District #19 - Elmwood

Office of the County Superintendent, Saunders County
Many difficulties faced the early settlers when they began establishing schools. There was the language handicap as many spoke or understood any English. Some early school board meetings were recorded in both English and Czech. The difficulties of transportation, the shortage of teachers and lack of communication were also encountered.

Annual reports made by the official school boards of the three districts, #19, #94 and #106 to the County Superintendent of Saunders County, Nebraska for the year 1884.

School District #19

Names of patrons having children in school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Charles Frohner</th>
<th>Joseph Ptacek (1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jacob Walch</td>
<td>Joseph Ptacek #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Blazek</td>
<td>Adam Hinek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob Sabata</td>
<td>Henry Havlovic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Kunesh</td>
<td>Peter Kastl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Shandera</td>
<td>James Frohner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virka Masek</td>
<td>Frank Pelan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Murry</td>
<td>John Novak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Junek</td>
<td>Anton Snitil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Ptacek (1)</td>
<td>James Samek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joseph Schulz</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School Board

Peter Kastl, Director
Joseph Sabata, Moderator
Henry Havlovic, Treasurer
Teacher - A.S. Kester
Teaching Period - 120 days
Salary $37.00 per month
$220.00

Finances:
Total received $552.42
Total paid out 550.25
Money left 2.17

School District #94

John Chleboun, Director
Jannie Dosek, Moderator
Joseph Jambor, Treasurer

Anton Stuchlik
Frank Tomek
Frank Wichtorin
Anton Cuhel
John Hruza
Frank Vavak
Vaclav Novak

Teacher - V.T. McCormick
Teaching period - 6 months
Salary - $40.00 per month
$240.00

Finances:
Total received $312.39
Total paid out 311.20
Money left 1.19
School District #106

Frank Vrbka  John Hladky  School Board
John Kastl  Frank Polak  John Kastl, Director
J. H. Enbody  Joseph Vondra  Martin Holubar, Moderator
James Helman  Anton Sholz  Joseph Vculek, Treasurer
Martin Holubar  Joseph Jelinek
Jacob Matejka  John Chmelka
John Vsetecka  Matous Cernohlavek
Joseph Vondra  John Hladik
Joseph Vculek  James Dufek
Frank Vculek  Matej Liska

The names of the wives of the school patrons are also recorded. Out of the 20 males, seven of their wives' names were "Mary".

Finances:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total received</td>
<td>$808.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total paid out</td>
<td>$808.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The names and number of children attending school in 1884 are also shown in the above reports and they average between 30 to 40 children. Now in 1975 it is about 23.

Records show that although most of the early families were of Czech descent, the early teachers, mostly male, were not. Many of the families consisted of nine, ten and even thirteen and fourteen children. Most of the teachers taught only one, two or three years. The present teacher, Mrs. Bessie Holubar has taught 13 years in District #106 and 18 years in District #19, making a total of 31 years and is still teaching.

In 1963 Districts #94 and #106 consolidated with District #19. The building of District #19 was sold and the new modern building from District #106 was moved to replace it and was further remodeled.

Incidentally, a story should be related here about the three districts' consolidation, the erection of the new school building and a humorous incident that happened a long time ago which again came to life when the old school building was removed to make place for the new one.
The story begins with a baseball and a ball bat, long existing symbols of both boys' and girls' recess time recreation in public schools. It appears that there were two boys there who were not "terribly" close friends; perhaps it was because one was considerably larger and stronger and the other one weaker and smaller. The one was Anton Curda who liked to tease the weaker ones and the other one was Emil Sedlacek, who was frail but smart. He had a fine homemade ball bat which he guarded masterfully as later here is proven. Anton liked the bat and threatened Emil that he was going to take it away from him and take it home after school. The schooltime bell rang after the afternoon recess and Emil was in possession of the bat. In desperation to prevent Anton from wresting the bat away from him after school, he stuck it into the foundation vent hole under the schoolhouse. But in haste he pushed it in too far and in no way could he recover it. The bat was left in there for many years, until the day that the old building was sold to one Josephine Havlovic Koranda who arranged to have the building kept as a keepsake and moved it onto her 80 acre farm nearby. Lo and behold, when the building was lifted off the foundation, there was Emil Sedlacek's bat as good as new. Josephine promptly took it home as a souvenir of the "good old days." It is now among her antique possessions. It is not known if Emil was advised of this important discovery.

Another discovery made during the removal of the old school building was a number of undisturbed cornstalks located under part of the building, arranged in a "checked" form of corn planting, which ground evidently was a cornfield on which the school building was erected. It is not known if Josephine collected the stalks for her trophy room.

With the Czech language predominating and many parents and their children not being able to speak the English language, communication between teacher and parents and children was difficult. In order to speed the advancement for children to learn English, some of the teachers prescribed a rule that "no Czech may be spoken among the "kids" in the school or on the school grounds, under punishment of staying in their seats at recess or for a time after school." This resulted in a very, very quiet group of children. However, that brought about a challenge with some of the children in some families, who considered it lots of fun and they set up the same rule at home on their own, including the parents, which resulted in a great help for the parents to share in the process of learning English.

School was not entirely popular with some of the pupils. Most of them
(us) were not oriented to being associated with strange playmates
and quite unfamiliar with the serious business of being taught strange
book work by the teacher and consequently, at first, going to school
was not considered a picnic by some of the children. They attended
only by duress from their parents. Some tried to play hookey and a
strange way they did it. As Mrs. Rose Fujan (Charles) of Wahoo said
her brother, Albert Sabata did not like school either and instead of
reporting to school (less than a mile from his home) he stopped under
an elm tree on the way to school, with lunch box food to sustain him
for the day, and stayed there until school was dismissed and then
went home. This writer personally knows that Albert later graduated
as a pharmacist at Fremont Normal School at Fremont, Nebraska.

We have another case where two boys, Edward and Joe Slegl in District
#94 continued this practice for a week before their parents discovered
it. Likewise with a lunch box well packed by their mother, they
travelled only a short distance from home and stopped under a bridge
well protected from bad weather. They played together all day, enjoy­
ing scenery of a nearby wooded pasture, and when they saw other children
going home from school, they waited until they passed and then went home.

In early days there were no extra-curriculum activities. Pupils were
taught the three R's, reading, 'riting' and 'rithmetic' and other difficult
subjects, such as grammar, physiology and history. Recreation con­
sisted of many games played by boys and girls separately and together
and also baseball.

One teacher in District #19 brought his violin and some songbooks to
school. It was soon discovered that music was the children's biggest
joy and a great help in discipline.

Teachers in early days had many chores which are not found in the mod­
eren rural school. Many teachers tried to make the schoolroom more
attractive. Two teachers, George W. Anderson, in 1906 and one of
his pupils Charles Novak Jr. who taught in 1916-1918 also landscaped
the school grounds. Trees were transplanted from pasture creeks and
many are still standing and an attraction for the grounds, and provide
shade for the pupils.

Many of the events and incidents in this history have been reported by
the second generation. Perhaps some important and interesting
accounts and happenings may have been overlooked, for which we are
sorry.
We sincerely thank the present teacher, Mrs. George Holubar who asked us as former residents and a former teacher in District #19 to help assemble this information. We have enjoyed the opportunity to look back into the school history of these three districts and revive our own memories.

Bessie Holubar  
Former teacher in #106 - 13 yrs. 
Present teacher kn #19 - 18 yrs.

Charles Novak  
Teacher in #94 - 1916-17-18
SW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 17, Township 15, Range 5
Elk Precinct
3 miles South, 3½ miles West of Prague

School Board -
- Edmund Havlovic
- Jerry Polacek
- Charles Prochaska

Teacher -
- Bessie Holubar

Pupils

Marnita Havlovic  Bradley Stanek
Annette Kubik    Steve Sousek
Margaret Sousek  Brenda Prochaska
Dennis Polacek   Deann Focher
Dallen Havlovic  Bobby Polacek
Tommy Polacek    Jimmy Kubik
Denise Focher    Dale Focher
Barbara Kubik    Marilyn Polacek
Dianne Prochaska Duane Havlovic
Barbara Polacek  Brian Prochaska