



Slovak Americans and Their Communities of Cleveland

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Cleveland Ethnic Heritage Studies, Cleveland State University

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Preface

If one had to choose a representative American ethnic group, high on the list would probably be Slovak Americans for a number of reasons, which we usually attribute to ethnic communities.

There are probably less than two percent of Americans of Slovak extraction and most of them settled here during the peak of the immigration period between 1880 and 1920. They came because of economic problems encountered at home but also because of political oppression and religious beliefs. They came to America practically penniless, and had to struggle for their own survival by starting at the bottom of the economic scale, experiencing all forms of injustices and discrimination. They labored in coal mines and steel mills in railroad yards and farms. They achieved a degree of security by establishing their own neighborhoods, parishes, schools and newspapers. Today, they are very much part of the American society and can be proud of their contributions to the growth and development of this nation.

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MICHAEL NOVAK

The series of essays which are part of this monograph were authored by three distinguished Slovak Americans.

Sister Martina Tybor SS.C.M. is one of the most prolific Slovak American writers. Translator, educator and scholar, she is deeply committed to the preservation of the Slovak heritage in America.

Dr. Mark Stolarik, a dynamic young scholar, is presently the Executive Director of the Balch Institute in Philadelphia. While in Cleveland as a C.S.U. professor and ethnic historian, he developed a great sensitivity for the Slovak community, which is clearly demonstrated by his objective and comprehensive analysis.

Miss Susie Megles, a Cleveland educator and ethnic researcher, complemented this work with details and thoughts which are so important for a study prepared for our educational institutions. To all of them, my heart felt thanks.

My sincere thank you also to the great Slovak American, Michael Novak, for the excellent introduction. He is always willing to support and contribute to scholarly ethnic research.

I owe a debt of gratitude also to Dr. Karl Stremen for organizing the basic research teams and for reviewing the manuscript.

Last but not least, my appreciation goes to the typists, Judy Slovenec, Shirley Lawson and Grace Sechnick for bringing this work to its successful completion.

Dr. Karl Bonutti
Editor, Monograph Series
Ethnic Heritage Studies
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Introduction

The two million or so Slovaks now in the United States represent barely one percent of the nation's population. Their story in America is an especially illuminating one for scholarly inspection, for the Slovak experience is like a crystal prism that casts light in many directions, at many angles. Slovakia is a wine-drinking land, with many connections to Mediterranean peoples. Both through the Czechs and directly, it has many connections with Germanic peoples; for generations, the Slovak city Bratislava was a symbolic center of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the city of coronations. By language, the Slovaks are kin to the Poles to the north, the Russians to the East, and the Yugoslavs to the South, and the Slovak tongue is thought to be closer than any other to the matrix of Slavic languages.

As long ago as most blacks in America were slaves, most Slovaks were serfs in Europe. They lived, in addition, under the rule of foreigners different from them in race and language. They possessed few inviolable civil rights. Until the twentieth-century, the social structure of Slovakia was not far removed

from the feudal period. While traditions of literacy and learning were honored, many peasants were refused education beyond the fourth or fifth year — or, in any case, could not attain it. Most were rural peoples, skilled with tools and implements of certain sorts and carriers of the crafts and arts of Central Europe. Climate and poverty had toughened them. Life at the crossroads of Europe — enduring invasions from the hordes of Attila, the advances of the Turks in medieval times, and the armored corps of Hitler's Germany and the Soviets today — brought them contact with multiple diverse civilizations. The castles on the hills of Slovakia reflect many technical secrets and artistic flourishes learned from many cultures. In the 1880's hunger and serious demographic changes forced nearly half the population of the eastern countries of Slovakia to emigrate elsewhere for survival. From the countries of Spiš and Velký Šariš, in particular, scores of thousands fled to western Pennsylvania and eastern Ohio.

Unlike Jewish, Greek, or Rumanian immigrants, the Slovaks did not in great numbers look to higher education and the professions for their major roads of advancement in America. Relatively few went into business for themselves. Most tried to establish themselves in solid, secure jobs, struggling first of all to own their own homes. Home first, other things second, seems to have been the economic strategy of most. Professors Josef Barton and Mark Stolarik have written excellent histories of the Slovak migration to Cleveland; the former's has been published by the Harvard University Press under the title *Peasants and Strangers*, and the latter's is available from the University of Minnesota as a Ph.D. thesis.

Among chroniclers of the Slovak experience in America, readers may wish to seek out the following. Thomas Bell's novel about the Slovaks in Braddock, Pennsylvania, *Out of this Furnace*, has recently been published by the University of Pittsburgh press in paperback. Andrew Cincura has done herculean work in assembling *An Anthology of Slovak Literature*, including works both from Slovakia and from America. Sonya Jason has written a novel about the experience of Slovak women in America, *Concomitant Soldiers* (available from the author in paperback at: 21165 Escondido Street, Woodland Hills, California, 91364). Paul Wilkes has recently won several prizes for his television documentary about six American families, and is now writing a history of Slovak families in America. My own books, *The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics* (Macmillan), *Growing Up Slavic in America* and *Further Reflections on Ethnicity* (available through the Jednota Press, Middletown, Pennsylvania, 17057) have tried to shed light on the immigrant experience. In 1978, Basic Books will publish my account of the Lattimer Mines massacre of 1897, in which some fifty Slavic workers, including many Slovaks, were shot down in cold blood. Many other books and pamphlets are available through the Jednota press.

In 1977, an Association of Slovak Scholars was established through the vision and energy of the young Canadian-Slovak scholar Mark Stolarik. The annual review *Slovakia* (Middletown, Pa., 17057) represents a forum for such scholarship, as for poets and story tellers. The Tamburitzans at Duquesne University have vast holdings in Slovak folk songs, among the thousands of the world's folk songs collected in their archives, the best in the nation. The Immigration History

Research Center at the University of Minnesota (826 Berry Street, St. Paul, Minnesota, 55114) has a motherlode of information on Slovaks in America for future exploration by scholars.

We do not know nearly as much as we should about the history of the Slovak people, whether in Slovakia or in diaspora around the world. Much work remains to be done by artists and scholars.

The purpose behind such activities should be the one value which Alexander Solzhenitsyn, the great Russian writer of our age, calls the most powerful force in the world: truth. The motive is not “pride.” The motive is truth. Human beings are fallible and wounded creatures, and so in studying history one finds not only matters of pride but also matters of shame. It is not, for example altogether happy to discover that the brief independence of the Slovak state, during the period of World War II, was won only by alliance with Hitler and the Axis Powers. In no other way could the autonomy of Slovakia been secured and, until 1944, Hitler’s armies were kept outside Slovakia. Still, the brief life of the nation was deeply shadowed by the ominous nearby presence of Hitler’s evil purpose.

The motive of the new ethnicity is truth, not pride. Yet one reason why “pride” is so much spoken of is that so many have in fact been made to feel ashamed for being what they are. Many have been looked down upon, and could not help noticing it, feeling it, internalizing it. The experience of a secret shame has been one of the most common of American experiences. To be taught how to become “American” was to be made to feel embarrassed about what was “not American” in one’s name,

face, manner, style, behavior. The temptation, then, to turn to “pride” as the antidote to long-experienced shame is great. This temptation should be resisted.

Clearer knowledge about our own roots should make us more generous, larger of mind and heart, more fully and openly sympathetic to others different from ourselves. Many such differences characterize America. The most effective and profound way of unifying all of us as one great people is for each person and each group to gain more truthful and more sympathetic knowledge: both about self and about others. Knowledge alone, of course, does not save us. But knowledge can help us to break down prejudices and to go beyond simplistic assumptions; it can help us better to understand deep and hidden aspirations, longings, and fears that have grown out of hundreds of years of history. Each of us carries a thousand years of history in our behavior. It is better for that history to be appropriated consciously than for it to be repressed.

So much remains to be done. It is to be hoped that this brief history will stimulate a new generation of poets, dramatists, writers, moviemakers, historians, and scholars of every sort to prepare better histories and greater works in the future. Immigration is a voyage that lasts for many generations. Some day soon, a generation will come along that will link hands again with the culture left behind, and in a kind of circle complete the fragmentary journey so far, and so painfully, traversed.

Michael Novak





A boy in national costume from
DOBRÁ NIVA – Slovakia. From:
*SLOVENSKO vo fotografii Karola
Plicku.*

Part I: Old World Origins

Historical Background

Although this monograph deals largely with the Slovaks who settled in America, it is altogether appropriate to explore the socioeconomic and political milieu of their homeland for the sake of acquiring both insight into their character and understanding of their motives for emigrating.

Who Are the Slavs?

The Slovaks belong to a wider group of people known collectively as the Slavs. To this group belong also Russians, Poles, Ruthenians, Czechs, Croats, Serbs, Slovenes, Ukrainians, Bulgars, and Macedonians. These people live in Eastern and Central Europe as well as Siberia, and are considered more a language group than a race. This becomes more evident when one notices the differences in their appearance. Some are light-skinned while others are dark; some are blonds and others have brown hair.

Mistaken Identity

Strange as it may seem, when a Slovak came to America, he could not say that his native land was Slovakia. While an Englishman could say that he came from England, an Italian from Italy, a Pole from Poland, and so on, a Slovak who arrived in America between 1867 and 1918 had to say that he came from Austria-Hungary. He could register his language as Slovak, but his country was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire that had absorbed many nationalities. Because of this enforced affiliation, they were often erroneously referred to by the slang term “hunkies” which is derived from the word Hungarian, and, of course, they were not Hungarian. This also complicated matters for the United States census takers, who did not distinguish between ethnicity, and an ethnic group and a political entity. As a result, we will never know for certain how many Slovaks were mistakenly tabulated as either Austrian or Hungarian or both! (Unfortunately, this confusion was to continue when the Czechs and Slovaks formed a free and independent state which was called Czechoslovakia. Now, if the Slovak said he was from Czechoslovakia, he was considered a Czech or a Czechoslovak and he was neither).



SLOVAKIA AMONG EUROPEAN NATIONS IN 1970

Language

Since Slovak names will be used from time to time, it is perhaps reassuring to note that since the Slovak language is quite phonetic, its pronunciation is not difficult. Also, as a point of interest, Slavic philologists consider the Slovak language a key to Slavic languages: Russian, White Russian, Ukrainian, Czech, Polish, Slovak, Slovenian, Serbian, Croatian, and Bulgarian. Slovak contains the greatest number of forms common to all.

Geography

Today, the ancient homeland of the Slovaks bears an established

identity of its own. It is called Slovakia or Slovensko (SLO-ven-sko) in the Slovak language. Slovakia, only a remnant of what it once was, is a relatively small-sized European country with an area of 18,922 square miles and a population a little short of five million people on their native territory. For various valid reasons, there are other millions of Slovaks who, even today, are not in their homeland. Some historians estimate that there may even be more persons of Slovak origin outside Slovakia than there are in it.

Slovakia is in east central Europe where the cradling slopes of the towering Tatry or Carpathian mountains form its northern boundary. The legendary Danube and the Tisa, its tributary, wash much of the Slovak southern border. Poland, the USSR, Hungary, Austria and Moravia (part of Czechoslovakia), are its closest neighbors, each one touching part of the border of Slovakia. In 1918 Slovakia, Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, and Carpathian Russia were joined into a federated republic called Czechoslovakia, but this did not occur until after the Slovak people bore with great patience and never failing trust in God, *one thousand years* of dominance by foreign elements.

Stone Age Beginnings

The Slovak people have a history as ancient as early Danubian civilization. Archaeological findings show that by 5000 B.C., Slovakia was an inhabited land. There are also indications revealing that in the oldest stone age (30,000 B.C.), the Nitra region was a cradle of a nascent civilization. These claims are not surprising, for Slovakia is located in the very heartland of

Europe. Its geographic position as well as its physical features favored the development of routes taken by nomadic tribes as well as by migrating peoples. Quite naturally then, this region came to serve as a crossroads for the heavy traffic of commerce, for the deployment of military forces, and for the quickening of cultural exchange. By the same token, it also attracted early settlers.

Yet these very assets sometimes proved to be liabilities as well, and the history of Slovakia records a succession of threats to its very existence and survival. At the same time, it also testifies to the surprising resiliency of the Slovak people with their native capacity and their seasoned schooling to endure, to achieve, and to hope even in the face of hopelessness. Periods of historic achievement stand out in vivid contrast to years of bitter oppression and subjugation in Slovak history.



SLOVAKIA — PART OF GREAT MORAVIAN EMPIRE IN 9th CENTURY. Source: ABC SLOVAK LANGUAGE.



SLOVAKIA AS PART OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA In the
years 1919-1938



PRESENT DAY SLOVAKIA

First Slovak State, Seventh Century

After long years under tribal government, the Slavic groups of Europe were effectively united by Samo (623-659 A.D.) who established the first Slavic state in the Morava-Danubian basin. Loose though it may have been, this state is historically significant. Within its structure and by a judicious government,

Samo achieved a notable series of victories over the Avars and various intrusive Frankish forces, and extended his kingdom to embrace regions on both sides of the Danube. Under his influence and leadership, the “Slovieni” developed an unmistakable sense of identity and enjoyed a remarkable degree of prosperity. Perhaps, because of this and the Golden Age that was close at hand, the “Slovieni” were able to keep alive the memory of these satisfying periods in the minds and hearts of each succeeding generation as they faced the long years of reverses that were to come, one after the other.

Foreshadowing of Christianity

Some Christian contacts came to this region with early Roman incursions into Danubian lands. This theory is supported by the presence of an inscription carved into a bluff at Trenčín which had been the site of the Roman camp known as Laugaricio. The inscription reads: “In memory of the victory of the Emperor’s army with its 855 soldiers of the II. Legion encamped at Laugaricio. Made by Constantine, Commander of the II. Auxiliary Legion.”

It is relevant to note that Laugaricio’s Legio Fulminans was a Roman contingent that pitched camp in the Trenčín area A.D. 178, and the inscription indirectly celebrates Christian faith and a response to trusting prayer. Because of a long drought, this Roman camp was practically doomed to defeat and extinction until a miraculous answer to the prayer of Christian soldiers in the ranks brought revitalizing rains that saved the parched soldiers and enabled them to recoup strength, fight valiantly, and

score a victory in that region. This event is also memorialized on the Triumphal Arch of Marcus Aurelius in Rome.

The Golden Age – SS. Cyril and Methodius

Politically and culturally, the period of the Kingdom of Great Moravia (833-907) was a Golden Age in the history of the Slovak people. By 874 King Svatopluk had consolidated the greatest Slav state of historic times. But, more importantly, in 863 the Greek brothers SS. Cyril and Methodius came to the Slovaks as Christian missionaries at the request of Prince Rastislav. Earlier, Irish monks had engaged in some missionary activity in this area, but their work was not wholly successful. The people did not resist Christianity. On the contrary, they were very much interested and wished to follow the Christian way of life, but it was difficult for them to understand the missionaries who were preaching in a foreign language.

Therefore, the ultimate success of this Christianizing process must be attributed to the apostolic zeal, the sensitive understanding and the scholarly talents of the Greek brothers Cyril and Methodius. The two priests were sent by Emperor Michael III of Constantinople in answer to Prince Rastislav's appeal for Christian missionaries who could instruct his people in their own language. The hope was also expressed, that after their conversion, the teaching of Christ might spread to neighboring peoples.

The saintly brothers devised a special alphabet for the Slavs known as Cyrillic or Glogolic alphabet. Then, they translated

Holy Scripture and liturgical books into “Slavonic,” a language that was adopted for liturgical functions until the eleventh century when it was to be lost to the vast majority of Slovaks who were to have the Latin culture imposed upon them. (The Slavonic language was retained by Byzantine Christians, and used in the United States as late as 1950 when it was largely replaced by English because by then the new generations of Americans no longer understood the language.)

Cyril and Methodius not only converted the Slovaks to Christianity, but the brothers also helped to lay the foundation of Slovak culture. They established schools, and with the aid of students and disciples whom they had trained, they laid a solid foundation for a civilization that was to survive even the downfall of Great Moravia.

St. Methodius died in 885 at the time when Slovakia was about to succumb to Hungarian rule. The greatest Slav state of historic times had become vulnerable because of its geographic position. Exposed to the contending forces that kept clashing in a mighty power struggle between the nations of the East and the West, it sustained a long series of changing fortunes. After the battle of Bratislava in 907, Slovakia was no longer an independent state, but rather part of a shifting battleground in the fiercely contested struggle between the Magyars (Hungarians) and the Germans. Finally, in the 11th century, Slovakia was reduced to a vassal principality in the kingdom of Hungary. The Byzantine influence would be lost to the majority of the Slovaks. However, the Christianizing efforts of Cyril and Methodius were not forgotten

by the Slovak people. To this day SS. Cyril and Methodius are
venerated as the Apostles of all Slavs.



ST. CYRIL & ST. METHOD preaching to Slovak
nations.



PRINCE PRIBINA BAPTIZED

Slovakia During Medieval Period

Devastation Looms

During the 13th century, Slovak lands suffered the ravages of the Tatar invasions. Their hordes devastated all the resources of the land, destroyed churches, and slaughtered the Slovak population, especially the young and the aged. The able-bodied were carried away as prisoners. Those who could escape, hid in the mountains and caves. After the Tatars had their fill of cruelties in these lands, they left. The Slovak survivors came out of their hiding places hardly able to identify the villages and towns in which they had lived before this terrible ordeal. Only the ruins marked the sites of their communities.

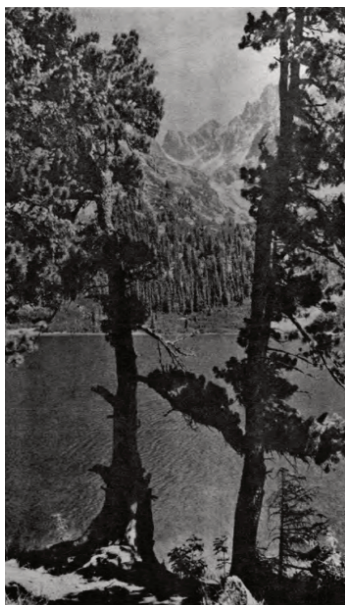
Feudal Times

Were this not enough, after the warlike Tatars abandoned these desolated regions, foreign barons further exploited and oppressed the Slovak lands. In time, however, the Kingdom of Hungary was itself torn by internal disorder and numerous

political upheavals. Frequent wars tipped the scales among the various contending forces — Hungarian, Czech, Austrian, German. The local and foreign nobility snatched at every opportunity to claim increasing power appropriating control of various Slovak districts.

An Enterprising Slovak, Matthew Čák

One such noble was Matthew Čák (Chak) of Trenčín (Trenchin). He had attained such power to earn the surname “Lord of the Váh and the Tatras.” He capitalized on every opportunity to strengthen his position by arrogating lands and estates to his ancestral holdings and by compelling other nobles to acknowledge and accede to his sovereignty. The peak of his power was reached with the capture of Trenčín Castle in 1299. In this fortress he established a court with all the appointments and retinue of a functioning sovereign. By 1301 Matthew Čák established an independent state of Upper Hungary controlling an expansive territory that reached from the Morava River to Spiš (Spish) and from the Danube to the Tatra mountain range.



Poprad Lake with old stone-pine
trees in the High Tatra
mountains



DEVIN CASTLE From:
SLOVENSKO vo fotograffi

Therefore, Matthew Čák seems to exemplify the innate aspirations and capacity of the Slovak people for self-rule in a successfully operational political state. As a ruler he personified a kind of Slovak national ideal at the time when the notion of nationalism had not yet crystallized as such. He had the inborn gift of discerning favorable historic circumstances and the leadership charisma to act in situations that might have deterred a lesser man, even though he may have been motivated by personal aggrandizement.

As “Lord of the Váh and the Tatras,” Matthew Čák ceremoniously held court at Trenčín Castle in the best of ruling

practice and tradition. Here he presided and received visits of state of numerous vasals exercising all the prerogatives of an absolute ruler. He maintained an independent army, negotiated matters of diplomacy and foreign exchange with neighboring nobles and established a mint in Nitra to coin money for his realm. (See pg. 34)

His power lasted for 20 years and the splendor of his court and the magic of his name became proverbial among the Slovaks.



Orava Castle and Village built between 13th to 18th Century



Charles Robert, the Italian contender to the Hungarian throne, displayed a mixed attitude toward Matthew Čák and his undeniable power. At first he was inclined to resist him, then he decided to honor him with distinctions and finally he withdrew his proffered promises of recognition. A series of struggles followed and in the course of years a number of nearby lords were overcome by Charles Robert. Because of tremendous odds of manpower that were pitted against him, Matthew Čák himself suffered some setbacks and lost some of his territory. Trenčín Castle, however, remained his stronghold and he continued to rule over a diminished region until the end of his life in 1321.

Charles Robert of Anjou

After the death of Matthew Čák, Charles Robert of Anjou, the new Hungarian ruler (1308-1342), extended his dominion over Slovakia absorbing it into the kingdom of Hungary. This period however, is characterized by a degree of economic development in the Slovak lands. Charles Robert found that the strategic

location of Slovakia made it a favorable site for diplomatic events. In the city of Trnava he concluded an alliance with King John of Bohemia (1327); in Trenčín he held a friendship parley with John's representatives and with Casimir the Great of Poland (1335). In Košice and Zvolen he hosted Polish-Hungarian meetings of historic importance (1382).

Sixteenth to the Seventeenth Centuries

Hussite wars (1421-1434) that originated in the Czech lands repeated the catastrophic devastation of the earlier Tatar invasion in a series of horrible predatory penetrations into Slovakia.

During the following centuries the Turkish power humbled Hungary and Buda (the capital of Hungary) became the center of Turkish domination. While the Magyar portion of Hungary fell under Turkish rule, Slovakia remained under Austro-Hungarian empire. Bratislava in Slovakia became the vital center of political and cultural activity. The Hungarians brought to it their key government offices, made it their coronation city and convened sessions of the Parliament either in Bratislava or in Trnava.

Catholicism Threatened

After Esztergom was seized by the Turks in 1543, even the archiepiscopal and Catholic center of Hungary was transferred to Trnava in Slovakia. For the next three hundred years, Trnava continued to be the center for all significant functions of church

and state. When religious upheavals occurred in the 16th century, and the Lutheran and Hussite movements produced a national crisis, church synods (meetings of bishops) were convoked in Trnava by Archbishop Nicholas Oláh, primate of Hungary. Under his leadership an effective trend was launched to bring about fruitful peace and general understanding among the two nationalities.

Cardinal Pázmány

In the Catholic Reformation movement among the Slovaks, the most efficient antidote to Protestantism was the reorganization of the school system and the influence of humanism. Archbishop Oláh was instrumental in having the Jesuit Fathers come to Slovakia in 1561 and in having them conduct a college in Trnava. Their presence in Slovakia also marked the development of a broader scope of missionary activity in a number of Slovak cities. However, a disastrous fire destroyed the college in 1567, and shortly after that, the Jesuits left for other missionary fields. From the time of this departure they did not return until Archbishop Peter Pázmány (1616-1637), who later became a cardinal, gave new impetus and more enduring success to the Catholic revival in Slovakia. Endowed with a brilliant mind and committed to spiritual values, Cardinal Pázmány impressed not only the common man, but the

nobles and the learned as well. Under his inspired leadership, many Slovak nobles were moved to return to the Catholic faith and many expropriated church properties were restored.

Another notable achievement of Cardinal Pázmány was his comprehensive program of youth education based on solid philosophical, theological, and humanistic principles. The Jesuits were invited to organize and conduct a seminary in Trnava. At the University of Vienna a special college “the Pazmaneum” was established for gifted clerical candidates from Hungary. Special boarding schools and high schools were provided and a native university was founded in Trnava (1635). This center of higher learning had a more successful history than did the earlier university, and it offered a much richer curriculum as well, greatly promoting the cause of religion and culture.

Trnava University was later able to expand these activities through its own university press which was very active in publishing scholarly works in all the languages that were used by the multilingual population of Hungary.

Piarist and Franciscan priests also engaged in educational endeavors of many kinds under the sponsorship of Cardinal Pázmány. and a great surge of religious and cultural vitality appeared throughout the land. These trends waxed strong as long as peaceful conditions prevailed but political problems, originating outside the country, especially those caused by the Turkish menace, blighted this promising resurgence in spiritual and intellectual activity.

No Respite from War

Slovak territory repeatedly became a harrassed battleground that was devastated by the invading Turks as well as by plundering defending armies at least until the Turks were finally driven out of the country in 1718. Later, Slovak lands were again the scene of fierce battles during the Thirty Years War and they were subjected to all the ruthless ravages of a battleground. In repeated warring engagements, Slovakia suffered the fate of a pawn of battle as it passed from the keeping of one aggressive army to another, the shifting fortunes of war favoring now one side, now the other. The people suffered indescribably, and it is surprising that in these vicissitudes of the times, they did not lose their national identity.

Juro Jánošík

Under the Habsburg system which followed the Turkish domination, the peasantry had no brighter prospects. As their sufferings mounted, some of the hardier and more venturesome subjects dared to lash out against their hopeless lot. Groups banded together as brigands, hiding on the mountainsides. From time to time they unexpectedly swooped down out of their seclusion to raid the strongholds of the well-to-do and to intercept the coaches of barons traveling on the highways and despoil them of attractive goods. They had committed themselves to the policy of “robbing the rich to help the poor.” These mountain boys became legendary heroes celebrated in folk tales, ballads and songs. Juro (George) Jánošík (1688-1733), the best known of them was hailed among the

oppressed as the champion of social justice and defender of the rights of the common man.

Slovak Revival, Language and Literature

Nationalism

Quite early in the 17th century expressions of national consciousness began to rock nationality relationships in Hungary. This wave of newborn ethnicity was prompted by the Magyar assertion of nationalism as well as by influences from the French Revolution that unmistakably made themselves felt throughout Europe. Since it had been an age-old practice for Slovak families of means, and many of the middle class too, to send their sons to German schools for advanced education, a considerable number of Slovaks came in close touch with the burgeoning German national life. These students, in turn, became the natural bearers of progressive ideas and ideals into their native land.

Ján Hollý

Shaped by such influences, new patriots emerged. Among them are individuals who proclaimed allegiance to their homeland like Alexander Rudnay, Cardinal and Primate of Hungary, who asserted: "I am a Slovak, and though I am installed in Peter's Chair, I will remain a Slovak." There was also the immortal Slovak priest-poet of the classical school, Ján Hollý, who created *Svätopluk*, an epic in twelve cantos which glories in the heroic aspects of a historic Slovak ruler of a bygone age. Holly also wrote *Cyrillo-Methodiod*, another magnificent work which served to revive a glowing memory of earlier times. These and similar works recalled Slovak ancestors whose example could again enkindle national pride and genuine patriotism as they renewed the hope that a glory which had once declined might yet be revived and perpetuated.

Jan Kollár and P.J. Šafárik

Jan Kollár and P.J. Šafárik likewise became outstanding promoters of the patriotic revival and of Slovak nationalism. Šafárik is often remembered as the founder of scientific Slav studies and his most notable contribution is embodied in the scholarly work *Slavic Antiquities*. Kollár became famed as the Slavist who synthesized the concept of Slav unity and advocated cultural and literary reciprocity with wholesome respect for each Slav nation's political and cultural independence. Simply expressed, Kollár advocated a cultural advancement rather than military conquest as a means to Slavic emancipation. He took pains to examine the fate of all Slavs reduced to subjection

and to propagate a humanistic and spiritual bond among the Slav peoples regarded as brothers in the family of man. He supported his theories by references to ancient beliefs and to the works of many earlier Slav writers of Polish, Russian, and Czech background. He appealed to Christian teaching and the tactic of peaceful effort. His eloquence, his logic, and his powers of persuasiveness won many adherents to the cause of “brotherhood among the Slavs.”

Kollár’s outstanding creative work is *Slávy dcéra* (The Daughter of Sláva), a unique poem of over six hundred sonnets wreathed into an artistic cycle. It can be regarded as one distinct contribution in the cultural field with which Kollár gave incontrovertible substance to his ideas.

These pan-Slavic nationalistic theories found expression in a gathering of 350 leaders at a Slav Congress that convened at that time in Prague. Ironically, Kollár himself was not permitted to attend but at the Congress his colleague P.J. Šafárik greatly inspired those who attended the sessions. The Germans who aspired to a unification with Austria-Hungary were irritated by the Congress. At first they ridiculed the Congress proceedings and later even used military force to quell such pan-Slavic tendencies. Yet, all this in no way countered the spirit of the Slavs who continued to repudiate assimilation by the Germans and the Magyars, resisting force with force.

Philological Reforms

A most important factor in the development of national

awareness was the movement of Slovak intellectuals to popularize the native language as a pre-condition for preserving a strong national identity. This conviction slowly gained increased acceptance and permeated many walks of life.

Anton Bernolák

The earliest language program with positive results in this new period was initiated through the historic philological reforms of Anton Bernolák. He codified a standard form of literary expression that would tend to unify the Slovaks who spoke in a great variety of dialects. In 1787 Bernolák published his scholarly work *Philologico-Critical Dissertation on the Slovak Language*. He further formulated the first rules of Slovak orthography, published a Slovak grammar in Latin, and compiled his monumental work, a six-volume pentalingual Slovak dictionary with word equivalents for Slovak terms in Czech, Latin, German, and Magyar.

The movement to establish a standard language norm for the nation furthered national unification. The literary renaissance that followed enriched Slovak literature through the works of Joseph Ignatius Bajza (1755-1836); the contributions of the leading literary stylist George Fandly (1754-1811); Canon George Palkovič (1763-1835) who produced a translation of the entire Bible and other books into revised Slovak; Martin Hamuljak (1789-1859), and John Hollý (1759-1849) to whom reference was made earlier

Ludovít Štúr

The language reform which was begun by Bernolák was further advanced by Ludovít Štúr (1815-1856). In 1844 he introduced sweeping revisions of standard Slovak idioms by updating Bernolák's earlier effort. Introducing practical changes, Štúr emphasized the dialects of Central Slovakia as opposed to the Western dialect used by Bernolák. Štúr's reforms met with an enthusiasm which was, in effect, a reflection of his own spirit. His ardor and leadership inspired many young students and eventually provided the nation with some of its finest leaders.

Štúr and his co-workers turned their attention and their talents to journalism and here happily discovered an even more effective means of disseminating their ideas. Štúr's closest associates were the Lutheran ministers Miloslav Hodža and Joseph Hurban.

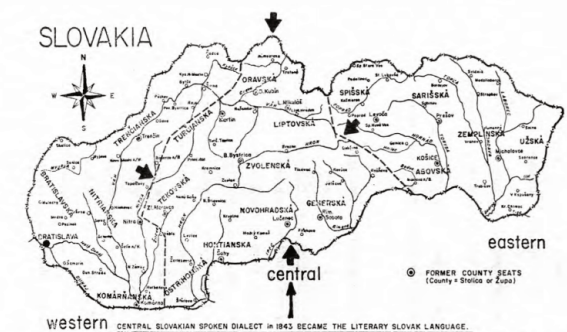
The first published book incorporating Štúr's linguistic norms was titled *Nitra*. It appeared in 1844 and was hailed for using Slovak native expressions. On the other hand, it was also denounced (especially by Kollár and his coterie) for departing from forms of Czech expression because this departure was viewed as action and practice that would lead to greater fragmentation and disunity. Štúr weathered all criticism and he gradually gained general support for his reforms. A surprising number of magazines appeared and a new generation of Slovak poets and authors arose, putting Štúr's reforms to practical use.

Literary Achievement

The literary “school of Štúr” included poets like Samo Chalupka (1812-1833) whose muse took him to events and castles of earlier times; John Botto (1829-1881) famed especially for *The Death of Jánošík*; Janko Král’ (1822-1876), a lyric poet who was personally fond of shepherds and their lore and a patriot whose poetry does not remain on the printed page but burns into his very life.

The most renowned poet among the Štúrists, however, was Andrej Braxator (1820-1872) generally known by his pen name Sládkovič, who produced the tender and artistic romantic works *Marina* and *Detvan*. His poetry delineates Slovak characteristics with a great sense of authenticity and assurance. *Detvan* (*The Mountaneer from Detva*) is considered the ultimate work of Sládkovič and one of the finest examples of Slovak poetic genius. The lyrics of Sládkovič express deep tenderness and sensitivity with bursts of dazzling fire especially when the lines are suffused with patriotic feeling.

Historical tales and novels also had their share of attention among the writers of this time. Perhaps the best known among them are the works of John Kalinčák (1822-1871) who wrote against a background of Great Moravia, the age of Matthew Čák, the era of King Matthias, the Turkish invasion and closely related periods. He drew many of his themes from narratives told by his grandmother as she reminisced about the great landholders and families of the gentry as she had known them. His crowning work is *Reštaurácia* (*The Election*).



CHARACTERISTIC OF SLOVAK DIALECTS. Source:
ABC SLOVAK LANGUAGE.

There are literally too many writers to discuss here but at least passing notice must be taken of Pavel Dobšinský (1828-1885) who became a diligent collector of Slovak folk tales and folklore. František Sasínek (1830-1912) ranks as an able historian who researched the role of Slovakia in Hungary's history.

Outstanding Slovak Writers

Among outstanding writers of a later period we must give at least passing mention to these:

Svetozár Hurban Vajanský (1847-1916) a gifted novelist, poet and essayist who concerned himself with many topics, not excluding politics.

Pavol Országh Hviezdoslav (1849-1921) who achieved renown for his volumes of dramatic, lyric and epic poetry. His most highly acclaimed work is *Hájnikova žena* (*The Gamekeeper's Wife*) which is characterized by its melodious celebration of the glories of nature and is hailed for its theme of the moral strength of the Slovak people. In other works, like *Gábor Vlkolinský*, Hviezdoslav deals effectively with the life and spirit of lower nobility. This poet's talent was equal to the handling of Biblical themes like *Agar*, *Cain* and *Solomon's Dream*; he also had the touch to master elements of humor as he did in *Bútora* and *Čútora* with its theme that realistically includes a quarrel among peasants; he had the artistic capacity for sensitive lyrical expression comparable to that of Wordsworth in his nature poetry, and he was a successful translator of authors like Goethe, Pushkin, Shakespeare, Petöfi and Mickiewicz.

Vajanský, Hviezdoslav, and Kukučín are a trio of quality writers. Martin Kukučín (the pseudonym of Matej Bencur, 1860-1928) was a medical doctor who found that voluntary exile in South America was kinder to him than were living conditions at home. He excelled in prose, especially as a novelist with excellent character delineation and uncommon skill in plot development.

Societal Beginnings

Literary societies likewise grew apace with this intellectual renaissance. Bernolák, the lexicographer and codifier of the Slovak language, for example, was one of the founders of the

Slovak Learned Society (Slovenské učené tovarišstvo), established in 1792 in Trnava to give direction and added substance to revitalized Slovak cultural life. This parent society had branches in Nitra, Rovné, Banská Bystrica, Solivar, Rožňava, and Košice. In 1801 the *Society of Slovak Literature* (Spolok literatúry slovenskej) was founded in Bratislava to promote publishing programs. *The Malohont Learned Association* (Učená spoločnosť malohontská) was founded in 1808 and the *Banská Literary Association* was organized in Banská Štiavnica in 1810. In 1834 Martin Hamuljak founded the *Society of Devotees of the Slovak Language and Literature*. It was a successor to Bernolák's Slovak Learned Society.

Preeminent among Slovak learned societies, however, were the *Matica slovenská* and *The Society of St. Adalbert* (Spolok sv. Vojtecha).

Matica slovenská was a national foundation established through the organizational genius of Bishop Stephen Moyses in Turčiansky sv. Maetia in 1863, the memorable year that marked the millenium of the coming of SS. Cyril and Methodius to Great Moravia, to Slovakia. Its very title *Matica* suggests a relationship of filial devotion on the one hand, and maternal nurturing on the other, for the existence of this cultural institute was to stimulate, to propagate and to enlarge the spirit by providing cultural sustenance, the essential life of the nation. It is a scholarly center that had been the hope of Slovak leadership for a long time. Its active program of research and publication, especially in the sense of corporate effort, was stated in the

original bylaws: “to foster and support Slovak literature and the fine arts.”

The expanded program of the *Matica slovenská* includes the promotion of all kinds of artistic creativity, the organization of drives and fundraising campaigns for cultural projects, the founding and development of a central library, and scholarship aid for deserving scholars and artists. Nor did the *Matica* overlook the needs of the common man, for among the publications which it sponsored are handbooks, monographs and specialized studies for those who were engaged in occupations like fruit-growing, bee-keeping and similar interests.

The prime service of the *Matica slovenská*, however, was its consistent and effective support of the standardized literary medium which found its way into every village and became rooted among a people whose speech was greatly variegated by dialects and sub-dialects. This bond of unification cannot be overestimated in the history of the Slovak people.

The Society of St. Adalbert was envisioned by its founder Dr. Andrej Radlinský as supplemental to the *Matica slovenská*. It was established in Trnava in 1870 to function mainly as a publishing house. Annually it provided the Slovaks with tens of thousands of religious books, pamphlets, periodicals and handbooks. Early in its history it formed a Biblical commission which inaugurated and implemented a new Slovak translation of the Holy Scriptures.



BRATISLAVA – the capital of Slovakia

Both of these cultural centers exist to this day and they would have a prolific mission in serving the life and the spirit of the Slovak people if they were not severely restricted in their activities.

THE TREŇČÍN CASTLE OPEN AGAIN

As of May 1st this year the first reconstructed sector of one of the largest castles in Central Europe — the Trenčín Castle in Central Slovakia, has been open to the public. In fact, a busy building activity has been going on in castle premises since 1954. It is gradually being given back its former grandeur and beauty — such as it possessed before being gulled out by fire in 1790. Even though, because of the ongoing

archaeological survey and general reconstruction work on the various palaces, only the lower part of the castle courtyard is accessible to the public, a visit to the castle is quite attractive. Of interest is the exhibition of items pertaining to the administration of feudal justice which has been opened by the Trenčín Museum in the former castle dungeon.



The extensive complex of the Trenčín Castle

Socio-Economic Conditions

Up to the turn of the 20th century Slovakia was an agrarian nation with 90% of its population tilling the land. Only the clergy were the educated class apart from a few others who came from wealthier or better placed families like the gentry. Therefore, throughout much of their history the Slovak people had to look to their priests and ministers for leadership in public and civic life as well as in church matters.

Economic Inequities

While the Slovak population was growing, the arable land was not keeping pace with this growth. The Kings of Hungary (and after the 15th century the Emperors of Austria and Hungary) had sought to protect peasant land by guaranteeing its inviolability in 1767, but not before the Hungarian gentry had managed to absorb much peasant acreage. Thus, we have a condition where nobles owned more than 90% of all arable land, allowing serfs (peasants in bondage) to work it only as sharecroppers. When the serfs were finally freed in 1848, their lot improved very little.

They received only those holdings which their forefathers had worked in 1767. As a result, peasants and former serfs, who made up 90% of the population, owned less than half the arable land while the gentry, a tiny minority, owned the other half.

What solutions could have helped the plight of the Slovak peasants? There were three — land reform, industrialization or emigration. Had the revolution of 1848, which freed the serfs, also resulted in the confiscation of noble land and its redistribution among the peasants, the economic situation of the vast majority would have improved. However, since Hungarian nobles had led the Revolution of 1848, they could hardly have been expected to redistribute their own land. After the Revolution collapsed, they made no attempts at land reform and the majority of the peasants continued working less than five acres per family, plots too small to support a family of four.

Industrialization offered another solution, but one which Hungary was loath to accept. Unlike Western European countries, including the Austrian half of the Empire, Hungary was slow to industrialize in the 19th century. The blame can be laid again at the feet of the nobility who regarded country life as the highest form of existence and who despised industry as “unbecoming” of gentlemen. As a result, while the rest of Europe industrialized in the late 19th century, Hungary remained an agricultural backwater and the desperate peasants could not find enough work even to pay their taxes. Thus, leaving the management of their little farms to the other members of the family, the man of the house had either to find a job working

for the Hungarian nobles, or he had to find a livelihood in other parts of the world.

Immigration

Finding a livelihood in other parts of the world was almost a way of life for the Slovaks. As their population increased from 1,000,000 to over 2,400,000 between 1700 and 1830, more than 200,000 of the landless peasants migrated to the lowlands of the Banát and Bačka (today in Yugoslavia) where they began to farm land that had only recently been recovered from the Turks. More than 50,000 also moved to Vienna to find work while, by 1870, over 20,000 left yearly to wander allover Europe as “tinkers” — handymen who offered to fix household implements for a small fee. In addition, several hundred thousand found seasonal employment on noble land, especially during the harvest season in 19th century Hungary. Since so many Slovaks were already on the move before 1870, it remained only a matter of time before they extended their wanderings to America.

Food Diet

The Slovak population was almost exclusively vegetarian. Meat was a luxury only to be had on Sundays and on special occasions such as Christmas, Easter, and at weddings and christenings. The vegetables they were able to grow provided the main courses from whence many of their regional dishes were created. Potatoes were particularly versatile, and today Slovaks still enjoy “halushki” (potato dumplings smothered with fried buttered sweet cabbage or cottage cheese), “pirohi” (a dough-

dumpling filled with mashed potatoes, sauerkraut, lekvar, or cottage cheese) and “loksha” (crepe-like potato-pancake brushed with melted butter). If, and when meat was to be had, it was either poultry or pork. Every edible part of the pig was utilized. The fat and rind of the pig were rendered and crushed into little bits called “shkvarki” and these were used to flavor biscuits. For “holubki” these bits of pork rind (a far cry from the ground meat that is used in stuffed cabbage today) were mixed with the rice. Even the feet of the pig were cooked and made into a gelatin-like dish called “studenina.” There were variations of these dishes in the various locales, but the above-mentioned dishes should be recognizable to any Slovak from Zemplin, an eastern district from whence many of the first immigrants came.



*A Woman in National Costume from
Viničné*

Home Life

The Slovak people often had little of the goods of this earth but they did not covet material riches. The simple cottage that enfolded all the family often had only a dirt floor, but its walls were whitewashed and gaily painted indoors and out with original peasant designs that displayed the creative talent and taste of each family group. Colorful embroideries distinguished not only the wearing apparel of every person in the home, but also graced many details of the interior — the bed linens and coverlets, hangings at the windows and from the shelving in the

kitchen, tablecloths, and even shrouds. Peasant painting adorned ceramic ware in the kitchen, and exquisite carving lent a distinctively artistic quality even to rather commonplace objects like kitchen utensils, door frames, cottage gables and balconies, a smoking pipe, a toy, a grave marker or wayside cross, a shepherd's flute, a cradle. In sincere appreciation of the artistry of these creations, the poet Sládkovič observed, "Look at the dipper of our herdsmen, and you will dream of Phidias."

The daily life of the Slovak people was basically rooted in spiritual and religious principles. Devotional practices were part of everyday tasks and experiences. In a typical Slovak home the day began and ended with prayer. Daily chores and interests were punctuated with spontaneous aspirations to God, reverent sighs calling on Him for help and support. The knife that is to cut a fresh loaf of bread first traces the sign of the cross upon it. On entering a home or putting on a light, one first praises God's holy name: "Praised be Jesus Christ!"



Young shepherds at play (Hawk Game)



The girls from Lúžna village have their fun.

The most prominent ornaments on the walls of a cottage have always been the crucifix and sacred images. Often a blessed pussy willow branch, reserved from the previous Palm Sunday, had a place among these, and, in the event of a violent storm, a blessed candle was lighted in prayer and a bit of the blessed branch was burned in petition for safe keeping against the storming elements of nature. A stoup of holy water hanged at the doorpost so that those who entered or left could dip their fingers and bless themselves in traditional Christian fashion.

The family rosary has been a common practice. Pilgrimages, processions, and church services brightened a holiday or a holy day. A prayer book and the beads were cherished personal possessions. Lenten practices were observed conscientiously, all entertainment and frivolity being strictly banned in the penitential season. Religion permeated all the experiences of life.

Song and Music

Almost as close to their lives as religion was the Slovak fondness for song and music. Even today singing is part of the nature of Slovak people. The poet-scholar Miloš K. Mlynarovič sees in song a sustaining art in the lives of the Slovaks. It is their natural way of communing with God and becoming inwardly renewed.

Nature's richness is the inspiration for the countless songs that he sings as he delights in the towering mountains, and the shaded valley, the full grown tree and the little budding flower, the forces of wind, storm, and stream as well as the glory of the new-born day. He has a song for every occasion, songs of joy and love at weddings, historic ballads, ritual melodies, songs of the Janošík mountain boys, songs that express his toils and griefs, his recreation and festivals, dancing songs, war songs, and midsummer songs for special gatherings around the great bonfires on special summer evenings.

The profusion of Slovak folk songs is incredible. The Institute of Slovak Folk Songs at the Slovak University at Bratislava has collected and prepared for publication 10,000 of these songs and work goes on researching in many more villages and hamlets because it may be possible to gather and preserve 20,000 or more separate Slovak folk songs.

At folk song festivals sponsored in Czechoslovakia between the two great wars, one year the first prize was presented to a typical peasant singer for her rendition of up to 500 folk selections. In a subsequent contest this singer again merited the first prize, this time for her offering of 700 songs.

In another vein, the Slovak people found that their difficult fate was sweetened by the joys of family life, the sharing of tales around a fireplace, the frisking of lambs in a springtime pasture, the song of the lark. Their tired spirit was often strengthened by the Christian bearing of difficulties and injustices, by the memory of their bygone glory as well as by the example of national heroes both from ancient times and from closer historic days.

Political Developments to 1960

Political Activity, 18th and 19th Centuries

The intellectual movements of the 18th century were paralleled by political action as well. Once the embers of nationalism were stirred, the flame and the fire of patriotism began to spread to all levels of Slovak life and signaled the day when a breach with Hungary would become inevitable. The political effort was not circumscribed to men of action in the public forum nor did men of letters limit themselves to desk-bound tasks.

Political activity had many faces. Sometimes it was a violent and radical expression with force of arms. In times of revolutionary uprisings, as in 1848, there was bloodshed and many a supreme sacrifice for the nation and its rights. In a peaceful climate political action expressed itself in reasonable and justified petitions presented to the Emperor, memoranda of the Slovak people expressing their grievances, and there were appeals against oppression and denationalization, as well as pleas on behalf of self-determination and the right to live. Resistance to assimilation by the Magyars expressed itself first of all by

demands for the recognition of Slovakia's basic rights; e.g., to participate in legislative deliberations of the Diet, to use the Slovak language in courts of law and as the language of instruction in the schools, to be granted fair representation in the Diet.

Reprisals

In rallies and open-air meetings the populace manifested its support of the national movement; but the Magyar government responded only by reprisals, by further measures of denationalization, intimidation, imprisonment, gross fines, the closing of Slovak schools, confiscation of Slovak cultural institutes and libraries, the forced changing of geographic designations on the map as well as in local communities and sometimes even the compulsory Magyarizing of personal names, including patronymics. It was an out-and-out effort to destroy national identity as well as personal identity. In the words of the Magyar writer Bela Grunwald, the key purpose of the Magyars was "complete extermination of the Slovaks."

The most appalling action was the government's transfer of Slovak children, usually orphans, to the Hungarian lowlands. Thomas Capek in *The Slovaks of Hungary* (pp. 203-204) summarizes the matter in these words:

In its insane desire to denationalize Slovakia at all hazards, the Hungarian Government lent its aid to the "transportation" of Slovak children to pure Magyar districts.

The first expedition of this kind, conducted ostensibly under the auspices of the “Culture Society of Upper Hungary,” was undertaken in 1874, and netted 400 children. On the second expedition, in 1887, 190 youngsters were captured and separated from their parents without the latter’s consent. A third child-hunt took place in 1888, and with the assistance of gendarmes, 86 children were taken away. The fourth expedition organized in Liptov County brought only 15 children. The fifth child crusade is recorded in Nitra County in 1892, with 174 children being herded together for transportation to Magyar districts in the Hungarian lowlands. At about this time violent protest was raised against the inhuman practice and it was stopped.

Public Outrage

Early in the 20th century the plight of Slovakia came to be reported by writers and influential observers in the public forum outside of Hungary. R.W. Seton-Watson, who wrote under the pseudonym Scotus Viator (The Scottish Traveler), described the state of injustice that prevailed among the Slovaks and other minority groups in Hungary. Ernest Denis, the French scholar and writer, compiled the book *Les Slovaques* and showed great sympathy in dealing with the subject of the Slavs at the mercy of the government in Austria-Hungary.

The famed Norwegian writer Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, winner of the Nobel prize in 1903, took up the cause of the Slovak people and in his writing exposed the inhumanities perpetrated against the Slovaks. Henry Wickham Steed, editor of the London Times, and William Ritter, the Swiss writer, also championed the

oppressed Slovaks and expressed their admiration of the spirit with which these people endured unbelievable suffering and survived, and hoped to emerge victorious.

Hlasists

With the events of the notorious Bánffy election in 1896, political awareness and maturity reached a new phase for the Slovaks. They now determined to safeguard their rights through an effective political party of their own. Thomas G. Masaryk (1850-1937) began to influence many young Slovaks who were studying in Prague toward the close of the 19th century. Led by Dr. Vavro Šrobár and Dr. Pavel Blaho, they carried into the general thinking of the Slovaks considerable feeling for mutually friendly Slovak-Czech relationships. Their ideas were propagated chiefly through the publication *Hlas* (*The Voice*) and in time they came to be known as the *Hlasists*. Their movement could have ripened into a firmly unified force had they not assumed an anti-religious attitude which the Slovaks naturally found foreign to their deeply spiritual nature and sensibilities as well as to their traditional loyalty to the Church.

Father Hlinka

It fell to the lot of the Church to raise a worthy leader for the people. He was Father Andrew Hlinka (1864-1938) whose conscience laid it upon him to be priest and father to his people as well as their political defender. He bent all his energies to working primarily for and with the peasants. For their betterment he organized agricultural and credit unions and in the movement

to liberate the peasant from the burdens that crushed him into servitude, he saw the pattern of liberation for the entire nation.

It was a matter of untold satisfaction for Father Hlinka to see at long last that Slovak deputies were making some gains in political elections. In 1901 there were two, and in 1905 there were four Slovaks elected to the Diet. In 1906, seven Slovaks won in the elections. In this election a total of 25 non-Magyar deputies came to office and their presence in the Diet became a matter of discomfort and apprehension to the Magyars who defensively resorted to sharp retaliation and worked to offset demands for equality for the Rumanians, Serbs, Croats and Slovaks. Their bitterest attacks were against Father Hlinka, who became the victim of imprisonment and clerical suspension from pastoral office.

During his imprisonment Father Hlinka devoted himself tirelessly to preparing a new Slovak translation of the Bible. He bore his church penalty in patience until Rome reviewed his case and he was finally vindicated and permitted to return to his parish in Ružomberok. Until his death he was involved in every significant event in Slovak history.

Milan R. Štefánik

In their desire to free themselves from the Magyar yoke, Slovak leaders started to explore possible federation with the Czechs and to examine prospects for Slovak autonomy. General Milan R. Štefánik (1880-1919) became a great force in the negotiations that developed with Masaryk and Beneš in planning the

formation of a Czecho-Slovak state. Štefánik had academic training that prepared him for a brilliant career in astronomy and in mathematics and he achieved widespread recognition in both fields. When World War I broke out, he left the observatory in Morocco where he was engaged in a scientific project and joined the French army as a private. A little later he transferred to the French Air Corps.

A further war effort of Štefánik was the formation of a Slav foreign legion for which he recruited 6,000 men. American Slovaks and American Slavs responded to his call, and his visit to the United States in 1917 created great enthusiasm and support for the break with Hungary and the success of the allied forces. The very people who had been under tyranny and who chose exile in a free world in order to escape oppression in Austria-Hungary now became a vital power to break the bonds and to disarm the oppressor. Slovaks in America, far from their homeland, proved to be far more effective in dealing with the problem than if they were at home at the moment.

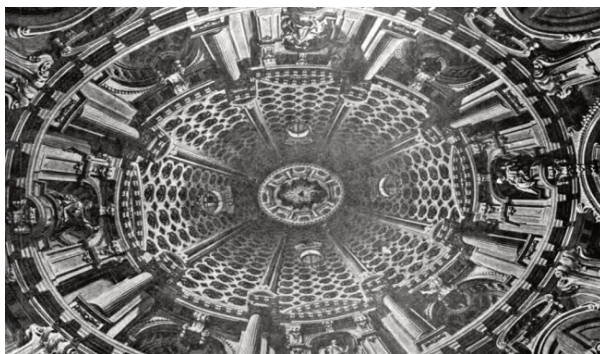
Independence, 20th Century

World War I finally brought about the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary and in the aftermath of the war, diplomats shaped the Czecho-Slovak republic. Unfortunately Štefánik was killed in a plane that crashed for questionable reasons on May 4, 1919 just before landing in Bratislava, and the new political state in the heart of Europe did not become the ideal partnership of Czech and Slovak brothers that it was meant to be. Both the Cleveland agreement of October 25, 1915 and the Pittsburgh

agreement which Masaryk himself signed on May 30, 1918, carried clear provisions for autonomy and a federated union of states in which each partner was to enjoy equal rights. The Pittsburgh agreement distinctly spelled out the provision that “Slovakia shall have its own administration, its own parliament and its own courts.” The stern reality was that Prague was loath to honor the commitments that had been recorded in legal papers.



Trnava — university mansion house from
17th century



Bratislava, fresco in Trinity Church

Since 1918, but particularly after 1920, there followed the thorny years of coming to an understanding with the Czechs. Unfortunately, from the outset, the government high-handedly treated the Slovaks as junior partners rather than co-equal partners in diplomacy and statesmanship.

American-Slovak Response

The Slovaks in America raised a great outcry against such injustice. In the homeland, Hlinka became the Slovak national champion who relentlessly pressed for self-rule for Slovakia. The struggle continued a long time. On June 5, 1938 a delegation from the Slovak League of America, headed by Dr. Peter P. Hletko who publicly displayed the original document of the Pittsburgh agreement, joined a massive demonstration of one hundred thousand Slovak patriots in Bratislava to manifest their endorsement of Hlinka and his Populist Party and to challenge

the government to face the promises they made through their chief executive. This was Hlinka's last public appearance.

World War II Period

Historically the period 1918-1939 was another testing time of the Slovak nation. Very often events in this era created intense tension and even presented a threat to national survival. Post-Munich Czechoslovakia became a dual state briefly. On March 14, 1939, after Hitler's decision to make Czechia and Moravia protectorates of the Reich, the Slovak Parliament proclaimed the independence of Slovakia and established the Slovak autonomous republic under the presidency of Monsignor Joseph Tiso. Many skeptics had assumed that, left to its own assets and resources, Slovakia would never survive independently, yet in a highly critical period of world history, this young nation gained the recognition of 27 countries and it proved that an independent Slovakia is an economically viable country.

Communist Putsch

After World War II Slovakia was occupied by the Red army, the Czechoslovak Republic was restored on practically the same inequitable principles as it had had before, and with the same old problems — all this over and above the burden of the Communist system which was imposed upon it.

Alexander Dubček

Among most recent political developments was the

liberalization program under Alexander Dubček and the revamping of political structures to effect autonomy for the Slovaks as well as for the Czechs under a new Czechoslovak constitution which provides for a federal state involving two distinct nations. Dubček initiated a program which departed from the heavy-handed policies of his predecessors. He did not enforce the repressive Soviet measures for he realized that Slovak people will never thrive under a system that negates the values of Western civilization. He proposed to “humanize” the Communist system, to relax the party’s grip on the national economy, to curb police power, to guarantee freedom of expression, to hear minority opinions in government, to rehabilitate political prisoners and to ease travel restrictions. These were some of his “January reforms” under which the country burgeoned into a new life. It is against such a way of life that the Soviets have sent their tanks, matching guns against ideas.

Though the Slovaks lost political independence with the fall of Great Moravia in the 10th century, their culture has not been destroyed. They have occupied their ancestral lands for long centuries without interruption and endured all the catastrophes that overtook them. Even under the Magyars they managed to become a cultural unit in central Europe with a university at Bratislava as early as the 15th century and later a Catholic university at Trnava in the 17th century. They have a distinctive literature, culture, history, economic capability, sociological and ethnographic individuality — the constituents of a nation.



Hand-painted ornaments decorate a kitchen in Viničné

Part II: New World Beginnings

Reasons for Emigrating

Economic want, political tyranny — either calamity would have been reason enough for leaving; but often, problems travel in pairs, so that when Slovaks were struck with the devastating cholera in 1873 at a time when debilitating hunger was widespread many felt compelled to search out a better life in the new world. As they reviewed their plight, the prospect of paid earnings became a further inducement in deciding to venture out of the homeland and to seek prosperity elsewhere. They realized that they had little hope of improving their lot at home. Many of them tilled small plots of soil that was thin and poor. The land was held mostly in great estates and was administered by manorial practices under the control of the upper fifth of the inhabitants. About seven tenths of the entire territory was peopled by peasants reduced to a level of near-starvation. When the iron plow replaced the wooden, there was some improvement in farming methods but the lot of the average family did not improve noticeably.

Those who followed a trade or managed a cottage industry like

weaving did not fare much better. Often they traveled near and far as journeymen searching for improved fortune and finding it rarely.

When the situation grew desperate, there were two equally disastrous alternatives. One was the possibility of taking out a loan at prohibitive rates: from seven to eight percent, often soaring to fourteen percent. It even happened that for a short loan, fifty percent was the imposed rate. Obviously, borrowing with usury of this kind was a ruinous measure, and as the economy declined, emigration figures rose.

The other alternative was for harvesters and agricultural workers to resort to strikes as a means of redress. This could have benefited the laboring class to some extent, but in 1898 a law was passed forbidding workers to strike. As a result, emigration became the natural sequel to labor problems. These figures bear some relevance in studying the gravity of the economic situation:

<i>Time Period</i>	<i>Number Emigrating</i>
1899-1904	55,743
1905-1907	176,015
In 1908 alone	52,942
In 1909 alone	113,315

The Four Waves of Immigration

The first of these mass movements of Slovaks to the United States took place roughly in the last quarter of the 19th century and shortly after that. By the opening days of World War I in 1914, the United States had received a third of the total population of Slovakia.

First Wave

The year 1873 can be called the beginning of a mass exodus, for in that year 1,300 Slovaks came to America. Most of them probably came from the Spiš (Spish) county of Slovakia where the emigrant tide began with jobless miners, tradesmen and small farmers. These were followed by weavers and cloth makers who at one time had had a flourishing industry, operating out of their own cottages. Once the first groups established a pattern of leaving in order to seek a better livelihood, the fever of emigration spread and before long even boys of 14 and 16 began to leave home for America. Eventually the villages and towns

had practically no one left for the tasks that had to be done, and hired hands had to be brought in from neighboring regions.

The Zemplin district felt the new movement by 1879 and it is significant that by 1883 about 8,500 persons left that region. In his study of the early phase of emigration to the United States, Jan Hanzlik observes that in this instance there were many cases of entire families from the Zemplin region migrating to America, timing their departure for the days after the harvest season. The home of an emigrating family was generally sold at a bargain price, sometimes as low as from five to twenty florins or gold pieces. Very many of these emigrants sought employment in the mining towns of the United States, but there was also a decided trend to settle in Cleveland where quite a few worked in the Kuntz Plant, an enterprise owned and managed by one of their own countrymen from Zemplin.

When legislation on compulsory military service bound all men under the age of 50 to remain on home territory, an increasing number of women dared, with their men, to face the rigors of an exhausting voyage and all the trials of living in an alien land and a new social environment. They had the extraordinary courage to brave pioneering hardships because their survival and the survival of their families demanded this kind of heroism.

Women, too, dared to take their chances by emigrating. It has been noted by Schneider, for example, that 5,961 persons emigrated from Šariš (Sharish) in 1905 and of these 2,139 were women.

K. Čulen records that it was the Slovaks of Passaic, New Jersey

who welcomed the first Slovak women to join their colony in 1879.

Out of these beginnings, the tide of emigration steadily increased as reports spread that there were brighter prospects in America. This word of mouth was generally substantiated by the presence of some who had returned and really brought home the means to improve their homes and their position in general. The following figures speak for themselves.

<i>District¹</i>	<i>Year Span</i>	<i>Emigrants</i>	<i>Total Population in 1900</i>	<i>Peak Year</i>	<i>Emigrants</i>
Šariš (Sharish)	1870-1878	2,676	174,470	1905	5,873
Spiš (Spish)	1880-1890	19,601	172,091	1905	6,009
Zemplin	up to 1883	8,055	327,993	1905	8,206
Abauj with Košice (Koshice)	1881-1890	19,912	196,462	1905	5,138
Trenčín (Trenchin)	1900	472	287,665	1905	3,652
Turieč	1899	144	51,956	1905	1,298
Liptov	1899	162	82,159		
Orava	1881-1890	4,615	85,000	1905-1907	5,175
Gemer	1899	1,241	183,784	1905	3,589
Nitra	1893	1,124	428,246	1907	4,523
Bratislava	1900	123	367,502	1907	1,904

As this first tidal wave of emigration began to lose momentum, and as the political program changed with the creation of Czechoslovakia, there was much hope that the new experiment of a federated republic would greatly improve conditions in the homeland of the Slovaks. This promise was unfortunately doomed because many mistakes of the past were repeated through Czechizing pressures that made themselves felt before long and left the hopes of the Slovak nation shattered.

Second Wave

The period 1918-1938 became another critical era in Slovak history and again emigration siphoned away large numbers of threatened, tried and disenchanted Slovaks who turned away from a land that had become to them a foreign state rather than a homeland. Many of them felt that they could be of more help by leaving than by staying. Many sadly realized that they were strong enough as a nation to endure but not strong enough to overcome.

Those who chose to withstand the new trials remained at home doing their utmost to support the life and the rights of the nation directly. Many who felt compelled to find other solutions to life's problems turned to the United States for asylum and survival. About 60,000 Slovak immigrants came to this country during the years when immigration quotas were already imposing restrictions, and many more who would have chosen to enter the United States found that they had been deferred

1. Statistics selected from K. Čulen: *Dejiny Slovákov v Amerike*. I. Bratislava, 1942. pp. 49-57.

and would have to wait a number of years before they could be admitted. Some of these sought asylum in other free parts of the world; e.g., Canada, South America, Australia.

Third Wave

Later when the Soviet invasion ruthlessly ground into Czechoslovakia in 1945, and barbed wire barricades, watch towers, forced labor, concentration camps and deportation to Communist Russia became a scourge upon the land, there was a third wave of departures from Slovakia. But this time it was different. Few were permitted to leave, and for the 8,000 Slovaks who succeeded in escaping, there were many others who did not succeed in their attempt. Many lost their lives for making a bid for freedom and democracy.

Fourth Wave

A fourth mass movement of emigration took place after the Dubček period closed and the ominous rumble of Soviet tanks struck terror throughout Czechoslovakia. Under the paralyzing action of the merciless invader about 30,000 Slovaks managed to risk all and find a way out, eventually reaching the United States.

This is a rough survey of the mass waves of Slovak immigration to America, but just as the traits of Americans have changed over the years of our nation's history, so too did marked differences occur in the social and professional characteristics

of the Slovaks who came to our land from distant Slovakia at various times.

In the beginning it was the men and boys who first decided to come to America. Most of them had little or no formal education and came with their good will, their native talents, and their physical strength as their chief assets. Later waves brought not only men and boys but married women and younger girls as well. Many who came after 1920 had a good education and a sharpened sense of world vision. Those who came in the last two waves were generally equipped with professional training and academic credits, degrees, certification and experience as well as a cosmopolitan view of life and the world.

Numbers

The U.S. Census Bureau records the fact that in the years between 1899 and 1920 there were over 619,860 Slovaks in the United States.

Those who study sociological sciences estimate that today there are about two million people of Slovak background living in the United States. It is very likely that persons of Slovak origin can be found in everyone of our fifty states, some cities and states having larger concentrations than others. Among these Americans of Slovak background some are relatively recent newcomers to our country; others are second, third, fourth and even fifth generations of Slovak immigrants.

Why would such large masses of people leave their native land and venture into an unknown world? It was a daring decision

for each one of them to make and sometimes it was a traumatic experience to leave all their dear and familiar scenes behind, to become a stranger among strangers, to undertake a perilous and long journey under extremely trying conditions, to struggle against an intimidating language barrier, to pit one's strength against unfamiliar forces and to prove oneself against all odds. Under normal conditions this would have been a rare and unusual step, and very few might have considered it seriously.

But it is no news to us that conditions in the world are not always normal for all people. Four times in modern history the Slovaks in their homeland found the prevailing situation so intolerable that they felt compelled to leave their homes and their native land in large numbers, and to seek a better way of life elsewhere. Each time many of them chose to find a haven in the United States.

Characteristics of Slovak Immigration

The Slovak's percentage rate of emigration was the highest of any group. In fact, the rate of emigration of Slovaks per 1,000 was 18.6; double that of any other race of people except the Hebrew and it was 18.3.

The average age of the emigrating Slovak was 28 which represents the most productive age.

Social Injustice

Most of the other emigrating peoples came to a new and strange land as a family unit: father, mother, and children who could be of mutual assistance as they faced a new chapter in their lives. But a look at the census ratio figures for the emigrating Slovak male and female shows that their venture was largely made on a solitary basis without the comfort of family ties. In the year 1900 the total number of Slovak immigrants was established at

29,243. Among them were 21,235 men and only 8,008 women, a ratio of 5.66 men to one woman. This ratio diminished later to 4:1. The ratio of men to women among other nationalities from Hungary was 2:1 or 3:1.

Mutual Needs

The immigrants and America needed each other. When businessmen began to industrialize the United States in a big way after the Civil War, they had to solve two major problems — a shortage of men to work in their factories and the refusal of native Americans to accept low wages. Businessmen could conceivably have approached the millions of Blacks in the South who had recently been freed from slavery and were desperate for work, but southern plantation owners also valued Blacks as a source of cheap labor and northern whites, quite as racist as southerners, did not want to see Blacks moving into their neighborhoods. Industrialists, therefore, sought and found the answer to their problems in Eastern Europe. They sent agents to persuade the newly-emancipated peasants to come to America. A Slovak making 15 to 30 cents a day on a noble's estates in the 1870's needed little prodding to try his luck overseas where he might earn \$1.00 to \$1.50 a day in the steel mills and coal mines. The trickle of peasants who had experienced life in America in the 1870's turned into a deluge after they returned home with their savings in the 1880's. Only 5,000 Slovaks had made the trip in the years 1870-1880. By 1920, however, over 600,000 (one quarter of the Slovak nation) lived and worked in the new land.

Back-breaking Labor

Like other immigrants from Eastern Europe, the Slovaks found work chiefly in the coal mines, steel mills, and oil refineries of the United States. Native Americans shunned unskilled work in these industries because it was so onerous, so poorly paid and so hazardous. While native Americans earned on the average, between \$2 and \$3 a day in skilled work between 1870 and 1910, unskilled Eastern Europeans could hope for little more than \$1.50 a day, and quite often less. Furthermore, unskilled laborers worked 10 to 12 hours a day six days a week (in the steel mills it was seven days a week) and thousands died of industrial accidents because their bosses valued profits over safety. The main reason Slovaks and other Eastern Europeans initially put up with such conditions was that they had no intention of remaining in America. Most had come to make their “fortune” (usually \$1,000) and then return home. Slovaks had a yearly return rate of 20 percent and thus could be considered as long-distance commuters of the late 19th century.

In America, Freedom

However, many of those who returned to the old country left it shortly after returning and came back to America to stay. John Mlinik typifies those who changed their minds. His story:

It was John Mlinik’s ambition to be a well-to-do farmer in Hungary in a few years, and recently he and his wife made a preliminary visit to his old home and bought a farm. They remained a few weeks — but

those few weeks were quite enough. He came back quite cured. "Every little clerk in the village looked down on me because I did not speak the official language, Magyar," Mlinik said. "He was an official while I was just a peasant. He didn't earn a quarter of what I do, yet I had to bow to him. That made me sore. In America, I'm a free man. Besides, live got a better chance to do well than in the old country. Yes, America is good enough for me."

The Long Voyage

Once it was decided to leave the homeland there was no great problem in gathering the few necessities that would be taken on the voyage. Those who were leaving had little of material value and very little money. Some travelers provided themselves with a packet of food for the way and a small bundle of personal belongings. They set out for the port of their choice on foot, by train, or by horse-drawn wagon. Genoa and Fiume were the less favored ports of departure. Rotterdam, Amsterdam and Antwerp were more popular choices but German ports were most highly favored, Bremen being the top choice (for about 60% of the travelers) and Hamburg ranking as second most favored port of embarkation (for 25%).

Unscrupulous Dealings

Steamship company agents were about, making attractive offers and suggesting inducements of every kind, for it was in their interest to provide workers for a growing American industry. There were promises of jobs with regular pay; there were

advertisements and offers to pay the passage of a worker coming to America. Overzealous agents even solicited prospective emigrants to leave their homeland without the government's sanction and instructed them on steps to take for clandestine departure. They recommended routes that might be safest to take out of the country. They provided information of every kind.

Steamship companies did a thriving business and when the demand for transportation exceeded the capacities of the great Cunard Line which held an exclusive franchise from the Hungarian government, this company invited other shipping lines to form a Continental Pool in order to accommodate all those who applied for passage across the Atlantic. This organized enterprise made great gains for itself and it benefited the government in various ways as it exploited its passengers. Its rules and provisions were related not to the welfare of travelers but rather to the sharing of the spoils of the business. Sad to say, the Continental Pool offered the most miserable accommodations, the poorest meals and the worst type of navigation.

Once he had purchased his ticket for 50 crowns or about \$20, or once he had arranged for the equivalent of this price, the prospective traveler had to wait patiently in the port city until an assigned departure date. This might be a few days or a few weeks away. If he happened to be booked for a ship that was already oversold, he would have to wait until another ship could be scheduled. In the days or weeks that intervened, he could become the victim of cheats and schemers of every kind. If he

was lucky, he sometimes found interim jobs to pay for temporary lodging and food.

On the ship itself living conditions were unspeakable. The immigrant cargo was not generally in first, second, or third class accommodations. Oftener than not, they were herded into the steerage, occupying space that could not be assigned to general freight or any profitable purpose. The lack of ventilation and common hygienic facilities made the air oppressive and stifling. Bodies were crowded so closely that there was no privacy, no comfort of any kind. Drinking water was rationed out only at infrequent intervals. Food was spooned into a cup which was given to each passenger with instructions that he was to look after it until the end of the voyage when it was to be returned. Because ship's fare was inadequate, many depended on supplemental staples that they had brought with themselves. Sleeping quarters were skimpy bunks in tiers of three or four levels with just straw mats for bedding. Men, women and children shared the same area.

The ship itself was not generally a strong or safe craft. Elemental forces battered it unmercifully and during a voyage of from 15 to 60 days the passengers in steerage felt that they were easy pawns between life and death and all the agonies that could be squeezed in between. Prayer and hope were their main sustenance. They counted on simple and old peasant remedies to alleviate some of their physical ills and miseries. They knew how to accept suffering and if this, too, was to be part of the price for a better life, they were paying it.

Ports of Entry

The usual ports of entry were New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New Orleans and Boston. The tremendously impressive and symbolic approach was, of course, through New York harbor, welcomed by the monumental Statue of Liberty. Disembarking, however, was not yet the end of the voyage. There was the need to pass through the immigration station at Ellis Island (Castle Garden) with its gamut of officialdom, inspections, and red tape formalities. Indescribable anxieties mounted here. The unendurable fear was the nightmare of being denied clearance into the promised land of America.

Once this trial was passed, the stranger in the new world had arrived and all too often was left to his own resources. His residual funds could amount to less than \$10 and if he was not careful, he could lose it all.

If he was very fortunate, he might find a relative or an acquaintance waiting for him as he began to explore his new surroundings. In that happy meeting he was assured a good start in a world that promised him a new life and better fortune. If he had to find his own way, he often set out in the direction of a railroad and hoped to find, not the proverbial pot of gold at rainbow's end, but the opportunity to work for a decent living and a chance to make some savings for himself and for those back home.

If he came through company agents, or, if he was hired by agents at Ellis Island, he went to whatever center they directed him. Ordinarily this would be a mining area or a factory site. Since

the coal, steel, and oil industries of America were concentrated in the industrial Northeast, most Slovaks settled in this area. Pennsylvania led the way, attracting almost 300,000 of the newcomers by 1920 while Ohio came second with 79,000 (Cleveland received one-third of them), New Jersey had 50,000, New York 46,000, Illinois and Connecticut 21,000. Smaller numbers appeared in Indiana, Michigan, West Virginia, and Colorado.

Employment Opportunities

It has been ascertained that the average assets of an incoming immigrant were \$11.42. Even if he invested all that he had for a piece of land to farm he would have to wait at least a season for some returns, and he could not afford to do that. Besides, many an immigrant did not care to make a permanent commitment like outright ownership of property because there was always the prospect of a possible return to the homeland. Almost every immigrant hoped to make some earnings and then try to improve his situation in the homeland. He was eager for immediate work with his hands and his physical strength, and an opportunity for prompt pay for his work. Mines and industries could offer these and so immigrant workers steadily gravitated toward mines, steel mills, oil refineries, textile works, factories and coke ovens. Some went to railroad and canal construction jobs.

Laborers Worth Their Mettle

Northeastern Pennsylvania had rich resources in hard coal and employed great numbers of Slovak men who proved to be highly

desirable workers. Though many were inexperienced in this kind of work and had a severe language handicap, they became diligent and productive miners with a natural capacity to work long hours and with stamina to endure great physical hardships. They were men of moral conviction who felt that it was their duty to give an honest day's work for an honest day's pay, small as that was on many occasions. Unfortunately, their faith in man was not always well placed, and, as underlings dependent on a mine supervisor or on a mine boss, they were sometimes taken advantage of and even short paid. Their physical strength and endurance often kept them at menial jobs because, sadly enough, a man was too often esteemed for what he could produce rather than for what he was.

Allegheny-Pittsburgh was the center for working the soft coal mines of Westmoreland and Fayette counties. The Frick Company also hired hundreds of Slovaks to work at its coke ovens. By 1889 there were about 35,000 acres of land with available coal deposits and 15,000 coke ovens under the management of Henry Clay Frick, and when he merged with Andrew Carnegie's steel works in that year, their combined industry employed 30,000 workers.

A giant industry of this kind welcomed Slovak laborers and a newly arrived immigrant welcomed the opportunity to be hired. Even if he was just a "yard laborer," one of the lowest paid employees here in 1890, he earned \$1.40 for a 10-hour day and he could hope to improve his standing and his earnings. A "road-man" made maximum earnings of \$2.10 for a 9-hour day. His take-home pay every two weeks averaged \$16 to \$25. It must be

remembered, however, that this was in a day when one could buy a pound of soup meat for 3 cents, a fairly good suit of clothes for \$6, and a pair of shoes for \$2.

The steel plants of Youngstown and the industrial shops and iron works in Akron and Cleveland attracted many Slovaks to Ohio. New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Illinois similarly offered employment in industry, business, railroad building and private enterprise. New Jersey needed a great labor force for its oil refineries. Passaic, New Jersey had a number of textile plants and those who were experienced in weaving and fabric manufacture were happy to use their skills there.

Women Laborers

Many of the single women from Slovakia who did not find domestic work and housekeeping chores attractive, settled in Passaic and worked in textile factories, garment and shirt-making plants, lace making, and handkerchief shops. Eventually there was much matchmaking in this community and if a young man without attachments decided to visit Passaic, he generally returned with a wife or a fiancée whom he would shortly marry!



Man's Costume in the Vicinty of Trenčín

Adventurous Slovak Immigrants

While most of the immigrants who came to America came for economic reasons, some of the very early ones were more fortunate in that most of them had been well educated and even wealthy. Though they were the admitted few, we think their inclusion will give some needed respite from the basically hard life of the average Slovak we have thus far portrayed.

Stephen Stitnický

(Stit-NITS-key) While the great waves of emigration for the Slovak people occurred late in the 19th century and beginning of the 20th, there were some hardy trailblazers. As far back as 1583 a Slovak-born scholar and educator named Stephen Parmenius Stitnický came to North America with the expedition of Sir Humphrey Gilbert. He had been born of Slovak parentage in Hungary during the Turkish occupation. After completing studies in a number of European schools and universities, he decided to live in England where he learned about Sir Humphrey Gilbert's plan to sail to North America with a group of

prospective colonizers. Impressed by their spirit and their general attitude toward the venture, it is not surprising that when the group set sail for Plymouth harbor on June 11, 1583. Parmenius was also a member of the expedition. His special assignment was to keep an accurate and scholarly account of all that would be noteworthy on the voyage.

After many terrifying experiences which tested the valor of the admiral and his crew, the admiral brought his ships past the banks of Newfoundland on August 3, 1583. At the end of an exhausting voyage of seven harrowing weeks, the company landed, and claimed the harbor and surrounding lands in the queen's name making this the first English colony in North America.

Shortly after, however, Sir Humphrey Gilbert found it necessary to return to England with his little fleet. Unfortunately, a wild storm wrecked the ships at Nova Scotia and among the victims was the poet-scholar Stephen Parmenius Stitnický, who very likely was the first Slovak to cross the Atlantic to the New World. Little did he dream that his fellow Slovaks would follow him one day but for reasons vastly different from his own.

Ferdinand Šarišský

(SHAH-ris-key) Established a first, too, by coming to the United States in 1677. He had been born of a wealthy Slovak family in Šariš (SHAH-rish), Slovakia. Employed as a teacher in Windsheim, Germany, he there learned about William Penn and his novel experiments for providing real freedom and needed

opportunities for the people under his form of government. The people of Windsheim knew about William Penn because a group that had been persecuted in Europe went to Penn's colony under the leadership of Francis Daniel Pastorius, the son of the mayor of Windsheim. The son kept his father informed of the group's progress and he shared news of their progress and trials with the teacher Šarišský. This news whetted Šarišský's interest and he soon expressed a desire for joining them, because he saw an opportunity to employ not only his teaching talents but also to fulfill his calling to a spiritual ministry.

His decision made, he journeyed to what is today Germantown and Philadelphia and there became preacher and teacher to these pioneers. After spending two years in their service, he found that the blessings of this colony were at least matched if not outweighed, by the sacrifices that were demanded of the colonists. He found it difficult to adjust to the rigors of this environment, so that in 1679 he decided to go to Maryland either to improve his position or to leave from Baltimore on a return trip to Europe. Unfortunately, we have no historic record about what he finally did. It is enough to know that among the early pioneers of Germantown was a young Slovak teacher who tried his best to fill a void for other brave and courageous pioneers.

Andrew Jelik

(YELL-ik) Another early Slovak in America was the much traveled Andrew Jelik who left his native Slovak home in 1764. Largely by force of circumstances, he became quite a traveler. Jelik was the son of a soldier, but he did not care for a military

career and decided to become a tailor. Army life was not for him and he did all that he could to avoid it.

As a tailoring journeyman, he visited many places: Vienna, Prague, Germany, England and France. He had many exciting experiences, for he seemed fated to come into a town or village just when men were being recruited into the army. Naturally, he had to do his utmost to avoid getting involved. Often he had to use his wits very speedily to escape conscription officers. Once he escaped by boat only to be shipwrecked at sea. He saved himself by clinging to some debris and then found himself stranded, but alive, on the shore of England.

After this terrifying episode, he decided to leave Europe by joining a Dutch ship bound for the West Indies and America. It was on this voyage that he came to the United States but for only a very brief period. On concluding the business of the expedition, the captain and crew returned to Europe. As a member of the crew, Jelík also returned.

In 1778, after more exciting adventures, Jelík finally extinguished the flames of his somewhat enforced wanderlust, and returned to his native Slovakia where he died in 1783.

John Polerecký

(PO-ler-ETS-key) In 1780 Major John Ladislaus Polerecký came to America. He was a Slovak nobleman and soldier who had joined the French-Hussar Cavalry Unit under the Duke de Lauzun. As an auxiliary French army under the leadership of

General Rochambeau, these Hussars had come to help Washington conquer the British in the Revolutionary War.

When they arrived in the summer of 1780, there seemed to be no hope of victory for Washington. The British had been gaining ground steadily and had the advantage in men and supplies as well as in morale. The American situation was bleak. The colonial army was starved and had no money, food, or reserves of any kind. Many American men were sick and broken in spirit. In that dark hour Providence sent Washington 6,000 crack troops in six strong French vessels.

All these men were eager and determined volunteers. Although they were a French legion under the command of the experienced French veteran Count Rochambeau, they were soldiers of mixed nationalities. And among them was Major John Polerecký, son of Count Andrew Polerecký of Turiec County, Slovakia. He, too, was a volunteer in the making of American history. He had earned his rank with the French Hussars who were now part of Rochambeau's relief unit helping Washington in the historic struggle for American freedom.

When the company moved into action, Polerecký was often assigned to communications and dispatch services. His unit fought in the White Plains and Kingsbridge area of New York, and then became responsible for the defense of New York City itself. Before long, however, they had to respond to a counter order. They were commanded to turn southward to support General Benjamin Lincoln and his hard-pressed company.

Following Washington's strategy involving action in the

southern section to block Cornwallis at Yorktown, Virginia, the French and American forces converged on him and the rest is history. Heavy bombarding started in Yorktown on October 7. Elegantly uniformed French troops fought side by side with the tattered colonial soldiers. All that mattered was that they fought a united action. At last, after 10 bitter days, the frenzy began to subside as the sounds of answering British fire died. With the appearance of a British officer waving a white cloth, bloody fighting was over in Yorktown on that October 17.

After both sides met to arrange terms and to sign the surrender document on October 19, 1781, there yet remained the ceremonies at which the conquered troops were to deliver their arms. As Washington, Rochambeau and their aides appeared on horseback on this ravaged field of war, the columns of soldiers were still and at ceremonial attention. It soon became apparent that Lord Cornwallis was not leading the weary and crushed British as they neared the designated place. This position was assigned to the British Brigadier-General O'Hara and in the intensity of the moment, it was clear to Washington that since a deputy of Cornwallis was charged to offer the official British surrender, it would be proper for an American deputy of similar rank to accept that formal surrender. With great composure Washington indicated that General Benjamin Lincoln was to act in his name, and so this officer moved into position to face O'Hara. After the symbolic gesture of receiving O'Hara's sword, General Lincoln indicated where the British were to lead their men for the general stacking of their arms.

The place was an open field beyond the American and French

lines where the cavalry contingent of the Duke of Lauzun was at attention in a semi-circular position under the poplars. Major John Polerecký was in this company of horsemen at whose feet the British yielded their weapons. He experienced the full impact and the tension of that hour as he witnessed the mood of the vanquished British soldiers. Some restrained their natural feelings with great discipline and conducted themselves with utmost dignity. Some were sullen and ill at ease; some wept; some swore. All were sad and undeniably crushed, all 6,000 of this British army and 840 seamen who participated in this act of surrender.

It may seem out of place to recount so much of American history in the telling of the story of Major Polerecký. Of course, it is evident that we are proud of the part he played in procuring for all of us the liberty we so cherish. But we were also struck at the incongruity of his witnessing the emotions of the vanquished British soldiers as they yielded their weapons and for a few moments we could not help but see the Slovak people in their long struggle for freedom. How many times must they have “restrained their natural feelings with great discipline and conducted themselves with utmost dignity?” How many times must some of them have been “sullen or ill at ease — or wept — or swore?” How many times must they have “been sad and undeniably crushed?” No one knows the answer to these questions and perhaps that is good.

With the war over, Count Rochambeau stayed on in Virginia with the prisoners of war, but he sent the Duke of Lauzun as his personal messenger to report to King Louis XVI in Paris that

the French and the Americans had distinguished themselves in a brilliant and crucial victory at Yorktown, Virginia. Major John Polerecký was honored to be part of that delegation that reported to the King. After this mission was completed, he decided to return to America, but only after resigning from the French Volunteer Legion on October 1, 1783.

As a civilian, Polerecký chose to stay in America permanently. He had formed a deep friendship with General Benjamin Lincoln and Colonel Henry Dearborn. Through the real estate office of Lincoln he bought a farm in Dresden, Maine and became a neighbor of Dearborn. His naturalization papers were signed by John Hancock, the famed signer of the Declaration of Independence. In 1785 Polerecký married Nancy Poshard. Over the years he held a number of public positions: deputy marshall, census commissioner, town clerk of Dresden, and lighthouse keeper.

Polerecký died at the age of 82 and was buried between two linden trees which he had planted in his courtyard. When a community cemetery was designated 40 years later, all the Polerecký graves were transferred to it. On Memorial Day, the American Legion annually honors Major John Polerecký, a one-time Slovak aristocrat who became a defender of American freedom and a distinguished Slovak American citizen.

Maurice Beňovský

(BE-nov-skey) Here is one Slovak of Vrbová, Nitra county in Slovakia who came to America solely out of a sense of

adventure. His personal account of travels and experiences has been preserved in two volumes and his autobiography has been translated into several languages.

Beňovský was born in 1741. He came of an aristocratic family that had a well established hereditary title and an estate that could be traced to Medieval times. He spent his boyhood in Vrbová and received the kind of training that would prepare him for a career in social circles and a future suited to the expectations of Vienna where the emperor held court. When he was only fifteen, he proved himself in military action against the King of Prussia. Family problems and inheritance quarrels later complicated his early manhood and he left the family estate. He then joined the Polish army to fight against the Russians for Polish rights, but he was taken prisoner and sent to Siberia.

In captivity he busied himself tutoring the children of Russian officers while he secretly planned his escape. When he finally succeeded in breaking out of his confinement, he roamed the wilds of Siberia as far as Kamchatka and made for the open sea. By pre-arrangement he joined the crew of escaped fellow prisoners who had taken a Russian ship which they sailed as far as China, hoping to secure freedom. They were successful, but Beňovský did not stay in China. He traveled to France and then decided to go to Madagascar where he was in charge of the French colony by 1773. Surviving accounts indicate that he administered impartial justice and that he sought to improve the lot of underprivileged classes. For this the grateful natives acclaimed him their champion and proclaimed him their king.

This hardly pleased the staunch government who did not approve of his benevolence toward the long exploited natives.

To offset an unwelcome confrontation and to seek better trade relations with other countries, Beňovský left Madagascar. He visited the South Sea Islands and then went to Europe, hoping to find understanding and support there. France, England, and Austria showed no sympathy for his cause, but he came upon unexpected good fortune when he met Benjamin Franklin who happened to be in London and Paris soliciting support for the American colonies. Franklin took an interest in Beňovský's efforts. He provided him with letters of recommendation to American friends of influence.

In London, Beňovský also met Hyacinth Magellan, a descendant of the famed Ferdinand Magellan, who advanced him 4,000 pounds for his project. With these funds and letters of recommendation, Beňovský came to America in 1775. He was so deeply impressed by the American ideal of freedom and democracy that he joined the American troops in the Revolutionary War. He fought with a cavalry corps in Pulaski's Legion and engaged in the siege of Savannah.

After visiting his homeland once more, he returned to America on the ship *Robert and Anne* with his wife. Count and Countess Beňovský sailed from London on April 14, 1784 and arrived in Baltimore on July 8. They were the first titled Slovak couple that came to America.

Beňovský was serious about helping the natives of Madagascar. He even considered the idea of colonizing the island for America

whose democratic principles he greatly admired. He received substantial aid from a Baltimore firm and fitted out the ship *Intrepid* with stores of food and 30 cannons. He provided for his wife's comfortable settlement in Baltimore and then sailed for Madagascar on October 25, 1784. He met hostile French forces on the island and was killed in heavy fire. He is buried in Madagascar. His wife spent the rest of her life in the United States.

Gejza Mihalócy

(GAY-zah MI-ha-lo-tsi) Among Slovak settlers who came to Chicago even before the Civil War was a man named Gejza Mihalócy. He is remembered mainly through a letter which he sent to President Abraham Lincoln on February 4, 1861, two months before the attack on Fort Sumter. He wrote:

Chicago, Feb. 4, 1861

To the Hon. A. Lincoln

Dear Sir:

We have organized a company of Militia in this city, composed of men of Hungarian, Bohemian and Slavonic origin. Being the first company formed in the United States of said nationalities, we respectfully ask leave of your Excellency to entitle ourselves "Lincoln Riflemen of Slavonic Origin."

If you will kindly sanction our use of your name, we will endeavor to honor it, whenever we may be called to perform active service.

Respectfully on behalf of the Company,

Gejza Mihalócy, Capt.

Lincoln responded by writing on the request:

I cheerfully grant the request above made.

A. Lincoln

In the course of events, this company of volunteers composed of immigrants became the first volunteer unit from Chicago to go into action in the Civil War. It trained as a distinct company until June when it became part of the 24th regiment of the Illinois infantry with Gejza Mihalócy ranking as lieutenant colonel.

Mihalócy was a native of Zemplin county in Slovakia. He graduated from the military academy of Vienna and was raised to the rank of lieutenant before serving in the uprising of 1848. He next became captain and for personal safety he left for London. Political involvements and loyalties climaxed in a duel which left him seriously wounded. After recovering, he left London for Chicago and turned his interest to farming but not for long. He soon realized that this occupation did not satisfy him and he returned to what he knew and loved best — military activity.

Mihalócy's sympathies were with the North because he favored liberty and freedom for all. His regiment of Lincoln Riflemen first came under fire at the battle of Perryville and then at Murfreesboro, Chattanooga, Missionary Ridge, Tunnel Hill and at Bussetrost where he was mortally wounded on February 24, 1864. He died on March 11 of that year, leaving a widow. His

grave is marked No. 439, Section A in the National Cemetery in
Chattanooga, Tennessee.



Village church yard in Detva

Part III: Organizations and Contributions of Slovak-Americans

Unifying Factors

A number of forces worked toward the unmistakable imperative that the Slovaks in America become united in some effective way. There was the natural advisability of seeking strength in unity and the social advantage of sharing through close intercommunication. There was the psychological and genetic bond of common origin and common identity. But above all, there was the obligation of seeking and attaining social justice.

Personal suffering and the problem of dealing with the resentment and prejudice of earlier classes of immigrants were matters to be dealt with on a personal or local level, but there were other issues and developments where united action was the only reasonable approach toward solution. Among these were such matters as labor difficulties, especially when they involved legal entanglements and the miscarriage of justice. On several occasions this happened in the aftermath of a labor strike.

Braddock Strike

When the bloody events of the Braddock, Pennsylvania, strike in 1891 ended, 44 Slovaks were among the arrested miners. The verdict at the February trial brought the sentence of death by hanging for Andrew Toth, Michael Sabol and George Rusnak. The rest of the arrested Slovak miners were given 3-12 month prison sentences. Only the collective outcry of Slovaks in all parts of the United States and a drive for voluntary contributions to appeal the case helped to redeem the situation. Sabol and Rusnak were eventually freed but Toth served 19 years of his sentence, commuted to life imprisonment, before he was released and became a man finally vindicated.

Lattimer Massacre

The horrible 1897 Lattimer massacre in the Hazleton, Pennsylvania area also evolved out of a legitimate strike of miners. It left 20 men dead and 50 wounded. The subsequent trial and legal investigation were a gross travesty of justice and again there was urgent need for a united body of Slovak-Americans to come to the defense of their own.

These and similar tragedies pointed up the urgency for unity and united action. They lent compelling substance to the talks of movement for the federation of local societies.

National Organizations

Two major forces emerged almost at the same time, each spearheaded by a leader of uncommon stature, each generating much good in three specific areas: on behalf of the Slovaks in America, on behalf of the Slovaks in the homeland and on behalf of the Slovak contribution to the adopted country of so many thousands of immigrants from Slovak lands.

These two forces are Slovak national fraternal organizations: The National Slovak Society, founded on February 15, 1890, under the inspired leadership of Peter V. Rovnianek; and The First Catholic Slovak Jednota (Union), organized through the genius of Father Furdek, with its preliminary advisory meeting of May 5, 1889, and its formal founding on September 4, 1890.

Both of these organizations were a response to the long felt need for local societies to merge into larger units for mutual advantage. By 1893 Slovak immigrants had established 277 independent local societies in various Slovak American settlements, with these states leading: 148 in Pennsylvania, 33 in New York, 30 in Ohio, 19 in Connecticut, 12 in New Jersey and

8 in Illinois. Others were found in Indiana, Wisconsin, Colorado, Maryland, Missouri, Minnesota, Iowa and elsewhere.

As early as 1887, St. Stephen's Society in Passaic, New Jersey, had raised the proposition of federating local lodges into larger and more effective units. From time to time the idea was again taken into consideration and it was given renewed endorsement but suitable action was not initiated. In 1888 Julius Schwartz-Markovič undertook more vigorous recommendations through his articles and editorials in *Nová vlast* (*The New Homeland*). Other leaders, notably Peter Rovnianek and B. Lajciak, warmly encouraged a program of this kind also.

Peter Rovnianek

Although there were differing opinions about a generally endorsed basic norm for unification, the wishful idea began to crystallize into reality by 1890. Peter Rovnianek, who stood for one massive organization under the banner of nationalism, took up the cause with flaming patriotism and tremendous enthusiasm. His eloquent appeals carried a ready conviction, and his personal magnetism began to attract growing support. Some, however, had more or less defined reservations about Rovnianek's liberal thinking and his expressed anti-clericalism. He professed non-sectarianism and advocated an attitude of neutrality in matters of church and state. Through it all, nevertheless, there were occasions when his crusade for impartiality and neutrality revealed his preferences for the purely secularist.

Father Kossalko and Father Bella

These priests led a campaign to foil Rovnianek's ambitions. They were churchmen of a gentry mentality, interested in preserving the Old World order and the interests of the Magyar government. They were apprehensive about the strength that the common man would have through the strength of a national organization interested in his welfare. In a newspaper of their own they bitterly assailed Rovnianek and the prospect of a national Slovak organization, even resorting to personal abuse and caustic disparagement in order to thwart the prospect of Slovak-American unity.

Paradoxically, the effort to create unity was characterized by extreme disunity and divisive hostility. Bitter differences in national feeling came to the fore and church loyalties developed into powerful polarizing factors. Catholic, Lutheran, and agnostic distrusted one another with inflexible tenacity. The outcome could have been not only critical but disastrous.

Father Furdek was not outside the sphere of this turmoil. He was convinced that the only solution to this impasse would lie in action to protect the loyalties of the immigrants for both their church and their nation. Though Rovnianek had magnanimously offered him the top position or office in his projected Slovak national society, he could not endorse Rovnianek's aspirations completely. Furdek believed that it would be best for the Slovaks in America to unite according to their church affiliations. Slovak Catholics needed a strong Catholic Slovak American organization and the Slovak Lutherans would definitely benefit from a united Slovak Lutheran organization. Others could

similarly work for a common objective, established on a firm unifying bond. There would be ample membership for all. Interacting among them would be their national spirit and their sense of identity in an adopted country. (Both the National Slovak Society and The First Catholic Union were mentioned briefly earlier. Here they are explained more fully and placed in a somewhat different context.)

The National Slovak Society

Supporters of Rovnianek's movement met in Allegheny, Pennsylvania on February 15, 1890 where they formally founded the National Slovak Society. The charter branches of this organization were represented by: Stephen Dravec of Hazleton, Pa.; Anton S. Ambrose of Plymouth, Pa.; Peter V. Rovnianek of Pittsburgh, Pa.; John Miller of Cleveland, Ohio; Reverend L. Novomesky, a Lutheran pastor of Freeland, Pa.; and John Rybar of Braddock, Pa.

Peter V. Rovnianek was elected president and he successfully guided the society for a number of years. The National Slovak Society adopted the motto: Liberty — Equality — Fraternity! Its expressed goals were:

To unite persons of Slovak and Slavonic ancestry in a fraternal benefit society;

To cherish among its members the language and traditions of their ancestors; to encourage respect for the land of their ancestors; and to foster pride in their ancestry;

To preach and practice the gospel of fraternity, charity and benevolence;

To uphold the Constitution of the United States of America and to preserve the democratic way of life;

To assist their kinsmen across the Atlantic in their efforts to make and keep their homeland, in the heart of Europe, a land of free men with free institutions;

To publish and circulate Slovak literature and to patronize Slovak arts and sciences; and

To protect its widowed, its orphaned, its sick, disabled, distressed and aged.

The First Catholic Slovak Union – Jednota

On May 5, 1889, the Slovaks of Cleveland met in a founding session and organized a local St. Joseph Society, much like the local societies in many other Slovak communities. Father Furdek was chosen president and James Gruss became vice-president. Bylaws for the society were drawn up by Father Furdek. Before long, however, Father Furdek yielded the presidency to Gruss because parish duties prevented him from attending meetings regularly.

Early in its history St. Joseph Society was approached by emissaries from the Rovnianek element in Pittsburgh. They were treated as guests and were given the privilege of addressing the assembled group in Cleveland but prematurely and

unbecomingly they presumed to indoctrinate the Cleveland Slovaks against priestly guidance. This experience made it clear that the influence of such agents could bring about alienation from the church, anticlericalism and eventually even agnosticism. Father Furdek's misgivings were not groundless and clearly it was time for decisive action.

At their meeting of April 13, 1890, St. Joseph Society of Cleveland voted unanimously for a mass meeting of American Slovaks on September 4, 1890. This historic gathering brought together representatives from many local societies in the United States. It became the founding session for a national organization of Slovak Catholics that is generally known as the Jednota (*Yed-no-ta*), a word which means unity or union. Officially it is called the First Catholic Slovak Jednota. The charter societies which had official representatives at this meeting were: St. Joseph, Cleveland, Ohio; St. Michael Archangel, Pittsburgh, Pa.; SS. Cyril and Methodius, Minneapolis, Minn.; St. Joseph, Pittsburgh-Allegheny, Pa.; St. Stephen, Olyphant, Pa.; St. Stephen the King, Streator, Ill.; Sacred Heart, Houtzdale, Pa.; and St. Wendel in, Wilkes-Barre, Pa.



Uniformed Slovak American Girls
representing the First Slovak Catholic Union
(in 1920's) (from Western Reserve Historical
Society Collection)

Father Furdek chaired this convention on his parish premises in Cleveland, and he presided at the elections which put the following in office: George Onda, president; John Bakos, vice-president; Reverend E. Gelhoff, recording secretary; J.A. Filek, financial secretary; John Prokopovic, treasurer; and Martin Slanina, auditor.

Membership in the Jednota was open to all who professed the Catholic faith and recognized the Pope as head of the Church. They could be either Roman or Byzantine Catholic. All members were bound to discharge their religious obligations

faithfully; enroll their children in Catholic schools; take an active part in parish life and contribute to the support of the church and school; and shun disrespect for and mockery of church services and ritual and never write in an anti-clerical or anti-Church spirit.

The motto of the Jednota was “For God and Nation!” The main objectives of the organization were to cherish and deepen one’s salutary faith; to support fellow members, their widows and orphans; and to defend and promote the Slovak language, to cultivate national consciousness and to cherish the Slovak cultural heritage.

Both the Jednota and the National Slovak Society promoted humanitarian, cultural and patriotic ideals. Both became a vital force in Slovak American life as well as in the history of the Slovak people in their homeland.

In its official 1974 edition of statistics, *The Fraternal Monitor* lists these figures for current standings of Slovak American fraternal societies:

<i>Name of Society</i>	<i>Certificates in force</i>	<i>Assets</i>	<i>Insurance in force</i>	<i>Net Interest Rate</i>
<i>First Cath. Sl. Ladies Ass'n. Organized in 1892</i>	105,053	\$52,872,733	\$127,010,506	5.58
<i>First Cath. Sl. Union (Jednota) Organized in 1890</i>	110,209	\$36,185,405	\$123,055,149	5.26
<i>Ladies Pa. Sl. Cath. Union Organized in 1900</i>	16,340	\$7,082,747	\$15,626,516	4.74
<i>National Slovak Society Organized in 1890</i>	24,601	\$10,414,028	\$26, 819,406	4.86
<i>Pa. Slovak Cath. Union Organized in 1893</i>	10,004	\$4,649,989	\$9,560,649	3.34
<i>Slovak Catholic Sokol Organized in 1905</i>	50,121	\$23,165,225	\$47,944,325	5.12

<i>Slovak Gymnastic Union Sokol Organized in 1912</i>	16,820	\$6,654,832	\$13,666,537	4.42
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This listing is merely representative of the organizational leaven that was at work among the Slovaks in America. It also reflects some of the survival capacity and suggests the growth potential maintained by not a few of the benevolent societies of the Slovaks in America.

Rovnianek himself did not hesitate to marvel at the real significance of what the Slovak element had dared and what it had achieved in this new world: “The National Slovak Society was the first organization in the history of the oppressed Slovak nation to raise high its national standard and to proclaim its Slovak character. Actually, before the founding of the National Slovak Society there was no Slovak organization whatever — neither in the Tatra lands nor in America.”

The combined strength of each organization, collating the membership of various branches and lodges, gave it enviable prestige, security and meaningfulness. Furthermore, in time of need or crisis, there was a distinct advantage in pooling the power of these distinct societies into a still more formidable body and an unmistakable manifestation of solidarity.

In 1897 Slovak American journalists established a committee to raise financial aid for the cause of supporting Slovak leaders undergoing persecution in the homeland. In 1905 thirteen

organizations and nine newspapers sent representatives to New York to form a similar committee for a like purpose. In the following year there was a meeting of Slovak priests in Wilkes-Barre, Pa., to protest the brutality of the Černová massacre in Slovakia and to launch a Catholic Congress on behalf of religious and national interests, creating a public manifestation of protest against injustice at home. Because those in the homeland were forcibly silenced, the Slovaks in America felt a moral obligation to raise their voices in a loud and justified outcry against injustice and inhumanity.

In 1907 a National Slovak Congress was convened. It was a historic event which demonstrated a tremendous witnessing of Slovak American unity publicly appealing against the inhuman violation of rights suffered by the Slovaks as a minority in Austria-Hungary. Over 10,000 Slovaks of all religious denominations converged upon Cleveland for this spirited rally. They came from all parts of the United States. The Connellsville, Pa. area arranged for a train of 16 passenger cars to transport those who wished to participate.

The Slovak League of America

Created in the enthusiasm of the Cleveland Slovak National Congress of 1907, the League is a mighty Slovak American politico-cultural body pledged to care for and promote the welfare of Slovakia and its aspirations for statehood and to cultivate the Slovak heritage and Slovak interests in the United States.

Early in the 20th century Magyar oppressive forces in Europe realized that some significant counter-movements from the United States were championing the cause of their Slovak subjects, bound in such fast serfdom that they were unable to resist on their own behalf. Magyar power saw that the Slovaks who had migrated to America where they thrived in the spirit of freedom and democracy had acquired a vitalizing sense of national consciousness and self-worth. They were ready to secure alleviation for their countrymen and their national institutions in the homeland.

Even before the Slovak National Congress in Cleveland, as it has been noted, the Slovaks worked through their local and national societies which by this time had a combined membership of more than a hundred thousand. In the single year 1906, Slovak Americans managed to send their homeland over seventy thousand crowns for political and national endeavors. Besides this financial aid, they offered invaluable moral support as well. Sadly enough, this unprecedented show of self-defense only bred harsher reprisals from the Magyars. It would have been unworthy of the Slovaks to accept further oppression and humiliation with mute meekness and an abject attitude of fatalism.

The Slovaks of America had to act for the homeland. To be at all effective, however, their action had to be unified. Years before this, they learned through forming their national fraternal societies, that in union there is strength. Yet as early as 1897 when the Lattimer Massacre in Pennsylvania drew blood, took a toll of lives, and in its aftermath staged a travesty of legal

justice, they came to a conviction that they needed more than national fraternal. They had to have a corporate union of all organizations, of all fraternal and of all cultural bodies. Local protest meetings and regional public demonstrations against the political injustices of the Magyars were effective in their own way, but it was time for a climax.

On the initiative of Father Furdek such a movement became a historic reality on May 26, 1907, when the National Slovak Congress was convened in Gray's Armory in Cleveland. More important than the mammoth attendance of individuals was the meaningful founding of the *Slovak League of America*. In it was coordinated the combined strength and prestige of all Slovak American organizations, for in it were concentrated the ideals and the objectives of The National Slovak Society, The First Catholic Slovak Jednota, The Slovak Evangelical Union, The Slovak Gymnastic Union Sokol, The Catholic Slovak Ladies Union, The Independent National Slovak Society, The Ladies Pa. Slovak Catholic Union, Sojuz, The Cleveland Slovak Union, The Passaic Slovak Union, Zivena, and The Ladies Evangelical Slovak Union.

Together with its ladies auxiliary *Včielky* (*Bees*), the Slovak League of America has achieved inestimable good on two continents as it continues to be the embodiment of the collective idealism and dynamism of leading Slovak American organizations, publications, and journalists united in a common cause.

The intrepid Father Furdek inspired the philosophy of fruitful action for the Slovak League of America when he urged that

the proceedings of the founding session concern themselves not with, demeaning invectives and useless complaints but with effective action and with wholehearted non-partisan measures for achieving the greatest possible good on behalf of the suffering nation. The immediate objective was to work decisively for the liberation of Slovakia, “for the glorious day of the Slovak nation’s resurrection.”

The official publication of the Slovak League of America is the annual titled *Slovakia*. It is an English journal currently in its twenty-fifth volume. Because of its valuable historic content and excellent quality, this periodical is read not only by members of the League, but it is also welcomed in outstanding American libraries, colleges, and universities where it is often used as a reliable resource tool.

The Slovak League of America has a rich history of accomplishments on two continents. Much of the burden of events leading up to and culminating in the creation of Czecho-Slovakia in 1918 fell to the lot of the Slovak League of America and its capable leaders. Often the League speaks out fearlessly on behalf of the Slovak nation denied a voice to speak for itself.

This unique Slovak American organization alone forms a substantive chapter in the history of Slovak and Slovak-American development. This limited survey cannot do justice to all its meritorious accomplishments beginning with its action to liberate Slovakia and continuing through the noteworthy events of the Memorandum of 1914-1915, the Cleveland Agreement of 1915, the American delegations that were sent abroad on political missions, the meeting with General M.R. Štefánik in

America, the valuable volunteer service and financial aid given in both World War conflicts, the Million Dollar Drive, the Pittsburgh Agreement of 1918, the reception of Monsignor Hlinka in the United States, the creation of the Slovak state, the 1945 Washington Resolution, the work of the Slovak National Council and the Slovak Liberation Committee, Youth Conferences and cultural programs.

The Slovak Catholic Federation of America

When there were evident signs that liberalism and a host of secular forces were at work not only to damage the Christian way of life among many immigrants but even to attract them into joining questionable activities and circles, it was time for establishing deterrents to such perils.

On the invitation of Father Murgas, a conference was held in Wilkes-Barre, Pa. on February 22, 1911. Bishop Michael J. Hoban of Scranton, Pa. and Bishop Joseph M. Koudelka, Auxiliary Bishop of Cleveland (later Ordinary of Superior, Wisc.) on this occasion joined an assemblage of 36 Slovak priests and 200 delegates to discuss effective means of strengthening the loyalties of Slovak Catholics to their faith and to explore suitable projects on behalf of Slovak youth.

The founding of the Slovak Catholic Federation was the outcome of these deliberations. It was conceived as an organization of laymen working with the clergy to protect and promote morality, faith, Christian education, a Catholic press and good works.

Over the years it has achieved many of its fine ideals. Reviewing some of its accomplishments we may note:

Support of the Catholic publishing institute Society of St. Adalbert in Trnava, Slovakia, and aid to impoverished churches in Slovakia after World War I;

During and after World War II, notable aid through a Slovak Catholic relief association formed under the auspices of the NCWC on behalf of war-ravaged Slovakia and its widely scattered refugees;

Assistance for Slovak students at seminaries in Rome, preparing for an eventual apostolate in Slovakia (The Slovak Institute of SS. Cyril and Methodius and the Pontifical Nepomucenum);

Promotion and enrichment of the heritage of SS. Cyril and Methodius;

Maintenance of an American cultural committee to honor and preserve Slovak Catholic traditions and to circulate Catholic literature;

Consistent cooperation with other federated Catholic societies in America; and

Fostering Catholic youth activities among persons of Slovak origins.

Cultural Growth

Although the Slovaks of America had become deeply involved in the needs of their nation and their countrymen abroad, they did not overlook or neglect issues that concerned them in the United States. They had survived the heartbreak stage of initial adjustment. Their hard work brought them steady earnings out of which they provided for the betterment of their families and tried to put by some savings. Through their fraternal organizations and their press they were developing self-awareness and genuine pride of nation. They had built churches of their own in many localities. They were sharing the American way of life, venturing into little business establishments and becoming naturalized citizens. All this was to the good but the question of schools and education still waited for attention.

Until this problem could be dealt with directly, there were still other attempts to foster culture. Annuals or almanacs were published by various fraternal organizations and societies. Occasionally a literary or a historical book or a collection of songs was published. There were also handbooks on health,

personal hygiene, and citizenship as well as dictionaries, grammars and textbooks.

American Matica Slovenska

In 1893 Father Furdek tried to establish an American counterpart of the European cultural society *Matica Slovenska* (Slovak Cultural Institute which was founded by Bishop Moyses in 1863). The American *Matica* was incorporated in Columbus, Ohio on October 26, 1893, and with understanding and wholehearted support it could have proved itself. Unfortunately, Rovnianek, who had participated in the founding of the American *Matica*, inexplicably countered this excellent undertaking by organizing *The Beacon, a Literary Circle* (*Majak*) on February 18, 1894.

Either undertaking could have netted results to be proud of, but a disunited effort divided and splintered the potentialities, the interest, the assets, and the prospects of success for both. Ultimately neither of these attempts was able to achieve its best fruits because labor troubles, especially the Connellsville mine strike, claimed prime attention among working classes. Culture will not thrive in a climate of conflict, unrest, worry and insecurity. Furthermore, as long as rivalries claimed the loyalties of the people, this distraction drained away the best energies of the people's able leaders and untold good was sacrificed.

Schools

Early in Slovak American history, children did not enjoy the opportunity to go to school. Little boys who had come to America with the early immigrants were put to work. Mine bosses needed them for jobs at the breaker, splitting some of the larger lumps that came up from the deep mines and separating the slag and stone from the coal. Their families needed the extra pay that such work would bring, much as they would have liked to see the boys educated in the American way. No doubt, some families accepted the practice because at first they looked upon it as just a temporary arrangement. It seemed to be a faster way of making the savings that they hoped to take back to the homeland on their return.

Times changed, however, and it became apparent that many would stay on in America and make permanent homes here. It was clear too that if the best values of the Slovak people were to be preserved and strengthened, it was vital to provide schools for the children. In their new world the young needed to enrich their minds with all that American schools offered but they were

aliens among other children, exposed to all the cruelties that children can so readily inflict on those whom they do not accept because they are “different,” because they are at a disadvantage with a language barrier, or because their ways and culture are strange in a new world.

Concerned pastors recognized what this situation meant. They understood this too: if the next generation and succeeding generations were to remain loyal to their faith and their ancestral roots, they would have to have suitable educational opportunities. If adults already showed signs of becoming halfhearted about church attendance and personal spirituality because the problems, the pressures, and the influence of their environment were encroaching on their sense of lasting values, what would happen to the young without adequate training?

When Father Gelhoff came to St. Stephen’s in Streator, Illinois in 1887, he had the vision to see what needed to be done first. Since the parish had a church that served the worship needs of the time, it was advisable to look to the future.

School Beginnings

Since 1886 Joseph Yambra, a St. Stephen’s parishioner who was a teacher, had been conducting some classes for children in his own home. This was a fair beginning but it was not enough. In 1888 Father Gelhoff built a parish school and two teachers from the parish, Joseph Yambra and Adalbert Kroener, were in charge of instruction in it until arrangements were made with the Sisters of St. Francis from Joliet, Illinois, to staff the school

permanently. This was, no doubt, the first Slovak elementary school in the United States.

St. Michael, Braddock, Pa.

A sizable and growing settlement of Slovaks were engaged in the steel works as early as 1880. By 1890 they founded St. Michael Society which was incorporated into the Jednota within a year. One of their first group concerns was to save voluntary contributions out of which they purchased a Protestant church in 1890 and renovated it to serve as St. Michael's Catholic church. Bishop Phelan endorsed their efforts and in 1891 Reverend Raymund Wider came to Braddock as the pastor of St. Michael's. He was the first pastor of the first Slovak parish in the Pittsburgh diocese. This founding of St. Michael's was a typical pattern for the founding of many Slovak parishes in America.

In 1896 Reverend Albert Kazinczy became the pastor of St. Michael's. Although he was just a recently ordained priest, he was a capable administrator and he was convinced that the parish had to make some worthwhile provisions for educating children. This was not a newly discovered need. It had been discussed and reviewed on many occasions. Providing classrooms or building a school for a waiting student body was not a problem of unusual proportions, but it would take at least a minor miracle to staff a school adequately.

At various priests' conferences it was generally agreed that parish schools would thrive best under the management and tutelage of teaching orders of Sisters. Father Kazinczy was

convinced of this too, but there were no prospects of finding such Sisters to teach the children of Slovak immigrants. To make a beginning, he started with his organists as temporary instructors.

The Sisters Come

After repeated appeals and much negotiating with the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul in Hungary, he finally welcomed five of these Sisters who came from abroad to take charge of his school. They set in motion a parochial school system in the soft coal area and became well established in the United States. Unfortunately, their numbers were limited and they could hardly meet the needs of the Braddock area.

Despite the teacher shortage, more and more schools were becoming a reality, and temporary arrangements were made for conducting classes while hope grew stronger that proper provisions would be made as soon as circumstances permitted. In 1900 Reverend Bartholomew Kvitek opened St. Michael's school in Chicago. In 1912 Reverend Louis Biskupski built a three story ten classroom school at St. Stephen's in Streator.

Other religious denominations also undertook the founding of elementary schools. A Lutheran school was begun by Reverend L. Novomesky in Newark, New Jersey.

The Pastor's Burden

In some localities provisions were made for at least Sunday

School instruction. Usually this responsibility fell to the pastor himself. Attempts were made also to have the children receive instruction in Slovak reading, grammar, singing, and catechetics once or twice a week after regular school hours or on Saturday afternoon. The parish organist often assisted the pastor with these classes and took pride in his role as teacher. But despite this help, it is undeniable that it was too much to expect the priest to be the spiritual leader and minister, organizer, counselor, fund raiser, laborer, teacher and whatever the need of the hour might require of him. The message was loud and clear that full time Slovak Catholic schools were an essential part of every parish unit.

Two major obstacles challenged the realization of such a blessing. There was no corps of bilingual teachers for these prospective schools and neither school buildings nor funds for building schools were available among the struggling Slovak workers, many of whom very likely were considering a return to their native land as soon as they had improved their economic condition. Besides, in their homeland, schools and churches were supported by a patron or by public funds. Rarely did parishioners bear this burden. The American idea was strange to them and the building of schools was still something that they felt they could not afford. Here again it fell to the lot of the pastor to educate the immigrants and to help them adopt measures for educating their children in American schools even at the cost of additional sacrifice.

Father Matthew Jankola

Concerned pastors often analyzed this problem individually as well as collectively. Fathers Pavčo, Jankola, Murgaš, Martinček, Pavolčík, Stas, Furdek, and others repeatedly probed the school question and gave it much thought but the most energetic and determined action was undertaken by Father Matthew Jankola. After several serious disappointments, he finally had the joy of placing several candidates under the training and formation program of Mother Mary Cyril, Superior General of the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary at Marywood College in Scranton, Pa.

Teaching Sisters

Mother Cyril's charismatic gifts of the spirit made her the ideal co-worker with Father Jankola. She provided the gentle and understanding details to complement his vigorous breadth of vision. She arranged and carried out the program of sound preparation as he envisioned the ideal realized. Out of their combined and blessed efforts a new American foundation of teaching Sisters, the Congregation of the Sisters of SS. Cyril and Methodius was established in 1909. This religious society is the first Slovak community of Sisters in the history of the Church, for although many Sisters devoted their lives in various apostolates in Slovakia and attracted thousands of recruits to their ranks, they were all branches of existing foundations that had roots in some other country or national group.

Out of the original band of three young Slovak American Sisters,

the congregation has grown into a community of over 400 with headquarters at the motherhouse in Danville, Pa. Today the Sisters of SS. Cyril and Methodius work in the teaching and nursing apostolates in seven states of our country. They teach in 30 parish schools, 8 high schools and one boarding and day academy. They also conduct a psycho-educational clinic and a music conservatory, serve the aged in 3 homes, and devote themselves to a special undertaking to preserve the Slovak cultural heritage at Jankola Library, a center rich in Slovak and Slavic resource materials — books, newspapers, periodicals, pamphlets, annuals, phonograph records, tapes, slides, and so on.

Other Slovak religious communities that either came from abroad or evolved out of parent foundations also undertook teaching in parish schools. Among them are several branches of Franciscan Sisters (Pittsburgh, Bethlehem, Lacon); Dominican Sisters from Oxford, Michigan; Benedictines of Oak Forest, Illinois; Vincention Sisters of Charity (Pittsburgh, Pa. and Bedford, Ohio).

Educational Progress

By the mid 1920's there were over 50 Slovak Catholic parish schools in the United States. The Chicago school of St. Michael the Archangel at that time had an enrollment of 1,250 students. Several others had 500 students or more. St. Cyril Academy was opened in 1922 and Benedictine High was opened in 1927. In 1938 K. Culen wrote that the Slovaks in America had schools staffed by

over 500 Sisters of various communities teaching well over 50,000 students.

Out of really meager statistics on this point, we glean the information that Slovak Lutherans had 3 full time schools and about 30 summer schools. They also had arrangements in about 40 locations for Slovak classes on Saturdays and Sundays.

Benedictine Influence

Very many young men of Slovak origin who went on for professional training found excellent opportunities at St. Procopius College in Lisle, Illinois, conducted by Czech Benedictine Fathers. Under their fine guidance this college promoted instruction in Slovak arts, literature, language, and history, and it cultivated an excellent spirit among young men of Slovak families. It graduated a great number of well trained Slovak priests, doctors, lawyers, business administrators and professional people in many fields. (The present Slovak Benedictine St. Benedict's Abbey in Cleveland is an offshoot of the St. Procopius Benedictine.)

A similar center was St. Vincent's in Latrobe, Pa., a Benedictine institute with monks of mixed nationalities. Hundreds of Slovak young men graduated from St. Vincent's. Academic instruction was often supplemented by the activities of various literary and reading circles, dramatic clubs, music and fine arts societies, and choral groups. In the course of its history, St. Vincent's had a number of Slovak priests on its staff. After the St. Thomas Literary and Homiletic Society was established, the Slovak

division devoted part of its Sunday afternoon meeting time to guidance and practice in delivering Slovak sermons. Most of the Slovak priests of the Pittsburgh diocese were alumni of St. Vincent's College.

Adult Education and Cultural Extension

As it became clear that America would be the permanent home of many Slovak immigrants, many leaders encouraged the working man to apply for naturalization. In many localities arrangements were made for adult education classes and many Slovak newspapers and publications carried articles on American history, government, and citizenship. Appropriate handbooks were also prepared in Slovak so that the basic information could be readily assimilated without language problems. The next step would be for the applicant for citizenship to express himself in English on subjects from this reserve of knowledge.

All those who prepared themselves for naturalization and attained their goal were proud of their American citizenship and could confidently identify themselves with all that characterizes the American citizen, his duties, and his privileges.

Other interests also attracted many to cultural matters. In some localities there were reading clubs. Some groups of young ladies cultivated crafts and arts with special attention to typical Slovak embroidery, concentrating on folk designs, characteristic stitches and techniques, and the use of traditional colors.

Most popular of all were choral and dramatic societies. Every

sizable community of Slovaks enjoyed staging a play or several dramatic and choral programs every year. Cleveland, for example, had a well-known singing group called "*Krivan*." It was founded by culturally minded members of the National Slovak Society on January 28, 1906, and distinguished itself singularly under the professionally gifted director Dr. M. Francisci and his successors. From time to time its presentations were supplemented by dramatic numbers.

Another outstanding group was the church choir organized by Father Jankola in Bridgeport, Conn. For the training and advancement of this society, the pastor sent the promising young George Lukac to St. Procopius College in Lisle, Ill. for specialized music study. After completing the prescribed courses, Lukac had a brilliant career as parish organist and director of church music, classical song, and folk music at St. Cyril's parish. Years later Lukac transferred to Cleveland, Ohio, where he and his son continued their musical careers with great success.

In 1921 Cleveland's branch of the Slovak League of America founded *Stefanikov Kruzok*, the Stefanik Circle, with a dual purpose. It was to take an active interest in promoting Slovak dramatic art and entertainment, and it was to raise funds for erecting a public memorial in honor of the Slovak diplomat, aviator and soldier General Milan R. Stefanik. All the members studied and worked with great enthusiasm and talent. They took pride in producing many theatrical numbers and in wearing hand embroidered costumes of typical Slovak fashion whenever they appeared as a formal group presenting a program of Slovak

dance and song. They produced a significant number of plays and concerts and by 1924 they had the satisfaction of celebrating a gala event: the unveiling of a handsome statue of Stefanik in Cleveland's Wade Park. By 1952 they were still an active group of about 70 members devoted to Slovak American cultural interests.

From live theater it was just a step to programs on the air when communication arts moved into radio and television. As a matter of fact, Slovak Americans participate not only in broadcasting cultural programs and having their share of technical experts who assist in producing programs, but they can also pride themselves on the achievements of Father Joseph Murgaš who has a number of U.S. patents to support his success in devising the tone system of wireless telegraphy or radio work which preceded and excelled the efforts of Marconi. His experimental work was done in Wilkes-Barre, but the fruit of his research and technical skill has gone to all parts of the world. Today many broadcasting stations throughout the United States produce a Slovak radio hour regularly on a weekly schedule or several times a week.

Part IV: The Slovak Community of Cleveland

Building a New Life

Slovaks began arriving in Cleveland in the 1870's, and shortly thereafter started to establish the components of their communities. Settling chiefly near their place of work, they established fraternals reflecting their religious orientation, which in turn, led to the founding of parishes of the same persuasion. Once distinct communities began to appear, they were then bolstered by a vigorous national and local press.

First Jobs

The earliest Slovak immigrants to Cleveland came in the 1870's, and settled on the banks of the Cuyahoga River. Jan Pankuch, the first historian of this group recorded that Jan Roskos arrived in the city in 1874, followed shortly thereafter by Jan Leheta. In 1880 Jacob Gruss, with his wife, having decided to by-pass the mining regions of Pennsylvania, came to Cleveland on the suggestion of a Bohemian employment agent who advised them to go to the new city of Cleveland, where there was lots of work. They came and were followed by others in search of

work. Though many had been farmers, they opted to supply the unskilled labor required for Cleveland's growing industry, which included machine shops, foundries, steel mills, and manufacturing plants. Some of these plants were: American Steel and Wire Co., the Corrigan-McKinney Co., the Cleveland Hardware Co., the Ferry Cap and Screw Co., the National Carbon Co., the Mechanical Rubber Co., and the Upson Nut Co.

Finding a Home

Finding themselves in a land full of strangers, Cleveland Slovaks, like immigrants before them, banded together in boardinghouses. One of the first arrivals reported that he found lodging in such an establishment run by Poles, and he shared the same bed with four other men. Others found shelter in Czech or German houses, depending upon which language the immigrants could handle. Once an enterprising Slovak acquired an apartment of his own, he would usually keep only the kitchen and one other room for his family and rent out the rest. In this way, his wife would care for five or six boarders and contribute to the family income. Once the family had saved enough money, they might buy the house and continue to rent out rooms. Consequently, Slovaks congregated in certain houses on certain streets and the original community was born.

My String Is Red

Life in a boardinghouse proved to be quite regimented. The men rose at five-thirty in the morning, the housewife cooked them a hearty breakfast that often included steak (beef cost only 5-10¢

a pound in the 1880's, depending upon the cut) and she also packed them a lunch pail that contained some sort of "goulash" (stew). While the men worked at their 10 or 12-hour shifts in the refineries or mills, the women did their laundry, cleaned the house and prepared supper. For this meal the housewife provided soup, meat, potatoes, vegetables, bread, and dessert with coffee. Sometimes the boarders insisted on buying their own cuts of meat and the housewife marked them with colored thread in order to correctly identify them after cooking. In the evening the boarders might entertain themselves in a nearby saloon, or play cards or attend a lodge meeting.

On Sundays the entire family usually went to church, although some boarders preferred to remain at home and drink kegs of beer bought at specially-reduced rates the night before. The cost of living in such an establishment varied from 50 cents to \$2 a week, depending upon the size of the rooms, the number of beds, and the services offered.



A ceramic plate from Modra

Early Societies

The new immigrant faced many problems: handling the unavoidable trauma of personal adjustment to a new land while enduring a painful separation from home and family ties; learning to cope with the ironic bigotry and bias which was also part of the American experience for many immigrants, experiencing social injustice and hardship in his day-to-day work experiences. So, it was natural that the men began to group themselves into clubs and organizations of various sorts where they would seriously discuss common needs and interests. Out of these gatherings grew the incentive not only to undertake the building of local Slovak churches but also the realization to organize benefit societies for mutual assistance in time of sickness and disaster.

Since industrialists who employed immigrants offered no social services whatsoever (nor did the state or federal governments), the earliest arrivals banded together and created their own. As early as 1883 Slovaks in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and in New York City established fraternal-benefit societies. These were

modeled on Old World craft guilds or societies of unskilled workers which had existed since the Middle Ages. Their major purpose was to offer comfort through fellowship and financial aid in case of sickness, maiming, or death. By 1890 more than forty such societies existed in the growing Slovak communities of the Northeast. Meeting on Sundays in someone's parlor, members of fraternities discoursed in their native languages, ate familiar food, and enjoyed the feeling of togetherness. Among the earliest societies established by the Slovak immigrants were these:

- 1883 — The First Slovak Health Benefit Society — New York City
- 1883 — St. John Society — Bridgeport, Connecticut
- 1884 — Slovak Roman Catholic Beneficial Society of St. Stephen — Cleveland, Ohio
- 1884 — St. Stephen Society — Passaic, New Jersey
- 1884 — Church and Health Benefit Society — Hazleton, Pennsylvania
- 1885 — Fraternity of the Sacred Heart — Houtzdale, Pennsylvania
- 1886 — Society of St. Stephen — Plymouth, Pennsylvania
- 1886 — Society of SS. Peter and Paul — Scranton, Pennsylvania
- 1887 — Society of Prince Rudolph — Bayonne, New Jersey
- 1887 — Society of St. Joseph — Yonkers, New York
- 1888 — First Coopers Mutual Aid Society — Bayonne, New Jersey
- 1888 — Society of SS. Cyril and Methodius — Minneapolis, Minnesota
- 1888 — Slovak Society of SS. Peter and Paul — McKeesport, Pennsylvania

Every local society developed in its own unique way, but the common unifying impulse came from the prompting to provide support and help in time of need. On the death of a member, a local lodge felt honor-bound to arrange for a becoming funeral. As a matter of fact, it was usually an impressive funeral. Uniformed lodge members assembled to pay their last respects. They marched to church and to the cemetery “in corpore” with flag and cross leading the procession and a band playing suitable music.

In the beginning, the organization of these societies was rather loose and somewhat insecure. Members paid 14 cents a month to cover administrative expenses, and every member contributed a suitable offering to meet the financial burden of sickness and burial as these sad occasions arose. Before long, however (1906), it became apparent that this was an impractical arrangement, for when troubles came in greater numbers, the call of charity to make repeated contributions to those in need became somewhat taxing. Wise leaders advised the lodges to adopt a more reliable and soundly efficient system. This idea gained further support and was endorsed from other areas too.



Slovak ornament

Cleveland Fraternalists

The St. Stephen Society was started in Cleveland by Father Stephen Furdek, Andrej Sotak, and half a dozen other men on June 5, 1885. It had a twofold function — to collect dues and pay social insurance if a member fell ill and to foster a Catholic way of life. In order to bolster its financial resources, it affiliated with the already-existing Central Czech Union in 1889.

St. Joseph Society

Other fraternalists that appeared in Cleveland remained in the Slovak camp, although religious differences divided them. On July 28, 1889, a group of religiously non-affiliated laymen founded a National Slovak Society and appealed to Catholics in the city to join it in an even wider union that, besides providing fraternal insurance, would work for national causes and downplay religion. Catholics, led by Father Furdek and Jakub Gruss, met with this society on May 5, 1890, listened to its leaders and decided that they were too anti-clerical. These Catholics then established the Society of St. Joseph which

subsequently attracted church-goers into its ranks. This action foreshadowed the permanent splintering of the Slovak community along religious and secular lines. The secular fraternal adopted the name “Garfield” and joined, as branch number four, the newly-created non-denominational National Slovak Society of the United States of America headquartered in Pittsburgh.

The St. Joseph Society then led a group of other fraternalists in founding the First Catholic Slovak Union in September 1890. As the moving force behind this venture, the St. Joseph Society made itself branch number one and established the national headquarters in Cleveland. Similarly, local Lutherans who had established their own Holy Trinity Society on February 14, 1892, helped form the Slovak Evangelical Union of the United States and became branch number three of this organization.

National Slovak Society

The national movement to unite Slovaks was begun in Pittsburgh in May of 1890. “The National Slovak Society of the United States of America” was the name chosen, and, by its name, it reveals a people who were aware of their national roots, but, who were just as aware of a desire to be true Americans. However, this is even more apparent in an examination of its constitution and bylaws of 1916:

Aims: “To educate the Slovak immigrants, who, being victims of unfavorable political conditions in their own country, were deprived of the means of education

and culture; to make of its members all sons of their nation; to teach them to love their adopted country and to become useful citizens of this Republic; to help one another in sickness and distress and to help the widows and orphans when their breadwinners have passed away.”

Duties: “He must lead a moral life, make an honest living, and refrain from acts which would bring disgrace upon the National Slovak Society, and dishonor to the Slovak race. It shall be the duty of every member to become a citizen of the United States within six years after his admission to the Society. If he neglects to do so, a complaint shall be filed against him in the Supreme Court.”

First Catholic Slovak Union

While laudable in many ways (we especially enjoy the part where a complaint would be filed against anyone who did not become a citizen within six years), the Slovak Catholics of Cleveland under Father Stephen Furdek, finding the society too secular in nature and even anti-clerical, established another national society called the “First Catholic Slovak Union” which was to be considered Father Furdek’s single greatest achievement among the very many he accomplished. The membership was limited to Roman Catholics or Greek Catholics in good standing anywhere in the United States. The official organ *Jednota* (Union) was also started by Father Furdek and was edited in Cleveland by him continuously for the first ten years. While Cleveland still remains the national headquarters of the lodge, *Jednota* is now published in Middletown, Pennsylvania. It is interesting to note here that the “First

Catholic Slovak Union” and its sister organization “First Catholic Slovak Ladies Union” make Cleveland the headquarters of the two largest Slovak organizations in the free world. (The national conference on Slovak ethnicity held in the 70’s in Cleveland under the sponsorship of the Slovak League of America, focused the attention of Slovaks from all over the country on Cleveland.)

Today, the First Catholic Slovak Union has grown to over 115,000 members in 975 lodges located throughout the United States and Canada, with 40 of these lodges located in Cleveland. These are among its many activities up to and including recent times:

1. Made contributions in excess of six million dollars to enrich Catholic Slovak culture in America;
2. Supports the only Slovak Catholic Orphanage in the United States in Middletown, Pennsylvania;
3. Built the Chapel of Our Mother of Sorrows in the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C.;
4. Maintains the Jednota Museum and Archives Institute which keeps historical records of the Slovak people; and
5. Made contributions to the building of SS. Cyril and Methodius Seminary in Rome where young men are trained to be priests so that one day they can serve Slovakia when it is free of Communism.

Slovak Gymnastic Sokol

To provide physical culture and training, the Slovak Gymnastic Sokol was established on July 4, 1896 in Perth Amboy, New Jersey. By 1918 there were chapters in New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Illinois. A similar organization limited to a Catholic membership called “The Roman and Greek Catholic Gymnastic Sokol Union” was organized in 1905. Both of these national organizations have chapters in Cleveland.

Slovak Women’s Fraternals

Slovak women also founded fraternals along secular or religious lines. The non-denominational “Zivena” of Pittsburgh established a branch (number four) in Cleveland in 1891 while Catholic women in 1892 banded together under Father Furdek and Anna Hruban to form the First Catholic Slovak Ladies Union with national headquarters in this city. By 1930 Cleveland had more than one hundred fraternals, most of them affiliated with larger national bodies and split on religious or non-denominational lines. The religious societies, however, enrolled the majority of Slovaks, whether locally or elsewhere.

The early fraternals led a very colorful, if disciplined, life. For former peasants it was honorific to be elected “president” or “secretary” of such an institution. They took their work seriously, presiding over weekly meetings as a judge might preside over court. The secretary, forced to keep clear and accurate minutes, not only improved his knowledge of Slovak

grammar in America but also learned to write more elegantly. Orderly debate taught these men how to deal with the larger society around them, especially the political parties. Then too, the presence of a lodge “marshall” (bounder) led to respect for the decisions handed down by the officers and, hence, respect for the law.



First Executive Committee of Slovak Women's Union

Besides dealing with the normal lodge business of collecting dues and paying out insurance, fraternalists also contributed to the social life of the community. They organized dances, balls, picnics, plays, singing societies, athletic events and bands. Many had their own colorful uniforms and on special Sundays would lead a parade around their church. They also enforced the observance of religious customs such as confessions and communion at Christmas and Easter, by fining any member who shirked his duty. Indeed, they often had reciprocal arrangements

with other lodges (even those of another ethnic group) whereby members pledged to attend each other's special functions and were fined if they did not. Such lodge activities went a long way in promoting strong group solidarity.



The Church

After organizing their fraternal-benefit societies, the immigrants lost no time in erecting the symbol and center of their fellowship — the church. Whether Catholics (eighty percent of all Slovaks belong to this denomination), Lutherans or Calvinists, Slovaks in both worlds have long treasured their parishes.

Several dozen families, usually acting on their own initiative, would buy lots, construct buildings, and advertise in the Old World press for priests (the advertisement usually promised an annual income of \$500, five times the amount the average priest could make in Hungary), with the result that as early as 1885 there was a functioning Slovak parish in the anthracite town of Hazleton, Pennsylvania.

In 1882 Father Jaskovic had come in response to the request of the Slovaks in Hazleton. He gave them his whole-hearted cooperation in founding St. Joseph's parish. By June 1885, the cornerstone of a simple wooden church was blessed and laid with due solemnity. On December 5, 1885, the first Mass was

celebrated in the first Slovak Catholic Church in the United States.

A similar undertaking was in progress among the Slovaks of Streator in Illinois, as an energetic community built St. Stephen's Church and celebrated their first Mass on December 11, 1885. The Slovak Lutherans of Streator had their first services in a church of their own on October 5, 1884. Also in Pennsylvania, Freeland and Nanticoke had a Lutheran Church built in 1886. These early churches were modest buildings but, over the years since these unpretentious beginnings, the Slovaks have built an impressive number of extra-ordinarily inspiring and architecturally distinguished churches in America.

However, such lay independence alarmed the largely Irish hierarchy of America which quickly asserted its supremacy over the new parishes and by so doing angered the founders. In the Old World, the faithful had observed, that if a noble built and supported a church, he could demand the appointment or removal of a pastor at will. In the United States laymen who built their own churches assumed that the same rights of "lay patronage" were theirs. Irish Bishops in America disagreed, and almost every Slovak community in the United States witnessed a struggle for control over the parish and its treasury. The combatants were usually a lay-dominated parish committee and the priest, who was supported by the Bishop. These struggles lasted throughout the first generation of immigration. The second generation, reared in America and educated by Irish nuns, who staffed most of the parochial schools, gave up the fight.

In spite of such problems, the parish, in conjunction with its several fraternal-benefit societies, became the center of Slovak communal life. Here the people congregated on Sundays, worshipped in their native tongue, socialized after church, held lodge meetings in the church basement and planned community affairs. The highlight of parish solidarity occurred at weddings and christenings. On such occasions several hundred people gathered to eat, drink and dance to the good fortune of the couple involved and the atmosphere of the Old World village was almost reborn.

Such celebrations were soon buttressed by more professional activities. In Cleveland, for instance, St. Ladislav and St. Martin parishes very early established singing societies, bands and dramatic clubs. These were usually appendages of fraternal societies, especially of their junior branches, and they helped preserve and promote the solidarity of the community and its culture. By the early 20th century virtually every parish engaged in such activities. And, although the practice has declined somewhat in recent years, the community still holds an annual “Slovak Day” at St. Joseph’s parish in Parma and the General Milan R. Stefanik Dramatic Circle still sponsors the occasional play.

Father Stephen Furdek

Catholic Slovaks in Cleveland had the good fortune of finding a capable priest very early, but ironically, he did not come to minister to them but to the rapidly growing Bohemian (Czech) parishes. Bishop Gilmour of Cleveland’s Roman Catholic Diocese had petitioned Prague to send a priest for the Bohemian

people, and Father Furdek, although a Slovak seminarian only 24 years old was chosen to answer the call. He was ordained here in 1882 in St. Wenceslas Parish and became its pastor. Two years later he was commissioned to establish the new Bohemian parish of Our Lady of Lourdes where he remained until his death on January 18, 1915.

A man of large ability and executive talent, he not only successfully performed his appointed work among the Bohemians, but from the outset, he began to minister to the needs of the Slovak people. It was not long before he became a national figure among the Slovaks and was everywhere affectionately known as "The Father of the Slovaks."



Rev. Štefan Furdek



Rev. Matthew Jankola

St. Ladislav

In 1885 Father Furdek began holding Slovak services regularly in the chapel of the Franciscan Brothers on Woodland Avenue, bringing together into a religious body the little group of Slovaks in Cleveland at the time. They, like the Czechs, had settled in the district around Hill, Berg, and Fourth Streets, but, at the urging of Father Furdek, moved to the then outskirts of the city along Buckeye Road and parallel streets from about East 78th Street to Woodhill Road. The settlement grew quickly and

in 1887 a fund for a church was begun. The first church, St. Ladislav (named after a Magyar saint), was a combined effort of the Slovaks and Magyars who also lived in the neighborhood. Father Furdek then went to Slovakia and brought them their first pastor, Jan Matron. But, it was not long before difficulties arose between the two groups, and the Bishop of Cleveland came in as arbitrator, decreeing that the Magyars should build themselves a new church. The Slovaks were instructed to reimburse the Magyars \$1,000 for their former interest in St. Ladislav.

The neighborhood around St. Ladislav changed much in the ensuing years so that by 1920 the small, neat homes of the Slovaks were crowded out by tenements, and many people moved farther out. However, sufficient numbers remained and they sent their children to St. Ladislav's Parochial School until 1970 when a serious fire broke out. This had been the second time that fire had been destructive, but this time it was sadly noted in the *Ženská Jednota* (Women's Union) that "today, with a deteriorating neighborhood, the parishioners are far too few to absorb the tremendous cost of rebuilding." It is ironic, but now, these families who wished to continue Catholic education for their children of elementary age, were compelled to send them to the nearby Hungarian parish of St. John. However, there was no evident animosity, and it is doubtful that this generation was even aware of the earlier difficulties between the Slovak and Magyar population.



St. Ladislav First Church – parish house and pastor



(A new St. Ladislav was built on Bassett Road in Westlake in 1974. However, it is cosmopolitan in character and the pastor

doubts that even 20 percent of his parishioners are of Slovak descent.)

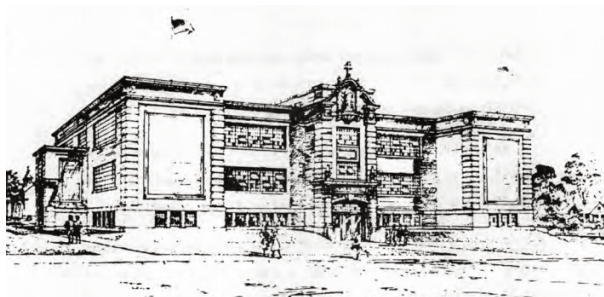
Holy Trinity Lutheran

On December 5, 1892, the Lutherans founded the Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Congregation led by Jan Pankuch and 50 co-religionists. It was the third Slovak Lutheran parish at that time in the United States. Having secured a pastor in 1894, the laymen began to collect money for a building and in 1899 bought a lot upon which, by 1906, they erected a building costing \$22,000. The church was located in the downtown district at 2506 East 20th Street, and although the local population changed entirely several times since its first beginning, the parishioners found it easy to come from all over the city until the church had to be relocated and rebuilt to make way for a city innerbelt. In 1959 a new church on Broadview Road was dedicated in Parma. (Father George P. Vojtko, the pastor at the time of this writing, estimated that he had approximately 350 families and that of these 20 percent are of Slovak descent.)

St. Martin

Some of the parishioners of St. Ladislav who preferred to live downtown close to the manufacturing plants in which they worked found the long street car ride to St. Ladislav tiresome, and so they decided to establish a local parish. In 1894 the Roman Catholics led by Michael Dlugos and Michael Kihoranyi established their second church in the same neighborhood as

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church and called it St. Martin. It was first located on East 25th Street; in 1902 a church was built on East 23rd and Scovill Avenue. Having no pastor of their own, they were able to persuade Reverend W.A. Panuška, who had replaced Jan Matron at St. Ladislav, to also say Mass for them. Then, under a new pastor Father W.J. Horak, they bought a larger lot at Scovill Avenue and East 23rd Street where, in 1906 they began to build a stone neo-Gothic structure that would cost more than \$100,000. The old church then plus three houses became a school. Unfortunately, in the 1960's St. Martin, the most beautiful of all Cleveland Slovak churches, fell victim to the new innerbelt being built.



Church and School of Nativity



St. Wendelin

Several years after the first three Slovak churches (St. Ladislav, Holy Trinity, and St. Martin) were established, a new settlement had grown up on the West Side. After settling for a time in the district of West 17th and West 22nd Streets, Lorain Avenue and Columbus Road, the Slovaks moved into the old Lincoln Heights neighborhood between West 5th and West 11th Streets. The parish of St. Wendelin was organized in 1903, and, in that same year, a school and church were built on West 25th Street and Columbus Road. By 1928 it boasted of having 7,000 worshippers and 1,000 children in its parochial school, making

it the largest single Slovak parish in Cleveland. Today St. Wendelin is still an active parish although most of its parishioners live in the suburbs.

St. Mary of the Nativity

In the neighborhood of East 93rd Street and Aetna Road the parish of St. Mary of the Nativity Roman Catholic Church was formed in 1903. It was probably an outgrowth of the St. Ladislav parish, and now they were conveniently located near the Newburgh plant of the American Steel and Wire Co., but in an area where the land was higher and the air clean and clear. Emily Balch in *Our Slavic Fellow Citizens* relates that some of the men in Slovakia had been compelled for economic reasons to follow a wandering trade (“tinkers” already mentioned). Most characteristic of these wanderers was the “drotár” who made all sorts of things of wire (which the name signifies), sometimes very elaborate and artistic things, but whose commonest task was the mending of broken earthen pots with a skillful wire network. As metal pots replaced earthenware, the demand for this service grew less, and the selling of all sorts of wire and tin goods and the like took its place. In America the wire workers often found employment for their skill in modernized forms of the same craft — making fences, gates and railings, mousetraps, and small articles, and they became tinplaters and plumbers. Since the tinware of Europe was made largely by

the Slovaks, it is interesting to note that an old form of skill has been made practicable in the new country.



The first home of the Benedictine High School



St. Benedictine School picture (1929)

Here, near the American Steel and Wire Co. plant, the Slovaks lived in single or two-family houses with neat yards and well-tilled gardens. Much of this district's orderly development was

due to the inspiring guidance of Reverend V.A. Chaloupka. When the Slovaks first came to America, they had been compelled to live in crowded boardinghouses, but as soon as they were financially able, home ownership was a goal the majority sought. Three Slovak building and loan associations assisted them in the acquisition of property: The Tatra Savings and Loan Association on Scovill Avenue, The First Slavonian Mutual Building and Loan Association on Buckeye Road, and the Orol Building Association is the Home Federal Savings and Loan Association with a branch on Brookpark Road, and the First Slavonian Loan Association no longer exists.

The Nativity school building was erected in 1916, and it was built with features which made it a genuine community center where the Slovaks came to enjoy a play, a movie, a lecture, or a dance. Here the young people could enjoy the bowling alley, the women could work on their Red Cross projects, and, those who were learning the duties of good citizenship, came to classes often taught by the priests themselves who were many times the guiding spirit in this endeavor.

Slovak Lutherans

On the West Side, a movement of the Slovaks to the suburb of Lakewood was made so that they could be near yet another site of employment — the Union Carbide Co. on Madison Avenue and West 117th Street.

Slovak Lutherans, who arrived in Lakewood first, also led in the establishment of parishes. Initially, they organized a filial of

Cleveland's Holy Trinity but this did not satisfy all groups. One faction split off on March 21, 1901 and established SS. Peter and Paul Church at Quail and Thrush Streets. In the next two decades the Lakewood Lutherans underwent two more schisms caused by doctrinal and personal differences with the result that by 1930 they had three churches located within a few blocks of each other — SS. Peter and Paul relocated at 13028 Madison Avenue, Pentecost Evangelical Lutheran at 13303 Madison and Gethsemane Lutheran at 14560 Madison. All three still function today.

SS. Cyril and Methodius

Although Roman Catholic Slovaks came to Lakewood later than Lutherans, they lost no time in organizing. Laymen began to take up a collection in 1902. They bought a lot at the corner of Madison and Lakewood Avenues in 1903 and by 1905 had built a wooden structure dedicated to SS. Cyril and Methodius. In 1926 they felt secure enough to begin constructing a new, stone church and, once it was finished, it ranked as one of the largest and most imposing of all Slovak churches in the Cleveland area.

Slovak Calvinists

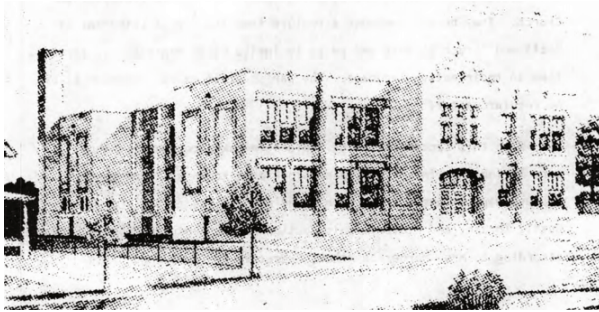
The last group of Slovaks in Lakewood to establish a parish were the Calvinists. A tiny minority of the nation, both in Europe and in America, Slovak Calvinists generally worshipped with Magyars of the same persuasion because pastors of their own nationality were almost non-existent. In 1917, 50 immigrants decided to break with the Magyars and formed branch number

33 of the Slovak Calvin Presbyterian Union, a fraternal society that had come into existence at Mt. Carmel, Pennsylvania, in 1901. Four years later they felt financially strong enough to establish their own Calvin Presbyterian Church. They bought a wooden structure from the Slovak Lutherans at Quail and Thrush Streets and began to invite Czech ministers to serve them in their native language. The parish still exists although it has no regular pastor.

With this concentration of Slovaks in Lakewood, many of whom were living then in a four-square block area known as “bird town” because many of the streets were named after birds (Robin, Lark, Quail, Thrush, and Plover), this section became known as “Little Slovakia,” according to Mrs. Margerita Mihok, Executive of the Second Czech and Slovak Cotillion Ball. She notes that residents in this southeastern portion of lakewood along Madison Avenue have lived here for 60 years or more.



St. Andrew's Church



St. Cyril & Methodius School

Our Lady of Mercy

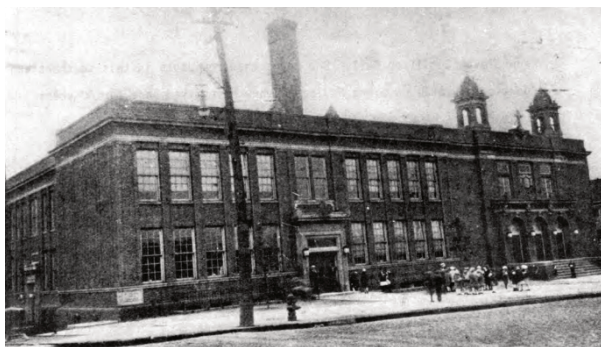
Some Slovaks on the West Side of Cleveland, especially those living in the “Tremont” area, felt that St. Wendelin’s was too far away. In 1915 they petitioned Bishop Farrelly for permission to found their own parish. He refused this request because the pastor of St. Wendelin’s did not wish to lose a part of his flock. As a result, the impatient laymen broke away in 1917 and established St. John’s Independent Slovak Catholic Church at 2425 West 11th Street. Only After Farrelly had died and Joseph Schrembs had replaced him in 1922 did a reconciliation occur whereby the laymen returned to the Roman Catholic Church and the Bishop recognized their existence. Although small and carrying the new name of Our Lady of Mercy, this congregation continues to function to this day.

St. Andrew

Slovaks also settled on the northeast side of the city, in the predominantly Slovenian neighborhood around East 51st and Superior Avenue. Here they began erecting a church dedicated to St. Andrew Svorad in 1906. The Reverend Jan M. Liščinsky, who administered the parish from 1908 to 1922, turned it over to the newly-founded Slovak Order of St. Benedict in the latter year and it then became the nucleus of the Benedictine order of teaching priests.

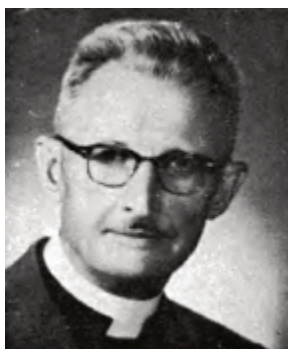
St. Benedict

The last of the original Catholic Slovak parishes to arise in Cleveland proper was St. Benedict's. After the Benedictine monks had established themselves at St. Andrew's parish, they found the facilities too small for their growing order. Thus, in 1928 they bought a large tract of land on East Boulevard between Buckeye and Lamontier and established St. Andrew's Abbey, St. Benedict's Church, and Benedictine High School on their new property. This large investment became the most impressive of the Slovak undertakings in the city. By serving those countrymen who began to move further east from St. Ladislav parish in the 1920's, St. Benedict's seemed assured of a long existence.



St. Vendelin School





Outside and interior of the
old Dr. Martin Luther
Evangelical Lutheran
Church with Rev. M.F.
Benko, former pastor.

St. Andrew's Abbey, the only Slovak abbey of the Benedictine Order, was established in 1922 as an offshoot of St. Procopius Abbey in Lisle, Illinois which was founded by the Czechs. In 1934 Reverend Stanislaus F. Gmuca, O.S.B. was elevated to the office of abbot, and at that time he was the world's youngest abbot, Ohio's first abbot and the only Slovak abbot in the world.

Benedictine High School was also a singular accomplishment in that in 1927 the Benedictine Fathers, using funds received from all over the country, established the first and only high school built mainly for Slovak boys. The building first used was the old St. Andrew church-school on Superior Avenue. In 1941 a new building was dedicated, and today around 600 boys of all nationalities attend the school at 2900 East Boulevard.

Martin Luther Evangelical

The Martin Luther Evangelical Congregation was founded in 1910 and used a dwelling at 2139 West 14th Street as a church until 1917. The 400th anniversary of the Reformation was celebrated by this group with the opening of a new church. Because they trace their history back to the reformation of John Huss, the coat-of-arms of this congregation is balanced by “The Cup,” the emblem of the Hussites which is their religious expression of democracy. Today they are relocated at 4470 Ridge Road which is also on Cleveland’s West Side.

Slovak Byzantine Catholics

Finally, a word needs to be said about Slovak Byzantine Catholics. These comprise about five percent of the nation and they are found chiefly in Eastern Slovakia. When they moved to the United States they established parishes, as did their Roman Catholic and Protestant counterparts, but these parishes were almost always a cooperative venture involving Ruthenians (Rusins) from Eastern Slovakia. As a result they were labeled simply “Greek Catholic” or “Byzantine” churches and were

given no ethnic identification. Two such parishes in the Cleveland area had a majority of Slovak worshippers — St. Joseph's Byzantine Catholic Church at 9321 Orleans in Newburgh and St. Gregory's Greek Rite at the corner of Thrush and Quail Streets in Lakewood.

(G.A. Malone in the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* further explains that the title "Ruthenian" or "Rusin" was used by the various papal congregations and the diocesan curias to identify the Eastern Catholics in these areas: western and southwestern Russia (Galicia), in Podcarpathia, in Hungary, and in certain districts of Czechoslovakia and northern Romania. Some of the people of these districts were ethnically either Ukrainian, White Russians, Ruthenians, or Slovaks although the ecclesiastical term Ruthenian applied equally to all. However, after 1962 that ecclesiastical term was dropped in part — Ukrainian being used for the Galicians and Ruthenian for all others.)

Importance of the Church

The founding of a parish was not a chance occurrence brought about by religious fanatics, but a serious project that symbolized the people's commitment to America, the city, and the neighborhood. Once the parishioners had invested thousands of dollars in a church structure, they were loath to leave it. Besides, the parish served both religious and social needs. On the religious side, the parishioners entered wholeheartedly in offering the sacrifice of the Mass. They entered the church singing in the vernacular, they sang during services, often holding up the priest's portion, and they exited still singing.

Before Mass the Rosary Society would meet and pray, and, after the services ended, the parishioners would gather outside to wish each other well.

Once all religious events had ended, various lodges would hold their meetings in the church basement, and, on special holydays, women's societies would prepare a hearty lunch for the entire congregation. Thus, on Sundays the church was generally used all day, not just for a few hours in the morning. Weekdays, the parish also served as a social center. Gymnastic organizations (and later the Boy Scouts) would meet in the basement; dances, balls, and bingos would also be held there, with the result that the parish church became the focal-point of the community. As a result of their close ties to their parishes, Slovaks in Cleveland tended to identify themselves as members of a particular parish rather than as East or West Siders.

The Press

The third major component of the Slovak community was its newspaper press. In the last one hundred years these people have published thirty newspapers and periodicals, among them four that enjoyed a national circulation.

First Slovak Newspaper

Credit for the first Slovak periodical in the United States is given to Ján Slovenský (Yan SLO-ven-skey), a former school teacher, who with his friend Julius Wolf had planned on going on a “lion safari” and landed in America instead. After “sweating it out” in the Pittsburgh steel mills, Ján luckily found employment in the Hungarian consulate where he began to realize how important it was to publish information for the many Slovaks who needed answers to their questions in this new and strange land. So, in 1885, he launched the *Bulletin*, a mimeographed information sheet written in the eastern Slovak dialect as the movement from Slovakia had begun in the northeastern part of the Slovak district of Zemplin, Šariš, Spiš, and Ung. According to Slabey the most

neglected districts were in eastern Slovakia where the Hungarian government cared little or nothing for the education and welfare of these poor people, and, as he so aptly puts it, “In 1880 a Slovak of the upper class was as rare as a white crow.”

The first issues of the *Bulletin* appeared in the commonest of gathering places — the local tavern. After the proprietor read his copy, he shared its reading with his patrons and then usually posted it on the front window so that it could be read easily by interested persons on the sidewalk outside.

Little by little, men who had always thought that newspapers were a luxury that could be indulged only by the leisure class and the gentry, began to take an avid interest in appropriating that privilege and in reading the news. So more and more of them subscribed. Pleased with the evidence of this gratifying interest, the editing partnership of Wolf and Slovenský took the next step in their journalistic careers.

In 1886, the first printed newspaper *Amerikanszko-Szlovenszke Noviny* (*American-Slovak Gazette*) made its debut. In 1889 they were joined by Peter Rovnianek, a brilliant student for the Roman Catholic priesthood, who had been expelled from the Hungarian Theological Seminary in Budapest for no other reason than reading Slovak literature which was proscribed in Hungarian colleges due to the government policy of Magyarization. He was residing in Cleveland at this time, but upon the pleading of Slovenský, Rovnianek left St. Mary's Seminary and went to Pittsburgh to begin his duties as editor of the *American-Slovak Gazette*. And his duties entailed more than just seeing that the paper was printed. He and the other workers

packed the papers for mailing. They also had to go out among the people and solicit subscriptions and advertisements. Their average working day was 18 hours instead of 8, and they worked from early morn till midnight for the small pay of \$9.

Rovnianek brought new life to the paper. He had a vivid, popular, style and a magnetic personality. He was a fiery orator, a fearless fighter for human rights, and a great lover of his Slovak nation. Even the Hungarian government feared his paper because of his attacks on their feudal system of oppression. They forbade his paper through the Hungarian mail, and even tried to suppress it here by writing to the Pittsburgh Police Department to forbid the publication of Rovnianek's paper. This caused much laughter in the American press in 1895, and Pulitzer, who also came from Hungary, had an editorial in his *New York World* to this effect:

Francis Joseph I, Emperor of Austria, King of Hungary, Bohemia, etc., etc., is a great sovereign, a mighty monarch, ruler of life and death of millions; but where an insignificant, poor Slovak paper is concerned, published in Pittsburgh, he is absolutely powerless, because in America we have freedom of the press and politics.

Out of this simple and rather unlikely beginning there evolved an impressive history of Slovak-American journalism. The following listing includes some of the earliest enterprises in Slovak journalism in the United States, some of which were rather short-lived:

1885 – Pittsburgh, Pa.	Slovenský's mimeographed <i>Bulletin</i> . After 20 issues it developed into the printed paper <i>American Slovak News</i> (1886-1922)
1888 – Streator, Ill.	<i>Nová vlast' – The New Homeland</i> (May to Dec. 1888)
1889 – Plymouth, Pa.	<i>Zástava – The Flag</i>
1889 – Plymouth, Pa.	<i>Slovák v Amerike – The Slovak in America</i> (This is the oldest surviving Slovak newspaper in the United States, enjoying a healthy weekly circulation.)
1889 – Hazleton, Pa.	<i>Katolícke noviny – The Catholic News</i> (to 1891)
1889 – Connellsville, Pa.	<i>Robotník – The Worker</i> (short-lived)
1891 – Cleveland, O.	<i>Jednota</i> – Official organ of the JEDNOTA organization. Enjoys an enviable weekly circulation.
1892 – Jersey City, N.J.	<i>Slovenské listy – Slovak Letters</i> (short-lived)
1892 – Cleveland, O.	<i>Americký Slovák – The American Slovak</i> (to 1894)
1893 – Connellsville, Pa.	<i>Slovenská svornosť – Slovak Harmony</i> (to 1897)
1894 – Cleveland, O.	<i>Cirkevné listy – Church Letters</i> (to 1899)
1894 – New York, N.Y.	<i>Fakľa – The Torch</i> (6 issues)
1894 – Pittsburgh, Pa.	<i>Slovensky hlas – The Slovak Voice</i> (to 1898)
1894 – Pittsburgh, Pa.	<i>Maják – The Beacon</i> (6 issues or so)
1894 – Freeland, Pa.	<i>Slovenská pravda – Slovak Truth</i> (to 1904)

1895 – Cleveland, O.	<i>Rodina – The Family</i> (5 issues)
1897 – Cleveland, O.	<i>Čarodejník – The Wizard</i> (to 1898)
1910 – Pittsburgh, Pa.	<i>Národné noviny – National News</i> Official organ of the National Slovak Society. In current circulation.

Statistics indicate that in 1910 there were twelve Slovak weeklies in the United States, having a combined circulation of 112,500. By 1920 Slovak American journalism offered its readership these types of publications: 6 dailies, 25 weeklies, 5 issued fortnightly, and 16 issued monthly. This is an astounding commentary on the intellectual capacity of a people who had been denied learning and cultural development of this kind on native territory.

Among his blessings in the new world, the Slovak then counted not only better earnings and improved material assets but also this bonus of a free Slovak press which became a tremendous educative force. The wonder of it is that the history of Slovak American journalism took root so strongly among immigrants who had come to the new world with minimal or no formal education. Many of them were illiterate because they came from a region where schooling was generally denied them. In the decade 1899-1910 there was still a 24% rate of illiteracy among the Slovaks, who ranked second highest in literacy among Slavic immigrants in the states. The clear vision of leaders and a will to compensate for what had been denied in the past now worked wonders.

Instructing the Ignorant

Often as staff people worked to prepare useful, informative and interesting copy, subscription agents were busy canvassing on a man to man, house to house basis to promote the publication. Contact with the worker, who was a potential subscriber, could be made only after long working hours or on Sundays. When the average prospect argued that newspapers were a privilege of the rich and that it would be quite senseless for him to subscribe for a paper that he could not read, the soliciting agent would take the time to sit down and patiently teach the mystery of the alphabet and the secret of reading from the printed page to an unbelieving learner. Such lessons would be continued from visit to visit until the skills were mastered and diligent persistence brought its own rewards.

Every working man who learned how to read had the capacity for further enlightenment and cultural growth by drawing upon the editorials, the news reports, the informative articles, the lessons in American citizenship and history that his newspaper brought him regularly. Those who wrote the newspapers and magazines put to good use the powerful potentialities of this medium.

Newspapers More Than News

Many editors and publishers were deeply concerned and capable leaders who conscientiously handled their responsibility to the reading public. They filled the issues of their publication not only with news items, matters of general interest, and

entertaining features, but they also took care to include worthwhile reading matter that would improve the mind, expanding its horizons with essays on topics of historic, literary and scientific content. They wrote on subjects of current concern and arranged practical lessons in citizenship and government by way of encouraging their readers to educate themselves and work for naturalization. The religious press also nurtured devotion and Christian morality. Passages of scriptural reading were published for their innate value, and homiletic paraphrases of the weekly gospel often supplemented or compensated for pulpit preaching, especially in areas where a priest was not available for regular services.

Even fierce polemics that occasionally broke out in the press could serve as a kind of learning experience. The airing of pros and cons, and even personal attacks on individuals and their ideas made the readers think, compare ideologies, evaluate arguments, judge the merits of positions as they were presented, and come to a personal decision to endorse or to oppose a contested issue. This too had educative value because it exemplified freedom of the press in a free country — a totally new concept for people who had come out of a thousand years of repression and subjection.

Some of the growth and possibly some of the influence of the press can be judged from this simple statistic:

Circulation record for the newspaper *Slovak v Amerike*¹

1. Kona: "The Oldest Newspaper..." *Slovakia*. 1965, pp. 49-50. also N.W. Ayer & Sons: *Directory of Newspapers & Periodicals*. Philadelphia, 1894-1918.

1894	3,000 subscribers
1905	20,000 subscribers
1907	30,000 subscribers

Slovak Journalism in Cleveland

Father Stefan Furdek established the *Jednota (Union)* the official organ of the First Catholic Slovak Union in 1891. He edited this weekly here until 1911 when it moved to Middletown, Pennsylvania. It soon became the largest-circulation Slovak newspaper in America and it survives to this day.

Ján Pankuch followed closely on Furdek's heels in establishing several newspapers. *Americký Slovák*, lasting from 1892 to 1894, represented Pankuch's first attempt at publishing an independent newspaper. After it folded due to his admitted lack of business acumen, he established the Lutheran weekly *Cirkevné listy (Church Letters)* which lasted from 1894 to 1899. Having sold the latter to a competitor who moved it out of Cleveland, Pankuch tried his luck again with *Lutherán*, which enjoyed a very brief run from 1900 to 1902. This and the former newspaper were merged in 1904 in Pittsburgh and became the national *Slovenský hlásnik (Slovak Herald)*, official organ of the Slovak Evangelical Union.

The third national newspaper that originated in Cleveland was *Ženská jednota (Women's Union)* in 1914. Father Ján M. Liščinský established it as the official organ of the First Catholic Slovak Ladies Union. Finally, Cleveland also gave birth to the

Slovenská obrana (*Slovak Defense*). It began in 1914 as the monthly *Kritika* which sharply criticized anyone who disagreed with its publisher and editor, the Reverend Ján Liščinský. The Bishop of Cleveland disapproved of Liščinský's critical journalism and forced him to relinquish control over it in 1915 whereupon it changed its name to *Obrana* (*Defense*), and in 1917 it was moved to Scranton, Pennsylvania where in 1920, Michal Bosák, one of America's first Slovak millionaires, brought it into the family. This newspaper then became the largest-circulation independent Slovak weekly in the country, lasting until 1972.

Among the many specialized Slovak periodicals that flourished in Cleveland, two still survive. One is the *Ave Maria*, a Catholic monthly which the Reverend Gašpar Pánik of Bridgeport, Connecticut, established in 1917 and which the Slovak Benedictines acquired in 1929. The other is the cultural quarterly *Most* (*Bridge*), founded by the emigré Society of Slovak Writers in 1954 and edited by the Reverend Mikuláš Šprinc.

Cleveland Slovaks also established many newspapers that catered to the local community. Among them were Ján Paknuch's *Hlas* (*Voice*) and *Denný hlas* (*Daily Voice*) which lasted from 1907 to 1947 and 1915 to 1925 respectively. Michal Senko, meanwhile, edited the *Clevelandská Slovenská jednota*, official organ of the fraternal of the same name, from 1920 to 1945 when this organization merged with the First Catholic Slovak Ladies Union. Finally, between 1949 and 1959 the Benedictines published *Slovenské noviny* (*Slovak News*), a weekly edited by the Reverend Andrew Pír.

Thus, after Slovaks first arrived in this city in the 1870's, they lost no time in establishing their own communities. Locating initially near the Central Business District where most of the jobs were, Slovaks gradually spread out into the rest of Cleveland, following the opening of new factories with the result that by 1920 they were located in eight distinct areas, all having at least one Roman Catholic parish and sometimes one or more Protestant ones. Religious fraternals led in the founding of these parishes and helped to sustain them. The vitality of the Cleveland Slovak community showed itself in its periodical press — four national newspapers originated here while 26 others saw the light of day in the years 1891-1975. These three elements — the fraternal, the church and the newspaper — reflected the religious splintering of Slovaks in Cleveland, as well as in the rest of the country, but at the same time they helped the individual components survive well into the second generation. Whether the third generation will preserve them remains to be seen.



Slovak Neighborhoods

When one traces the lives of a sample of Slovaks at any Cleveland parish before 1940, one discovers that they clustered around their churches. A sample of 100 families at St. Wendelin's parish in 1924 showed, for instance, that 84 of them lived in a small triangle between Columbus Road, Willey Avenue and West 17th Street. All one hundred were within ten blocks of the church. Similar results were obtained in a study of St. Ladislav, SS. Cyril and Methodius and Nativity parishes. Indeed, Cleveland area Slovaks clustered in eight distinct neighborhoods of residence, each having at least one Roman Catholic and perhaps also a Lutheran, Greek Catholic, or Calvinist church, as outlined earlier.

Neighborhood Solidarity

Many of the Slovaks saved their money and invested it in housing. Furthermore, they encouraged older children to live with the family for a few years after marriage in order to increase the total family income, which could also be used to buy more

property. By investing in property and trying to keep the entire family nearby, American Slovaks became very attached to their neighborhoods and resisted moving about. As a result, when Blacks and Appalachians began to move into Slovak neighborhoods in the 1950's and 1960's, they encountered resistance. Later the Slovaks resettled largely in Parma, Bedford, and Garfield Heights.

East and West Clash

The loss of their neighborhoods was only one of a series of crises that American Slovaks experienced. They initially had to contend with a strange Catholic Church that was more Irish than Roman. We have already seen that soon after arriving in Cleveland, Catholic Slovaks established their own parishes. They did so not only because they wished to worship in their own language, but because the typical American parish in the 1880's was Irish and featured the lifeless "Low Mass," a relic of English persecution of the Irish in the Old World. Slovaks, as other Eastern Europeans, preferred the exuberant "High Mass" with its singing and ritual.



Cleveland, Indicating Slovak Centers

1. St. Ladislav's Church	6. St. John's Church
2. Holy Trinity Church	7. St. Andrew's Church
3. St. Martin's Church	8. St. Joseph – Greek Catholic Church
4. St. Wendelin's Church	9. Martin Luther Church
5a. Nativity Church	10. First Baptist Slovak Church

5b. St. Cyril & Methodius was
also built in 1903 in Lakewood

Neighborhood Segregation

Oftentimes, the arriving Slovaks had to withstand hostility from native Americans and even sometimes from the Irish, who earlier had experienced some of the same treatment that was now being accorded the Eastern Europeans. Both groups refused to live beside Eastern Europeans, preferring to move to “better” neighborhoods. Thus between 1880 and 1914, Cleveland’s near West Side, formerly almost totally Irish and German, became increasingly Eastern European. The pattern of segregation of American cities began, when native whites refused to live with “inferiors.”

Old World Village Cohesion

A closer look at the records of four Cleveland Slovak parishes reveals that in each case a significant core of the worshippers hailed from the same area in the Old World. Marriage records of St. Ladislav parish for the years 1889-1892 reveal a distinct concentration of people from the upper Torysa River Valley in the district of Sabinov, county Šariš. At St. Wendelin’s, the people who married between 1903 and 1908 came largely from a small triangle of villages bounded by the towns of Kežmarok, Poprad and Spišská Nová Ves in county Spiš. Judging from the earliest records of Holy Trinity parish, people who joined this congregation between 1892 and 1898 came largely from southern Šariš in the district of Drienov. Finally, members of the Slovak Calvin Presbyterian parish of Lakewood originated almost exclusively in the western tip of Užhorod county. The records thus reveal a clear pattern of chain migration (one

immigrant following another from the same village to the same city in America) from Eastern Slovakia and they also show that individual parishes arose on the basis of these chains.

Endogamy Prevails

Furthermore, the marriage records of Slovak parishes illustrated a continuing pattern of village endogamy. Records of ten Slovak villages that sent large numbers of immigrants to America reveal that they had a 62 percent rate of village endogamy (people taking partners from the same or neighboring village) in the years 1853-1888. The four Cleveland Slovak parishes mentioned directly above had partners from the same or neighboring villages in 50 percent of all marriages. Thus, although the rate of village endogamy did drop slightly, it still encompassed half of all first generation Slovak marriages in Cleveland.



Slovak wedding at St. Gregory's in Lakewood, Ohio

Customs and Holidays

Weddings

The sacrament of marriage itself remained as festive an occasion as in the Old World and underwent few changes in America. Since this celebration involved not just the immediate family but the whole community, elaborate preparations had to be made. Several months before the event the father of the bride rented the church basement and began to stock it with liquor. The mother, with the help of many of her friends and relatives, began to cook and bake choice specialties weeks in advance.

On the appointed Saturday the chosen couple was united in matrimony at a joyous High Mass which included the liberal use of rosemary sprigs (for fertility — an old pagan custom). After the religious formalities ended, a “*starosta*” (master of ceremonies) led the newlyweds in a procession to the church basement where several hundred guests gathered to eat a dozen courses of food and drink to the health of the couple. While the meal was being devoured, the “*starosta*” provided comic relief by giving the newlyweds some “serious” advice.

Folk music, played by Gypsies if possible, lured people to the dance floor where the celebration continued into the wee hours of the morning. Sometimes a good, fight erupted, necessitating the calling of Irish policemen and these, after restoring order, often joined the festivities. The merrymaking lasted through Sunday and often Monday, making weddings a perpetual headache for foremen of factories.

In only two small ways did American Slovak weddings differ from those of the Old World — the choice of days and the lack of a dowry. In Slovakia the celebration usually began on Monday and lasted through Wednesday but American work schedules prevented this. Dowries were found to be impractical in America and money took their place. Hence, the bride offered to dance with any man willing to pay her a small token (25 cents to a dollar) and raised a respectable sum for the future. Many guests donated money outright to the newlyweds. Through such a happy celebration of a major step in life, young newlyweds found themselves firmly established in the growing American-Slovak community.

A Slovak Christmas

Christmas is special for many peoples, and so were my “Slovak” Christmases as a child. On the vigil of Christmas which we called “*Velija*” we watched our mom prepare “*bobalki*” which were made from bread dough, but these little parker-house rolls, the size of marshmallows, were popped into boiling water instead of the oven. Once drained they were smothered either with buttered sauerkraut (which the adults usually favored) or

with cooked poppy seed mixed lavishly with sugar and butter, and naturally, were usually suited to the taste of the children. Depending on which “*vallal*” (county) one’s parents came from, other dishes were prepared and differed greatly according to the district. My parents were from Zemplin and I would imagine that others from there must have prepared this next dish which, because it was sour, was not my favorite. It was called “*juška*” (literally juice) and was made from sauerkraut juice to which “*žapražka*” (thickening) was added. To this soup, were added broad homemade noodles.

On special occasions such as this, we ate in the dining room. I think mom was the one who said grace, but what she did next was indeed more memorable for me. Into the glass container which held honey, she dipped her little finger and made the sign of the cross on each of our foreheads. She then gave us each a clove of garlic and told us to dip it into the honey and eat it. After many contortions my two sisters and I managed this feat, and the taste of garlic and honey can still be recalled. For some reason, we never seemed to question the reason for this ritual, but now, looking back, there seems to be a logical, if symbolical explanation. Since garlic is bitter and honey is sweet, garlic is the symbol of life on earth — much of it can be bitter, but life can be sweetened with a little bit of honey! And the sign of the cross on our foreheads was likely the Slovak’s way of asking God to sweeten the crosses which, as a Christian, he knows he has to bear.

For dessert mom baked delicious nut and poppy seed rolls and “*ročliky*” (butter cookies with filling). There were also nuts and

candy on the table but this was probably a typical American addition. After we ate, mom and dad would sing the carols either in Slovak or Slavonic (we are Byzantine Slovaks) and we would try to join in when we could. Soon it would be time for Midnight Mass, and because it was so unusual to have Mass in the evening (Mass was never said in the afternoon or evenings then) we all went, and joy of joys, mom let us go up into the choir loft on this special occasion where, after watching the people below us from this incredibly great height, I inevitably fell asleep during the sermon.

During the Christmas season men from our church would dress up as shepherds or angels and visit homes singing carols and wishing everyone well. While most people called them “*jasličkari*” we kids called them kubi-zoobies. Why we called them that I don’t know, but I do remember hiding from them during one Christmas season. They came to our house in the evening, and for me, they were frightening because in their efforts to resemble shepherds they stuffed their trousers so that their legs looked like fat sausages. From my hiding place, under my bed, I could hear them wish the family, “*Vesele Vianoce*” (Merry Christmas).



Education for Second Generation Americans

When my immigrant parents and other first generation Americans had children of school age, they had to make a crucial decision about the value and extent of their education, especially about the relative merits of public versus parochial schooling. In the Old World the ruling Magyars made this decision for the subject nationalities. From 1872 until their liberation in 1918, Slovaks in Hungary suffered the indignity of seeing their parochial schools closed and replaced by state institutions which specialized in Magyarizing their children. American Slovaks, therefore, had a healthy suspicion of public schooling and this attitude was reinforced by both their lay and religious leaders. In a content-analysis of *Jednota*, the Catholic weekly published in Cleveland, it was found that between 1902 and 1911, 17 articles discussing schooling appeared and they contained 31 discrete statements about its worth. The vast majority praised parochial education for cultivating morality and preserving the children's language and nationality. Seldom, if

ever, did the idea of education for the purpose of social mobility arise. Secular newspapers, such as *Amerikánsko-Slovenské noviny*, published in Pittsburgh, revealed similar sentiments in the years 1893-1902.

Public School vs. Catholic School

The true aim of schooling, as perceived by Slovak priests, lay not in preparing children for advancement on this earth but in molding good Christians who would receive their eternal reward in heaven. Father Stephen Furdek, for instance, joined his colleagues Andrej Pavčo and Ján Porubský in denouncing public education. Pavčo labelled public schools as “anti-religious” and blamed them for all the immorality present in America. Ján Porubský denounced these institutions for teaching “anti-Catholicism” and for receiving state aid for such immoral purposes. Furdek, while agreeing with these observations, compared the relative merits of public versus parochial education and chose the latter as best. He admitted that public schools were free, that they supplied books and clothes to poor children, that they had nurses to care for the sick and small classes of only thirty to forty pupils taught by teachers with diplomas. Slovak parochial schools, on the other hand, were expensive, they were overcrowded and many of their teachers lacked diplomas. In spite of the short-comings of parochial schools at the turn of the century, Furdek still believed them to be superior to public institutions because “the saving of souls was more important than a good secular education,” and parochial schools, by teaching catechism, fulfilled this essential role while public schools did not.

Slovak distrust of public schooling revealed itself quite clearly when members of larger parishes built their own schools and had their children educated at these institutions. Every single Slovak Catholic parish in the Cleveland area had a parochial school within a few years of its founding. So did the Lutheran parishes of Holy Trinity and SS. Peter and Paul. Only the smaller congregations, which could not afford their own schools, did without. Furthermore, in their analyses of parochial education, Josef Barton and Mark Stolarik have both discovered that where a congregation had its own school, such as at St. Wendelin's, more than three-quarters of all the children attended it in the years 1910-1930. Hence, the majority of parents listened to the advice of their leaders and gave their children parochial educations.

High School

While 12% of native Americans in Cleveland attended high school in 1908, only .5% of Slovaks did so. Furthermore, one quarter of all children at Slovak parochial schools in the first third of the twentieth century dropped out before reaching the eighth grade and only 22% of those who entered junior high in the 1920's and 1930's reached senior grades, a figure that was well below the national average. In explanation of this rather poor record, it is noteworthy that many of these young people were needed to help with finances at home, since their fathers had been given the most menial and poorest-paying jobs. The Slovak also held the basically Catholic teachings that any type of work is honorable so long as it is done well and promotes the well-being of the community and that education served

primarily to preserve a child's morality and nationality. Catholics at the turn of the century did not view social mobility in the traditional middle-class Protestant fashion, that is, moving up from blue to white collar work and out of the old neighborhoods into the suburbs.



Slovak-American participating at a parade and stage production in the 1920's (Source: Western Reserve Historical Society)

Americanization Movement

Native Americans also found certain Slovak customs offensive and the latter had to learn to repress their true thoughts and feelings in order to placate the host culture. “Noisy” weddings, christenings, and funerals offended Anglo-Saxon sensibilities and had to be toned down. Religious processions down main streets on certain holy days suffered the same fate. Prohibition was essentially an anti-immigrant law and ethnic leaders bitterly denounced it.

Finally, the national hysteria known as the “Red Scare” of 1919-1920, led to the “Americanization” movement of the 1920’s — a blatant attempt by native Americans to destroy “foreign” cultures in this country and to turn all ethnics into “100% Americans.” Although the movement failed, it generated a lot of repression among immigrants as they stopped using their native tongue in public, told their children not to identify themselves as “American-Slovaks” but simply as “Americans” and many even anglicized their names.

This kind of repression continued until the sixties. Today the third generation is slowly rediscovering its ethnicity.

Some Slovaks, of course, refused to knuckle under to the pressure and fought to preserve their heritage. Benedictine High School, for instance, taught the Slovak language at several levels until 1972. The Benedictine monks received several cultural delegations from the Old World in the 1920's and 1930's and worked with them to establish the monastery as an active center of Slovak culture in America. Original members of fraternals continued to employ their native language at meetings and in church and never really accepted the "American way" as superior to their own. Among the second generation there were those who did carry on in the tradition of their fathers. Gymnastic organizations and social clubs attracted them the most, and, although these were no longer as ethnic as before, they did, nevertheless remind the members of their origins. Finally, a few individuals such as Joseph Paleš, Alex Mikula, Michael Beňo and John Biro developed Slovak-language radio broadcasts and music on various Cleveland stations and contributed to the preservation of Slovak culture in this way. Meanwhile, the ethnic press never gave in to nativists, although by the 1950's English began to replace Slovak in many columns for practical reasons — the second and third generations could no longer comprehend the tongue of their ancestors.

Slovak Community Leaders

As we have seen, at first it was seldom financially possible for the Slovak to send his children beyond grammar school, but, with the acquisition of homes and improved living conditions, the number of children in high school increased rapidly. Eleanor Ledbetter noted that in 1918 there were only four professional men of Slovak descent: two physicians and two lawyers. But, by the 1940's the picture changed, because by then many more Slovaks had left the factories to go into business for themselves and were entering into the professional fields as well.

The following is a list from a wide spectrum of Cleveland Slovaks who, in some way have distinguished themselves and have contributed to their heritage and community. However, as all lists, this is an imperfect one and we will be guilty of omission, but not deliberately. We beg your indulgence.

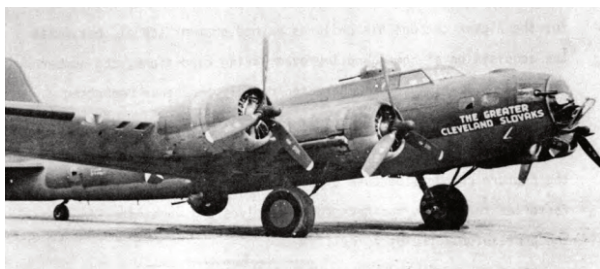
Clergy

Rev. Stephen Furdek, gifted leader of the early Slovaks; Rev.

Gregory Vaniscak, O.S.B., founder of the Slovak Benedictines in Cleveland; Msgr. Francis Dubosh, P.A., guiding spirit for Lakewood's Roman Catholics; Abbot Stanislaus Gmuca, O.S.B., first Slovak Benedictine Abbot; Msgr. William Novicky, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools for the Diocese of Cleveland for many years; Rev. Matthew Benko; Rev. John Humensky, STD., Ph.D.; Abbot Theodore Kojis, O.S.B.; and Abbot Jerome Koval, O.S.B.

Industrialists

V. Sarmir, W. Lorence, P. Janko, M. Olle, Bobinchuk and Sons.



One of the airplanes purchased by Slovak-Americans during World War II to help with the war effort.



“TATRA” The first Slovak Saving & Loan Co. in
Cleveland

Fraternal Organizations

John Sabol, Mrs. Sue Matuschak, Mrs. Anna Sotak, Martin Slimak, Joseph Dubnicka, Mrs. Louise Yash, Mrs. Tillie Bacik, John Pankuch, Sr., and John Kimpan.

Politicians

John Smolka, the first Slovak to be elected to the state legislature in Columbus; Judge George Tenesy, the first Slovak judge in Cleveland; Attorney Stephen A. Zona, member of the state legislature for about 20 years, Mayor of Parma for three terms and finally Judge of the Parma Municipal court; Mary Sotak, City Council-woman for many terms; Richard Harmody, Councilman; Victor Labutta, Councilman for the City of Parma; Steve Suhajcik, Councilman and later Commissioner for two

decades in the City's Utilities Department; Andrew C. Putka, attorney, member of the state legislature, superintendent of the state's Savings and Loan Department, City Treasurer, and Director of Cleveland Hopkins Airport; John Petruska, Mayor of Parma; and George Matowitz (Matovich), Chief of Police in Cleveland for a quarter of a century.

Bankers

Joseph Sotak, Jr., President of the State Savings and Loan with headquarters in South Euclid, Ohio; and George E. Fedor, President of Home, Federal Savings and Loan with headquarters in Lakewood.

Radio Broadcasters

John Mazur and Kolman Lajcak began Slovak radio broadcasting in the early 1930's. It continued with Joseph Pales of the Slovak Radio Club, John J. Biro of the Cleveland Slovak Radio Club, Michael Beno, Alex Mikula, and J.J. Koscak. For years George E. Fedor was co-announcer with John Biro. (The stations now broadcasting Slovak programs through the week and on Sundays are WXEN-FM, WZAK-FM and WERE-AM.)

Poets

Rev. Mikuláš Šprinc and Dr. Karol Strmeň.

Historian-Educator

Dr. Francis Hrušovský; Father Andrew Pier, O.S.B.

Authority on Slovak Archaeology

Dr. Joseph G. Cincik.

Architects

John Lipaj and John Pastirik, Jr.

Musicians

Sammy Kaye, a member of a well-known Slovak family in Lakewood is the most prominent of Slovak musicians from this area. George Szell, the famed conductor of the Cleveland Orchestra, acknowledged that his mother was a Slovak. Two Slovaks, Francisci and Orsagh were well-known as composers of classical music at the beginning of the century. Many may still remember the popular orchestras of Sedlak, Pales, Goldun and Beno as well as bandleaders John Rozboril of St. Ladislav and Ray Zamiska, who directed the Catholic War Veterans' Band at St. Benedict. Today John Pastirik and Joe Kopcho have come to the forefront with their music. Foremost in church music were men like George Lukac, Sr. and Joseph Duris of St. Benedict and Matt Lucas, the choir director of St. John's Cathedral for more than 33 years.

Sportsmen

In the 1920's and early 1930's Johnny Risko, a heavyweight contender was a prominent figure. Ollie Downs (Kaplafka) and Andrew G. Putka were well-known as boxing commissioners.

Travel Agents

Atlas Travel, John Olds; Adventure International Travel, Andrew Hudak, Jr. who is also honorary president of the Northern District of the Slovak League of America after serving many years as president; Groger Travel; and Lihani-Nemecek Travel Bureau.

There are many Slovaks in the various professions such as law, education, and medicine as well as in business enterprises such as taverns, general stores, funeral homes, and so on. Cleveland Slovaks have also contributed substantially to the ranks of the priesthood and to religious life in general as there are several hundred nuns of Slovak ancestry in the various religious orders, as well as more than a hundred priests and religious brothers in the diocese.

Cleveland has played an important part in the lives of the Slovaks, and, they in turn have made many contributions to her. In singling out the most important contribution made by the Slovak people, we would concur with the feelings of Father Andrew Pier in his historical review of Cleveland, where he acknowledges the importance of building a faith community, both physically and spiritually:

“One should be mindful in evaluating the assets of various ethnic peoples in America that not the least of their lasting contributions was their constant building of religious institutions, namely, churches, schools, convents, etc. These projects were certainly welcome to the building trades and added greatly to American progress and prosperity. This was true in the city of Cleveland and throughout the country as well. There also is no way of assessing the spiritual benefits derived by millions of our fellow citizens. Nevertheless, it does not take an expert to see the contrast between these religious-inspired communities and those that have no faith.”

Writing his historical review of the Slovak people in Cleveland on the occasion of our nation’s Bicentennial celebration, Father Pier concluded his article:

“Cleveland Slovaks are perhaps more aware of their many contributions than others . . . perhaps not. But in view of the above facts (his historical review), no one can deny the impact of the Slovak community on the city of their choice. Together with thirty or forty ethnic groups of their fellow citizens who cherish respective traditions of their forefathers from many lands, they can justly claim that each in their own way helped Cleveland ‘the best location in the nation’ or at least favorably comparable to any cosmopolitan community in the nation. This is no empty boast by any means in the light of our united share in the heritage of a great cosmopolitan metropolis on the shores of Lake Erie and in the very heart of our great country.”



Silver Jubilee of the Slovak Institute (Cleveland,
Ohio)

June 22, 1977

From right to left: Fr. J. Humenský, STD; Fr. A. Pír OSB, Director of the Institute; J. Koščák; Fr. M. Šprinc; Mrs. Olga Strmeň; Abbot Jerome Koval, OSB; Mrs. Adele Hrušovská; Abbot Theodore Kogiš, OSB; Mrs. Maria Mihalovičová; Dr. K. Strmeň; Mrs. J. Koscak; V. Mihalovič.

Source: KALENDÁR JEDNOTA 1978

Old World Tensions Persist

In spite of the problems Slovaks encountered in American society, they could and did make use of the relative national freedom that prevailed here to agitate for and achieve the independence of their brethren from Hungary. Although this was covered in the historical background, we hope to bring fresh insights as to the feelings of Slovaks in America, especially those living in Cleveland. The liberation movement in America began in newspapers, spread into the lodges and churches, crystallized in the Slovak League and reached its zenith during World War I. Once free from Hungary and united with the Czechs in 1918, many Slovaks grew disillusioned and began a second “liberation” movement on behalf of their countrymen in Europe. This move shattered the fragile unity reached by their community during the war and persists to this day.

Newspapers' Impact

By 1900 Slovak patriots in the Old Country were fighting for their very survival. Using America as a base against oppression,

the Slovaks entered into the fray using the most effective tool at their disposal — the press. The weekly *Jednota*, founded in 1891 and edited until 1911 by Father Stephen Furdek of Our Lady of Lourdes parish in Cleveland, took an early lead in this battle. Ján Pankuch's many Cleveland newspapers, including the *Hlas* and *Denny Hlas*, described in a previous chapter, joined the cause as did *Kritika* (later *Obrana*), published by the Reverend Ján M. Liščinský of St. Andrew's parish. During World War I this periodical lashed out unmercifully against Slovak "*Magyaroni*" priests who opposed freedom from Hungary. Thus, together with newspapers published in other American cities, Cleveland Slovaks distinguished themselves in the press war against their enemies.

Very soon after their arrival in America, Cleveland Slovaks also began to quarrel with Magyar parishioners. At St. Ladislav parish, alluded to earlier, both groups had tried initially to worship in the same church for financial reasons. By 1890, however, so much tension had built up between them that they began to go their separate ways. The Magyars caused the final rift when they tried to force Father Ján Martvoň to preach only in their language. The Slovaks rejected this attempted takeover, and the Bishop was called in to arbitrate. The Magyars were paid \$1,000 in compensation and then built their own St. Elizabeth's parish a few blocks away. Slovak Calvinists in Lakewood did likewise. In 1917 they broke with the local Magyar fraternal-benefit society and in 1921 ceased to attend Magyar church services, choosing to establish their own Slovak Calvinist Presbyterian parish instead. Lutherans avoided such conflicts by rejecting any contacts with the Magyars from the start.

Hostility to Magyar Politicians

Besides quarreling with Magyar immigrants in America, Slovaks also reacted negatively to politicians from Hungary seeking support for their cause. When Count Albert Apponyi, former Hungarian Minister of Education, arrived in the United States in 1911 to promote his people's independence, Slovaks greeted him with hisses at the Cleveland railroad station, they held a public demonstration at Gray's Armory and denounced him in the *Plain Dealer*. Only the calming hand of Father Stephen Furdek kept them from physically assaulting Apponyi, as their countrymen did in Chicago. Count Michael Károlyi, arriving on a similar mission in 1914, received comparable treatment.

This boycott of Magyar politicians reminded many Slovaks of an earlier struggle over a statue at Public Square. In 1902 Hungarians of Cleveland received permission from the city government to erect a statue to their hero of the 1848 Revolution — Lajos Kossuth. The Slovaks regarded this as an affront because Kossuth was a Magyarized Slovak and, hence, a “renegade.” As a result, Stephen Furdek, Ján Pankuch, and other leaders of the community secured the aid of other Slavic peoples of the city to protest. So successful was this campaign that City Council subsequently withdrew its permission to the Magyars and suggested that they erect the statue at Euclid Avenue and East Boulevard which they did.

The depth of American-Slovak nationalism, as revealed by the statue affair and the Apponyi and Károlyi visits, soon crystallized into direct action against Hungary itself. As early

as 1906 , Cleveland Slovaks, led by Stephen Furdek and Ján Pankuch, began to collect money for politicians back home. They sent more than \$2,000 that year and helped elect several of their countrymen to the Budapest Parliament. In 1907 immigrants from allover America met in Cleveland and founded an umbrella organization — the Slovak League of America — which then elected Stephen Furdek its first president. This League subsequently took the lead in demanding home-rule for the minorities of Hungary.

Czech-Slovak Unification Attempts

While the Slovak League worked for autonomy in Hungary, other countrymen, whether in Europe or in America, had different plans. Ever since the 1848 Revolution in Austria-Hungary, a small group of Czechs and Slovaks had dreamed of uniting their peoples into a new state. They based their arguments on the close similarity of the Czech and Slovak languages and also on the fact that in the 9th century these peoples had been briefly united in the Kingdom of Great Moravia. In Europe, Thomas G. Masaryk, a professor of philosophy at Charles IV University in Prague, led the movement. Vávro Srobár was his most faithful disciple in Slovakia while Milan Getting, an official of the Slovak Gymnastic Union of America, championed this idea here. These individuals liked to call themselves “Czechoslovaks,” emphasizing the unity of the two peoples and denying their separate nationhood.

The majority of Slovaks in both worlds rejected these ideas.

They stressed the cultural differences between the two groups (the Czechs had shared in German culture and the Slovaks in Magyar for a thousand years) and especially the anti-clericalism of many Czechs in comparison to the deep religious orientation of the Slovaks.

Cleveland Agreement

The outbreak of World War I afforded the Slovak League its greatest opportunity for success and, therefore, after some hesitation, it grasped the opportunity and began to engage in a liberation movement. While in the first years of the war the League contented itself in raising a collection for widows and orphans of the conflict, in the second year, bowing to pressure by certain individuals, it entered into an historic agreement with the Czechs. On October 22, 1915, officers of the Slovak League and the Bohemian National Alliance met in Cleveland and resolved to work for the destruction of Austria-Hungary and the creation of a Czecho-Slovak state. This “Cleveland Agreement” further stipulated that the new state would be a federation of the Czech and Slovak lands wherein the two groups would have local autonomy. Thus, although the League agreed to work with the Czechs, it rejected the notion of a unitary “Czechoslovak” state. And, although Czechs and Slovaks would have several more such historic meetings as the war progressed, the Cleveland conference would go down in history as the first in the world to call for a new Czecho-Slovakia and its provisions would remain an inspiration to Slovaks in the Old World as they struggled for equality in the new Republic for generations to come.

Besides participating in conferences concerned with freedom, Cleveland Slovaks also contributed materially to the cause. In the Fall of 1917 Milan Rastislav Štefánik, an officer in the French army-air-force and the leading Slovak figure in the European movement for independence came to America and called for the establishment of a Czecho-Slovak Legion to fight the Central Powers. His Cleveland countrymen responded by supplying 96 men for this force which eventually contained 6,000 soldiers, and they were outfitted by local women's organizations calling themselves "*Včielky*" (Bees). Besides providing for the uniforms and upkeep of these men, Cleveland Slovaks also raised \$30,000 for the "Million Dollar Fund" for Czechs and Slovak independence during the war. Finally, after the war had ended and General Štefánik met an untimely death in an airplane crash in 1919, his Cleveland brethren erected a statue costing several thousand dollars to his memory in Wade Park, on Liberty Boulevard.

Pittsburgh Agreement

Hardly had the war ended when American Slovaks found themselves divided over conditions in the new Republic of Czecho-Slovakia. In the last year of the war, Thomas G. Masaryk, the leading Czech figure in the European independence movement, came to America and concluded another agreement with the Slovaks. Meeting with representatives of the Czech and Slovak liberation movement in Pittsburgh on May 30, 1918, Masaryk rejected the Cleveland Agreement as unrealistic. Instead, he drafted a new "Pittsburgh Agreement" which only implicitly promised the Slovaks home

rule in the proposed new Republic. While certain Slovak representatives had misgivings about this new agreement, they submerged their true feelings in order to present a united front against the Central Powers. After the Allied and Associated Powers recognized the existence of the new Czecho-Slovak Republic in the Fall of 1918, Masaryk and the Czechs reneged on their promises. A Czech-dominated Constitutional Convention drafted a centralist Constitution and proclaimed a unitary “Czechoslovakia” in 1920. The Slovaks did not receive their promised autonomy. As a result, a majority of Slovaks, especially the Roman Catholics, grew disgusted with the new state and began to demand the implementation of the Pittsburgh Agreement. A small minority, both in the United States and Slovakia, supported the form of the new Republic.

Cultural Delegation

While the debate over the merits of the new country continued in the 1920’s and 1930’s, American Slovaks received a delegation from the Old World that helped perpetuate their culture in the New. In 1935 five emissaries of the “*Matica slovenská*,” the foremost cultural organization of their homeland, visited the American community. Many Clevelanders welcomed these representatives with open arms for they remembered that back in 1893 Father Stephen Furdek had established a “Matica” in America, only to see it collapse because of the bickering of its leaders. Now, in 1936, the new “Matica” sent thousands of books and pamphlets for the use of its American countrymen to help preserve their language and culture. The Benedictine monks

of Cleveland agreed to house these gifts and eventually they became the basis for a Slovak Institute at the Abbey.

A Short but Genuine Independence

Meanwhile, as war clouds hovered over Europe, American Slovaks had to face a painful decision. In the Autumn of 1938 the Czechs finally granted the Slovaks their long-sought autonomy and put the hyphen back into Czecho-Slovakia. This arrangement lasted only until March of 1939 when the Germans invaded Bohemia-Moravia. Hitler had no immediate interest in Slovakia and permitted its autonomous Parliament to declare independence. Some American countrymen, largely Catholic, supported the new state while Protestants and secularists generally opposed it because its President, Jozef Tiso, was a Catholic priest and his People's Party was closely tied to the Catholic Church. When the United States entered the war against Germany in 1941, American Slovaks had to oppose the new Republic because of its close links with Germany.

After World War II had ended and "Czechoslovakia" was restored by Russian arms, American Slovaks continued to face a dilemma. Some among them were happy with the new order while others were disappointed by the loss of their countrymen's independence. When the Communists seized control of the country in 1948 both sides were disappointed. Since 1948 many Slovak refugees settled permanently in the greater Cleveland area and integrated within the existing Slovak community.



A Slovak-American Ensemble of Singers and Players
(1920's) (from Western Reserve Historical Society
Collection)

Summary

This brief study of the Slovak presence in America naturally brings us to some concluding or summarizing observations.

The open doors and the great heart of the United States received several hundred thousand Slovaks from an oppressed homeland into a haven of freedom, opportunity and democracy. For this hospitality and unprecedented humanitarianism, the Slovaks responded not only with an abiding sense of profound gratitude and undying devotion but, true to their native instinct of generosity, they gave this new homeland of theirs a liberal donation of all that they had to give.

In the tapestried design of this “nation teeming with nations,” (in Walt Whitman’s words), their traits and contributions are woven into the glorious whole and they enjoy the consciousness of being Americans among Americans and the offspring of forefathers whose past is rooted in the history of age-old Slovakia.

Their earliest contribution was the brawn and muscle of their

physical strength: the calluses, sweat and stamina of long hours in mines, at steel forges and iron foundries, in factories and in construction work. Many paid in mutilation through occupational accidents and many were part of the sad statistic recorded by Steiner thus: "Twenty-three thousand lives have been sacrificed in the coal-mining industry in the United States in about ten years. Read it again: Twenty-three thousand people had to give up their lives for the heat and speed which we enjoyed in the last ten years."¹

Even at great cost early Slovak immigrants became a resourceful part of the tremendous force of labor that helped to develop American industry at a time when the United States needed it most.

As America accepted this gift of hard work, long hours and sheer exhaustion, there was a reciprocation, for while the diligent immigrant who had been so long downtrodden labored wholeheartedly and became aware of his earning potential in a free country, he acquired a new sense of worth and personal dignity. This intangible far outweighed all the material benefits that came to the willing Slovak worker as the fruit of his application and exertion.

It would be a mistake, however, to conclude that it was only in this sense of promoting the industrial growth and the physical progress of America that Slovaks have helped advance the growth of the United States. Immeasurable contributions have also been made in cultural fields. In many instances the net

1. Edward A. Steiner. *The Immigrant Tide*. N.Y.: Fleming H. Revel, 1909, p. 240.)

benefit resulted from the composite effort of many who worked collectively for a common goal.

Often enough there were individuals as well, who distinguished themselves in a specialized work or endeavor, and although it is not possible to mention all outstanding achievements, it is in place to mention at least some representative individuals — and to offer apologies to the many who happen not to be included at this time.

The collective gift of outstanding value that was made to this country by millions of Americans of Slovak origin is in the imperishable domain of the spirit. Over 300 Catholic churches and more than a hundred Protestant churches in America attest to the faith of the Slovak people. Out of their firm conviction that loyalty and devotion to the Almighty comes first in their lives there springs their patriotism which puts love of country and homeland next in the order of priorities.

Close to the church is the parish school and the concept of cultural institutes for enriching the spirit. The Slovaks in America have built and maintained with private contributions and support about 200 elementary schools and over a dozen secondary schools. Among specialized Slovak American cultural centers the most noteworthy are The Slovak Institute Library at Cleveland, Ohio (The Slovak Benedictine Fathers); Jankola Library at Danville, Pa. (The Sisters of SS. Cyril and Methodius); and Jednota Museum at Middletown, Pa. (The First Catholic Slovak Union). Rich private collections of Slovak art and craft works are also the pride of Mr. Joseph Smak of Dillsburg, Pa. and Mrs. Mary S. Kozusko of Sewaren, N.J.

Besides concentrating on developing cultural centers under ethnic auspices, Slovak American scholars and fraternities have contributed to many worthy collections of Slovakiana in various American universities, colleges and public libraries. Some of these are: The New York Public Library, The Cleveland Public Library, The Immigrant Archives at the University of Minnesota, The Carnegie Library in Homestead, Pa. and The Balch Institute of Philadelphia.

For more than fifty years the Jednota organization maintained an ideal home for orphans in Middletown, Pa. It was administered by the Sisters of SS. Cyril and Methodius who cared for over four thousand children who needed care and education and prepared them for a useful and satisfying life as citizens of the United States.

The first boy admitted to Jednota Home was Philip Hrobak. He became a gifted high school coach and teacher but his most brilliant career was as long-time editor of the *Jednota* and an inspired leader in Slovak American life. Many others who spent childhood years at Jednota Home built upon the early training that they received here and served God and country well as happy and useful citizens, as teachers and specialized professionals, as priests and religious.

Four modern homes for the aged are in full operation under Slovak American sponsorship and there are plans for other similar facilities.

Scholarship programs are offered by all the major Slovak

American societies, providing financial aid and encouragement for continuing education on behalf of young American citizens.

Apart from these institutes and programs there is an even more valuable cultural force in the ranks of the Slovak American clergy and the membership of men's and women's religious communities. There were first the immigrant priests devoted to pioneering work among pioneers. Over the years they were succeeded by thousands of young men from Slovak families imbued with American idealism and an awareness of their ethnic roots. Out of the ranks of the clergy there have been two Slovak American bishops, several protonotaries apostolic and scores of prelates.

Religious congregations are represented by six orders or congregations of men and nine of women. These include the Benedictines, Dominicans, Franciscans, Vincentians and the unique congregation, Sisters of SS. Cyril and Methodius, a sisterhood founded in the United States in 1909 by Rev. Matthew Jankola specifically for an apostolate in works of education and charity and with prospects of eventual expansion into broader fields. In all history, they are the only religious congregation of purely Slovak foundation.

Fraternal organizations which promote American and Slovak idealism and provide their members with mutual benefits include: The National Slovak Society (1890), The First Catholic Slovak Union — Jednota (1890), Zivena Beneficial Society (1891), Slovak Evangelical Women's Union (1891), The First Catholic Slovak Ladies Ass'n. (1892), The Pennsylvania Slovak Catholic Union (1893), The Slovak Evangelical Union (1893),

The Slovak Gymnastic Union Sokol (1896), The Ladies Pennsylvania Slovak Catholic Union (1898), Ladies Pennsylvania Slovak Catholic Union (1898), Slovak Catholic Sokol, First Slovak Wreath of the Free Eagle, and Presbyterian Beneficial Union.

Noteworthy in a special sense is the Slovak League of America which represents a culmination of organizational vision. The spirit of American democracy inspired the newly arrived Slovaks to look to their immediate needs and to find an American way for mutual aid. Out of this awakening there rose many separate societies, each working for its own needs as it felt best. Sometimes there were differences of opinion and ideological conflicts among them. Sometimes they worked in harmony and mutual understanding. Sometimes they bickered and fought. When a common cause needed Slovak American support, however, they put petty animosities aside and had the capacity to face a threat or a danger with all the strength of the American way of life and the Slovak spirit of devotion for a long cherished heritage.

This is what essentially makes the Slovak League of America the great body that it is. This is what has made the history of its achievements so remarkable. The action of Slovak Americans under the auspices of the League is what helped win redress for Slovaks abroad especially when they were denied political and social rights. Of special note are the following:

The defense of Monsignor Hlinka and other political leaders who were imprisoned and persecuted for

promoting Slovak participation in politics and government;

The movement to attain not only fairness and equity in political dealings, courts of law and socio-economic situations but also to secure Slovak statehood or independence from a dominating power;

The concerted action of Slovak Americans to stage rallies publicizing and protesting barbaric Magyarization tactics;

The establishing of a substantial National Fund on behalf of meeting court expenses and other needs to aid the Slovak cause in the homeland;

Undertaking effective action to introduce on the 1910 U.S. Census forms and reports a correct identification to make it clear that although many immigrants to the United States came from Austria-Hungary, they were nevertheless Slovak by national origin and spoke the Slovak language;

The sponsoring of many undertakings, especially on behalf of bringing the truth to light (as on the occasion of Count Albert Apponyi's visit to America in 1911 and Count Karolyi's similar visit in 1914); its sponsorship of Slovak literature and the great contribution made through its official English publication Slovakia which is welcomed by English-speaking professionals as well as by the general Slovak American public; and

The tremendous war effort launched by Slovak Americans under the aegis of the League in World War I and World War II when more than fifty million dollars of war aid was raised in war bond sales and donations from Slovak Americans in addition to the voluntary donation of many ambulances, defense vehicles, training planes, the four-engine bombers

named “The American Slovak,” “The Greater Cleveland Slovaks,” “The Scranton Anthracite American Slovak,” “Slovaks of Wisconsin,” “Slovak League of America, Chicago District No. 1,” “Slovak League of America, Chicago District No. 2,” “Slovak League of America, Chicago District No. 3.” There were also at least three donated training planes named “Spirit of the Slovak League of America” and four Liberty Ships named in honor of Furdek, Murgas, Stefanik and Kocak.

The Ladies Auxiliary of the Slovak League of America also distinguished itself by the scope and generosity of its volunteer work, often joining other established agencies like the American Red Cross and the National Catholic Welfare Council.

In terms of manpower, it has been recorded that Slovak American families gave 25,000 men in World War I and 85,000 in World War II, besides a large number of volunteer women for military service. In the horrors of war, many gave their lives, many merited awards and honors of various kinds and one is immortalized in the famous sculpture group of six American men planting the American colors at Iwo Jima. He is Michael Strank of Franklin Borough, Pa., who came to America from Spish in 1922 when he was just three years old. He was one who made the supreme sacrifice.

Another important Slovak American contribution is the Slovak press in America which has always been effective and faithful to its task of informing, inspiring and educating. A number of newspapers and periodicals that are published in our day for Slovak American subscribers are bilingual in order to satisfy a greater number of readers of diversified backgrounds. *Slovakia*,

which is the official publication of the Slovak League of America, and *Furdek*, an annual of the Jednota, are published in English. It would not be practical to catalogue all the contributions that the Slovaks have produced in the United States through the press alone. K. Čulen has compiled a 192 page encyclopedic work on Slovak newspapers and magazines produced in the United States since 1886. The richness of this survey leaves one astounded at the prolific output that flowered outside the native environment when free and favorable conditions were granted to a people whom America received when so many of them had little formal schooling.

Some representative works that continue to enrich the American press are the following:

<i>Name of Publication</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Classification</i>
AVE MARIA	Slovak Benedictine Fathers 2900 E. Boulevard Cleveland, Ohio 44104	Catholic — Devotional — Monthly
BRATSTVO	9 East North St. Wilkes-Barre, Pa. 18702	Official Organ Pa. Sl. Cath. Sokol — Monthly
CHILDREN'S FRIEND	205 Madison St. Passaic, N.J. 07055	Official Organ Jr. Cath. Sokol — Monthly
DOBRÝ PASTIER	205 Madison St. Passaic, N.J. 07055	Official Publication Slovak Cath. Fed. — Bi-Monthly
FLORIDSKÝ SLOVÁK	463 Jergo Road Maitland, Fla. 32751	Private Ownership K. Belohlavek
FRATERNALLY YOURS (Ženská Jednota)	24950 Chagrin Blvd. Cleveland, Ohio 44122	Official Publication ICSLA — Monthly
FURDEK	3289 E. 55th St. Cleveland, Ohio 44127	Official Eng. Annual ICSU
JEDNOTA	Jednota Printery P.O. Box 150 Middletown, Pa. 17057	Official Organ ICSU — Weekly
JEDNOTA KALENDÁR	Jednota Printery P.O. Box 150 Middletown, Pa. 17057	Official Slovak Annual IKSJ
KATOLÍCKY SOKOL	205-7 Madison St. Passaic, N.J. 07055	Official Organ The Slovak Cath. Sokol — Weekly

LISTY SV. FRANTIŠKA	232 S. Home Ave. Pittsburgh, Pa. 15202	Catholic — Devotional — Monthly
LITERÁRNÝ ALMANACH SLOVÁKA V AMERIKE	Ed. Dr. Jos. Pauco Ridge Ave Middletown, Pa. 17057	Sponsored by SLOVAK V AMERIKE
MOST	Slovak Institute 2900 E. Boulevard Cleveland, Ohio 44104	Independent — Quarterly
NARODNÉ NOVINY	516 Court Place Pittsburgh, Pa. 15219	Official Organ Sl. Nat. Soc. — Twice Monthly
SION	628 Grant St. Pittsburgh, Pa.	Lutheran — Devotional — Monthly
SLOVÁK V AMERIKE	P.O. Box 285 Middletown, Pa. 17057	Dr. Jos. Pauco — Owner, Publ. — Weekly
SLOVAKIA	303 Ridge Ave. Middletown, Pa. 17057	Slovak League of America — Annual
SLOVO	628 Grant St. Pittsburgh, Pa.	Lutheran — Devotional — Monthly
SLOVENSKÝ HLÁŠNIK	1601 Beaver Ave. N.S. Pittsburgh, Pa.	Organ of Lutheran Jednota — Weekly
SLOVENSKÝ KALVÍN	1341 Fry St. Lakewood, Ohio 44107	Organ of Calvin Society — Monthly
SOKOL TIMES	P.O. Box 468 Perth Amboy, N.J. 08862	Sokol U.S.A. — Fraternal & Physical Fitness — Semi-Monthly

SVEDOK	1201 Ingham St. N.S. Pittsburgh, Pa	Lutheran — Devotional — Monthly
ZORNIČKA (MORNING STAR)	315 Oak Hill Drive Middletown, Pa. 17057	Ladies Pa. Slovak Cath. Union — Monthly
THE ZION	46 Spring St. Danbury, Conn. 06810	Slovak Zion Synod of the Lutheran Church — Devotional — Monthly
ŽIVENA	218 West Main St. Ligonier, Pa. 15658	Živena Beneficial Society — Monthly

Čulen lists almost 30 annuals which were welcomed into Slovak homes in the United States and even found readers abroad. Some were sponsored by fraternal societies or by religious denominations. Others were produced by publishing houses or by private investment. They may be of unequal quality but in most of them, as in a host of souvenir and memorial booklets, a researcher of today can find historical and biographical material at least in tidbit form if not in a thorough study. In this sense they may be a gold mine of information.

Surprisingly, a number of bookstores were established (K.V. Cihelka, E. Nyitray, P. Kadak, M.N. Soboslay, V. Galik were some of the early ones) and their catalogues and book lists give some indication of works that were published here and were in popular demand. Among them are Bucko's *Dictionary of the English and Slovak Languages*, Nyitray's *Slovak-English and English-Slovak Dictionary*, religious and devotional works, adventure tales like *Rinaldo Rinaldini* and *Robinson*, the tale

of Dr. Faust, simple works on grammar and letter writing, collections of wit and humor, translations from Jules Verne, Dumas et al., the horror tale *Dracula*, Indian stories, the memoirs and adventures of Maurice Beňovský, model speeches for all occasions, some poetry collections, and song books and verses for children. Very little was produced by the early immigrants themselves but that is understandable. The wonder of it is that they produced literary works at all. G. Maršall-Petrovský, P. Kadak, J. Porubský, S. Furdek, M. Mlynarovič, I. Gessay, A.J. Ferienčík and Andrew P. Slabey helped to blaze the trail for Slovak writers in America. Down through the years the Slovaks in America did develop writing skills and came into publication with writers like Philip Hrobak, Peter Hletko, Joseph Husek, John Pankuch, Peter Yurchak, Thomas Bell and others.

If one were to summarize the religious communities, it would be in place to mention at least these: Benedictine Fathers of St. Andrew Svorad Abbey, Cleveland, Ohio; Slovak Franciscan Fathers, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Franciscan Fathers of Uniontown, Pa.; Franciscan Fathers, Valparaiso, Indiana; Franciscan Fathers, Columbiana, Ohio; Franciscan Fathers, Easton, Pa.; Benedictine Sisters, Oak Forest, Illinois; Sisters of SS. Cyril and Methodius, Danville, Pa.; Sisters of St. Francis, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Sisters of St. Francis, Monocacy Manor, Bethlehem, Pa.; Daughters of St. Francis, Lacon, Illinois; Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford, Ohio; and Daughters of the Holy Redeemer, Gary, Indiana.

Over the years the Slovaks have been impressed by the

immeasurable benefits that America has given them. In a spirit of profound gratitude they gladly expressed this appreciation whenever there were opportunities for such manifestation. In peace and in war they are ever eager to serve the United States wholeheartedly and to contribute to its enrichment as well as to support its noble efforts.

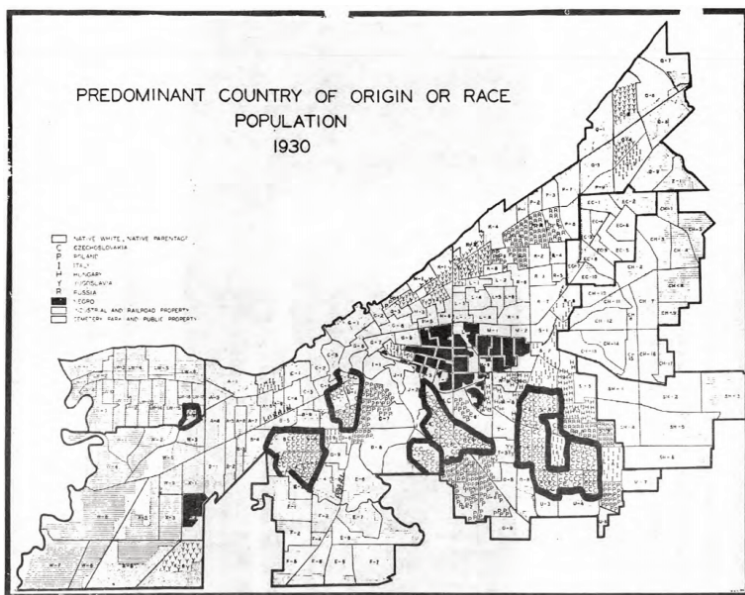
The long and fruitful history of flourishing fraternal organizations and mutual benefit societies together with a remarkable program of Slovak, English and bilingual publications; the activity of numerous elementary and secondary schools, the careers of countless professionals, sportsmen, technicians, priests, brothers and sisters — all these are a tribute of Slovaks to the American spirit of democracy and opportunity. Through these opportunities they found it possible to make some return for the gifts they have received.

Slovak Americans continue to serve and cherish this country that received their oppressed ancestors many years ago. In today's world they are the equal of other Americans who live the American way of life in every type of career from industry, business and finance through communication and fine arts interests, education, sports and entertainment, scholarly pursuit, medicine and science, creative arts, space exploration and homemaking.

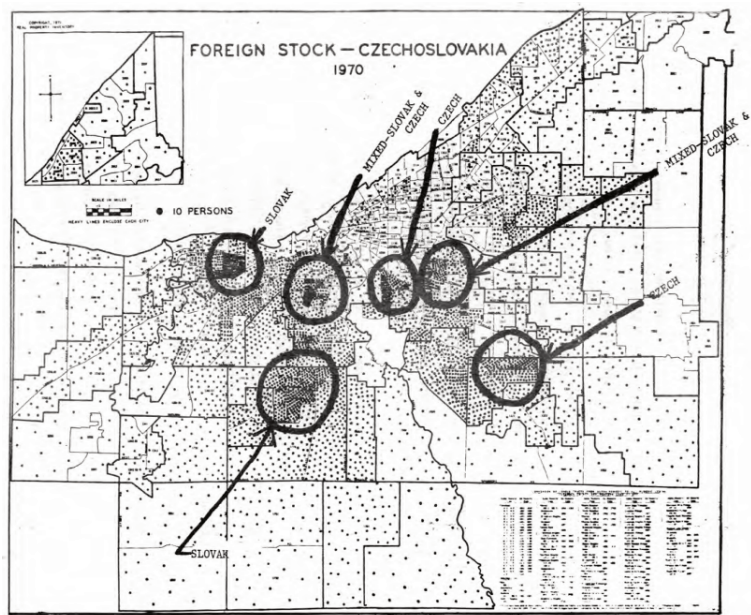


Parade in Cleveland (1920) (From Western Reserve Historical Society Collection)

Appendix A



Country of Origin or Race Predominating in Each Census Tract: 1930
(Source: Real Property Inventory, Cleveland)



Appendix B

Some Cultural Backgrounds

Hope for liberation and autonomy was often renewed through the spirit that was kindled and re-kindled by poets, writers and inspired intellectuals. Let us sketchily recall a few:

As early as 1443 Matthias Corvinus founded the first university at Bratislava. It was called “Istropolitana,” quite appropriately, since *Istros* was the Greek name for the Danube. This event naturally created a degree of national pride and a sense of identity.

In 1697 John Fischer-Piscatoris had his learned treatise on “The Origin, the Right and the Use of the Slavic-Slovak Language” printed in Wittenburg.

In 1616 Archbishop Peter Pazmany established a college in Trnava and saw to its development with solicitous concern. He had a personal interest in the students and their progress, and he sent the best achievers to advanced study in Rome and

Vienna, where the famed *Pazmaneum* was later established for specialized scholarship. In 1626 he founded Bratislava College. Three years later he was elevated to the rank of cardinal. Through his instrumentality the college at Trnava was raised to the status of a university.

Jacob Jacobeus in 1643 wrote a memorable Latin poem, “The Tears, Sighs, and Prayers of the Slovak Nation.” This is a work of singular value because it traces the history of the Slovak people and their use of the Slovak language from the remote records of distant ancestors.

Providence always provided a scholar, a historian or a learned patriot like Simon Timon with his study “*Imago Antiquae et-Novae Hungariae*” (1733) in which he established the autochthonous origins of the Slovaks within the realm of Great Moravia. There were likewise John Balthazar Magin, whose historic research also vouched for the identity of the Slovak people, and George Papanek, George Sklenar, and George Fandly, all patriotic scholars of the 18th century.

The 19th century brought to the fore these leading personalities:

Anton Bernolák, the Catholic priest-linguist-grammarian with his pioneering language reforms and his six-volume pentalingual dictionary; Štur and the Lutheran pastors Hurban and Hodža who built on Bernolák’s efforts to codify the Slovak language and who effectively introduced a literary norm for standardized and unified Slovak expression; the celebrated poet-priest John Holly who produced works of epic length and epic quality (*Svatopluk; Slav; Cyrillo-Methodiad*) and who was blinded in a

rectory fire later in life; Paul Joseph Šafárik and his impressive research project *Slavic Antiquities*; and the intrepid Bishop Moyses whose courage and gifted leadership brought to fruition the founding of the cultural institute *Matica Slovenska* in 1863 on the occasion of the millennial anniversary of the coming of SS. Cyril and Methodius to Slovak lands.

As the 19th century yielded to the 20th, leadership passed on to other talented individuals, outstanding among whom were the unequalled Msgr. Andrew Hlinka, prelate and statesman; General Milan Rastislav Štefánik, astronomer, diplomat, soldier and aviator; Martin Rázus, poet, leader and patriot; Bishop John Vojtaššák, heroic defender of church and nation.

Other Slovaks in the Civil War

FREDERIC WERTHER — a volunteer in Company B of New York; one who responded to Lincoln's appeal for 75,000 volunteers to defend the Union.

JOSEPH FILIP — member of the Lincoln Riflemen.

GEORGE GRECENIK — a volunteer in the 72nd company of General Sickles; was seriously wounded near Williamsburg, Virginia.

ANTHONY FIALA — in Lincoln's 1st Cavalry Unit.

JOHN FIALA — graduate of Graz Military Academy; railroad surveyor in St. Louis; commissioned to draw the map of Missouri; ordered by General Frémont to prepare war plans for

the fortification of St. Louis; grievously wounded in battle near Davenport, Iowa.

ALBERT MOLITORIS — first lieutenant of the artillery.

ANTHONY POKORNY — captain of the 8th New York infantry; later lieutenant colonel.

EUGENE KOZLAY — joined the 54th company of New York volunteers in 1861; three years later was in command; became adjutant to General Sigel; was commissioned brigadier general in 1865; became civil engineer in Brooklyn after the war.

GABRIEL KRUPINSKÝ — colonel of the 28th Pennsylvania Volunteer Company (identified as an outstanding dancer!); in 1862 ranked as a colonel in the Civil War; was cavalry commander in the Mexican War.

KLEPETNIK — surveyor, authorized by General Ross to map the territory that surrounded the besieged garrison at Bolivar, Tennessee; was captured by hostile Southerners and severely beaten; later became a prospector and researcher in Colorado.

JOHN MUZIK — colonel with the Union forces; later lived in California.

CHARLES DOLEZIC — a builder who joined Lincoln's Riflemen of Slavonic Origin in 1861; later signed with the 9th Ohio Infantry.

CORNELIUS FORNET — a surveyor, consul in California,

soldier under General Frémont; organized the 22nd regiment of volunteers.

BARON THEODORE MAJTHÉNYI — born in Nitra; major under General Frémont; leader of a hundred horsemen, the bodyguard of General Frémont; with 160 riders he repelled a Confederate cavalry assault and secured Springfield, Missouri, for the Union; captain of the 1st Indiana cavalry unit.

MATTHEW RUŽIČKA — enlisted in Pope's artillery division; was promoted to captain; is buried in Arlington Cemetery.

DR. BERNÁT SIMIK — -member of Lincoln Riflemen of Slavonic Origin; army doctor in the Civil War.

CHARLES SEMSEY — fought with the English at the siege of Sebastopol; joined the 45th infantry and became a major in the Civil War.

SAMUEL FIGULY — fought against Vienna in the 1848 revolution; fought in the Crimean War; joined the Italian navy in 1866; first came to America c. 1848, returned in 1868 with eligibility for first papers for naturalization; fought in the Civil War; was a physician and a plantation owner; cultivated cotton and tobacco in Virginia; joined an expedition to the North Pole; died in Slovakia in 1880.



Reverend Joseph Murgas (1864-1929)

Several notable achievements marked the lifetime career of Reverend Joseph Murgas, pastor of Sacred Heart Slovak parish in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, for more than three decades, and the founder of the Slovak Catholic Federation of America in 1911.

Father Murgas is best known as a pioneer inventor in the field of wireless telegraphy. His many patents, as well as a successful public demonstration of his invention in 1905 gave him a strong claim to the title of co-inventor with Marconi of modern radio. Two of his patents preceded his successful experiment on November 23, 1905, in exchanging several wireless messages by the Mayors of Wilkes-Barre and Scranton, Pennsylvania. The

transmission was witnessed by many invited guests, including U.S. Navy representatives. The event was duly recorded in the local daily press and the New York Times.

Originally, Father Murgas devoted much of his spare time in his 197 early years to art. A gifted painter, he seemed destined for a successful career as an artist. But he changed his interest to scientific experimentation in the fascinating field of wireless communication. There is ample evidence that the eminent Slovak priest-inventor not only successfully transmitted messages via the Morse Code on his own wireless apparatus but actually developed a system of transmitting the sound of the human voice over the airwaves. However, before he could perfect his discovery Marconi put his product on the market, and this led to the ultimate invention of modern radio.

In 1939 the Slovak Republic issued a pair of postage stamps in his honor and a memorial tablet was dedicated to Father Murgas' memory in his native birthplace of Tajov in Slovakia after World War II.

Appendix C

History of “Let’s Buy a Bomber for Uncle Sam” Fund

As it has been truly said that “Mighty Oaks from Little Acorns Grow” so a sincere appeal thoroughly aroused more than 17,000 Americans of Slovak Descent and led them to unite their efforts and combine their contributions in a Fund which culminated in the raising of the sum of \$31,231.06 for the purchase of three Fairchild PT-19B Trainer planes to be used in the training of Army Air Corps Cadets.

In mid-January, 1942, Mr. Ladislav Baranovich, of 282 Lincoln Avenue, North Vandergrift, Pa., wrote a letter to the Slovenska Obrana, a semi-weekly newspaper, published in the Slovak tongue, by Obrana Press, of Scranton Pa. He reminded his people of the privileges and blessings enjoyed in the land of their adoption. He urged them to show their appreciation by starting a Fund to buy a Bomber to present to the War Department and offered a day’s pay toward such a collection.

In its issue of January 30, 1942, Slovenska Obrana announced

that it would take up voluntary contributions; defraying the incidental expense of the campaign and publishing semi-weekly the names of all contributors, their address, and the amount of their contributions. The article stated that the "Let's Buy a Bomber for Uncle Sam" Fund had gotten off to a good start with the sum of \$178 subscribed by the Officers and Employees of Slovenska Obrana.

So spontaneous was the response that by March 1st more than \$1,000 had been subscribed. Those who offered material assistance kept their word; they not only sent in their own contributions, but solicited friends and neighbors for help. Some volunteer workers sent in 8 or more reports; results of their efforts at fraternal and club meetings, at churches, in schools and shops, everywhere Slovaks congregated. To these zealous workers belongs much of the credit for the success of the Campaign.

Scarcely a week passed without finding the Bomber Fund increased by at least another thousand dollars. In all, 16,000 readers of Slovenska Obrana in 37 states made individual contributions to the Fund. Following the suggestion of Slovenska Obrana, the publishers of *Osadne Hlasy*, a Chicago Diocesan Slovak newspaper, began a Bomber Fund and approximately 1,600 subscribers and friends sent in contributions totaling \$3,050.13.

A check for this amount, together with a certified check for \$28,180.93 was presented to Assistant Secretary of War for Air, Mr. Robert A. Lovett, in Washington. D.C., on April 15 by Frank and Michael J. Bosak. Jr., publishers of Slovenska Obrana. It

was at the suggestion of the War Department that the decision was made to use these Funds to purchase three PT-19B Trainer planes.

At the Cleveland Airport, Cleveland, Ohio, on Saturday afternoon, May 29, 1943, at 2:30 P.M., these three Trainer planes will be officially dedicated. As they take to the air, the same sincere sentiments will be in the hearts and minds of very one witnessing the ceremonies: —

“May God protect every brave lad who secures any part of his training in any of these Trainer planes and may each prove himself a real ‘Ace.’”

Appendix D

Social Characteristics of the Population by Nativity, Parentage, and Country of Origin for Selected Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas: 1970

(Data based on 15-percent sample, see text. For minimum base for derived figures (percent, median, etc.) and meaning of symbols, see text.)

Cleveland, Ohio, SMSA

AGE

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CLEVELAND • 249

	Native of foreign or mixed parentage — Czechoslovakia	Foreign born — Czechoslovakia	Total (Round no's)	Czechs — 40%	Slovaks — 60%
Male, all ages	20,165	4,691	25,000	10,000	15,000
Under 18 years	1,182	71	1,000	400	600
Percent	5.9	1.5			
18 to 24 years	533	108	600	240	360
25 to 44 years	4,716	471	5,000	2,000	3,000
45 to 64 years	11,223	1,480	13,000	5,200	7,800
65 years and over	2,511	2,561	5,000	2,000	3,000
Percent	12.5	54.6			
Female, all ages	22,225	5,968	28,000	11,200	16,800
Under 18 years	1,011	28	1,000	400	600
Percent	4.5	0.5			
18 to 24 years	664	86	800	320	480
25 to 44 years	4,611	430	5,000	2,000	3,000

45 to 64 years	12,417	1,738	14,000	5,600	8,400
65 years and over	3,522	3,686	7,000	2,800	4,200
Percent	15.8	61.8			

Years of School Completed

		Native of foreign or mixed parentage — Czechoslovakia	Foreign born — Czechoslovakia
Male, 25 years old and over		18,450	4,512
Elementary:	Less than 5 years	298	432
	5 to 7 years	1,220	1,272
	8 years	2,521	1,066
High School:	1 to 3 years	5,448	601
	4 years	6,004	718
College:	1 to 3 years	1,443	201
	4 years or more	1,526	222
Median school years completed		11.9	8.2
Female, 25 years old and over		20,550	5,854
Elementary:	Less than 5 years	441	718
	5 to 7 years	1,696	1,865
	8 years	3,433	1,575
High School:	1 to 3 years	5,684	699
	4 years	7,776	689
College:	1 to 3 years	945	171

4 years or more	575	137
Median school years completed	11.5	8.2

Residence in 1965

	Native of foreign or mixed parentage — Czechoslovakia	Foreign born — Czechoslovakia
Populations, 5 years old and over	42,118	10,634
Same house	20,644	7,530
Different house in United States	10,666	2,503
Same county	8,921	2,110
Different county	1,745	393
Same state	1,106	248
Different state	639	145
Abroad	52	368
Moved, 1965 residence not reported	756	233

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MICHAEL NOVAK

Mother Tongue

SLOVAK AMERICANS AND THEIR COMMUNITIES OF
CLEVELAND • 255

	Native of foreign or mixed parentage — Czechoslovakia	Foreign born — Czechoslovakia
Total	42,390	10,659
English	7,318	178
Norwegian	—	—
Swedish	7	—
Danish	—	—
Dutch	—	—
French	14	6
German	652	703
Polish	253	42
Czech	11,982	3,283
Slovak	18,776	4,843
Hungarian	643	610
Serbo-Croatian	76	14
Slovenian	243	68
Russian	468	79
Ukranian	88	39
Lithuanian	—	—
Yiddish	318	535
Greek	—	—
Italian	12	9
Spanish	13	—
Japanese	—	—

Chinese	—	—
All other	1,140	226
Not reported	441	69

Employment Status

	Native of foreign or mixed parentage — Czechoslovakia	Foreign born — Czechoslovakia	Total (Round no's)	Czechs — 40%	Slovaks — 60%
Male, 16 years old and over	19,212	4,630	24,000	9,600	14,400
Labor force	16,225	2,164	18,000	7,200	10,800
Civilian labor force	16,207	2,164	18,000	7,200	10,800
Employed	15,903	2,117	18,000	7,200	10,800
Unemployed	304	47	400	160	240
Not in labor force	2,987	2,466	5,000	2,000	3,000
Female, 16 years old and over	21,410	5,940	27,000	10,800	16,200
Labor force	8,897	1,157	10,000	4,000	6,000
Civilian labor force	8,897	1,157	10,000	4,000	6,000
Employed	8,676	1,081	10,000	4,000	6,000
Unemployed	221	76	300	120	180
Not in labor force	12,513	4,783	17,000	6,800	10,200

Occupation

	Native of foreign or mixed parentage — Czechoslovakia	Foreign born — Czechoslovakia
Male employed, 16 years old and over	15,903	2,117
Professional, technical, and kindred workers	1,836	251
Managers and administrators, except farm	1,526	183
Sales workers	794	137
Clerical and kindred workers	1,578	78
Craftsmen and kindred workers	4,901	645
Operatives, except transport	3,013	493
Transport equipment operatives	674	58
Laborers, except farm	647	76
Farmers and farm managers	32	23
Farm laborers and farm foremen	21	6
Service workers, except private household	875	156
Private household workers	6	11

Female employed, 16 years old and over	8,676	1,081
Professional, technical, and kindred workers	814	80
Managers and administrators, except farm	334	20
Sales workers	853	100
Clerical and kindred workers	3,537	232
Craftsmen and kindred workers	245	55
Operatives, except transport	1,345	260
Transport equipment operatives	33	7
Laborers, except farm	126	15
Farmers and farm managers	—	—
Farm laborers and farm foremen	7	—
Service workers, except private household	1,232	230
Private household workers	150	82

Class of Worker

	Native of foreign or mixed parentage — Czechoslovakia	Foreign born — Czechoslovakia
Male employed, 16 years old and over	15,903	2,117
Private wage and salary workers	13,356	1,792
Government workers	1,674	138
Self-employed workers	859	180
Unpaid family workers	14	7
Female employed, 16 years old and over	8,676	1,081
Private wage and salary workers	7,282	892
Government workers	1,157	125
Self-employed workers	171	45
Unpaid family workers	66	19

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MICHAEL NOVAK

Income in 1969 of Families and Unrelated Individuals

	Native of foreign or mixed parentage — Czechoslovakia	Foreign born — Czechoslovakia
All families	17,790	4,130
Under \$1, 999	344	263
\$2,000 to \$3,999	911	687
\$4,000 to \$5,999	839	470
\$6,000 to \$7,999	1,411	415
\$8,000 to \$9,999	2,226	493
\$10,000 to \$14,999	6,259	994
\$15,000 to \$24,999	4,819	699
\$25,000 or more	981	109
Median income	\$12,538	\$8,933
With income below poverty level	553	385
Percent of all families	3.1	9.3
All unrelated individuals	3,982	2,092
Under \$1, 999	1,132	1,130
\$2,000 to \$3,999	796	612
\$4,000 to \$5,999	680	141
\$6,000 to \$7,999	627	94
\$8,000 to \$9,999	321	69
\$10,000 to \$14,999	356	20
\$15,000 to \$24,999	55	26

\$25,000 or more	15	—
Median income	\$4,191	\$1,881
With income below poverty level	970	1,046
Percent of all families	24.5	50.0

Appendix E

PERCENTAGE OF ILLITERACY AMONG EMIGRANTS BY NATIONALITY 1899-1903¹

Table: D

	1899		1900		1901		1902	
Nationality	Total of illit.	Percent	Total of illit.	Percent	Total of illit.	Percent	Total of illit.	Percent
Magyars	466	9.5	2124	15.4	859	6.4	2895	12.2
Slovaks	3913	24.7	7475	25.5	8086	27.7	8663	23.4
Slovenes	2110	24.5	6149	35.7	6773	37.7	12132	40.7
Ruthenians	546	38.8	1270	44.4	2634	49.7	3557	47.2
Poles	7524	26.4	13010	27.7	13739	31.0	23272	33.4
Italians	31783	40.4	40954	40.1	61615	44.7	80085	44.3
Russians	198	11.1	259	21.5	166	24.0	443	28.5

1. Országos Levéltár -- OL. ME-XIX-1066/1904 (Hungarian National Archives, Budapest) Cit. from: Bielik Rákos: op. cit, p. 33.

SLOVAK IMMIGRANTS BY PROFESSION 1899-1903²

Table: E

Profession	1899	1900	1901	1902	1903
Bakers	6	16	13	24	45
Utilities workers	253	278	286	2309	2666
Butchers	21	37	34	41	83
Farmers	—	61	9	27	269
Agricult. workers	441	1655	2063	5405	3807
Mechanical engineers	5	1	5	9	42
Mechanics	14	7	8	16	25
Machinists	—	—	5	16	25
Smiths	34	76	63	180	262
Tailors	26	48	56	89	190
Shoemakers	51	124	106	153	230
Locksmiths	13	36	47	133	185
Carpenters	46	115	90	201	363
Laborers	330	690	612	1326	2062
Others	2123	7135	6025	10716	13162

2. Országos Levéltár -- OL. Budapest ME-XIX-1066/1904 Cit. from: Bielík Rákos: op. cit, p. 12.

IMMIGRATION STATISTICS OF SLOVAKS BY INDIVIDUAL STATES OF USA 1699-1902³

Table: F

States	1899	1900	1901	1902	Total
Connecticut	763	1101	959	1025	3848
Illinois	723	1278	1132	2114	5247
New Jersey	1945	3505	2906	3479	11835
New York	2504	4055	4299	4904	15762
Ohio	827	1683	1486	3153	7149
Pennsylvania	8135	16085	16835	19930	60985

DISTRIBUTION OF PERSONS OF SLOVAK ORIGIN IN THE UNITED STATES BY CHIEF PLACE OF RESIDENCE⁴

Table: G

3. Országos Levéltár, Budapest -- OL. ME-XIX-1066/1904 (Hungarian National Archives, Budapest). These statistics include only states with major immigration figures.
4. These figures count the Slovaks by their organizational membership, which may include Slovaks of all three generations. The accuracy of these figures may be challenged in the U.S. Census due to the use of different data gathering criteria.

Place	Total
STATES	
California	18,000
Colorado	10,000
Connecticut	25,000
Idaho	2,000
Illinois	100,000
Indiana	35,000
Maryland	2,000
Massachussetts	10,000
Michigan	60,000
Minnesota	20,000
Missouri	20,000
Nebraska	25,000
New Jersey	100,000
New York	120,000
Ohio	300,000
Pennsylvania	500,000
Washington	12,000
West Virginia	15,000
Wisconsin	50,000
CITIES	
San Francisco	8,000
Los Angeles	10,000

Denver	7,000
Pueblo	3,000
Steubenville	40,000
Youngstown	50,000
Cleveland	130,000
Bedford	10,000
Philadelphia	25,000
Allentown	15,000
Lancaster	8,000
Scranton	30,000
Wilkes-Barre	65,000
Potsville	35,000
Norristown	10,000
Reading	7,000
Easton	3,000
Harrisburg	3,000
Williamsport	10,000
Altoona	8,000
Greensburg	50,000
Johnstown	35,000
Erie	10,000
New Castle	20,000
Washington	50,000
Pittsburgh	80,000

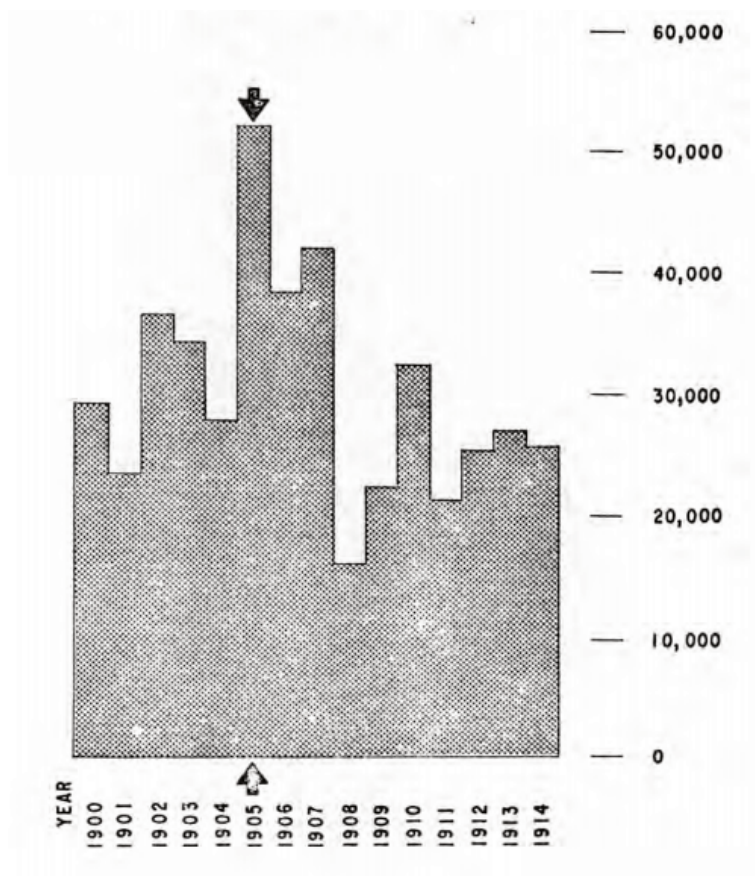
Everett	2,000
Olympia	5,000
Tacoma	5,000
Wheeling	10,000
Clarksburg	3,000
Charlestown	2,000
Racine	10,000
Milwaukee	20,000
Bridgeport	20,000
Hartford	5,000
Lewistown	2,000
Chicago	75,000
Joliet	5,000
Deville	2,000
Springfield	5,000
East St. Louis	8,000
Quincy	3,000
Marion	2,000
Gary	22,000
Sounth Bend	10,000
Lafayette	3,000
Baltimore	2,000
Holyoke	5,000
Firchburg	2,000

Lansing	3,000
Port Huron	2,000
Saginaw	3,000
Muskegon	5,000
Bay City	3,000
Cheboygan	2,000
Marquette	10,000
Detroit	35,000
Rochester	2,000
Mankato	2,000
Minneapolis	10,000
St. Cloud	1,000
Marshall	2,000
Duluth	3,000
St. Louis	13,000
Kansas City	7,000
Omaha	10,000
Norfolk	12,000
Scotts Bluff	3,000
Camden	2,000
Asbury Park	3,000
Trenton	17,000
Morristown	30,000
Elizabeth	5,000

Hackensack	5,000
Passaic	10,000
Teaneck	5,000
Newark	15,000
Jersey City	10,000
New York City	85,000
Buffalo	20,000
Syracuse	15,000
Lima	2,000
Toledo	5,000
Athens	3,000
Warren	10,000
Columbus	3,000
Lorain	20,000
Akron	25,000
Zanesville	7,000
Canton	8,000
Wausau	3,000
Green Bay	4,000
Eau Claire	3,000
Superior	10,000

Source: SLOVAKS IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
(1974)

SLOVAK IMMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES



Source: ABC SLOVAK LANGUAGE

Appendix F

CHRISTMAS CUSTOMS IN SLOVAKIA

By Father Andrew V. Pier, O.S.B., M.A.

Unlike the excitement that is generated in affluent countries of the western world to touch off shopping-sprees in preparation for Christmas each year, the weeks before the great event in Slovakia are filled with an interesting series of activities during the season of Advent. For one thing, each morning in a Slovak village, people both young and old, walked to the village church to participate in the 'Roráty' singing of hymns during the holy Mass at dawn.

St. Andrew's feastday on November 30 generally touched off the pre-Christmas season with the unique custom of pouring hot lead into water. After cooling off, the various shapes formed by the pieces of lead became subjects for predicting the future.

Everywhere the eve of St. Nicholas Day (December 5) was awaited with mixed emotions of joy and trepidation by the

youngsters because the good saint arrived with a bag of candy, toys and fruit and he was not only accompanied by an angel but also by a 'devil' who rattled his chains in the background . . . this was the signal for the children to fall to their knees and say their prayers. The good children were rewarded and praised for their virtue, but the bad ones were given a stern warning that unless they amended their evil ways they would be carried away by the devil in the big empty sack he always carried with him.

In most households, too, St. Nicholas (our Santa Claus) came in the dead of night when the children were fast asleep. When they awoke, the good ones found their neatly-polished shoes filled with an assortment of candies, toys, books, etc. But alas, the naughty children only found potato and onion peelings, straw and coal in their shoes! It was a cruel lesson that was not easily forgotten.

Winter evenings in the Slovak village had a charm all their own. Neighbors gathered in various households and spent their time spinning flax, weaving, or stripping feathers. The monotony was broken by story-telling by masters of the art and by group singing.

The feastdays of St. Barbara (December 4) and St. Lucy (December 12) were anticipated on the eve of these days by groups of girls, clad in white and with faces covered with white chalk, who went from door to door for a visit . . . strangely enough on what turned out to be an inspection tour to see if the homes were kept clean. Housewives prepared for these seasonal calls by getting their homes spick and span . . . after all, they did not want the village gossips to have 'an unkempt house' to talk

about. The callers announced their coming by ringing a bell . . . again we find children getting into the act but on the negative side. One of the callers carried a large bag . . . you guessed it . . . for bad children! But no child, no matter how bad, was ever carried away. This part, too, was merely a warning, a remainder for disobedient children to mend their ways.

Young ladies of marriageable age had their own custom to intrigue them on St. Lucy's day. Each maiden wrote a dozen names of prospective suitors on separate slips of paper. She burned one of the papers each day until Christmas . . . the one remaining had the name of her husband-to-be . . . supposedly.

Another quaint custom involving the selection of a husband was determined on Christmas Eve. A girl wrote out as many names as she wished, then inserted each slip of paper into a bit of dough. She dropped the entire collection into a pot of boiling water. The one coming to the top first was ostensibly the name of the one to be her future husband.

Among young men in the mountainous regions of Slovakia a very strange custom involved the making of a hassock-style stool hewn by each young man from wood. The operation had to begin on St. Lucy's feastday (December 12) and completed by Christmas Eve. Then at midnight the youth took his 'shamlik' (perhaps derived from the ancient word 'shaman' — magician or conjurer) and went to the nearest forked road in the hills. There he encircled his wooden hassock with a blessed chalk and sat down to await the appearance of ghosts, goblins and witches. Since he sat in the sacred, enchanted circle he could not be harmed . . . and when he got ready to leave he simply

reached into his pockets for a few handfuls of poppy-seed to throw outside the circle to distract the ‘spirits.’ While they were collecting the seed, he made his departure . . . hastily, it is presumed. This weird custom had nothing to do with the blessed yuletide season . . . it must have roots in pagan antiquity.

“Betlehemci” (the boys from Bethlehem) frequently began making their rounds a week before Christmas. The boys sang carols, recited poetry, read excerpts from the Bible, narrated ballads set to music and extended greetings of the holy season. Their performance required a good memory, a good voice and, of course, confidence in their ability to communicate their message properly. Accordingly, they were rewarded by each household by baked goods, fruits, candy, etc. When they returned for an encore on Christmas Eve to sing carols their reward was monetary . . . a coin or two . . . prescribed by custom . . . which was a must . . . otherwise, misfortune would befall the miserly householder and his family!

Christmas Eve was an all day affair that was marked by hustle and bustle . . . and a fast from morning to night. Children were beguiled to abstain from food by the promise of beholding an angel or a special star at dusk . . . many, no doubt, saw both by nighttime as the result of the pangs of hunger. Finally, the Christmas Eve supper was on the table. But the father had to say the special prayer and grace, then followed the exchange of altar-bread dipped in honey and mutual greetings before all sat down to a dinner fit for a king. There was the “kapustnica” (sauerkraut soup with mushrooms and prunes), baked fish, poppy-seed puffs, a variety of vegetables, fresh and canned fruits, nut-rolls,

figs, candies . . . and both “slivovica” and wine. Sometimes an intermission was called and the family sang a hymn or two. After the meal all gathered around the Christmas tree to sing a few more carols. The master of the house did not forget the animals on this holy night . . . he took a particle of each food on the table and fed it to dog, the cat and to the various animals in the barn so that they, too, would be partakers of the joyous season of the Nativity.

Around the city of Trnava there was an ancient custom of cracking four nuts . . . one for each season to determine what kind of year was in store for the family or district. A hollow or worm-eaten nut obviously was a bad omen for the future.

In the Topoľčany district the mother went out with a dish of altar-bread and a glass of honey. She knocked on the door of her home and called out “Open the door.” This she repeated three times and in reply to the question from within, “What are you bringing us?” she answered: “Health and God’s blessing.” Only then was the door opened and the mother entered, extended greetings of the Christmas season and distributed the altar-bread dipped in honey.

Holy water, too, played a part in the ceremonies of Christmas Eve. The master of the household went about sprinkling not only the inhabitants of the home but the animals, for they, too, were represented at the birth of the Lord in the stable in Bethlehem and hence they, too, were to share in the blessings of Christmastide.

What may actually be a remnant of an old pagan rite is the

householder's custom in some quarters to throw a nut into each corner of the living room with an exhortation for health and happiness . . . a brief prayer for God's blessing was added, apparently after the Slovaks became christianized.

It is interesting to note that there was no emphasis placed on the exchange of gifts, as we do here. Gifts were incidental . . . these were 'discovered' under the Christmas tree next morning. Christmas Eve was devoted to the traditional practices enjoyed for generations before getting ready for the midnight Mass that was, for centuries (and continues to be despite communist pressures), the culmination of the holy season of Advent that covers several weeks in preparing the proper atmosphere for the coming of the Saviour who is welcomed with hearts full of gratitude and joy on Christmas Day.

Although after Christmas the series of visits of relatives and friends were somewhat of an anti-climax to the holy day itself, they were enjoyable occasions still glowing under the magical spell of the Nativity scene with its manger, the Divine Child, the Blessed Mother, St. Joseph, the animals, the shepherds, the Three Kings, the camels . . . and the atmosphere faded slowly . . . it was still there on St. Sylvester's Day (New Year's Eve) as villagers gathered in their church to hear an assessment of their joys and sorrows, successes and failures, hopes and disappointments enumerated by their pastor. The somber note disappeared as friends gathered together again to great the New Year.

As the New Year dawned there was a revival of the Christmas spirit, for another great event was in the offing, namely, the

Feast of Epiphany, on January 6. The happy interlude was amply celebrated by the visit of the Three Kings from the Orient as they went from home to home each evening. Their coming was a spiritual renewal and reminder of the blessings of the Revelation of the Gentiles that a Saviour was born. Epiphany was celebrated with due solemnity because it marked the revelation of the Gospel of Christ to the pagan nations.

The procession of the Three Kings and their entourage, bedecked in all the colors of the rainbow, was a sight to behold as the holiday group trudged through the snow from one home to the other, and in the dim light of the interior of each humble abode one could feel the presence of Him whom the visitors from afar had come to adore long ago in the Stable of Bethlehem.

Now at last, as the Epiphany season waned, the incomparable and all pervading spirit of Christmas vanished in a golden glow for another year.

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Appendix G

Easter is Something Special for Slovaks

Dr. Michael V. Simko

For families of Slovak extraction, it's not oatmeal and pancakes at Easter breakfast. More likely, the menu offers Easter bread in the form of a lamb, a ball of Easter cheese or egg roll, boiled ham and "kolbasy," usually prepared on Holy Saturday. A bowl of decorated eggs in the center adds identity to this particular festive morning meal.

Whether God or food comes first at Easter is debatable, for the solemnity and delights of the Resurrection feast start in the kitchen of Slovak residents. Clinging to their ethnic awareness, even second and third generations seem intent on perpetuating this traditional schedule.

To the Slovak family, good fortune and plentiful food are indications of the beneficence of the Almighty, from whom all blessings flow, according to devout ancestral religious beliefs.

Gratitude

At the Easter holiday, then, Slovaks manifest their gratitude to heaven through special foods. Preparation for the “Velka Noc” (magnificent night) observance starts with marketing and baking: beets and horseradish, eggs and milk for a particular cheese, poppyseed and nuts for delicious rolls, a generous Easter loaf called “paska,” smoked kolbasy (pork sausage), and the inevitable boiled ham.

While Velka Noc is an occasion for specially baked dishes, Holy Week calls for daily attendance at church services, fasting and abstinence, even though current Lenten regulations are more relaxed than in former years.

Lenten austerity of no music, no theaters, no gaiety, subdued behavior and restricted appetites ends on Easter morn, when the family partakes of the food blessed the day before.

Holy Saturday begins at daybreak for the housewife, anticipating hours over a hot stove, with only a relaxed evening at church devotions, where little Mary and Johnny take part in a procession headed by four stalwart men bearing a figure of the risen Savior while the choir chants: “Lord Jesus Christ is risen from the dead. Alleluia. Let us praise God.”

Reward

The boiled ham and pork sausages offer no problem. Easter bread, nut cakes and poppyseed rolls, and “syrok” (Easter cheese or egg roll) absorb all the energy and culinary talents of the industrious housewife. Her reward is seeing her family exclaim

over the paska, the exciting rolls and nut cakes, the sharp beets and horseradish, and the savory egg roll.

Energy is part of the program, kneading and rolling the dough, while Johnny is directed to grate the horseradish outdoors to check the tears and smarting of his eyes. After the loaf, in a lamb-shaped mould, and baked items are set in the oven, mother mixes grated beets and horseradish with a dash of vinegar to add relish to the ham and kolbasy.

All must be in readiness by 4 o'clock, when a basket is arranged for the traditional blessing of food. This practice dates back several centuries and is considered by some authorities as being of pagan origin. In early times, during Lent, eggs were forbidden as articles of diet. So at the end of the long deprivation, the worshippers celebrated by decorating the eggs and having their food blessed.

Church

Mothers and daughters gather with their colorful baskets before the church altar, while a priest sprinkles the savory display with holy water and prays: "May the grace of Your blessing, we beg You, Lord, descend upon these eggs, so that they might be a healthful food for Your faithful, who gratefully consume them in celebration of the Resurrection of our Lord. O Lord. You have blessed all of this food created by You: may it be a means of good health for mankind. Through Christ, our Lord, Amen."

Each basket offers the same assortment: a saucer of beet horseradish, a cube of sweet butter, a slice of ham, a section of

reddish kolbasy, a canary-yellow slice of Easter cheese, a peeled hard boiled egg, a colored egg, a wedge of paska, small pieces of nut cake and poppyseed roll, and lastly, an ounce of salt.

Offerings

With smiling thanks, the housewives draw a white napkin over the contents and leave, placing on a table culinary offerings of appreciation for their pastor.

Except for Christmas, no table setting equals the Easter breakfast in the home of a Slovak. No one is seated until after the father thanks God for this bountiful collation. Then each one present must taste a portion of the blessed food. The housewife serves her husband first, then the children, and lastly, herself.

Tradition directs that the table offer a generous-sized boiled ham, long links of pork sausage, boiled eggs, with a collection of decorated eggs as a centerpiece, sweet butter, a large loaf of Easter bread in the form of a lamb, a grapefruit-size ball of Easter cheese or egg roll, an overflowing platter of poppyseed and nut cakes, and, unfailingly, a saucer of grated beets and horseradish mixture guaranteed to give a tangy, sharp taste to the kolbasy and ham.

Small wonder, then, that one generation after another eagerly anticipates this memorable breakfast of the Resurrection, even though ethnic customs are declining in this country far removed from the shadows of Slovakia's Tatra Mountains.

Source: SLOVAKS IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Appendix H

A History of Benedictine High School

In the prologue of the Holy Rule which he wrote for his followers in the 6th century, St. Benedict tells them that they are to know God better and serve Him through “faith and the performance of good works.” From the actual days of St. Benedict, his monks have been training young men in the ways of God. The work of education has been a popular Benedictine endeavor not only because St. Benedict had even welcomed young boys for training in his monastery, but also because it allows the monks to pray and work as a family within the property of the monastery as St. Benedict had directed them to do. This sense of community has been the trademark of Benedictine life and education for nearly 1500 years.

Benedictine education in Cleveland can look back to 1922 for its origin. In that year Bishop Joseph Schrembs of Cleveland granted the request of a group of Slovak diocesan priests for the establishment of the Benedictine Order in Cleveland. The Abbot of St. Procopius Abbey in Lisle, Illinois (a monastic foundation

of Czech background) sent Father Stanislaus Gmuca, O.S.B. in February of 1922 to assume control of St. Andrew's parish on East 51st and Superior Avenue. The goal of the Benedictines was to establish a base to care for the spiritual needs of the Slovaks in Cleveland and in particular to begin a high school for the training of young men.

In 1927, Father George Luba, O.S.B., was sent from Illinois to open a boys' high school at St. Andrew's parish. On September 8, 28 young men registered for the first day of classes at Benedictine High School, located in classrooms above St. Andrew's Church. In the next few years, incoming classes boosted the enrollment to a full four-year program. Father Gregory Vaniscak, O.S.B., who had organized the establishment of the Cleveland Benedictines while still in Illinois, arrived in Cleveland in 1928 as the first superior of the community.

With the financial assistance of the Slovak Catholic Educational Foundation, which spearheaded a nationwide financial drive, Father Gregory, the Conventual prior, negotiated the purchase of Mount St. Mary's Institute for Girls at 10510 Buckeye Road from the Notre Dame Sisters in 1929. The separate floors in the main building served as monastic quarters, high school facilities, and as a boarding residence for the numerous students who attended Benedictine from out-of-state.

In 1931, the first graduating class received their diplomas from Benedictine. Among the 32 graduates were Valedictorian Andrew Novotny (now Father Cyril — 43 year member of BHS faculty), Andrew Slimak (Father Bernard — former long-time faculty member), John Podobnik (Father Thomas — 40

year member of BHS faculty), and Peter Jenco (the late Father Aloysius). Father Ivan Kramoris, O.S.B., principal (1930-32) obtained a charter from the State of Ohio for the four-year high school in 1931.

The 1930s would see BHS continually expanding. The enrollment increased from about 100 to 300 students at the end of the decade. In addition to Father Ivan, Fathers Wendelin Kravec (1934-31) and Andrew Pier, O.S.B. (1937-41) also served as principals of the young school.

The college prep curriculum was enhanced by the opening of the art department in 1931 by Mr. George Krispinsky. Also in that year, Father Andrew initiated the first school newspaper. In the 30s, the basic sports were football, baseball and basketball. The football team began fielding a team in 1929 and struggled to make a name for itself against the established football traditions of city schools. An upset victory over St. Ignatius in 1934 marked the start of a Benedictine football tradition which would grow steadily through the coming years.

In 1934, Father Stanislaus was elected the first Abbot of St. Andrew's Abbey and President of Benedictine High School. He would guide the developing institutions for the next 12 years.

On April 18, 1940, Bishop James McFadden laid the cornerstone for the new Benedictine High School building at 2900 East Boulevard. The handsome, yellow-bricked structure was completed in the early fall, but a near-tragedy struck on November 1, 1940. A boiler explosion caused 875,000 damage

to the new structure, yet miraculously claimed no fatalities since classes were not in session for All Saints' Day.

The war years of the early 40s left their mark on BHS history. Air-raid attack drills were initiated in the school. 650 graduates entered the armed services during World War II and 22 of these young men gave their lives for their country.

The enrollment jumped after the war hitting 1000 in 1948. Abbot Stanislaus lent support to the establishment of a machine shop in 1941. Father Daniel Novak, O.S.B., Mr. Clem Strohmeier, and Father Cyril directed the early industrial arts courses. The shop program would last until it was discontinued in 1956. In 1947, when additions were made to the third floor of the new school, a separate shop building was constructed. It was rechristened as the Science Building in 1960.

Principal Father Armand Gress, O.S.B. (1941-44) organized the first marching band in September, 1942 with Mr. Jack Hearn. Earlier a student orchestra had been functioning under Mr. Frank Suhadolnik. Within three years, the new marching band earned recognition as the top band in the city. A Glee Club was formed in 1944.

The school boasted a renowned aeronautics department begun in 1941 by Father Method Granchie, O.S.B. It was authorized by the U.S. government as a ground training school. The successful program lasted 15 years and provided students with extensive theoretical knowledge and experiential opportunities in the art of flying.

Mr. Leonard Pchola reactivated dramatics with the Footlights Club in 1940. Fathers George and Cyril later took over the direction of the drama club and drew audiences of over 900 for several popular productions during this decade. In 1945, principal Father Louis Hudak, O.S.B. (1944-46), organized the Dads' Club as the first parental school organization. Beginning in 1947, the Dads' Club sponsored very successful yearly indoor bazaars which significantly assisted the development of RHS for a number of years.

Mr. Joseph Rufus joined the Benedictine sports program in 1945. He would become one of the legendary figures in BHS history remaining involved with the school as teacher, coach, and athletic director until the present. By the mid-1940s the major sports flourished at Benedictine. In 1916, the school won its first city championship in basketball. The year 1948 can be considered the beginning of Benedictine's rise to becoming a topped-ranked football power in northern Ohio. In that year, Benedictine achieved its first victory over arch-rival Cathedral Latin before 20,000 fans in the Cleveland Stadium. The team went on to capture its first Charity game Championship and later that year took baseball and basketball championships to be the first school to achieve the triple crown.

In 1946, Father Theodore Kojis, O.S.B., a mathematics teacher, was elected second Abbot of St. Andrew's Abbey and President of Benedictine. He would direct the development of both institutions for the next 20 years.

The 1950s marked Benedictine's emergence as one of the foremost Catholic Cleveland high schools. *The History of the*

Diocese of Cleveland, published in 1953, recorded that “Benedictine High School has developed into one of the largest (schools) in the diocese.” In 1952 BHS attained its highest all-time enrollment — 1115 students. The faculty consisted of 23 monks and 13 laymen under principal Father Benedict Dobrancin, O.S.B. (1951-57).

The increased student body led to the development of the school curriculum. In 1952 the Industrial Arts building expanded to four times its original size to house a variety of courses in that department. Also in that year, the meteorological tower and laboratory was opened under the direction of Father Gregory Oravec, O.S.B. making BHS the only school in the city with such advanced meteorological facilities. Driver Education was another addition to the program.

In 1953, Benedictine was accepted as a member of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. The science department blossomed under the tutelage of Fathers Raphael Zbin, O.S.B. (Biology), Cyril Novotny, O.S.B. (Physics), Basil Brin, O.S.B. (Chemistry), and Mr. Joseph Pastor (Chemistry). The BHS contribution to the 1953 State Science Fair merited a rating of excellent. The 1957 Diocesan Science Fair found 23 of the 53 projects which earned highest honors coming from Benedictine.

Father Donald Baydik, O.S.B., brought city, state, and national recognition to Benedictine through his work with the school publications. Known for his perfectionist attitude, Father Donald sent his editors to summer Journalism Institutes at the Catholic University in Washington D.C. where he himself taught for

several summers. In 1957, *The Bennet* newspaper took the top ratings in the four major scholastic press associations. In 1954 it had been the first Diocesan school paper to receive the Northeastern Ohio Press Association Donaghy trophy.

The BHS sports program reached its zenith in 1957 as the Bengals captured their first State AAA Football Championship. Augie Bossu, a former Cathedral Latin head coach, was hired to assist Joe Rufus in 1953. The next year found Bossu at the helm of the varsity football squad as Rufus became Athletic Director. Bossu, now in his 23rd year as head coach has led Benedictine football teams to an overall record of 152 wins, 54 losses, and 13 ties. In 1953, alumnus Chuck Noll '49 signed with the Cleveland Browns becoming the first BHS grad to receive a contract from a national pro football team. Father Augustine Yurko, O.S.B. organized the Parent-Boosters Club in 1959 which would develop into one of the most active and successful groups in the school's history.

The 1960s began with the largest expansion of the physical plant of Benedictine. After a successful financial drive, a new gymnasium was erected in 1962. The modern, functional design gym with distinctive pagoda roof can seat 1400. The former gym was divided into two floors; the lower being converted into the cafeteria and the upper into a combination study hall — auditorium.

The curriculum continued its growth responding to the needs of the times. In 1961, Benedictine's science program was judged as best in the northeastern Ohio district by the junior division of the Ohio Academy of Science. In addition to an extensive Latin

language sequence, Benedictine enrolled students in the study of French, Spanish, German, Slovak and Russian. In previous years courses were also offered in Polish, Slovenian, and Hungarian.

Using money earned by the students in the annual chocolate drives, principal Father Robert Wilkes, O.S.B. (1957-62 and 1966-69) contracted to have the school wired for commercial and closed-circuit television in 1968. Later a student television production studio was opened and a student crew trained by Fr. Norbert Ozimek, O.S.B. The television program has developed into a popular and versatile aspect of the BHS curriculum.

In 1966, Abbot Theodore resigned as Abbot of St. Andrew's Abbey and President of Benedictine after 20 years of creative leadership during the school's expansion years. He was succeeded by popular BHS chaplain, Father Jerome Koval, O.S.B. Beloved for his friendly personality and respected for his dedication to Benedictine High School, Abbot Jerome has moved to direct Benedictine through some of the more challenging years in its history.

In keeping with the growing trend in the Church to involve laymen in areas of concern to them, Abbot Jerome restructured the BHS school board in 1968 and appointed the first non-faculty members to the board. In September of 1969, Abbot Jerome appointed Father Roger Gries, O.S.B., as principal of Benedictine. A 1954 graduate of Benedictine, Father Roger had received the MR. BENEDICTINE award as a senior — meriting the highest student award at Benedictine.

Beginning in the late 1960s and continuing into the present,

Benedictine felt the effects of the financial crisis which threatened private education across the country. By the end of the decade the higher costs resulted in a smaller enrollment. However, the educational goals of Benedictine students increased. In 1963, 62 percent of the graduating seniors entered college. By 1968, nearly 75 percent of all graduates pursued higher education.

In 1972, after 35 years, Benedictine ended its affiliation with the East Senate Football league. In 223 total league games, the Bengals had won 157, lost 57, and tied 9. The record represents a winning percentage over every other Senate foe, including Latin, a fact which no other league member can boast. The Bengals hold three major senate records. First, they have won or shared the East Senate title 20 times. Secondly, they have appeared in 17 City Championship games, winning 11, losing 4, and tying 2. Thirdly, their 11 championship victories (City) is tops in the Senate.

In 1973, only two years after Benedictine left the East Senate, the Bengals won the State AA Football Championship — attaining the first spot in the state in the division of medium-sized schools. Governor John Gilligan presented the State trophy in the Benedictine auditorium on December 18, 1973.

The 1970s have found Benedictine reaching out in new ways to meet the needs of students in a changing society and working to keep costs down so as to insure the long range future of Benedictine education in Cleveland

To provide easier access to the school, Benedictine has greatly

expanded its bus service in the last three years. From one downtown bus trip, the service has expanded to include a four route program for the next school year providing busses to Public Square, St. Clair Avenue, Fleet Avenue, Euclid, Cleveland Heights, Garfield Heights, Maple Heights, Mayfield, Lyndhurst, and Independence.

Under the direction of principal Father Roger, BHS has maintained its religious identity as a Catholic institution while also providing opportunities for a limited number of non-Catholic students to benefit from a Benedictine education. The school still maintains a larger number of religious faculty members (20) than lay teachers (13) — one of the few diocesan high schools to have such a situation.

The curriculum has expanded to include new areas of study. Courses in psychology, criminology, and anthropology have been introduced. A new emphasis has been given to developing student awareness of the Fine Arts. Every freshman is now required to enroll in the Humanities course, which consists of 12 weeks each of music, art, and drama. Likewise, four-year programs in Latin, French, German and Spanish as well as Studio Art are available to interested students. The success of the college-centered curriculum can be seen in the fact that over 80 percent of the last graduating class are now enrolled in college.

Benedictine has also added depth to its extracurricular program. The Benedictine yearbook staff received much recognition in recent years for quality craftsmanship in the production of the school annual. The 1974 Benedictine yearbook was featured in the nationwide magazine of the Taylor Publishing Company.

The school band attends summer band camp each year at Rio Grande College in southern Ohio. A Human Relations Board was formed in 1971 and successfully fosters activities among the various segments of the school population. The Drama Club, under the direction of Father Timothy Buyansky, O.S.B., produces a Fall and Spring show each year. On April 3, 1977 the Drama Club won gold, silver and bronze medals at the Cleveland Theatre Conference dramatics meet. In 1970, the Ski Club joined the roster of school activities.

Over the past two years, Benedictine has experienced a gradual increase in enrollment with 450 boys now attending the school. The high school chapel was remodeled this past summer and a grant from the St. Ann Foundation enabled the school clinic to expand into a multi-room health center under school nurse, Brother Philip Petrow, O.S.B.

In sports, the Bengals continue to field winning teams. The football squads play an important schedule: the varsity, reserve, and freshman teams all posting winning seasons this past Fall. The school also maintains varsity, junior varsity, and freshman basketball teams and varsity and reserve squads in baseball. The Bengals also boast teams in wrestling, track, cross country, hockey and howling. A training squad and extensive intramural program involve students at other times during the school year.

On March 21, 1977, Ahbot Jerome appointed Father Dominic Mondzelewski, O.S.B., a 1960 graduate of BHS, as the new principal for the 1977-78 school year. Father Jonathan Zingales, O.S.B., will be the new assistant principal.

As Benedictine High School begins its next half century of Catholic education for young men, it will continue to operate out of the same perspective of its founder, Father George Luba, O.S.B., who opened the doors of BHS to meet the needs of the Church and to carry out the tradition of work and prayer of the founder of the Benedictine Order, St. Benedict.

SOME NOTED ALUMNI

Chuck Noll (1949) — Head Coach Pittsburgh Steelers Football team.

Robert Zion (1962) — Head of “Up Downtown Cleveland, Inc.”

Raymond Kudukis (1957) — Utilities Director of the City of Cleveland.

Jerome Stano (1950) — Ohio State Representative, District 7, Parma.

Tom Weiskopf (1960) — Professional golfer.

John J . Koral (1952) — District Vice Chancellor for Educational Planning and Development of Cuyahoga Community College (Former President of the Western Campus).

Jim Swingos (1959) — Owner and manager of the Keg and Quarter Restaurant and Celebrity Motel.

George Sevcik (1958) — Backfield coach — Cleveland Browns Football team.

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MICHAEL NOVAK

Source: JEDNOTA ANNUAL FURDEK 1978

Appendix I

OUR LADY OF LEVOČA

A Slovak American shrine in Bedford, near Cleveland, Ohio.

In 1928, when Archbishop Joseph Schrembs of the Cleveland Diocese dedicated the Motherhouse grounds of the Vincentian Sisters of Charity, the Slovak people raised a fund to construct a Shrine of Our Lady of Levoča at the Motherhouse in Bedford, Ohio.

The religious community was under the direction of its newly appointed Provincial Superior, Mother Mary John Berchmans Fialko, when it assumed guardianship of the shrine in 1928. Later, these Sisters were to become a separate community for the Cleveland diocese with Mother Berchmans as the General Superior.

Encouraged through a strong devotion to Our Lady of Lovocha (a 700 year old shrine in Slovak) and the willingness of the Vincentian Sisters, a group of women from St. Wendelin Slovak

parish set about the task of securing a statue similar to the one in their beloved homeland.

Bishop Vojtāssak was contacted in Slovakia and directed to supervise a carving of a statue out of solid apple tree wood which was to be the exact replica of the original Levoča statue.

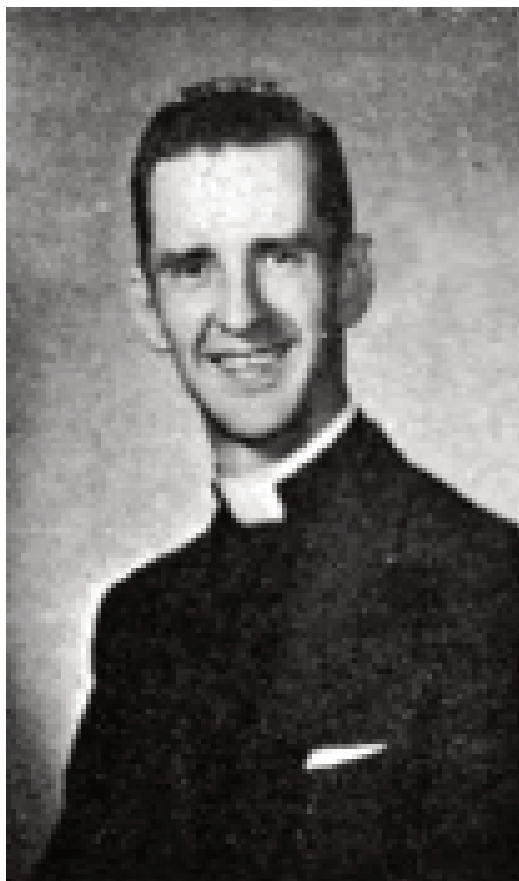




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MICHAEL NOVAK







The New Dr. Martin Luther Evangelical Lutheran
Church on 4470 Ridge Road with Rev. V. L.
Hibian, Pastor.

Appendix J



ASTRONAUT EUGENE E. CERNAN (ČERŇAN), COMMANDER
OF APOLLO 17 Lunar Landing Mission (Source: ABC SLOVAK
LANGUAGE)