfer baggage from the ship to the railroad station. Research came up with the information that the old Erie Railroad was the leading line from New York to Chicago, although many changes were made during the journey to transfer to subsidiary lines. The night in New York was spent in what probably was called

a traveler's inn where other immigrants bound for the west no doubt stayed. Then they boarded the train for the overland route in Chicago. The wood burning locomotive chucked away for four days before they reached Chicago. Many stops were made to transfer to other coaches while the locomotive crew loaded on more wood and water. The journey proceeded through Pittsburgh and Cleveland, Ohio. Chicago was just being incorporated into a city in 1856 with a population of less than 30,000 people with Ferdinand Wood as the first mayor. It was a long tedious journey as the cars rolled and rumbled and sped along the way.

A stop of one day was made in Chicago to transfer to another railroad line to Milwaukee. Some of the passengers remained in Chicago to settle and seek employment. There was a strong desire on grandfather's part to remain in Chicago and seek work. However, there was the indebtedness to Cerny for passage fare, so he continued on. In another day they landed in Milwaukee and there the railroad ended. There were no railroads out of Milwaukee northward. A short line was being constructed out of Milwaukee to Waukesha. The balance of the trip to Manitowoc was made in a stagecoach. These stage coaches ran at regular intervals and carried baggage and four passengers and since grandfather's party consisted of Cerny, his wife, three daughters and son, Vaclav, it was necessary to split up and make the journey in two coaches. The stage route was on the old Fond du Lac-Sheboygan plank road. It was the leading and only stage route from Milwaukee northward. Taverns or inns were located at about four mile intervals where travelers could stop for the night and take their meals.

A good day's journey by stagecoach covered about twenty miles in those days. Many times after a rain, the roads were a sea of mud and ruts. Being the month of December when grandfather came, the ground no doubt was frozen. It took almost a week to cover the route from Milwaukee to Manitowoc.

Friends from Cooperstown were on hand to greet them when they reached Manitowoc, among them was Francis Herda. Then they were driven to the final destination. The reader must not confuse Cooperstown with that village of today in Manitowoc county. There was no village of Cooperstown then, it was merely the name of the township. Their destination was Greenstreet, an older settlement than the village of Cooperstown. Greenstreet was located three miles south of the present village of Maribel. It consisted of a church, a saloon, perhaps a country store and a few other buildings. Nothing remains except the cemetery where the Cerny's are buried.

Once again, the common language was heard and many hours were spent renewing acquaintances they knew in Bohemia. News of those left behind was eagerly sought by those settled in Cooperstown. Within three days after his arrival, grandfather spent his first Christmas in America.

CHAPTER 10

THE SETTLEMENT IN COOPERSTOWN

The gentle rolling farm lands around Cooperstown were not unlike those of their homeland in Bohemia. Pioneers had settled in Cooperstown as early as 1820 and the settlement took its name from an early settler named Cooper, hence the name of Cooperstown. There was a strange contrast to that of Cep where the farmers lived in a rural village while here in America each lived on his own land. That must have seemed strange to grandfather. The settlers were busy felling the trees, clearing the land for wheat raising. At that time, Manitowoc was a thriving lake port with a population of three thousand persons. The farmers brought their wheat to Manitowoc and did their trading there.

Being a man of means, Cerny purchased 120 acres of land in the vicinity of Greenstreet and grandfather became his hired man to pay off the passage indebtedness as agreed. As the forest was cleared, the land was plowed and planted to wheat. The soil was productive and with favorable weather the yields usually were good. As one looked around during the harvest time, there was a familiar sight, that of seeing the pioneer farmer swinging the grain cradle followed by his wife or older son binding the grain into bundles by hand.

Upon his arrival in America, the uppermost thought of the settler was to become a citizen-- otherwise he was considered an alien, he could not vote or take part in governmental affairs. It was necessary to become a citizen in order to be qualified to avail himself of the Homestead

Act. The requirement was a two year tenure in America and then he could make application to become a citizen. By November 1st 1858, grandfather had been in America two years lacking two weeks. On November 1, of that year, he journeyed to the Courthouse in Manitowoc where he made application before the Clerk of Court. The yellowed document is still in existence and was loaned to me by my cousin, Emily. It reads as follows:

State of Wisconsin)
County of Manitowoc)

as Mathias Dlotchatch

Personally appeared before me the subscriber, Clerk of Circuit Court for said county being a Court of Record, and made oath that he was born in:

BOHEMIA

on or about the year eighteen hundred and 28, that he immigrated to the United States, and landed in the port of New York on or about the middle of December in the year eighteen hundred and 56, that it is boni fide his intention to become a citizen of the United States and to renounce forever all allegiance and fidelity to any Prince, Potentate, State, or Sovereignty whatever, and particularly to the EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA whereof he is a subject.

his

Mathias X Dlotchatch
mark

Subscribed and Sworn to before me this 1st day of November, 1858.

E.F. Leuzeke,
Deputy, Clerk of the
Circuit Court

State of Wisconsin)
Manitowoc County)

I, T.G. Olmstead, clerk of the Circuit Court of Manitowoc County, being a court of Record, having common law jurisdiction and a clerk and seal, do certify that the above is a true copy of the original declaration of M. Dlotchatch to become a citizen of the United States, remaining on record in my office.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto subscribed my name and affixed the seal of the said court, the 1st day of November one thousand eight hundred and 58.

T.G. Olmstead, Clerk of
Court

By E.T. Leuzeke, Deputy

Although grandfather could write his name, he signed the Naturalization Document by merely writing an "X." I

have seen the name of Tlachac misspelled hundreds of times by those who fumbled over it but the manner in which the Deputy Clerk of the Circuit Court wrote it as "Dlotchatch" would it seems to me, be a prize winner anywhere for misspelling.

Grandfather was now a citizen and entitled to all the privileges an American might enjoy, except that of holding office. For that three more years had to elapse when he would have to make final declaration for citizenship. This he never did and in the meantime the law was abolished so that he was accorded full citizenship by reason of tenure in the United States.

Most of the pioneers who came to Manitowoc county settled in the northern and eastern part. Originally, the township of Cooperstown was a part of Brown County but it was annexed to Manitowoc County by legislative act in 1836. A sawmill was built there in 1847 which was still in operation when grandfather arrived in 1856. The heavy clay soil in Manitowoc county was ideal for brick making and there were several brickyards scattered throughout the county in those early days. As the forest was cleared and the land broken, it was planted to wheat and there was much wheat raising as well as some oats and barley. With favorable climatic conditions, the rich, new heavy soil yielded abundantly. By 1860, the census showed that more than 900 people lived in the township of Cooperstown and these were mostly Bohemian settlers, mixed with a few Germans.

The county seat also was located in Manitowoc Rapids, which was a semblance of a village but in 1853 the seat of government was transferred to the village of Manitowoc. Being a

lake port with a good harbor, it was a thriving village. Lake vessels brought to it merchandise ordered by the merchants for their trade and returned with cargoes of wheat, cord wood, hemlock bark and other farm produce to Milwaukee, Chicago and other lake ports. These Bohemian settlers chose wisely, the farm lands around the village of Manitowoc where they found a ready market for their produce. Grandfather often spoke about hauling wheat to Manitowoc while he was a hired man around Cooperstown.

In the village there was a tannery, several grain warehouses and a brewery. The brewery, in particular, was a great asset to these early settlers where they could sell their barley and to this day some of the farmers in Manitowoc County are noted for their good strains of malting barley. The brewery is now owned by the Pauly Cheese Company and they are brewers of Kingsbury Beer. Because of early activity around Manitowoc, some of the lands were owned by Chicago land speculators and even at that time were not cheap. That is one reason why my grandfather never attained ownership of land, because of a lack of funds.

One figure around the vicinity of Cooperstown whose name I heard grandfather mention was Juranek. Research has come up with rather interesting information about this man. In a previous paragraph mention was made about the religious upheaval in Bohemia as a result of the writing and teachings of John Huss and which was carried through to the time of my grandparents in Cep. Even some men who had studied some theology or were ordained priests subscribed to the teachings of Huss. One of these was Thomas Juranek. Coming to America in 1848 or 1849, Juranek tried hard to get a start at

something that was more to his liking than the pulpit. He drudged for a while at cigar making in New York. Seeing no prospects in this occupation, he made his way to Milwaukee; there he became a fruit peddler. Saving a few dollars, he bought a hand organ and with this instrument strapped to his back he tramped along the Mississippi River to New Orleans and back to Wisconsin, settling in Cooperstown. There he established himself as a schoolteacher, justice of the peace, newspaper correspondent and a sort of a legal advisor in the community. Many settlers went to him for advice in legal affairs such as procedures in homesteading land, land purchases and others. Juranek was quite a prominent figure in the community of Cooperstown and he died there in 1890. In those early days most every community had someone who was a little more posted in legal affairs, he probably was justice of the peace, a title that carried considerable weight, and it was to him that people went when they sought legal advice on most any matter. Juranek was such a person around Cooperstown.

By the end of 1858, grandfather had been in America two years. Being strictly an agricultural worker, he labored for Cerny and the passage loan was now paid off. Now his thoughts turned beyond the sea to the village of Cep where grandmother and little son, Mathias, were left behind when he emigrated. His great ambition was to bring them to America. Saving some money, he sent it to grandmother early in 1859 and then she made preparations to join him. It required about eight months before all legal formalities were completed, so she started her preparations early in the spring of 1859. Like grandfather, she was required to show proof of her birth.

therefore she journeyed to the little village rectory where she obtained a certified copy of her birth record and it likewise was written in the German language. Translated it reads as follows:

Kingdom of Bohemia
District of Budweis
Dominion of Wittingau

No. 57

BAPTISMAL CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify from the baptismal records in Volume C, page 44, that Mary, a daughter of Jakob Hadac, farmer in Cep N. 5 and his wife Anna, a daughter of Joseph Vanecek, farmer of Cep. N. 17 and his wife, Mariana, maiden name Ramus N. 53, was born of Catholic religion on the 24 of January, 1832 in Cep. N.C. 5 and was baptised the same day by Mathias Charvat, assistant priest of the parish of Suchenthal, according to the Roman Catholic Rite in the presence of sponsors, Andrew Nowak, resident of Cep and his wife, Katherine. Midwife was Rosina Kostecka.

Certified in the parish of Suchenthal, March 17, 1859.

Martin Nowak,
Pastor

(SEAL)

It was a very complete baptismal certificate and it was the first step towards her preparation for leaving her homeland. This was followed by a trip to Prag, the capital city, to obtain an Emigration Permit for no one could leave the country without permission. Like grandfather's trip, hers also took three days to reach the capital from her home in Cep. In Prag, she went to the Emigration Bureau where her baptismal certificate was carefully examined. Found in order, and Emigration Permit was issued and it is dated June 12, 1859. Printed and written in German it reads as follows in translation:

No. 28229

EMIGRATION PERMIT

Since there is no obstacle known that should prevent

Mary Hadac, (spelled Hadatsch on the permit) and her son Mathias from Cep, District of Wittingau, from immigrating to Wisconsin in North America, permission to emigrate from this country is granted to those above mentioned in accordance with the Emigration law of March 24, 1832.

Governor of the Austrian Kingdom of
Bohemia
Prag, June 12, 1859

Anton Graf Frogarl

Contrary to grandfather who obtained his passport the same day as the Emigration permit was issued, it appears that after obtaining her permit, grandmother returned to her home for her passport was not issued until October 27 of that year. The later date co-incides with her date of departure from Prag. During the ensuing period, preparations were made. The trunk containing clothing and other personal effects was made in readiness, friends were visited for perhaps the last time and at last came October 24 when she left her native home in Cep. At the time of her departure, grandmother's father was still alive. However, uncertainty clouds my memory about what I heard say about her mother, events would indicate that she had already passed on. Grandmother had one uncle, John Hadac and his daughter Anna, in her immediate relatives whom she left behind when she emigrated. Her older brother, Matt Hadac was also living; other brothers or sisters she did not have.

In company with her little son, Mathias, now nearing five years of age, they departed from Cep and arrived in Prag on October 27, 1859. Their first objective was the Emigration Bureau where the emigration permit was presented, then her passport was issued which is dated October 27, 1859. From

Arriving to Bremen around the 29th of October, they were immediately taken to Bremerhaven where they saw the large ocean vessel that was to take them across the vast Atlantic ocean to the port of New York. They boarded the boat, with other immigrants bound for America, and the seven weeks voyage began. I heard my uncle Mathias tell of faint recollections which he had about this ocean voyage. When they arrived in New York, it was the middle of December, from there a train was boarded and the overland trip to Chicago took four more days. Transferring from one train to another, they arrived in Milwaukee where they boarded a stagecoach, arriving in Cooperstown a few days before Christmas. It, no doubt, was a happy occasion when my grandparents were again united for the life battle that was before them as new settlers in America.

Following her arrival, my grandparents went to house-keeping in Cooperstown while grandfather continued as a hired man for several more years. Two years later my aunt Kristina was born to them and in 1863 another son, my uncle Frank, was born. Now the family consisted of three children, no doubt a care for the parents who were in fragile circumstances. Wages were only about fifteen or twenty dollars a month but were high in comparison to that paid in Bohemia.

The year 1860 was a turning point in the life of my grandfather. The Civil War broke out in April of that year. At first, it was looked upon as a war that would be of short duration but such was not the case. As the war went on, times became harder. Farm prices for bread grains, such as wheat, were good but men were being drafted for the

army. I heard grandfather mention the "Linkun Times." Men with families were being drafted who were not owners of land and this had a profound effect upon my grandfather who was only a laborer. Then he began looking around for land to homestead but all choice lands around Cooperstown were either all homesteaded or were too high priced. Two reasons motivated grandfather into wanting to become a farmer. The first one was the prospect of being drafted into the army to fight in the Civil War. Grandfather abhorred war and the thought of leaving family and home to fight in a war was a very distasteful presumption to him. It was the very thing he escaped from in his native country where wars were being fought every generation. The other reason was the high price of wheat created by the war's demand. Wheat reached a high price of one dollar and fifty cents a bushel during the first years of the war. It lured many into wanting to become farmers. Settlers broke new land with vigor and planted it to wheat which they sold to grain dealers in Manitowoc. In three years time, wheat acreage in Cooperstown increased by leaps and bounds. It was much more profitable to be a farmer than to be only a hired man on the farm.

The increased price of bread grains, however, worked to the disadvantage of those who sought to acquire land. With the increased prices of farm produce came higher land valuations making the purchase of them prohibitive to those who had no money, like my grandfather. Choice lands were all taken up and there were no others that could be homesteaded in the area. This compelled grandfather to seek elsewhere. He remembered his old friend, John Cisar, who

was located in the town of Brussels and who owned one hundred and sixty acres of land on which he was living. Early in 1862, grandfather made a trip on foot to see Cisar. While there, Cisar offered to sell one of his eighty acre plots to him. The offer was accepted and, as I recall, grandfather stated that some kind of an agreement or land contract was drawn up between them. Grandfather was to pay a certain amount down each year and when the amount agreed upon was paid down, Cisar would furnish a clear title to grandfather. Being without money, it was the only way my grandfather could purchase land.

Originally, all lands in Wisconsin belonged to the federal government. One section in each township was transferred to the state, the proceeds of which when the land was sold to the settlers, the money went into a state fund to be used for schools and educational purposes, such as aid to school districts. Section 34 in the township of Brussels happened to be the section which was designated for school purposes. These state owned lands were under the administration of the Commissioners of School and University Lands. The commission consisted of the Secretary of State, State Treasurer and Attorney General. Settlers who purchased land in one of these sections received a Land Patent directly from the state whereas settlers who purchased their land from the federal government received their land Patent from the federal government. Being in Section 34, Cisar purchased his land from the state, whereas when my father's farm was homesteaded, just across the road in Section 33, the Land Patent was issued directly from the Department of Interior in Washington, D.C. This signified ownership of the land.

CHAPTER 11

LIFE IN BRUSSELS TOWN

The spirit of helpfulness and co-operation was ever present among the early settlers. Grandfather had no way of moving his family and meager household goods to their new home in Brussels. John Cisar hitched oxen to his wagon and drove to Cooperstown to move my grandparents. It was a forty mile trip from Cooperstown to Brussels and took four days, according to my grandfather. It was in the early spring of 1864, in time to do the spring planting.

To those of us who are their descendants, living in this land of abundance, it is difficult to realize the poverty and hardships that confronted my paternal grandparents as early settlers. Let us picture in the mind's eye, a family trekking along by oxtteams to locate in the wilderness and to make an attempt to carve out home and farm from it. My Uncle Matt was a lad only nine years old. It was the end of a journey that had taken them eight thousand miles from their home in Cep. They had not a relative in the New World. Their story with only minor modification is the story of hundreds of other families who settled in the pine forests of northern Wisconsin in the middle of the nineteenth century. What is it that gave these pioneers courage to face the future of uncertainty? It was faith in themselves, faith in the future with a hope to be able to provide for their children the necessities of life that they themselves were denied. These were the basic tools which the pioneers were fortified with in conquering the wilderness.

Upon reaching Brussels town, my grandparents lived with

the Cisars for the first two weeks until grandfather was able to build a house from the logs which he cut the previous winters. Soon a "building bee" gathered in the neighborhood consisting of Cisar, Swoboda, Herda and Miller and within two weeks the log house was completed. It stood on a knoll in the middle of the north forty on which the present farm buildings of Vojta Tlachac now stand. There is one person living who has seen their first log home and has recollections of it and she is my cousin, Emily, the eldest in lineal descent. My inquiry of her concerning the log house, which was the first home of my grandparents, brought out the following description of it in a letter she wrote me. Her description was short but authentic and interesting. She wrote, "Yes, as a child, I was in that old log house several times, although I do not remember too much about it. It had been abandoned for several years already and it seems to me that it was completely bare on the inside, no plaster, just the bare log walls with the chinks between the logs filled with clay, a lot of it had fallen out. I don't remember if there was a ceiling or not, a door to the south, a couple of half windows and a hard clay floor. There was a partition on the east end making another room where Dad said the oxen were housed. Grandma kept a few chickens the first year and for a while she kept them under the bed at night to keep them safe from predatory animals." According to this description, we can see the old country style of housing--there was one roof which covered dwelling as well as the stable. Another small table stood nearby which was still in existence when I was a boy and I have recollections of it. It has been dismantled many, many

years ago and nothing remains to indicate where the first log farm buildings stood, although I know the exact spot.

Much of the countryside in Kewaunee and Door counties was covered with virgin forest of some pine, hemlock, maple and poplar brush. Roads were poor and hardly fit for travel. During the first few years the nearest mail dispatch was in Wolf River, later on called Ahnapee and now Algoma. Immediately after the Civil War, a postoffice was established in Rosiere which served the community and Charles Rubens was the first postmaster, then succeeded by his son, Louis. This postoffice continued until 1906 when rural delivery began. As a boy, I have recollections of the old Rosiere postoffice with its pigeon hole boxes along the wall in the old Ruben's grocery store. Mail was brought from Casco by stagecoach and later on by a Star Route. In 1865 the census showed that Green Bay had a population of only 2,702, a few hundred less than Algoma at the present time. Milwaukee had 55,000, Manitowoc 3,000, Two Rivers, 1,306 while Sturgeon Bay, Ahnapee and Kewaunee were parts of townships without even village organizations.

Without wasting time, grandfather and my Uncle Matt turned to the task of clearing more land. We, who live in an age of mechanized farming, will never fully understand what is meant by the term "clearing land" in that day. The forest had to be cut away; the wood burned and the ground broken by hand with a grub hoe. It was a case of "grubbing" an opening out of the solid forest. Grandfather had no oxen the first year. But the following year he purchased a yoke of oxen from Ferdinand Massart in Rosiere. They were called "Buck" and "Bride" and provided the motive power for several

years on the farm. This bit of information came from my father and if memory serves me grandfather paid \$60. for the yoke which was a rather high price in those days but without oxen, farming operations were futile. This beast of burden served the early settlers very well on their frontier farm because he was tough, hardy, easy to handle on account of his dumbness and he required little care.

During the first years there was no well on the farm, water was hauled from creeks which were plentiful everywhere. Water for family use was hauled in barrels on a wagon drawn by oxen from a cool, clear spring in the Isadore Brans farm. The exact spot was pointed out to me by my father and although dried up now, there are still visible signs where the spring was located. Most of the neighbors obtained drinking water from that spring until Brans disapproved and polluted it by filling it up with manure. Then each settler had to look for a new source of supply or dig a well of his own.

Grandfather had few farm implements the first years, chiefly among these were a plow, a homemade wagon, a wooden harrow, a hand rake for hay and grain, a grain cradle, scythe and a flail. The first year the ground was broken between the stumps and planted to wheat. The seeding was done by hand by broadcasting it. In 1864 and 65 the demand for bread grains was still good on account of the Civil War. The new soil was conducive to wheat growing. Diversified farming had not yet come into being and as there was no livestock on the farm, with the exception of one or two cows to provide milk for home use, grain raising was their chief farm operation. Milk from the cow was used at home, sometimes butter was churned which was packed into

crocks and traded for needed groceries in Wolf River. Pastures were lush and after the day's work the oxen were unyoked and allowed to shift for themselves in search of food and drink. Grandmother had a garden in which they planted potatoes, cabbage, rutabagas and other garden truck which could be stored away for winter use. Sometimes the hot summer's sun beat down mercilessly on the small field that was surrounded by forest which deleted the cooling breezes. In the winter more trees were felled to clear land. The logs were gathered on a pile by oxen power. Bark from hemlock trees was stripped off, piled to dry, then hauled to the tannery in Wolf River for which 75 cents a cord was received. In the summer when the weather was dry, the logs were burned. Stumps were either burned or grubbed out of the ground. Some hemlock ties were also made as well as shingles, the latter which was a common occupation among the settlers in the neighborhood. Usually straight grained pine logs were cut into sixteen inch lengths, then split half an inch thick with an instrument called a froe. The slab was shaved down with a draw knife to form a shingle. A bundle consisted of 250 shingles and four bundles brought \$1.75. A good shingle maker could shave two bundles a day. My Uncle Matt did much of this kind of work when he was a boy on the farm.

Many of the farm implements were made by hand from pine which was plentiful everywhere. In particular I wish to mention the farm wagon. My father gave me a word picture of the early farm wagon and how it was made. To make the wheels, a large pine log was felled from which the end was cut off about six inches, to form a wheel. A four inch hole was made

in the exact center which was fitted into an axle, made of tough wood like oak or maple. A wooden peg was fitted in the end of the axle to hold the wheels in place. This was fitted onto a wrench and tongue and the wagon was made. Often during the hot summer's day, the heat cracked a wheel, sometimes in a most critical time, like in harvesting. Then grandfather and my Uncle Matt had to go into the woods to cut another wheel from a log that usually was kept on hand for that purpose. Later on, an iron tire was fitted around the wheel to make it more sturdy. My grandfather made many trips to Wolf River hauling shingles or hemlock bark and wheat to market. Buck and Bride provided the motive power.

There was a grist mill in Forestville which was known as the Fetzner mill where wheat could be ground into flour. However, most of the trading was done in Wolf River. Frank Swaty was the leading merchant in Wolf River, later called Ahnapsee, during the early years of my grandparents farming operations. Swaty immigrated from Bohemia in 1852, also lived in Manitowoc County until around 1865 when he moved to Wolf River and started out as a merchant dealing in most every kind of farm produce. He operated his establishment in Algoma until around 1910 or later. He was a successful business man dealing in groceries, wood, ties, hemlock bark, etc. In his early days, most Bohemians patronized him because of his fair dealings but most of all because of the common language. As a student in Algoma in 1912, I often saw the old bearded Swaty walking slowly on the street. He passed away soon thereafter.

An interesting episode occurred from 1864 which continued for several years. Grandfather broke land and farmed, making

his yearly payments to Cisar which was agreed upon. Then Cisar would not or did not want to furnish a title to the land. I heard the actual story from my father concerning this matter but details faded from my memory. However, there followed several years of worry on the part of my grandparents since they did not have secure title to their farm. Then grandfather made a trip to the federal land grant office which was located in Menasha, Wisconsin and there he presented his case. More years were required to iron out the matter and on July 5, 1870 grandfather received a Land Patent to the forty acre plot on which the farm buildings stood, showing that his payments to that part of his farm were completed. More years followed and a second Land Patent was issued to grandfather on the back forty and it was issued on March 17, 1877. Then the way was clear for a transfer of the eighty acre plot of land from Cisar to my grandparents. The deed was drawn up by Justice of the Peace, Frank Gregor on April 29, 1878. All during the years from 1864 to 1878, my grandparents farmed on lands of which they were not in possession of a clear title. Just why Cisar could not or did not want to furnish a clear title to grandfather is dormant history. Not too many years before his passing, I heard grandfather mention this incident which seemed to have lived with him all his life.

The first few years of farming were of the pioneer style such as one would expect to find on the frontier farm. The work of seeding, harvesting and threshing of grain was all done by hand. As the land was cleared for cultivation, more wheat, rye and barley was planted. Around the year 1869, grandfather and my Uncle Matt had already cleared nearly

twenty acres out of the solid forest. The cradling of grain gave way to a McCormick reaper which grandfather purchased. It was a vast improvement over the hand method of grain cradling and was necessitated by acreage expansion so that they were unable to cut the grain with a cradle. Where a man with a cradle could cut one acre of standing grain, with a reaper he could swath down at least five acres. This machine merely cut a swath of grain as it was pulled along by oxen or horse power and by means of a rake like contrivance, the grain was swept off the platform at regular intervals. Then followed the binders who bound the grain by hand and my Uncle Matt could testify to the back braking job binding the grain.

Oxen power gave way to horses and grandfather purchased his first team of horses about the time of the birth of my father in 1871 or perhaps a few years later. The horse was superior to the ox in that it was a faster animal and could pull heavier loads. A farmer who had a team of horses in those days was looked upon as an up and coming farmer.

Like the grain cradle, the hand flail became outmoded and obsolete for the reason that the expanded acreage of wheat necessitated something that could thresh the grain at a more rapid rate. Grandfather solved the problem by purchasing a little grain thresher. This machine resembled a small feed cutter. It was propelled by a horse power and as the grain was fed into it, a toothed cylinder within separated the kernels from the hull and the straw, chaff and grain came out all together. Then the grain and chaff had to be separated from each other and this was done by hand. This method of threshing was employed for many years

until commercial threshing machines came into being in that community about in the middle of the 1870's. In my boyhood days, I saw this little thresher rotting away in the old log stable where it stood in a corner for forty years or more. To me this primitive thresher seems to form a connection between my life and that of the early pioneer years of my grandparents on their pioneer farm.

All during these early years my grandparents kept up a yearly correspondence with Matt Hacac in Cep. Neither of my grandparents were able to write, therefore it was necessary to seek assistance in letter writing. In Wolf River, lived William Bastar, a successful hotel man and saloon keeper who was well versed in letter writing as well as in legal affairs. It was to him that grandfather went every year for assistance in writing to their kinfolks in Bohemia. Around 1867 grandfather learned of the death of his father at the age of 75 years in a letter that was received from Matt Hadac. Following the death of their father, Martin and Anna Tlachac (grandfather's brother and sister) disposed of the little homestead in Cep and departed for America, arriving in Chicago in the fall of 1868. With their departure the name of Tlachac became extinct in Bohemia. Grandfather had no known relatives left in the old world although grandmother's cousin, Anna Hadac was still alive as well as her brother Matt.

Upon their arrival to Chicago grandfather's sister remained with friends where she married. The Kostichka's are her descendents. Grandfather never saw his sister in America. However, Martin proceeded to Brussels where he lived with my grandfather during the winter of 1868-1869,

helping out on the pioneer farm. He marveled at the size of the farm as compared to the plots of ground in and around the village of Cep in his native land. "How good you people eat," he remarked. He was amazed at the abundance and variety of food which grandmother prepared. However, Martin became lonesome and decided to return to Bohemia. Grandmother tried in vain to persuade him to remain in the hopes that her own work on the farm would be lessened by his help but it was to no avail. Martin departed for Chicago and was never seen again. There he married and obtained employment. A son, John, was born in 1870 and the father passed away soon thereafter. (This information came from my uncle John only two months before his death in 1949.) It was the last time I saw him alive or spoke to him.

Nothing further was heard from our "Chicago relatives" for forty-seven years. One evening in 1918 my father was reading his Bohemian newspaper, "Hlasatel" and came across an article telling of the death of one Mrs. Tlachac. We discussed the article and having heard grandfather speak of his brother Martin who lived in Chicago at one time, it aroused my curiosity. Unbeknown to my father, I wrote to the address contained in the article to make inquiry about possible relationship. A prompt reply was received from John Tlachac, who was a cousin of my father. He confirmed a relationship in that he was a cousin of my father, the son of grandfather's brother, Martin. John and his son, Frankie, came for a visit during the Christmas time after I had written to them giving explicit directions for travel from Green Bay to the railroad station in Forestville. I was at the station with my father to meet them. As the train

rounded the bend towards the depot, I tried to picture what kind of a person I would see. Naturally I was somewhat excited. The train came to a stop at the station and among the passengers who dismounted came a man about my father's age, carrying a suitcase, followed by a little boy. I knew it was they and as we met each other, introductions were very informal. Then we alighted on the lumber wagon for the five mile homeward journey. That night my mother prepared a goose supper after which we sat up until late into the night talking. Visits were made to the other Tlachac families during the time they visited and the one occasion which impressed me most was one afternoon when I saw my grandfather, my uncle Matt, my father and their cousin John all seated in our living room talking about the by-gone days. As I looked in on them that afternoon I was doubly repaid for my efforts in bringing them together; I was glad that my grandfather had the occasion to meet for the first time, the son of his brother, Martin. All of them have passed away and that scene is only a memory.

According to my father, about 1885 letters ceased coming from Bohemia. Matt Hadac had passed away. His passing ended, forever, a connection that my grandparents had with their relatives in their native land. From then on, Bohemia was merely a memory.

By 1869, some changes had taken place in the little Bohemian settlement in Brussels town. Frank Herda became dissatisfied with his farm. As the land was cleared he found it to be quite rocky and he decided to dispose of it. John Nejedlo became the new owner of the farm for which he paid \$600. Herda moved to Pierce town where he continued

farming. Martin Swoboda, who lived on my father's farm, had five children, Anna, Frank, Albert, Lawrence and Rose. Anna became Mrs. Jos. Nowak; Rose married Frank Gregor; Lawrence passed away at the age of nineteen years from an epidemic of small pox. After his marriage to Rose Swoboda, Frank Gregor purchased the Martin Swoboda homestead. According to an old deed, he paid \$1,000 for the farm and the deed was drawn out by him on March 29, 1879. Swoboda, then moved to an adjoining eighty, now known as the Swoboda farm. John Cisar continued to farm until 1898 when he passed away. His wife, Elizabeth, passed away in 1906 and I have vivid recollections of her. William Miller sold his farm to Joe Nowak and moved to North Dakota. He was still alive in 1914. This paragraph, while not strictly a part of the life of my grandparents is merely written as supplementary community history.

Three more children were born to my grandparents after they settled in Brussels town. There was aunt Magadeline, who was born in 1865. Next was my uncle John, born in 1868 and he was followed by my father who was born on August 7, 1871. Father was the "baby" of the family. My knowledge of their schooling is rather vague. There were no compulsory school laws when they were children, therefore schooling was meager. My father started going to school at the age of about nine years. The first school which he attended was a little rural school located in Misiere district. He only went to school during the winter months when he was not needed at home. No doubt my uncle John started out in that same school. The present Lincoln Graded School district was organized in 1884. Then my father and uncle John attended it. Father went thru

the third reader which is equivalent to about the third grade. Then his school days were over when he was thirteen years old. My uncle John received the most schooling and attended the Algoma High School for one term. Victor Romden, county superintendent of schools in Kewaunee County at one time, was his classmate.

As my father and uncle John grew up, they sought employment in the lumber camps. My uncle John spent several winters working for the Cook Lumber Co. in Oconto. When my father was twenty years old he journeyed to Iron Mountain and Crystal Falls in Michigan where he spent two winter's working as a lumber jack. Wages were \$22. a month and the day started at four o'clock in the morning until darkness compelled them to return to camp in the evening. When spring came and the swamps broke up, he returned home by train to Green Bay and from there made the journey homeward on foot, a distance of thirty miles.

By 1870, the Civil War had been over for five years but a depression had set in which was an aftermath of the war. It was difficult for the farmers to make money, farm prices were cheap. The price of wheat had dropped to fifty cents a bushel. But the worst calamity was yet to come. The year 1871 is known as the year of the "Big Fire"-- the Peshtigo Fire. No rain had fallen from July until late in October of that year. The harvest had been completed early on account of the drought, streams dried up, the ground became powder dry and the forest a virtual tinder box. The grass was as dry as straw, the leaves on the trees fell early adding to the hazardous fire condition, in the forest which covered the countryside. People scanned the western horizon every

day for signs of clouds. Day after day the sun rose into a cloudless sky, at noon it looked like a fireball and set at night in a haze and pallor of smoke from fires everywhere. People went to work in the fields carrying moist cloths with which they cooled red eye lids that smarted from the smoke filled air. Even the birds and animals in the forest acted strangely, these seemed to forbode something ominous to come. Women prayed for rain which did not come.

October 8, 1871 was on a Sunday and most of the day the sun had looked like a copper colored ball in the sky. When night closed over the village of Peshtigo, a sullen red was plainly visible over the tree tops to the southwest. A great roar came from the woods. Then a slab of fire came hurling out of the sky to land on the sawdust street of the village. Shortly it was raining fire everywhere and in five minutes the entire village was ablaze. More than eight hundred lives were lost. The fire seemed to burn everywhere as it traveled eastward over the Green Bay area into the town of Union and Brussels. Many of the Belgian settlers in Brussels lost all they had. The little shingle mill in Williamsville (Tornado in Brussels) was wiped out. My Uncle Matt had been employed in this mill a few months before. Sixty lives were lost in this village and beside the highway midway between Brussels and Sturgeon Bay is a memorial marked which stands on the exact spot. The stone foundation, now partly covered with earth, is still visible where the mill stood. It bears the name of "Tornado Park" and on the memorial is a cryptical recital: "Here was the village of Williamsville with a population of 72 persons on October 8, 1871. This village was blotted out by a

tornado of fire. Sixty persons sought refuge in an open field surrounding this spot and were burned to death." The fire crept nearer and nearer and in Kolberg four lives were lost and their charred remains were interred in a common grave. I saw this grave many times in my youth, it was surrounded by a picket fence and is located on a knoll in the August Hafeman farm. The fence has fallen but I know the exact spot where the grave is located.

As the fire came nearer and nearer, grandfather and my Uncle Matt hastily plowed several furrows around the small clearing to prevent the fire from reaching the tinder dry roofs of the farm buildings and a wheat stack that stood nearby. A constant vigil was kept day and night. One day a gust of wind picked up a large spark of fire and it fell on the stack. My grandmother who was standing nearby cried out hysterically, "Now the stack will catch fire and everything will burn." She could not be of much help, still being weak from the recent birth of my father. Grandfather ran for a ladder, uncle Matt for a bucket of water. When they returned, a miracle seemed to have been performed. The spark burned itself out and the stack did not catch fire.

In my boyhood days, father pointed out to me concrete evidences of the big fire such as charred stumps, etc., grim reminders they were to those who knew. With the depression and the fire, some of the settlers wondered if the promised land was so promising after all. But they were made of sturdy fabric, not easily moved by calamities or hardships and always in the hope of a better day which came to them in due time.

One winter day around 1870 grandfather made a journey to

the land office in Menasha in connection with the land Patent to his farm. On his return he stopped to see his old friend Joseph Cerny and spent some time visiting. While there, grandfather bought a small feed cutter. The problem presented itself, how to bring it home as he was on foot. It was decided to mount the feed cutter on a hand sled and grandfather pulled it home through the snow, a distance of more than 30 miles. To us it seems like a Herculean task but those old hardy pioneers thought nothing of such a task.

It was the last time grandfather saw Cerny. From his granddaughter, Mrs. Zeman, I was able to learn how Cerny lived out his life in Cooperstown. When his son Vaclav became of age, Cerny turned over his farm to him with a stipulation that he pay out shares to the three other daughters. According to Mrs. Zeman, the terms were rigid and quite severe. Then with his money Cerny and a son-in-law bought a brewery in Kewaunee. Cerny put up all the money. The venture proved a financial failure leaving Cerny with an indebtedness. He returned to Cooperstown a sad and broken-hearted man. He sold one forty of his land to pay his debts. This unfortunate incident broke the spirit of the aged man who was always used to a certain amount of wealth. His last years were spent with his son where blindness afflicted him and he passed away rather suddenly in 1884 when he was about 76 years old.

As the sons of my grandparents grew up, more land was cleared and farming operations were carried on on a larger scale. Grandmother lost the help of her two daughters, Kristina and Magdelene, both of them married when they were fifteen years old and moved away. The increased acreage

required a larger barn and around 1875 a new log barn was constructed. It was decided to locate it near the road and it was built on the same site where the frame barn of Vojta Tlachac now stands. It was torn down in 1905 and replaced by the present frame structure. By that time my grandparents were in a position to build a new home and it was situated near the new log barn. The house was built when my father was nine years old, making the date of its construction in 1880. This was followed by the construction of a granary and cow barn. A wall was drilled and the motive power was provided by horses hitched to a tread mill. Now my grandparents and the family moved into their new house and with that the original buildings fell into ruins or were dismantled, the last one being the little log stable which was still standing when I played around it as a boy. It was torn down about 1910.

With the approach of the year 1880, the depression which had been an aftermath of the Civil War, came to an end. The price of wheat rose so that the settlers were once more encouraged and more land was broken and seeded to wheat. Grandfather followed with expanded farming operations and around the year 1883 he struck what might be called a banner year as far as income was concerned. That year the weather was favorable, crops were unusually good so that he threshed eight hundred bushels of wheat which was all sold for two dollars a bushel. This income of sixteen hundred dollars was never equalled in any one succeeding year. It gave my grandparents a tremendous boost. Just about that time Nejedlo decided to sell his farm and grandfather bought it

for twelve hundred dollars. When my uncle Matt and Aunt Catherine married in 1883, he moved to this farm the year following his marriage and lived there for two years until he moved away to a farm of his own. More of the life of my uncle Matt and Aunt Catherine is told in a succeeding paragraph. With their departure, the home on the Nejedlo farm stood vacant for two years although the land continued to be worked. In 1887 my uncle Frank married and moved on the farm which eventually became his own.

In the later 80's wheat growing came to an abrupt end, the chinch bug, a new pest, made its appearance and ravished crop after crop so that it was unprofitable for the settlers to raise wheat. They found the soil suited for peas and from then on they raised peas which provided their chief cash income. Oats and barley as well as some rye was also raised. There was much wild land pasture and the settlers kept more cows. Dairying came into being and although yet a side line, farming was more diversified. The first cheese factory stood on the corner of the Isadore Brans farm, the first in the Rosiere community, standing diagonally from the present James Jilot store. Remains of a stone foundation can still be seen where the factory stood. All the farmers in the vicinity hauled their milk to this cheese factory. Brans also had a small grocery store which burned down about 1896. The factory continued to operate until 1898, when it closed up. I can remember the old cheese factory although it was already closed up. Desire Brans was the cheesemaker towards the end and I am wondering what kind of cheese he made-- referring to quality, of course.

All during these first years, my grandmother played an important part in the development of the farm and home. She not only brought up the family but did much work in the field, especially during harvest time. There were no conveniences in the home of any kind, not even the simplest kind as I would imagine might have been in existence in my childhood days. Clothing was all made by hand and sewed with thread and needle. Needless to say, children were taught how to care for their clothing to make it last. Woolen stockings and mittens were also knitted by hand during the long winter evenings. There was baking to be done, kolatches were baked for Sunday or special occasions. I ate many slices of grandmother's rye bread when I was a boy. The garden provided vegetables which were stored away for winter use. The woods provided luscious blackberries, raspberries and strawberries which were picked in season. Later on, during the month of September, there were mushrooms and my very first meal of this delicacy was prepared by my grandmother. Basswood blossoms were gathered for tea and those who never drank tea from basswood blossoms have truly missed one of nature's tasty beverages. Even in my boyhood days, I can recall basswood trees that were white with blossoms. When one came near the tree, he could hear a continuous buzzing of bees that were seeking honey and the air was aromatic with the perfume from the blossoms. Herbs were gathered to be dried for medicinal purposes. Camomile was one in particular from which a tea was made and taken with sugar to cure a cold. Maple trees were tapped for sap from which syrup was made. Fats and greases were saved

during the year and in summer were made into soap. Grandmother attended to these and many other tasks during those early years. She was truly a pioneer's wife. There was very little time left for herself, it was all devoted to the performance of her daily duties as wife and mother. I can still see her neat appearance, evidences of her family background.

Social activities in the community were practically nil. When the hard day's work was completed, these early settlers were glad to rest. There were practically no newspapers or other reading matter and news traveled very slowly. Occasionally, neighbors visited each other during the winter evenings. Once a year most every home had a stripping bee when the women from the neighborhood gathered at someone's home to strip feathers that were used for pillows and feather beds. At other times when women visited at someone's house, they brought along their knitting and knitted while they talked and visited. Grandfather spent many evenings reading his Bohemian newspaper, "Slavie."

At other times the housewife accompanied her husband to town to purchase needed supplies. How different was the shopping in those good old days. Today's madame glides down the wide lanes of the modern grocery shopping center, in a valley of well-stocked shelves that are bursting with foodstuffs and groceries. She pushes a shopping cart, stopping here and there to make selections of canned goods, meats, and most every other kind of foodstuffs.

In the old days, the madame stepped through a door, was greeted by the sound of a tinkling bell, walked over a sleepy-eyed dog, side stepped a spittoon, and nodded

casually and shyly towards a group of men sitting around a big Round Oak stove discussing weather, crops and politics. Reaching into her apron pocket, she pulled out a slip of paper-- part of a sack that had been lugged home with provisions the previous time. On the brown paper was written several items that were needed. Filling the early day shopper's nostrils was an aromatic mixture of pipe smoke, cheese, kerosene and freshly ground coffee. She watched the groceryman dip into the cracker barrel with his hands and come out with "about a nickel's worth," added five or six for good manners and placed them in a small sack.

In one respect the old time merchandise mart offered a convenience not generally found in today's market. She had only to step to the counter to pick out three yards of calico for Sally's new dress (measured by the proprietor by holding a part of the bolt at his nose and stretching it out as far as his arm would reach). Her weekly supply of coffee was freshly ground in the big red wheel crank grinder or perhaps she preferred to have it ground at home in her own coffee grinder. Then, perhaps, she bought a three inch slab of cheese cut with a long knife, wiped on the not too clean apron of the proprietor who thoughtfully added three handfuls of jelly beans to the shopping list for little Johnny.

After picking up her two gallon can of kerosene that had a small potato stuck on the spout to prevent spillage, the mesdame of the early 90's stepped back out on the worn lean stoop that was about ready to part company with the rest of the building and turned to the butcher shop. Here, things were a bit less crowded and as she opened the door

to enter, the typical butcher shop aroma filled her nostrils and even made her hungry. The air had a combination of smoked bologna and fresh pine from the sawdust that was thickly sprinkled on the wood floor. Mrs. Shopper in the good old days placed her order for a link of bologna that could be had for five cents. To this, she added a few pounds of beef and she watched as the butcher whacked off great chunks of meat with a big cleaver on a hardwood block. When wrapping the meat for her, he threw in a generous piece of liver. There was no charging for a fraction of an ounce as is the case today. There were no neat, cellophane wrapped choice cuts in those days.

Back outside on the built-up board sidewalk, our early shopper looked up and down the street for John's rig. Ah, there it was-- just as she thought-- in front of the saloon. Perhaps it was Bastar's or Urbanek's saloon in Ahnapee. John met one of his old friends on the street so they did their visiting over a glass of foaming beer in the saloon. Time passed by faster than they realized. Mrs. Shopper would liked to have gone into the saloon to rouse John out but it was beneath her dignity to enter, so she waited out in the rig. Finally John wiped the last foam from his mustache, said good-bye to his friend and mounted the rig. Tired from long waiting, Mrs. Shopper gave him Hail Columbia-- she was anxious to get home, her wash was soaking in the tubs and she forgot to tell Sally to hang it out.

Probably not one of a hundred modern shoppers would want to go back to the good old days but there still remains something mighty enticing about the old general

store with its cracker, sugar and flour barrels, to those who remember them. Fortunately, or unfortunately-- depending on how one looks at it--- has gone the way of the horse and buggy, the fancy carriage, the kerosene lamp, the old cook stove, button shoes and hoop skirts.

There was much wild game which provided sport for those who liked to hunt. Deer were often seen pasturing in the open fields early in the morning. Rabbit hunting was a great sport. In particular, however, I wish to mention the passenger pigeon, with its small head and neck, long tail and beautiful plumage. The bird had an air of uncommon elegance and it was mercilessly hunted and slaughtered by the settlers everywhere. At times enormous flocks of these pigeons came sweeping over, alighting to feed in the fields. They came in countless myriads and often when they settled to earth, they covered acres of meadow. When alarmed, they rose with sound like the rumbling of thunder. At times, the lines of their cloudlike flocks were so unending that those in front of the rank were lost in the northern sky, while those in the rear were but dim bands beneath the southern sun. Immense roosts of birds piled up on each other's backs as they settled on trees, breaking the limbs from sheer weight of numbers. No other species of bird probably ever approached the passenger pigeon in numbers. This mental picture of the passenger pigeon was given to me by my uncle Matt and I have merely to put it into words. Pigeon hunting was a favorite sport of his when he was in young manhood. By 1890, the pigeon population decreased tremendously, cut down by the white man's devastating attack with gun and nets. By the turn of the century,

the pigeon population was practically cut down to zero and in the year 1914, the last known passenger pigeon died in captivity. Its passing was a sober lesson to mankind and brought sharp attention to the fact that a species can become a non-renewable resource.

In 1890, grandfather met with an accident that might have cost him his life. While cutting wheat with a binder one hot July day, one of the horses kicked over the pole, while unhitching the team, it became frightened and started forward pulling the heavy binder over him. The bull wheel passed over his ankle but fortunately the ground was soft, his foot was pressed into the ground and only broken bones resulted. He suffered multiple bruises about his body and had to be carried home. My uncle Frank hitched a horse to the bugboard and went for Dr. Minahan who was practicing medicine in Casco. The doctor set the broken bones, bandaged bruises and then my uncle Frank drove him back to Casco. Grandfather was laid up for the summer. In 1940, I read this article in the 50 yr. column of the Algoma Record Herald. I copied it and it reads as follows: "Matt Tlachac, a Brussels town farmer, met with a painful accident last week. While Mr. Tlachac was unhitching a team of horses from a grain binder, the team started forward pulling the heavy machine over him. Tlachac suffered broken bones and other bruises which no doubt will lay him up for the summer."

By 1896, correspondence from their relatives in Bohemia had ceased for more than 15 years. Although my grandparents were aging, (according to my father), home ties were strong

and they often spoke of their relatives. They wondered what changes had taken place in their native village since they departed from it forty years earlier. They were now in a position where they could make a trip "back home." Grandfather was desirous to make the trip to Bohemia but grandmother thought the undertaking was too great. "What is the use of going back to Cep?" she told grandfather. "You have no relatives left there, while I have only cousins who perhaps may not be alive." The idea was abandoned and the trip was not made.

During the summer of 1896, Frank Gregor decided to sell his farm. My father was to take over the home farm and my uncle John was not yet provided for, therefore grandfather bought the Gregor farm which was intended for my uncle John. However, something came up to change this plan. On November 25, 1896 my father married and mother not being able to speak Bohemian, made it inadvisable for my father to take over the home farm as intended. It was decided that my uncle John would take over the home farm since his wife was of Bohemian nationality. My grandparents preferred it, so my father settled on the Gregor farm. However, as years went by, mother learned enough Bohemian to make herself understood whenever my grandparents came to our house for a visit.

The family of children were now all settled, my grandparents reached retirement age. Plans were consummated for their retirement from active farming. The home was converted into a two family dwelling. The large kitchen was reserved by my grandparents for their living quarters. The deed to the farm was transferred to my uncle John with

some reserverations. There was a bond of support drawn out which stipulated that they were to receive a certain sum of money and other provisions for their livelihood. It was a customary agreement such as was the case among Bohemian families when the parents retired.

At the time of their retirement, my grandparents had farmed for forty years. In spite of the fact that they started out like the rank and file of early settlers with nothing more than their hands and a strong determination, they were successful. Thrift and hard work paid off and now they were in a position to take life easier.

CHAPTER 12
IN RETIREMENT

Retirement for my grandparents did not mean the suspension of work, it merely meant the severance of actual farming operations. Having been used to work all their life, complete retirement could hardly be expected. Grandfather was in good health and active in spite of his sixty seven years of life. He continued to take an interest in farming operations which had been turned over to his sons. A favorite passtime for him was to take cane in hand and visit with one son or the other and to help whenever it was needed. On many occasions, during harvest time, I saw him mount the binder and cut grain. Often I saw him haul milk to the local cheese factory seated on the buckboard, the platform of which was sagged in the middle like a bow. In winter time, he split much wood and assisted with other chores about the farm. When evening came, he drew from his jacket pocket his pipe which he filled with home-raised tobacco, lit it, and proceeded homeward. This continued year after year.

At other times, grandfather spent his leisure time reading his Bohemian newspaper, "Slavie." A garden was planted year after year and much time was devoted working it with a hoe. When grandchildren were born, grandmother cared for the newly born until the mother was able to be about her daily tasks. When I was born on February 10, 1898, grandfather was anxious that I be named after him and as an inducement that I be named Mathias, he presented my parents with a ten dollar gold piece which they passed on to me after his death. Together with a few other gold coins which I had I foolishly turned in when gold coins were called in by

the federal government in 1933. I have regretted it ever since. According to my parents, grandfather expressed a desire that he would live long enough to see me bring to him my father's newspaper, "Hlasatel." Little did he realize that he would live long enough to see me as a married man with a family of my own.

One incident occurred during my early childhood which perhaps merits mention. In 1901 my parents built our barn. One day when grandfather was busy piling the logs from the old barn, he came across a porcupine. My father was not at home that day so grandfather went to the house for the shot gun to shoot the animal. As mother took the gun from the wall where it was hung and handed it to my grandfather, it suddenly discharged, the charge passing within a few inches of where I was standing. I barely missed death, she did not know that the gun was loaded. Soon Frank Swoboda came hurrying across the field to our house, knowing that my father was not at home, the firing of the gun made him wonder what had happened. Swoboda and grandfather killed the animal with a club. Mother had a black spot on her arm for many days caused by the recoil of the gun. I was only three years old at that time but the incident created an impression on my mind which lives with me to this day.

In 1904, my grandparents experienced their first family sorrow when my aunt Magdaline passed away in her 40'th year. On one occasion, when we visited her, I saw her in her sickbed haggard and worn out from the dreaded disease of tuberculosis. One evening a message came to grandfather, summoning him to her bedside. It was on a dark cloudy night in summer and there was lightning flashing and the rumbling of thunder in the sky. Grandfather came into our house breath-

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less to inform my father of the summons. They hitched "Molly" in the top buggy and drove to the bedside of my aunt. A few days later she passed away. I did not accompany my parents to the funeral but I remember the occasion vividly.

It was during their latter years of retirement that I remembered my grandparents most vividly and visited them very frequently. There was always something fascinating about visiting my grandparents. Human nature is much the same today and I experience the same traits of character in my grandchildren whenever they come for a visit. Outside of their own parents, there is perhaps no one that can take the place of grandparents in the hearts of children. As a boy it was my biweekly task to bring mine the Bohemian newspaper, "Hlasatel," when my father was through reading it. I was truly a barefoot boy in those days. Often as I trudged the dusty road during the summer, I plucked wild flowers that grew profusely along the rail fence and carried them to grandmother. I can still see her beautiful eyes light up as I presented the bouquets to her and she carefully took them from my dirty little hand, smelled of them and then she would say, "How nice they smell." They were placed in a tumbler of water which was carefully set on the kitchen table. Then came the reward. Proceeding to the wardrobe, she opened the door and previous experiences told me what to expect. Reaching to the corner within, she drew out a flask consisting of what was then called "stomach bitters"-- a sort of wine. She poured some of the contents into a glass tumbler, added some water and sugar, then handed it to me. What a treat! Naturally I drank it, sip by sip, to

prolong the goodness of the taste. At other times, grandfather brought from the cellar a glass of beer and although quite flat tasting from its long tapping, it likewise, was a treat. Still at other times grandmother passed around large molasses cookies or perhaps I had a meal with them.

One day, grandmother showed me something which was a matter of curiosity, small as it was. She took from an old trunk a small box and opening it, she showed me a tooth from her mother. She brought it along when she came to America. It was her wish that when she passed away, it would be buried with her. Her wish was granted.

Simple as their circumstances were, my grandparents seemed to enjoy their final years together. Having experienced a life of thrift and hard work, they were satisfied with a simplicity of life. Grandmother kept up her religion fervently. Their home had an air of simplicity but was comfortable. The kitchen was quite large. On the east end stood the kitchen stove where grandmother did the baking of rye bread and other pastries. Near the stove stood an old cupboard containing all sorts of kitchen necessities. On its side hung a soda cracker box containing cedar sticks, sometimes called pipe lighters. Drawing one of these at twilight, it was held over the coals in the stove and ignited and the flame carried to the kerosene lamp on the kitchen table where it was lighted. The flame was extinguished and the remaining cedar stick was placed back in the box to be used over and over until too short for further service-- concrete evidence of the thrift and saving to which they had been accustomed. Near the cupboard a door led into a small bed-

room where they slept. Behind the bedroom door were the clothes hooks, where everyday clothing was hung. In a corner stood the old trunk where grandmother kept her precious items of clothing. Along the south wall stood the kitchen table with a chair on each side. Beyond it, a door led into the pantry containing simple pieces of china, water pail and other dishes. A door led out from the pantry to the orchard. Along the west wall stood the wardrobe where Sunday clothing was carefully hung to protect it from sunlight and dust.

Near the wardrobe stood an old squeaky wooden rocker which grandmother occupied in times of leisure. Near the wardrobe, another door led to the porch on the north side of the house.

Between two windows on the north wall stood the clock that tick-tocked and struck the hours of day and night. On the wall in the rear of the stove was a small shelf on which stood grandfather's shaving mug and the razor strap that hung beneath it. In the northeast corner, a drop door led into the cellar where vegetables were kept during the winter months. A short distance from the house was a hogpen where grandfather kept a hog each year. Every fall it was my father's taks to butcher the hog and I accompanied him on several occasions. Then the hog was cut up, hams were smoked. Grandmother made blood sausage and "sults." The rest of the meat was fried for winter use. It was a simple life but not unlike that of other pioneers who retired after their life work. Fortunately my grandparents enjoyed health and were free from a retired life of financial worries. This rather crudely describes the retired life of my grandparents from 1896 to 1911 when it ended.

CHAPTER 13

THE PASSING OF GRANDMOTHER

It was on a clear, balmy and sunny day in the month of May, 1911. I was assisting my father to plant apple trees and as we looked up the road that afternoon, grandmother was coming for one of her periodic visits. Her appearance was like that which I had seen many, many times-- dressed in black, a white apron, "shatek" on her head and assisting her walk with a cane. There was nothing to indicate, in the least, that her robust health might fail within a few weeks. As she approached, we left our work and visited for a while. She remarked how fast I was growing up and that within a few short years I would be a young man. She spent the afternoon at our house and then toward evening was homeward bound. It was her last visit to our house.

Within a few weeks, grandmother complained of not feeling well. Dr. Donovan from Forestville was called and he diagnosed her ailment as dropsy. She failed to respond and steadily grew worse. During her illness my father visited her often and my uncle Matt, who was devoted to his mother, hardly ever failed to make bi-weekly visits with her. But her life was slowly ebbing away and one Sunday afternoon, I accompanied my father to grandmother's house. All her children were there and as they sat around their mother, the look of anxiety could be seen in their faces. It was the last time I saw grandmother alive. Within a few days she was bedridden and Father Gloudeman from Rosiere was called to annoint her. Father spent almost every night at her

house and one morning when I was doing chores about the farm, I saw my father coming home. As he neared us, the look on his face foretold what he was about to say. His remarks were these, "Well, mother passed away last night at eight o'clock!" I was a lad thirteen years old then and perhaps too young to fully understand the significance of father's remarks, if they had not been made about one of my grandparents to whom I may not have been so closely attached. "Grandmother is dead," those words sank deep into my heart, young as I was, for I really loved her who had been so kind to me. It was hard to believe but nevertheless, a reality. It was the 4th of August, 1911.

Funeral arrangements fell to my father and uncle Matt. With a lumber wagon, they drove to Algoma the next day to the Schubich Funeral Home where a casket was purchased which they brought to her home. Relatives and friends gathered for the wake and as I looked upon her in the black casket, her face seemed to be as natural as in life. She was really sleeping the deep sleep which no one could escape.

Then came the day of the funeral, chores were done early that morning. It was a hot, humid August day and clouds were gathering in the western sky foreboding a storm. My parents promised me that I could attend the funeral with them. When chores were completed, I hurriedly dressed in knee pants, long black stockings that extended above the knees, button shoes, a coat that was a hand-me-down from my cousin, Steve, and a black hat, the brim of which was turned upward. Somehow, I felt like a man. We drove to grandmother's house and I watched intently and curiously as the black casket was carried from the house to the hearse drawn by two black horses with their bright new harness and tasseled fly nets

that hung down to the horses knees. Led by the shiny black hearse with its sides of plate glass and tasseled drapes within, the funeral left the farmyard for the dusty road to the Rosiere church. I sat between my parents in a top buggy drawn by our black horse, "Barney." The squeak of the harness, the clomp of the horses hoofs on the hard, dusty road and the rumble of the iron-tired vehicles was all that could be heard as the funeral proceeded onward. Just behind the hearse the pallbearers rode in a rig followed by my uncle Matt, his family and grandfather seated with them. They were followed by other vehicles, a dozen in all.

Clouds in the western sky rose higher and higher; there were lightning flashes and sounds of distant thunder, a perfect setting for a storm. As we neared home, my father turned and spoke words which I shall never forget. He said, "Mattie, there is going to be a storm and you will have to stay home with the children." These words dampened my hopes but having been taught obedience to parents, I sadly dismounted and made my way to the house, a disappointed lad. I watched the funeral train until it was out of sight. Grandmother was gone forever. In a short time, the tolling of the church bell could be heard through the motionless and humid air. It was the 7th of August and on my father's 40th birthday. What a birthday present! Incidentally, the clouds dissipated and the expected storm did not come.

By midday, the funeral was over and relatives began returning, some to their homes and others to grandfather's house where they spent the afternoon. That evening father and I went to see grandfather. As we entered the house he

was just finishing his supper and as he pushed his bowl aside, he remarked, "Well, this is the first one," meaning it was his first meal alone. He was now 82 years old but he took the passing of grandmother bravely. As we sat and talked, he once again expressed a desire to make a trip to his old home in Bohemia. On second thought, it might be better to write some distant relative of grandmother's whom he believed might be alive and tell her of grandmother's passing. His wish was never granted. His early life seemed to come before his eyes and he told of his own home in Cep. I was old enough then to find his conversation with my father interesting and many of the incidents which harboured in my memory are written in the pages of this book.

While we were thus talking, my uncle Frank came and then their conversation turned to grandfather's future. However, he insisted on living alone in his home. From then on it fell to my mother to do his washing and baking. Every week as regular as clockwork, one of us children carried loaves of bread to him. In spite of his age, he managed well.

CHAPTER 14

THE PASSING OF GRANDFATHER

Following the death of grandmother, my grandfather lived alone for eight years. No doubt, at times, it was a lonely life, but he was a courageous man. During that time, I continued to visit him often and he seemed to appreciate being visited with grandchildren. As I grew up, he often remarked that he wondered what occupation I would engage in when I grew up. Somehow or other, being a namesake of his, it seems he took an interest in my future. On May 12, 1912, I graduated from country school. I was anxious to obtain more schooling mostly motivated by the fact that I was the oldest of twelve living children with little hope of help from home. However, being the oldest, I was needed at home and further schooling appeared dim for me. My desire to attend the Door-Kewaunee Training School in Algoma where some of my classmates were planning on attending, was looked upon as an unfavorable venture by my parents. It meant the expenditure of money for extra clothing, tuition, books and other supplies which my parents would hardly afford besides the loss of my help on the farm, which I was aware they needed. At this point in my deliberations, it was my grandfather who came to my rescue. One day, he pleaded with my father and convinced him of the desirability of my going on further to school. I do not believe that I can recall a single incident which warmed my heart to the extent which it did when grandfather and my father stood in the barnyard discussing my further schooling and what little education I possess, I owe to my grandfather. No doubt having his own boyhood days in

mind, it was a clear indication of the pioneer's desire to help his descendant achieve some of his aspirations. I was thankful to my grandfather and as a further inducement, he loaned me fifty dollars that fall which gave me the real start towards my ambition to become a country school teacher. Later on, I repaid him.

As the years were slipping by, one by one, they were gradually taking their toll as grandfather was nearing his 90'th year. He became less active and one Sunday in 1919 when my uncle Matt was visiting at home with my father, my cousin John came to tell us that grandfather was ill. I cranked my 1919 Ford car and we went to see him. We found him lying across the bed, apparently a sick man. We took him to our home and from then on, he lived with my parents. The next day we moved his meager belongings together with the old trunk. The rest of the household goods remained in his home and passed on to my uncle John.

Companionship, home cooking and a good bed revived him and once more he became himself. During those years I attended considerably to grandfather's personal needs. I shaved him weekly, helped him dress and attended to other needs. I was the only child at home who could talk to him in Bohemian fluently. He appreciated it and often I took him for a ride in the new Ford. Every time he mounted it, he remarked, "Todlec je necco" which means, "This is something!" He marveled at the horseless carriage and saw the transformation of transportation from oxen to automobile. Several times I drove him to Algoma where he drew his yearly interest on his savings account in the Bank of Algoma. At other times, we took a drive to the cemetery to visit grandmother's grave.

These and many more were the tasks which I performed for grandfather and often my mind reaches back to those days and I am glad that I tried to be considerate to him. Even in his advanced years, he continued to take interest in those about him. On August 2, 1921 I was married and a year later, he saw my first born son, Norman, his great grandson of which he had many.

After our marriage, we moved into the E. Brans house across the road from the Lincoln Graded School where I was teaching. One winter day an incident occurred which I shall relate. Grandfather decided to visit at my uncle Matt's house. He took a short cut across the field, slipped on the ice and fell down. Due to an injury he was unable to stand up and dragged himself to a fencepost where he finally was able to get himself on his feet. During the recess period, I happened to look out of the school window and saw him waving. I quickly ran to his aid and he told me what had happened. He thought his hip was broken. Being unable to be of immediate help, I ran to the Peter Andre farm where a horse and cutter was obtained and Wallace Andre brought him to uncle Matt's house. That evening father and I went to see grandfather. What he thought was a broken hip was merely an injury and after several days, father was able to take him home. Grandfather was now 93 years old and although in good health considering his age, he confined himself to his room and ventured out only in favorable weather. His eyesight, although quite good, failed him to the extent that he could not read the fine print in his newspaper and perhaps because of his age, he lost interest in reading. However, his mind was good and

during the next two years I visited him whenever I came home. He often caressed and played with my little son, Norman, now two years old. He was no trouble to anyone.

Being now just in his 95th year of life, it was my hope that grandfather would become a centenarian and it looked like he would but, alas, my hopes were illusionary. One day when coming home from Algoma where I went for school supplies, I stopped to see my father who was a semi-invalid from illness. My mother informed me that grandfather was sick and had lost his appetite. We called Dr. Kerscher, who diagnosed his illness due to old age. We were informed that he could get well but that he might pass away anytime. On August 19, 1924, I was busy preparing for the opening of the Roosevelt School in Misiere. The telephone rang. It was my mother calling to inform me that grandfather had passed away in his sleep at ten o'clock that forenoon. It was a piece of news that I could hardly believe. I had known grandfather so well and had been attached so closely to him, it seemed as if he would live forever.

I hurried homeward and as I walked into his room I saw the form of the lifeless old pioneer on his couch. My father took his passing tearfully and it was the first time in my life that I saw him shed tears. I could easily understand the thoughts that were in his mind. Afflicted with an incurable anemia, he perhaps envisioned himself in a similar circumstance and if such were his thoughts, he was correct. Nine months later, he followed his father to the grave.

I had much admiration for the old pioneer. To me he was the symbol of the rank and file of those early settlers

who made our country. I was thankful that the Creator ^{p. 112} gave him the courage and fortitude to break away from peasantry and immigrate to a land of opportunity. Without that indomitable spirit with which he was endowed, I, too, might have been a peasant's son in Bohemia. It was he, who made it possible for me to enjoy the blessings of liberty, freedom and all of the other good things which are synonymous with that word, "America." Then and there I considered them gifts for which I was thankful.

My father was not able to be of help, therefore it fell upon me to make funeral arrangements. My first act that afternoon was to call for uncle Matt. I brought him home where he stood beside his father for several minutes, saying nothing. Saying nothing, did I say? His face spoke what was in his mind. Here was a son who labored with his father when they grubbed the soil among the stumps on the pioneer farm. Here was a son who was ever devoted to his father throughout his life and his passing was a distinct loss to him. But he knew it could not be otherwise.

After a brief stay, uncle Matt and I drove to Algoma in my Chevrolet touring car to purchase the casket. As we entered the Schubich establishment, uncle Matt turned to me suddenly and said, "Mattie, you pick out the casket-- you understand that better than I do." Assuring him that I would, he seemed to be relieved from performing this task for one who was so close to his own flesh and blood. Examining several, I finally picked out a black one with satin lining, cost \$185, a rather expensive one for grandfather's means but I thought the old pioneer should have the best that could be afforded. On our way home uncle Matt

told me much of grandfather's early life after I gradually turned the conversation to that interesting subject.

Relatives and friends gathered at our house for the wake and at his death, grandfather hardly looked his nearly 96 years of age. I thought it fitting that six grandsons act as his pallbearers; they were Steve, Joseph and John Tlachac, Anton and John Koss and myself. My father was too ill to attend the funeral and stayed home in the company of Mrs. Nowak who cared for his needs. We carried the casket to the long black motor hearse and as the funeral started out for the Rosiere church, it seemed to me like yesterday since I saw a similar sight when grandmother passed away, although it was 13 years before.

Following church services by the Rev. C.J. Smits, we carried the pioneer to his final resting place beside that of grandmother. Another pioneer was gone. On a simple tombstone can be seen the following inscription in Bohemian, "Mathias Tlachac, Narozen 19 Ledna 1829. Zemrel 19 Srpna, 1924." "Marie, Zena Mathias Tlachac, Narozen 24, Ledna 1832, Zemrella 4, Srpna, 1911. Nechete duse jej odpociva v pokoje." This simple epitaph translated reads: "Mathias Tlachac, born Jan. 19, 1829. Died August 19, 1924. Mary, wife of Mathias Tlachac, born January 24, 1832. Died Aug. 4, 1911. Let her soul rest in Peace."

CHAPTER 15

THE PIONEER'S SON

This book would not be complete without adding a chapter about the life of my uncle Mathias and his family. He was my sponsor at baptism and my namesake which made him my favorite uncle. I have always admired him for his kindness, his prudence and generosity of heart. Let anyone in need ask for a favor and he was never turned away from his door. He was in every sense, a "Pioneer's Son." Born of humble parentage in Cep on January 29, 1855, he was a lad barely five years old when he felt the breezes of the salty Atlantic as he made the journey to America with his mother.

Life for him in Cooperstown was uneventful as he was only a child. Then as a boy nine years old he found himself in Brussels town where at that early age he took a man's place beside his father in helping to carve out a home and farm from the wilderness. Here the boy wielded the axe and grub hoe as they felled the trees and dug out the stumps to make a clearing. It was he who guided the oxen, helped to cut the grain with a cradle, bind it into bundles and help to thresh it with a flail. Many a lad would have flinched from these hard tasks but not my uncle Matt. His sense of duty to his parents remained with him throughout his life. When he was sixteen years old he journeyed to the little shingle mill in Williamsville in Door County where he spent one winter as a "lumberjack" returning to the farm in the spring. This was just a few months prior to the "Big Fire" in 1871.

At the age of 28 years he married Catherine Kies, a

kindly girl, who for some time previous had worked as a hired girl in Chicago. This event took place on November 20, 1883 at St. Mary's Church in Ahnapee and they were married by Father Cipin. My father, then a boy twelve years old, was not in attendance at the wedding, having stayed home to care for the farm while the other members of the family were away. The newly-weds lived with my grandparents for perhaps a year when my cousin Emily was born on September 18, 1884. Then they moved to their first home on the Nejedlo farm which grandfather purchased shortly before. A second child, Mary, was born there in the log house which still stands and is in a remarkable good state of preservation considering its hundred years of existence.

Two years were spent on this farm but as the land was being cleared my uncle Matt found it quite rocky and not to his liking. In the town of Lincoln lived a family which if my memory serves me correctly was named Gillis. Their 80 acre farm was for sale, the soil was deeper although it was almost all covered with forest and underbrush. My uncle Matt thought the possibility seemed more assuring so he persuaded my grandfather to let him purchase the farm for \$1,200. Grandfather consented to the purchase and the deal was consummated. Uncle Matt became the new owner of the land. Then preparations were made to move into their new home. Household goods were packed into a wagon and everything was in readiness. Seated on the wagon with their parents were my cousins, Emily, a child of three, and Mary, a baby of eight months. I can best describe the moving in Emily's own words taken from a letter which she wrote to me

on February 10, 1956. She said, "When they moved to my present home I was three years old but how well I remember that moving day-- a cold, dark December day about a week and a half before Christmas. There was no snow but flakes were sailing through the sky and the ground was frozen hard. And the house we moved into-- disorder all over. The family that moved out had three boys. It consisted of 80 acres with very little of that cleared and the buildings were a few log shacks in poor repair. As they didn't have much money, for a down payment, they had to give a mortgage on the rest and paid ten percent interest on that. But mother used to say they were contented and happy in spite of hard times because they were working on a place of their very own." A beautiful description coming from the daughter of the pioneer's son.

My uncle Mathias and aunt Catherine saw hard times as they developed their farm throughout the years but their mode of life may well serve as a model, with a demonstration of good will, patience, enduring courage and above all honesty. There was always something alluring to us children when father said we were going to uncle Matt's. As a lad, I vividly recall the old log barn where we played while our parents visited. It was replaced by the present frame structure in 1904. And the old log house, how neat and clean aunt Catherine kept it. When seated in the large living room, my curiosity was often aroused as I looked up on the ceiling and saw the large ornamental circle in the plaster. I thought it was quite artistic. Then aunt would pass around poppy

seed kolatches and how good they tasted as we sank our teeth into them. They were sponsors for all of us children; I was the first to be baptized on February 16, 1898 when I was six days old and their thirteenth and last trip was made at the baptism of my sister Rita. All those incidents are but memories and like countless others before them; they have bowed out to Father Time.

And what of their children? This chapter would be incomplete without mentioning them. The first one is Emily, the oldest one. To many, not in that position it is somewhat difficult to understand what the term, "oldest of the family" means. I can speak from experience. As such, one learns very early in life to become useful. Usually younger children are left to your care so that actually you are either father or mother to them while the parents are about their daily task. You learn to share with them, help to teach them right from wrong. You sometimes get less than others in the family because at that time the parents are usually getting a start. You practice thrift with them and contribute in many other ways. In this same manner my cousin, Emily helped out and attended school whenever the chance prevailed. She is intelligent, well-read and an interesting conversationalist. I have known her for fifty years and have yet to hear her speak an unkind word about anyone. Through the medium of this book, I wish her everything that is good in life.

The second child is Mary but unfortunately I know less about her early life than I would desire. I remember her as a quiet good natured girl and one who inherited many of the good

qualities of her paternal grandmother. She was born on March 15, 1887, married when twenty years old and is the mother of two fine children, Libbie and Stephen.

Anna was born on March 13, 1891 and was the third child of the family but unfortunately lived a short life and passed away at the age of nineteen years. She, too, had a quiet unassuming character and disposition, qualities admired by many. Her passing was a distinct loss. I was a pallbearer at her funeral.

Now comes Steve, the baby of the family, date of birth April 5, 1894. I could write a chapter about him; he is four years my senior but throughout our lives it seems we had much in common. A deep thinker with convictions of his own, a great reader, a good conversationalist, a lover of sports and music and a great hunter, these qualities made him an outstanding figure in the community. I went to school with Steve and how well I can recall those days. He was what we commonly call, "good in school." Arithmetic and history were mere playthings for him; in these he stood at the head of his class. Indians and Indian tales were a favorite of his and might the assignment be on "Chief Rain-in-the-Face," or "Chief Blackfeet," Steve was sure to come out with something or other no classmate knew or thought of.

Then there were our hunting days --- and how we loved those. As a boy he started out with an air rifle, and when he graduated into the shot gun class, the air rifle passed along to me. He had an exceedingly keen hunter's eye and when the fall season came he knew where the rabbit population was the thickest. Then on Sunday morning our hunting expeditions

started. There were Joseph and William Tlachac, Walter, Frank Holub, myself and sometimes others. Guns were oiled, shells readied, some sandwiches packed and carried in a jacket pocket as we started out for the woods behind his hunting dog, Fannie. Sometimes soon after we reached the edge of the woods, Fannie gave a squeak, then a long howl and the hunt was on! The hunters scattered like dry leaves in the wind, each to some advantageous place, some on a knoll, some perhaps on a stump while others squatted down to obtain a better view through the thick underbrush. As the dog's bark became fainter and fainter we knew that this time it was a jack rabbit for it is characteristic of them to be far ahead of the dog and travel in a large circle. Then the dog's bark faded away entirely but we were not disappointed for we were well aware of Mr. Jack Rabbit's tricks. Silently every hunter waited, then from far off came a faint bark. Mr. Rabbit was on his way back to the place of beginning. Louder and louder the bark became and this was the most tense moment of all for the hunters. Everyone stood very quietly scanning every opening in the brush, then suddenly a "bang" resounded in the woods. "Did you get him, Steve?" someone shouted. "Wait," said Steve, then seconds later, another "bang." "I got him!" shouted Steve. Another rabbit flipped his tail and kicked up his heels for the last time. Then followed the usual conference when hunters gathered together to learn the final details. Came Fannie, panting for breath, the rabbit was picked up and she was allowed a sniff, then perhaps a pat on her head and a few strokes on her back as her reward for a chase well done.

Again the party broke up and perhaps a few minutes later another rabbit was running for his life. By this time noon was at hand and the pangs of hunger manifested themselves. Sandwiches were drawn out of the pocket, two or three bites and they disappeared like magic. Thirst was quenched by a brook, a few minutes rest and the hunters were ready for more fun. Evening came before anyone realized its approach. Then began the homeward journey, gun on shoulder, game tied to a string which was slung over the shoulder and the tired but happy hunters bid each other "goodnight" and departed for home. Happy memories, these are.

A keen ear for music soon made Steve in demand throughout the community as a fiddler. He started his fiddling when about twelve years old and kept it up most of his life. He loved music. His first violin was a hand-me-down from my father and as he progressed and showed aptitude for fiddling, his parents purchased him a good violin. Constant practice made him a proficient fiddler and such difficult pieces as Devils Dream were played like a professionalist with Emily chording on the piano. I can still hear them.

Amusements, in those days did not extend much beyond the boundaries of the community. Chiefly, among these were the house parties and they were much fun. We had many of them at our house during my boyhood days and many times they came as a complete surprise and were called "surprise parties" to celebrate a birthday or wedding anniversary. Friends and relatives came from afar to these house parties.

They came by horse and buggy sometimes by bicycle to which was attached a carbide light, while others came on foot. In winter they came by sled or cutters. What a thrill to be snugly cuddled in the bottom of a sleigh box that was thickly bedded with fresh straw. The creaking and squeaking of the sled runners as they slid over the hard crusted snow told of a cold night. Sleigh bells poured forth their jingle that could be heard for miles through the still frosty air that was lighted by a full moon which hung in the sky like a silver ball. Occasional laughter and shouts pierced the stillness of the air as we rode on.

As soon as the guests were assembled, the hat was passed into which each man dropped a coin. Then someone was dispatched to the Rubens saloon for a "double header" of beer which, in those days, cost \$1.60. When he returned, it was set on a chair in the corner of the room, some one drove into it a wooden spigot or beer pump and the first glass of the fluid was thrown away but none after that. Everything was in readiness; the room was cleared, chairs set along the wall and the festivities were about to begin.

Then came the musicians, Steve the leader with my uncle Fred Andre to play second fiddle. They were seated in a corner of the room. First the violins were carefully lifted from their cases, strings hastily pitched with the thumb. Then the bow as rosined, drawn over the strings to make sure they were in tune and if not, adjustments were made. Then they set many feet into motion dancing to such tunes as "Blue Eyed Waltz," "Clarinet Polka," "Red Wing," "Kido," and others. Sometimes my uncle Fred played the accompaniment on the big bass viol that took up nearly a

whole corner of the room. How its rich, deep and resonant tones blended with those sweet strains coming out of Steve's violin. There were waltzes, two steps and quadrilles with Desire Brans doing the calling over the shuffle of shoe leather on the floor. "Alemande left, alemande right; Swing your partner with all your might!" Between dances, there was more of this amber fluid to satisfy thirsts created by this activity and to bring a glass of foaming beer to the musicians was looked upon as something of an honor.

Before it was realized, midnight was at hand. Heaping platters of kolatches or sandwiches brought by the women were passed around among the hungry guests. More glasses of the foaming amber fluid were consumed and by this time some of the men made a trip outside to see if the moon and stars were shining. When they returned they seemed to be relieved of some discomfort and were ready for more dancing. There was more fiddling with increased zest and Steve's nimble fingers picked the keyboard like a professional. Sometimes sleep was just behind their eyeballs but the music went on. About this time some were seeing things where they were not and there was merriment everywhere. Then, perhaps, some old Bohemian would start out with a song and was stuck before he hardly sang the first line like "Kde Je Mui Domov," meaning, "Where Is My Home?"

Strains of "Home Sweet Home" told that the party was over, horses were hitched and homeward they went sometimes to the twitter of the morning birds and already the first rays of the morning were dimly visible in the eastern horizon. Perhaps many were sleepy-eyed or wore a hang-over

headache, the next day. But, who cared; these physical discomforts were far outweighed by the merriment that was enjoyed the night before.

Years have passed by and with them has faded away the old time house parties. They were the medium through which was provided wholesome amusement and they promoted friendship and good will in the community. To the younger generation of this age, they have indeed missed a grand form of recreation and they are fond memories to those of us who attended them. Many of those who enjoyed themselves at this simple form of amusement are numbered among the departed. Perhaps, never again, will Steve play lively music on his violin for an "old time house party!"

FINIS

CONCLUSION

This completes the story of the life of my grandparents which is interwoven with paternal and community history. As I reread the story, the lack of culture necessary for writing a thesis of this kind is clearly evident to me and it is written in much simplicity as only an amateur knows. This handicap has constituted an obstacle in my effort to express my thoughts fluently and in appropriate phraseology, such as a reader might expect.

When I set upon writing this book, little did I realize the time and effort it would involve to make it as interesting and authentic as possible. The planning, outlining, organizing, research, correspondence, compiling data, manuscript work and other associated acts, required much of my spare time during the past two years. By co-incidence, and to my satisfaction and desire this volume has been completed on the one hundredth anniversary of the arrival of grandfather to America in 1856.

It is my hope that readers will find this book interesting and informative. It will compensate to a large degree, for the time and effort expended in writing it. I found it interesting work as well as educational.

To those of us who are their descendants, it is good to recall to our mind the struggle and hardships endured by our grandparents, the fruits of which we are their direct beneficiaries in the way of a more abundant life than they ever knew. Although, like the rank and file of other early settlers, our grandparents did not have any formal education, they had other basic qualities which helped to lay the foundation to make America great. The early settlers who braved the dangers of frontier life, felled the trees, broke the land, built homes, schools and churches, played an integral part in the development of the community and nation, although they did not realize it. It is for us to preserve for posterity the heritage which is ours to enjoy.

Cep, Bohemia
Joseph Tlachac, wed ?

*

*

Bartholomej Tlachac (Tlachatsch) wed Theresa Cadka, daughter of
(Bartholomew) b.1792, d. 1867 Procop Cadka. She died 1837.
(also known as Bartol, or Lopatarz for
his shovel making, became blind in 1847.)

children

*	*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*	*
son, Joseph b.1819 died 1837, drafted into German army, killed in battle	son, Jacob unmarried served in army died in early twenties	son, Mathias b.1829 Cep (to Chicago, 1856, later Cooperstown, to Rosiere, 1864) d. 1924 wed Maryann Hadac, Cep. b.1832, d.1911 emigrated America, 1859. parents, Jacob Hadac; Anna Vanecek Hadac; grandparents, Joseph Vanecek; Marianna Ramus	son, Martin, also known as Jan, (John) b.1840 emigrated to Chicago, 1867, (lived on Mathias Tlachac farm in Rosiere, 1868-1869) d. 1892 wed Katherine Korbell, b. 1842, Cep, d.1917, Chicago	daughter, Anna b.1844 d.1914 went to Chicago, 1877, married a widower, Jacob Bumba, who had 3 sons: Pat, Mike, Frank and 1 daughter, Mary. Anna is buried in the Konicek lot-- her daughter's married name--St. Adalbert Cemetery Niles, Ill. unmarked grave.
		*	*	*
		(children)	(children)	
		<u>Mathias</u> , b.1855 Cep, Bohemia	* <u>Josef</u> , (Joseph) b.1868 d.1889	
		<u>Kristina</u> , b.1861 Cooperstown, WI	* <u>John</u> b.1869, d.1922 wed Antonia Vavra, d.1951	
		<u>Frank</u> , b.1863 Cooperstown, WI	children:	
		<u>Magdalene</u> , b.1865 Rosiere, WI	<u>Frankie</u> (wed Mary)	
		<u>John</u> , b.1868 Rosiere, WI	<u>Sylvia</u> (wed Otto Ottish, both deceased)	
		<u>Stephan</u> b.1871 Rosiere, WI	<u>Lillian</u> (wed Frank Kovarik)	
			<u>Rose</u> : (wed Geo. Pinta)	
			* <u>Marie</u> b.1879 d.1898 wed Frank Vavra daughter Bozenka (Bessie) b.1898 d.1902	
			* <u>Edward</u> b.1877 d.1951	

NOTE: All dates substantiated
by certificates, census data,
or Chicago directory data.
S.M.Audri

NOTE: All of Martin (Jan)'s family

NOTE: Martin's widow, Katherine, married her
daughter Maria's widowed husband, Frank Vavra.