AMERICAN ETHNICITY AND CZECH IMMIGRANTS' INTEGRATION IN TEXAS: CEMETERY DATA

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The lasting traces of Czech immigration to Texas and the once prominent immigrant community lead to the cemeteries. The purpose of this study is to show how to read Czech cemetery data in Texas from the 1860s to the 1950s in order to understand the immigrants' integration and contact with their German neighbors and the dominant Anglo-American society. To immigrants in the middle of the 19th century, Texas offered land and freedom of movement. But the reasons to return home outweighed those to stay for some of the earliest immigrants who were unable to align themselves with networks established by the German immigrants who preceded them. Those who followed the pioneers lived within interethnic social structures that they gradually abandoned in favor of the ethnocentric Czech community. Language choices, the interplay of Czech and English, and the endurance of the Czech language in tombstone inscriptions yield synchronic and diachronic data whose analysis and interpretation reveal sociolinguistic networks of immigrants, rules of social cohesion and ethnic identity.

Keywords: Texas Czech cemeteries, immigrant integration, language shift, interethnic networks, ethnocentric Czech community

INTRODUCTION

Cemetery lands are overlaid with language that is opened to diachronic and synchronic exploration. Chronological data of gravestones resonate with immigrant arrivals. Cemetery inscriptions thus provide a permanent, yet rarely sought-out perspective on immigration, detail a case study in prolonged assimilation and language contacts, and provide an outdoor archive of socioeconomic integration.

They represent microcosms where sociolinguistic identity as well as religious and economic history is compressed and inscribed into stones and circumscribed by fences that have become emblematic of immigrant enclaves. The data are accessible to all who pass by. The most prominent and lasting traces of Czech immigration to Texas and the once prominent immigrant community lead to the cemeteries. Other traces include music bands, kolache festivals, place names, non-American steeple churches, buildings of the Catholic Unity of Texas, immigrant press and archived letters. To immigrants in the middle of the 19th century, Texas offered land and freedom of movement, which is what they lacked in their homeland of Bohemia and Moravia. But reasons to return home outweighed those to stay for some of the earliest immigrants who were unable to align themselves with networks established by the German immigrants who preceded them. The purpose of this study is to show how to read Czech cemetery data in Texas in order to understand the immigrants' integration and contact with their neighbors.

CZECHS AND GERMANS SETTLING TEXAS: OLD NEIGHBORS IN A RURAL SETTING

Among the very first attempts to resettle in Texas was that of an established Czech merchant family. Kateřina and Frank Herrmann, from a town in northeastern Bohemia, settled in the area surrounding Cat Spring in southeastern Texas and documented their immigrant experience, which ended in a near disaster in 1852, in letters home (Herrmann, 1851–1853). The Herrmanns were overwhelmed by the unexpected features of the environment, expanse of the unpopulated land, distances between the shabby houses, primitive living conditions and lack of a basic economic infrastructure that would provide wells with drinking water, roads, agricultural land, food storage and helping hands. During their voyage in the heat of a Texas summer they lost two children, became ill, barely managed to care for their other four children and finally departed for their homeland. Immediately following their return they attempted, in vain, to interfere with others' intention to migrate to Texas by publishing their letters.[1] The local contacts on which they had planned to rely when settling proved inadequate. Unlike the nuclear family, their young nephew (Václav Matějovský, 1829–1904) managed to connect with local German and Anglo settlers and was accepted into their

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[1] The letters were published by J.B. Malý in his *Prague National Journal* in 1851, nos. 52, 66, 70, 86, 90 and 93, from October 31, November 7 and December 14, 12, 19 and 24.

community.[2] Several other Czech adventurers tried their luck in Texas in the period from the 1850s up to the Civil War, leaving their traces in settlements such as Industry and Bluff. Chain migration of Czech families to Texas did not start until after the Civil War when immigrants followed the first Czech adventurers such as the Bergmanns to Cat Spring,[3] the Lešikars to New Ulm[4] and the Haidušeks to Dubina,[5] as well as German immigrants to Fayetteville, Ellinger and High Hill.[6] The arriving immigrants purposefully settled near Germans where they established their own houses and farms along the ethnic boundaries they have always respected. Rural settlements enabled expansion throughout the farming black land that attracted the Czechs and also many German immigrants. However, the Germans' social and professional composition was diverse while the Czechs were uniformly oriented towards farming.[7] They transplanted the image of homeland villages by replicating the shape of roads lined with trees, small farming lots, churches attached to cemeteries and farms clustered in the vicinity.

On a Texas map from 1810, not a single town appears as it is known today.[8] The nucleus of European migration was the so-called Austin colony in an area that the Spanish opened up to immigrants in the 1830s, and the earliest settlement was established near Austin as early as 1823.[9] Further settlements arose along migration trails, in the vicinity of shelters built to protect the colonizers and those of Spanish Catholic missions.[10] The first German settlers came in the 1830s

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[2] *Fayette County, Texas Heritage*, 1–2, Fayette County History Book Committee, Dallas 1996, p. 296; F. Lotto, *Fayette County. Her History and Her People*, Schulenburg 1902, pp. 270–271.

[3] Ernst Bergmann (1797–1877) was an Evangelical pastor from Prussian Silesia who left the homeland for America in 1849 and sent back letters praising Texas.

[4] Lidumil Lešikar was an 1848 revolutionary and a prosecuted Brethren believer who organized an expedition to Texas in 1851.

[5] Augustine Haidušek, a future lawyer, banker and prominent journalist, arrived with his parents in 1856.

[6] E. Eckert, *Stones on the Prairie: Acculturation in America*, Bloomington 2007, Chapter 3.

[7] T.G. Jordan, *German Seed in Texas Soil: Immigrant Farmers in 19th Century Texas*, Austin and London 1966.

[8] T.R. Fehrenbach. *Lone Star: A History of Texas and the Texans*, New York 1968, Chapters 9 and 10.

[9] L.J. Rippley, *The German-Americans,* Twayne Publishers, Boston, 1976, pp. 45–46.

[10] While at home, Czech Catholics (unlike Protestants who were persecuted) formed a privileged class, but in emigration they found themselves absurdly in the position of the persecuted. After Mexico gained independence in 1821, they were reduced to a minority but remained one of the largest religious bodies in Texas, nevertheless. After the Texas revolution, many of the Mexican Catholic communities above the Nueces River were displaced, and clergy remained only in San Antonio. In the 1880s, Catholics represented less than 10% of the population of 1,600,000, and slightly over 10% fifty years later (*Catholic Church*, in *Handbook of Texas*, online).

and 40s, sponsored by the Society for Protection of German Immigrants which sought to establish new markets for Germany's growing maritime trade. In the 1840s and 50s, immigrants from Alsace, parts of France, Austria, and Norway settled near the Gulf of Mexico, southeast of Dallas and the Southwest. By the 1850s when the very first immigrants from Bohemia and Moravia arrived, the eastern, southern and central regions of the state were sparsely settled by Anglo-Americans and Europeans primarily from Germany.[11] In the 1830s, Germans established Oldenburg, Weimar and New Ulm in central Texas, infiltrated the Anglo towns of Cat Spring, Columbus and Round Top, and built New Braunfels at the base of the Hill Country.[12] In the 1840s, German textile workers, coal miners, artisans and peasants moved by the thousands to capture cheap Texas land. Already in the 1850s, more Germans owned land in Texas than Americans.[13] In the 1840s, thousands of Germans lived in Galveston, northeast of Houston and the Hill Country, and settled the sizeable towns of Castroville, Fredericksburg and New Braunfels in the expansive regions north of San Antonio, where very few Czechs ever ventured. By 1845, the German town of New Braunfels already had a population of about fifteen hundred, and by the 1860s, Lutheran and Catholic Germans constituted about a quarter of the population in the region.[14]

In the 1850s, Czechs lived in central Texas at Cat Spring, New Ulm, Wesley, Dubina, Fayetteville, Hostyn, Praha and a few other locations. Fayetteville (built on the Old San Felipe Trail in 1833 to shield immigrants against Indians and wild animals) became a shelter for a few Czechs in 1854 and later a prominent Czech-German settlement that exhibited the principle of early interethnic contacts. By the 1880s, Czechs formed the majority in Fayetteville and over 200 families lived there in 1890. They were attracted, among other things, by the prospering Catholic community and its newly built church, since over 85% of all immigrants from Bohemia and Moravia were Catholics. Ellinger was originally settled by German Catholics in 1859 but there, too, they became outnumbered by Czech immigrants by the 1880s. While Germans represented the "old" and trusted immigration, Czechs were ranked with the "new" ones who were treated as a burden to American society, particularly at a time when a quota affecting the

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[11] Between 1840 and 1860, Germans contributed one-third of the 1.4 million U.S. immigrants (Olson 1979, p. 95).

[12] B. McCandless, *Equal before the Lens: Jno. Trlica's Photographs of Granger, Texas*, College Station 1992, pp. 226–227.

[13] W.D. Kamphoefner, W. Helbich, U. Sommer (eds.), *News from the Land of Freedom: German Immigrants Write Home*, Ithaca 1991, p. 60.

[14] C. Machann, J.W. Mendl, *Krasna Amerika: A Study of Texas Czechs, 1851–1939*, Austin 1983, p. 209.

new immigration was prescribed in the 1920s. High Hill was established near the Old Spanish Trail in 1858 by German Lutherans who were joined there by Moravian families in 1860.[15] Hostyn, too, was a German town in the 1830s, but was transformed into a stronghold of Texas Czech Catholics that had its own school, theater, reading clubs, and a permanent pastor from Moravia as of 1884. Starting in 1864, with twenty-five Moravian families, who at first attended the German church at Hallettsville, Praha became one of the largest Czech towns in Texas by the turn of the century[16] which also had its own church and priest. In 1860, 30,000 Germans and 700 Czechs lived in Texas, the population of which grew five times between 1860 and 1900 with German immigrants outnumbering Czech immigrants ten times by 1880.[17]

The boundaries of inhabited Texas kept expanding, but Czech immigrants barely participated in colonizing the west and north of Texas, with over 90% of them continuing to live in contiguous settlements in central Texas. Reaching out to buy land, Czechs expanded outwards from their original interethnic region and established settlements such as Frenstat, Ennis and West in the 1880s. Between 1849 and 1920, Czech immigrants established about forty new settlements, mostly in Austin and Fayette counties.[18] Commentaries in Texas's Czech-language press (and in particular those in *Svoboda*, 1885–1966) indicated that Czechs' integration into Texas' Anglo social networks and adjustment to America during the first twenty years was slow and difficult, and Czechs barely managed to attain American living standards.[19] They were tolerated by the Anglos and Germans who considered Czechs invaders of a territory they did not belong to rather than seeing them as equals. Nevertheless, in four of Texas's counties (Fayette, Burleson, Colorado and Lavaca) the Czech population reached or exceeded the number of German settlers, and the 1900 Census showed a total of 22,000 Czechs. A radical decline and then stagnation of the German farming population, and migration of Germans to cities from the 1910s onwards, gleaned

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[15] *Fayette County, Texas Heritage*, 1–2, Fayette County History Book Committee, Dallas 1996, p. 67.

[16] V.A. Svrcek, *A History of the Czech-Moravian Catholic Communities of Texas*, Waco 1974.

[17] C. Machann, J.W. Mendl (eds.), *Czech Voices: Stories from Texas in the Amerikán národní kalendář*, College Station, Texas. 1991, p. xviii.

[18] R. Janak, *Geographic Origin of Czech Texans,* Hallettsville 1985.

[19] The Milroys have elaborated the concept of individual speakers' social networks, i.e. the web of relationships and ways of communicating, and a taxonomy of speech communities according to density, overlap and an ''in-or-out'' orientation of the networks, L. Milroy 1987. The Czech immigrant community would be accordingly defined as focused and organized, primarily through overlapping endocentric ethnic networks.

from statistical data on the two ethnic groups, should not be understood as
abandonment of German settlements. Germans exceeded manifold the numbers of
Czechs throughout the history of their cohabitation, and their language displays
similar rates of survival.[20]

Figure 1.

Texas towns and settlements in 1904, J. Habenicht, *Dějiny Čechův amerických*
[History of American Czechs], St. Louis 1904, n.p.

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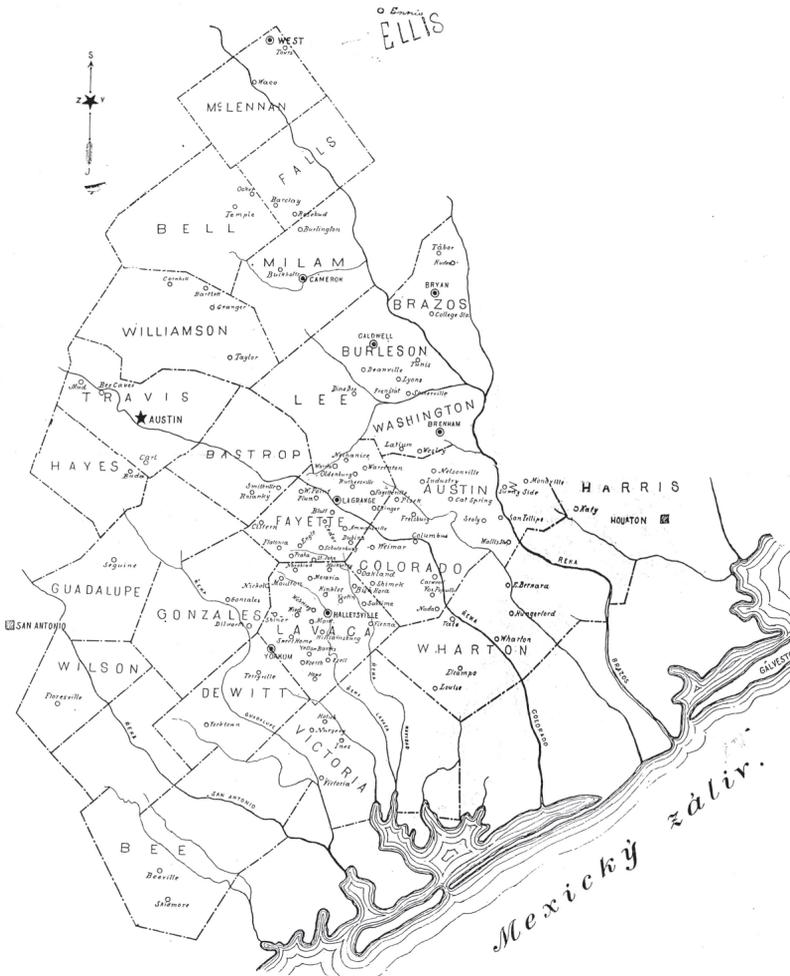
[20] As documented, for instance, by research done in the 1960s for *German Linguistic Atlas*,
See: G.G. Gilbert, *Linguistic Atlas of Texas German*, Austin 1972.

This settlement pattern confirms what Dorota Praszałowicz points out when tracing the processes of ethnicization and Americanization transforming immigrant populations in her research of New York immigrant neighborhoods, established and transformed from the early 19th and into the 20th century:

"The Old Immigration (Germans and German Jews) had forged patterns of ethnic community building which were used by the New Immigration (East European Jews, Poles and Ruthenians). In the process of community-building, each group became increasingly ethnocentric, however. In the course of time, others were pushed to the margins of a community life… Each group invented its ethnicity in opposition, even in hostility to others. The process involved a great deal of ethnocentrism. It seems that interethnic relations involved two processes which were going on at the same time but at a different pace. On the one hand, there was a process of cooperation between immigrants of various ethnic origins. The cooperation was intensive at the beginning of the mass migration, and later on, the tradition of close interethnic contact was maintained. On the other hand, some prejudices were carried over from the Old to the New World and caused animosity between ethnic groups. This process was reinforced by ethnic community-building, and was also hastened by nationalism which was transmitted from Europe".[21]

F i g u r e　2.

The tombstone at Nelsonville marks the 1902 death of Emilie Jurčak.
The name and basic data are recorded in Czech but the German epitaph reveals
interethnic links. All the photographs in the article are from the author's archive
of tombstones located in central Texas Czech cemeteries.

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[21] D. Praszałowicz, 'Old Neighbors in the New World. Germans, Jews, Poles and Ruthenians on Manhattan Lower East Side', *Przegląd Polonijny* 31/4 (2005), pp. 77–92.

A CEMETERY AS A FOUNDATION
FOR AN IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY[22]

Czech cemeteries reflect the transformation from interethnicity to ethocentricity to different degrees depending on the urban vs. rural makeup of immigrant communities and the time of arrival. The interethnic beginnings can be discerned in towns such as Fayetteville, Halletsville and Ellinger which, however, represent exceptions to the central Texas pattern of small immigrant settlements replicating homeland villages. Although Czechs shared boundaries with German neighbors, they intended their settlements to be ethnically cohesive from the 1870s onwards and structured their social networks accordingly. Apparently, they were motivated not to replay the homeland conflict with Germans in the "land of freedom." Nevertheless, historical memory of the conflicts ran deep and affected their decisions. For one, they avoided transferring their social and cultural subordination to Germans and the interethnic cohabitation with them that had defined social organization throughout the Czech Lands of the Monarchy. When leaving Europe, they left behind the systems of military conscription and forced labor that had marked the history of the Habsburg Monarchy in Central Europe. By the 1860s, central Texas's socio-economic infrastructure had been laid out by the German pioneers. Czech immigrants could draw upon it at the beginning by sharing material and human resources, which was necessary due to their lack thereof, and also by attending interethnic churches and schools. Although memoirs, ethnic press and official speeches by community leaders stress the boundaries between Germans and Czechs, urban cemeteries and primary documents of letters and diaries dating back to the 1870s (e.g. a German teacher named Mentzen's diary in the Polansky private archives, Fayetteville) depict mutual tolerance.[23] German neighbors welcomed the settling of Czech people nearby, and benefitted from their proximity as well. As in the homeland, they rented land to the Czech immigrants and hired them as helping hands, and thus supported their eventual passage to ethnocentric independence.

However, Czechs saw emigration as liberation from German oppression and took advantage of the opportunity to distance themselves and assert their independence by establishing separate agricultural settlements. The four decades

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[22] Cf. T.G. Jordan 1982 for a description of German folk cemeteries in New Braunfels and isolated family cemeteries in the Hill Country. He comments on the American custom of burying the dead on the edges of their farmland.

[23] Cf. E. Eckert, 'Language Variation in an Immigrant Community: Language and Community Maintenance,' *Brown Slavic Contributions XI: Modern Czech Studies*, (1999), pp. 11–37, for an analysis of a relevant community speech, presented in Fayetteville in 1920.

of mass migration starting in the 1870s enabled the rapid growth of Czech settlements expanding away from the focal territory of interethnic neighborhoods. Rural cemeteries at Dubina, Hostyn, Ross Prairie and other places show the self-reliance of Czech communities, which started then and lasted until the 1940s. They also reflect strict social demarcation by means of religious affiliation. The cemeteries display ethnocentricity through tombstone inscriptions showing recurring family names and intermarriages, and an absence of German interethnic ties. Both Catholic Church records and tombstone inscriptions document a paucity of marriages between Czechs and Germans or Americans before the 1940s.

F i g u r e   3.

Kinship relations are carefully recorded on the above tombstone,
on which the inscription reads: *Here rests Ludvik Horák and his wife Kateřina,
née Míglová and first married to Jan Dostalík who died 22 March 1914.*
The epitaph is only for Kateřina.

Modern maps of Czech and German settlement regions recording place names and cemeteries indicate that most of the Czech-marked territory overlaps with the German territory. This overlap provides a context for neighborhoods in the new land but does not indicate population mergers, shared infrastructures or growing intercultural communication. The immigrants signified their intention

to stay by laying out a cemetery near which they built a Catholic or a Brethren church. By these acts they revealed an intention to mark out their territory and claim a new homeland there.

Figure 4.

A sketch of a Texas map showing partly overlapping settlement regions of Czechs and Germans during the mass migration era.
Source: S.J. Baird, 'The Taylor, Texas,
City Cemetery: A Language Community', *Markers* XIII, (1996), p. 115.
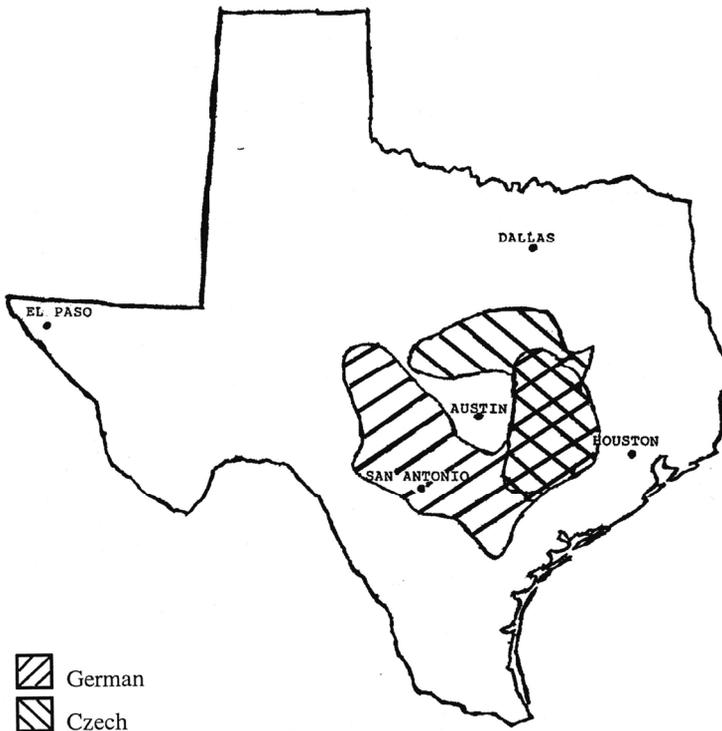
Features of language, dating and religious symbolism shape the taxonomy of the Czech cemeteries. Some of the simple, hand-fashioned and hand-inscribed gravestones were replaced by modern ones in the second half of the 20th century, as in the following photo.

Figure 5.

The tombstone of Antonia Vlasak Motal (died 1891) is a modern replacement
of an old stone, likely copying some of the original text. The stone is headed
by an English term of kinship but the inscription itself is in Czech,
although with spelling mistakes and without diacritic signs.

Czech people upheld the split between Catholics and Brethren in Texas, too,
by attending different churches and burying their dead at different cemeteries.
The symbols of the cross vs. those of a chalice and Bible visually mark the
affiliation. The Wesley Brethren congregation was organized in 1864, its first
church built in 1866 and the earliest death date carved in a tombstone in 1870.
In Ross Prairie, the Brethren congregation established its church and cemetery
in 1870 when the earliest death date was chiseled in. The cemetery sections
established at the time of immigration show unevenly distributed rows with
intricate metal crosses, gravestones of various shapes and tablets listing children's
names. Kinship and marital ties are easy to track.

Janak surveyed 106 cemeteries with Czech inscriptions in the Czech-settled
region marked on the map.[24] Czech burials in the originally German settlements
such as Fayetteville and Ellinger reflect the necessity to bury the dead in the
sanctified ground of a Catholic cemetery, as well as the initial interethnic
support.[25] The fact that between 1872 and 1910 all Catholics at Fayetteville

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[24] R. Janak, *Czech Inscriptions on Texas Tombstones*, n.p., Beaumont 1997.
[25] S.J. Baird, 'Language Codes in Texas German Graveyards', *Markers* IX, (1992), pp. 217–254.

were served by the Czech pastor Josef Chromčík confirms this support (his trilingual tombstone dominates the cemetery). At the Catholic cemetery of Fayetteville (one of several city cemeteries), Czech tombstones raised in the 1870s outnumbered German ones with a ratio of 8:3. In the 1880s and 1890s, German burials formed only one-quarter of the total, one-fifth in the 1900s, 10% in the 1910s and 5% in the 1920s. The Catholic cemetery in Praha and its surrounding Czech settlement refers back to an Anglo community called Mulberry in its earliest tombstone markers of the 1850s. Tombstones from the late 1860s record numerous arrivals (and departures) of Czechs, and those raised between the 1860s and 1880s testify to Czechs' numerical dominance in the parish. In the 1880s as well as in the 1940s, the majority of inscriptions were in Czech.[26] The tombstones reflect the pattern of Czechs being pulled into migration family after family and remaining near their relatives. Rather than spreading out, establishing isolated farms, and using the land as pastures, the Czech immigrants clustered around the pioneers, settled down together and vehemently practiced their Catholic rituals.

Figure 6.

This 1897 tombstone embodies vernacular culture in the early stone design.
The one above announces the birth and death of triplets.

Language data of tombstone inscriptions at 12 of the surveyed cemeteries reflect a settlement transformation from German or Czech-German to Czech ethnocentric rural enclaves. In these cemeteries, the original balance in numbers of Czech and German burials drastically changes in favor of Czech burials over

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[26] R. Janak, *Czech Inscriptions…*, p. 3.

the period of recorded cemetery history, i.e. from the 1860s to 1950s.[27] However, in the cemeteries of Schulenburg, Frelsburg and High Hill, Germans retained a majority over the period of recorded history. Most "Czech" cemeteries such as Hostyn, Industry, Snook, Shiner and St. John's show an absolute majority of inscriptions in Czech from the 1860s to the 1930s, when German inscriptions reach only single digits. For instance, four immigrants (two Czechs and two Germans) were buried at Hostyn in the 1860s, but twenty-one in the 1890s, out of which nineteen were Czechs.[28]

Figure 7.

A tombstone depicting the Protestant chalice and Bible, the symbols of the Brethren faith, contains an inscription to the local pastor Bohuslav Emil Laciak, who died in 1891, cites John 11:25
(spelled out dialectally as *Ja jsem vskřišeni i živod Kdo veři ve mně pak i zemřel živ bude* [I am the resurrection and life. He who believes in me will live even if he has died]) and ends in a common epitaph
(*Pokoj prachu Jeho* [Peace to his ashes]).

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[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid., p. 53.

The texts in the stones trace kinship, homeland geography and dates of birth, death and occasionally arrival to Texas. They contain not only highly codified, standard language but also vernacular language. Inscriptions in Czech include dialectal features referring to the isoglosses of northeastern Moravia. Even biblical verses and epitaphs appear inscribed with dialectal pronunciations. Early inscriptions often read as personal commentaries spelled in the way they were pronounced, regardless of prescribed spellings, as if written on a scrap of paper rather than chiseled in stone. Early tombstones carry various other imprints of vernacular production and show idiosyncratic texts and stone decoration, carved into lime or sandstone. Some include crude lettering, casually drawn separating lines and words spilling over the stone. Domestic production, informality and the function of documenting continuity of the community are reflected in the very language of the inscriptions, approximately into the interwar period.

Figure 8.

This inscription dating from 1927 contains vernacular spellings and juxtaposes Czech and English naming patterns. The English first name is spelled with double "l" but ends in a Czech diminutive ending, drawing the reader's attention to a little girl's departure. The last name reflects the English habit of using the family name instead the Czech naming convention which specifies the female gender. The inscription closes with a vernacular retelling of a standard epitaph used on children's graves.

Dialectal features punctuate inscriptions as late as the 1930s and 1940s, even when engraved in granite or marble. The tombstones thus contain texts that are personal and private and, at the same time, public, shared and accessible to cemetery visitors. In this way, the cemetery functioned as a public chronicle compiled over four generations.

The above inscription contains both dialectal and phonetic spellings,
and displays the characteristics cited above. The commonly occurring epitaph
is personalized through a Moravian regional pronunciation.

The tombstone of Celestina Kulhanek indicates where she was born in Bohemia
and how old she was when she died. It is followed by an inscription commemorating
the death of her son and concluded with an epitaph for both,
containing idiosyncratic spellings.

"DISTANCE" AND MOTIVATION:
FACTORS IN THE INTEGRATION OF CZECH IMMIGRANTS

Czech migrants were highly motivated to settle down and farm but not to integrate or assimilate.[29] For the first time in their modern history, they had a chance to establish an ethnic nation and invested energy in doing so. Only then did they enter the ranks of American citizens, and they served the country in the military during the world wars, as well. Their German neighbors left Europe cognizant of, and confident in, the value of the German nation that had been established politically and linguistically in Europe. In Texas they merged into local political, economic and social structures without the burden of testing and proving their national identity.

Czech settlements were organized by social networks interconnecting the family, church and community. Prolonged maintenance of the community can be ascribed to traditional values formulated on the basis of the Catholic faith that correlated with non-integration. But this set-up caused conflicts with the American majority because Texas Czechs' social networks were insular.[30] They could do well without a grasp of English as late as the interwar years, as recorded in immigrant press letters and advertisements,[31] because their economic and cultural needs were satisfied through Czech bankers, shop owners, doctors, and priests.[32] They were slow to learn English, except for the few whose networks did reach into the American public domain. Inefficiency in English and the enclave community caused difficulties in integration. Americans expected no less than assimilation and felt threatened by the close-knit community networks,

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[29] T.G. Jordan, *German Seed…*; R.L. Skrabanek, *We're Czechs*, College Station 1988.

[30] Immigrants became targets of attacks by the Know Nothing movement of Protestant nativists prevalent in the South, active throughout the 19th century and directed mainly against Catholics (Daniels 1997, pp. vii-viii). By the second half of the 19th century, prevalent religious tolerance became widespread at home and formed an unexpected counterpoint to the religious intolerance found in emigration. The ideology of the Know Nothing movement was taken over by the American Party in 1854, and proposed a twenty-one-year stay in the U.S. as a requirement to qualify for citizenship, a requirement for only Americans to vote and a restriction that Catholics, and Protestants married to them, cannot run for office.

[31] E. Eckert, 'Community "Translation" in the Immigrant Press' in C. Cravens, M.U. Fidler, S.C. Kresin (eds.) *Between Texts, Languages, and Cultures: A Festschrift for M.H. Heim.* Bloomington 2008, pp. 81–95.

[32] Lippi-Green (1994) discussed sociolinguistic elaboration of the network system of a community's communication, pp. 12–14. For a report on interviews among Czech Texans in the late 1990s, see E. Eckert, *Kameny na prérii: Čeští vystěhovalci v Texasu* [Stones on the Prairie: Czech Immigrants in Texas], Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, Prague, 2004, pp. 205–210. Eckert 2004.

religious devotion and group mentality. Consequently, the Czechs and Anglos maintained both cultural and spatial distance.[33]

What's perceived as the resilience of the Czech national identity, manifested in the ways it was cultivated and projected, stems from the massive transfer of the population from a specific region in Northeastern Moravia to central Texas, where they did not disperse, which caused population stagnation in particular villages in Moravia. They remained united as a nation until World War Two, whose aftermath dealt a final blow to agricultural settlements throughout the American South. To summarize, the ethnic profiles of the Texas Czech community were (1) the homogeneous pre-emigration origins of the group and ethnocentric social infrastructure in emigration; (2) the heavy flow of immigrants into central Texas before the First World War over four consecutive decades;[34] (3) endocentric social networks of individuals along with the practice of endogamy and relative isolation of immigrant settlements; (4) ethnically defined infrastructure of clubs and social organizations; and (5) the influence of community leaders. The immigration was compressed mostly up to the 1870s through the 1900s, when a national linguocentric revival was in full swing at home, and emigrating villagers rode the wave of national consciousness in Texas, as well. The two world wars corresponded with major social shifts that influenced life in the community as well as the majority society. During the pre-WWI period, the influx into Czech settlements steadily increased. The original settlements were rejuvenated through contact with the homeland, and incoming immigrants dispersed into settlements nearby. This period marked the peak years of the community's vitality, when an ongoing cultivation of homeland ties and affirmation of Czech roots occurred spontaneously. The situation began to change after WWI, when links to the homeland weakened and immigration to Texas declined after the Czechoslovak declaration of independence in 1918. The most significant cause of the sharply falling numbers of immigrants was the U.S. Congress's imposition of immigrant quota in 1924 that classified Czech migrants as "new," East Europeans undesirable and undermining the foundations of the American nation.[35]

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[33] R.L. Skrabanek, *We're Czechs…*

[34] A focused community is an inward-oriented group with limited outside contact (cf. W. Downes, *Language and Society*, 2nd ed., Cambridge 1998, p. 61). Milroy uses the term "focused community" in relation to the density of speakers' social networks (L. Milroy, *Language and Social Networks*, 2nd ed., Oxford 1987).

[35] See R. Daniels, *Not Like Us: Immigrants and Minorities in America, 1890–1924*, Chicago 1997.

AMERICAN ETHNICITY AND THE IDEOLOGY OF LANGUAGE

Americans saw themselves as the "native born" who had conquered the Wild West – free, democratic, successful and morally superior to newer immigrants, whom they expected to indoctrinate with American cultural values. Dublin writes that the American character was formed by the Puritan faith that emboldened Americans with a special mission, an exceptional fate and history that molded democracy and civilization.[36] The conflicts stemmed from perceptions of mutual cultural distance, Czechs' awareness of economic inefficiency and social inequality, perception of racial inequality, Anglo-Americans' animosity towards "new" immigrants, and the rural isolation that stood in the way of integrating and acquiring American values. A major hurdle was the Anglo-Americans' distrust of Catholicism, which supposedly disabled immigrants' participation in democratic socio-political institutions.

As a unique nation, American "natives" were ideologically tied through American English into a supposedly monolingual nation embodying the grand mission of citizens inspired by the victory over British colonizers and the French Revolution. Noam Webster noted in the Preface to the 1st edition of his Dictionary (1828) that language, made different from British English through spelling prescriptions and disseminated as such through the American school curriculum (in Texas this happened when English was made the official language of public school teaching in 1871), was the crux of the emergent American nation and matched its nature.

Czechs were slow to follow both the new spelling rules and prerogatives to assimilate, rid themselves of their distinguishing accents and Catholic religious and cultural values, and start speaking English as true American citizens. For years they circumvented expectations of integration by cultivating Czech through ethnic organizations and declaring the care for language as their ultimate purpose. The Catholic Church propagated the usage of Czech in Sunday schools, as well as the ideology that Czech enabled maintenance of religious and conservative socio-cultural values. The community abided comfortably in the cultural, economic and religious domains empowered by Czech.

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[36] T. Dublin (ed.), *Immigrant Voices: New Lives in America, 1773–1986*, Urbana and Chicago 1993, pp. 1–18.

CZECH ETHNICITY AND THE IDEOLOGY OF LANGUAGE

The majority of Czech immigrants arrived at the height of the homeland National Revival, carrying Brethren Bibles that represented re-translations of the Old and New Testaments into modern Czech from the end of the 16th century. This Bible became the critical linguistic resource for language revival two hundred years later. They also migrated along with František Palacký's (1798–1876) monumental history of the Czech Kingdom, glorifying the history of Czech independence up to 1526, when it was annexed by the Habsburg dynasty. The Revival gave the impulse to forge Czech national identity around language. Only those who spoke Czech could belong to the nation, according to the ideology of Josef Jungmann (1773–1847), who consequently excluded speakers of German even when they had lived in Bohemia for centuries. This linguocentrism was the axis, but at the same time the weakest link, in the culminating revivalist movement. Czech gradually became an autonomous language covering a full range of social, literary, and cultural domains. Maintenance of Czech language and development of nationality were also written into bylaws of Texas's Czech institutions. Language was equated with national identity (although German lexical borrowings and calques were deeply entrenched in Czech), and as such it became central to the immigrants' internalized concept of ethnicity, as well. Even in Texas it continued to be revered as a sacred inheritance and a basis of historical continuity. It became standardized in the press, where Moravian dialects were used in letters from readers to retain the true sound of the homeland.[37]

Although English had become the official language of instruction in Texas schools already in 1871, Czech continued to be taught in some schools in the interwar period when Czech ethnocentrism prevailed in the community, and until the 1950s, when there was a linguistic and cultural shift away from the active life of the Czech community. The Czech Catholic Church emphasized teaching in Czech so that children did not become strangers to their nation ("*...aby se neodnárodnily*").[38] Reading clubs promoted circulation of Czech books and periodicals in rural areas starting in the late 1860s. From the 1880s onwards, Czech fraternal organizations, insurance institutions, and benevolent societies were established that maintained meeting minutes in Czech (in the Catholic Unity of Texas from 1896 to 1932). These institutions, too, were perceived as guardians of the Czech language.

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[37] E. Eckert, K. Hannan, 'Vernacular Writing and a Sociolinguistic Change in the Texas Czech Community', *Journal of Slavic Linguistics,* pp. 87–161.

[38] *Svoboda*, 17 April 1908, newspaper, La Grange, Texas.

Language provided a measure of the continuity of a community, and the way in which language was used in documents produced by the second and third generations, including tombstone inscriptions, demonstrated a gradual shift in the immigrants' identity. Czech was the language of the immigrants' homeland, used for self-identification in emigration, while English was the language through which they negotiated their identity from Czechs [living] in Texas to Texas Czechs (in the interwar period) and, finally, to Americans.[39] Tombstone inscriptions, the minutes of the Catholic Unity of Texas meetings, readers' letters to the press, and personal notes mediate the experiences of both worlds. Gestures towards an acceptance of the American world become evident in English borrowings and grammatical patterns, code-switching between Czech and English, dates and epitaphs in stone, and stories and advertisements in the press.

The 1940 Census shows that 60,000 Czechs of the first and second generations were farmers. Twenty years later, the Census shows a decline to 50,000 Czech speakers. Eventual social integration was brought upon without much effort on the part of Texas Czechs, primarily due to interwar and post-WWII changes in agriculture that favored mechanized farming on large lots and caused the collapse of the economic infrastructure of small farms. As a result of improved access to the city and university education, individuals adjusted their social networks, which caused a gradual decline of the social and economic value of Czech and a change in attitude towards the language and traditions. Czech was no longer ideologized as the pillar of community life, but rather as one's access to the homeland culture and ancestors. Czech integrated growing numbers of English borrowings and grammar patterns, and thus became hybridized and compressed stylistically. At the cemetery and in inscriptions, the value of Czech shifted from documentary to symbolic.

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[39] O. Overland draws attention to immigrants claiming their right to American identity in diverse ways, *Immigrant Minds, American Identities: Making the United States Home, 1870–1930*, Urbana and Chicago 2000. Most of those with biological and historical ties to the Czech community espouse complex identities today in which ancestral ethnicity may or may not play a part. Ethnic origins represent just one of multiple components that the individual may utilize in defining a personal vision of identity. L. Dutkova argues that language continues to be used in symbolic functions delimiting Czech ethnicity, reduced to greetings and slogans that appear on banners and T-shirts, *Texas Czech: An ethnolinguistic study*. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Arizona 1998, and L. Dutkova-Cope, 'Texas Czech ethnic identity: So how Czech are you, really?,' *Slavic and East European journal* 47/4 (2003), pp. 648–676.

CEMETERY DATA: CHRONOLOGY OF INTEGRATION

Czech cemeteries in central Texas followed the life cycle of the settlements that established them. The culture of a folk cemetery with distinctive inscriptions and visual images was gradually transformed into a homogenized graveyard.[40] At the cemetery, Czech is imprinted all over, stretching across considerable geographical and temporal space and chronological boundaries of several generations. Inscriptions display stages of community acculturation through patterns of language usage, the initial functional separation of English and Czech, as well as an eventual shift into monolingual English usage after World War Two.

In crossing the boundaries of time and space when walking around the early established sections of the cemetery, one's attention is captured by imprints of individual authors. As one arrives to the 20th century, traces of their identities begin to get muddled, suggesting that some individuals made the leap into English quite early in response to opportunities, needs and aspirations. Tombstones show that language choices and individual practices of home language retention were idiosyncratic as well. Nevertheless, even the fourth generation continued to dot their English inscriptions with Czech identity symbols.

The cemetery layout reflects the density of cultural ties among individual immigrants within the early community. Czech does not begin to mix with English and recede until after World War I, when the graveyard became a homogenized space. As the ties among individuals weakened when they started yielding not only to the outside economic pressure but also to educational and other opportunities, so did the ties of third and fourth generation descendants to their ancestors. Bilingual gravestone inscriptions duplicating Czech and English messages suggest that relatives would not be able to read Czech. The language and the community reflected the lack of a direct homeland inspiration. In the 1940s and 1950s, distances between graves increased. Grave markers commemorated deceased couples, but references to more distant relatives were not included, and all the markers began to resemble one another. The material of marble, being an extremely hard and expensive stone, restricted the options of choosing and engraving texts.

With passing years, linguistic data began to fit into English morphosyntactic structures. Within English word order Czech inflectional endings became redundant, as Fig. 11 shows.

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[40] T.G. Jordan, *Texas Graveyards: A Cultural Legacy, University of Texas Press*, Austin 1982, p. 7.

Visually the tombstone fits a standard esthetic and text design of marble gravestones.
The basic and expected outline is filled with text compressed to a minimum which,
however, retains Czech diacritic signs, noun endings,
and phonetic spellings of the standard epitaph.

The text describes the kinship of Anna Chaloupka in Czech (died in 1940)
and declines the place of birth correctly (*V Cerme v Cechach*
[in Cermna in Bohemia]), although phonetically.
However, the place of death is given undeclined, in English (*v Houston*).

As cultural contact between Czechs and Americans became commonplace, so did contact between Czech and English on tombstones. For instance, basic inscription data might have been carved in Czech, but was followed by English epitaphs.

F i g u r e 13.

A phrase in English indicating Henry Ginzel's place of death (*in Industry, Tex.*) is inserted into the Czech inscription above (died 1937).

Particular features of cemetery texts and tombstones provide a perspective on integration, and are summarized in the following table outlining the social history of the community. The inscriptions communicate through a keen visual and linguistic display and spell out stages of language compression and shift. Overall, the chronology of integration breaks down into three stages, which are depicted in Table 1: (1) the pre-World War I period, defined by an interplay between formal Czech standard and vernacular dialects, (2) a transitional interwar stage of language contact characterized by borrowing English words and phrases into Czech, stylistic reduction of texts and fewer choices in textual content, and (3) the stage of language attrition and shift that began after World War II. By then, local churches were closing, priests were rarely preaching in Czech, schools were merging into town districts, and local products were being distributed at the state and national rather than local level. Tombstones reflect language atrophy and shift, and provide a cultural context emblematic of individuals' integration into other Texans' social networks. While the networks gradually interconnected with the American world throughout the decades leading to World War II, those reaching into the homeland weakened until they became irrelevant.

Language variation and shift in tombstone inscriptions.

	The 1860's – WWI Czechs in Texas Ethnocentrism	**WWI – WWII Texas Czechs Contact**	**WWII – Present Americans Shift**
Language Variation	Dialect/standard Detailed, personal inscriptions	Language contact Shorter inscriptions Stylistic compression Convergence to English patterns Borrowing Codeswitching	Language shift to English Attrition of Czech: Set phrases, spelling, and grammar patterns.
Semantic Data	Diversity of Introductory phrases Kinship terms 'Father'/'Mother' Places of birth and death Biblical verses Personal greetings Epitaphs		Czech in disparate signs Reduced to: *Name* *Zde odpocivaji* *'Here rests'* *Otec/Matka* *Birth and death dates*
Production Stone material Esthetic impact	Domestic and creative Limestone or sandstone, metal, wood Diversified religious symbolism	Commercial soft and hard stones	Commercial granite or marble Occasional photos Predictable symbols
Textual layout	Varied		Basic prototypes Surname Mother Father Birth Date Birth Date Death Date Death Date Odpocivejte v pokoji 'Rest in Peace'

INTEGRATION AND LANGUAGE SHIFT

Comparison of the 1870s and 1950s tombstones and texts reveals a turnover in the type of stone from limestone to marble, which affected both the length and detail of the inscriptions, and eliminated free-flowing texts in favor of standardized writing and personal ones in favor of formulaic writing. Czech texts

marked by dialectisms were gradually replaced by standardized and predictable English texts with irregularly occurring Czech features in spelling, occasional names and epitaphs. Language marked the territory and defined the immigrants' identity in Texas until the moment when Czech ceased to be the language of the family. Young people departed for cities without knowledge of their ancestral language, mostly after WWII when Czech was no longer practical, and began to take it up instead as a subject of intellectual engagement at the University of Texas, in Austin.[41] The community and its language no longer satisfied the needs of many of those who might have been born and raised there.[42] When they left their settlements, established new social networks that reached into the American world**,** and engaged in activities dominated by the English language, they severed daily contact with other Texas Czechs.

For instance, by the year 2000, two cemeteries and a few scattered buildings remained from the settlement called Hranice [Borders]. Only about ten residents live in the vicinity of the church at Wesley that was once the center of a Brethren settlement. In 1946, 252 Czech settlements existed in Texas, as identified by the presence of Czech ethnic organizations, but ceased to function as ethnic units by the 1950s. The 2000 Census recorded 187,729 Texans of "Czech" or "Czechoslovakian" ancestry, and the 2010 Census recorded a total of 136,447 people of "Czech" (110, 299) and "Czechoslovak" heritage (26,148) in Texas. Cope (2012) notes that these numbers fall within the cautious current estimate of 150,000–225,000 ethnic Czechs and Moravians in Texas that scholars can agree upon. Texas Czech is a nearly extinct and critically endangered language, whose remaining speakers are elderly and have little opportunity to use the language.[43]

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[41] According to J.A. Fishman (*Reversing Language Shift: Theoretical and Empirical Foundations of Assistance to Threatened Languages*, series Multilingual Matters 76, Philadelphia 1991), ethno-cultural factors contribute to language maintenance that continues as long as language is viewed as the vehicle for a historical, cultural, national or ethnic identity, cf. W. Downes, *Language and Society*, 2nd ed., Cambridge 1998, p. 61, and M. Saville-Troike, *The Ethnography of Communication*, Oxford and New York 1982, p. 21. In their study of language contact and creolization, S.G. Thomason and T. Kaufman (1988) emphasized contact-induced language change in social context, *Language Contact, Creolization and Genetic Linguistics*, Berkeley 1988.

[42] Milroy (1992) concludes that the weakening of norm-enforcement mechanisms will bring about a reduction in the everyday functional value of the use of in-group linguistic variants, where simplification patterns will become apparent, p. 105.

[43] G.F. Simon, M.P. Lewis, 'The World's Languages in Crisis: A 20 Year Update', in E. Mihas, B. Perley, G. Rei-Doval, K. Wheatley (eds.), *Responses to Language Endangerment*, Studies in Language Companion Series 142, Amsterdam (2013), pp. 3–19.

Inscriptions of some fourth-generation descendants often give an impression of having been authored by speakers unable to distinguish Czech from English, and unclear about how words and patterns fit together. In sum, Czech and English fused into a hybrid variety, and English gradually dominated the texts as the main or matrix language.[44] In the inscriptions, suffixes marking dates, names, and places appear misplaced, grammatical agreement is ignored, prepositions are omitted, word boundaries are obliterated and words decomposed. English phrases are translated into Czech literally and Czech words are transferred out of context from inscription to inscription, with the result of mismatched gender endings.

Figure 14.

The inscription displays curious mistakes (e.g. spelling *Maryje* instead of Marie) and is followed by an epitaph suitable for a tombstone of a deceased child rather than an aged couple [An angel chosen to guard God's throne is not a loss for parents who fear God].

Despite compromises in grammar and spelling, inscription authors seem to have been obstinate about writing in what they understood to be Czech, motivated by respect for their parents' last wishes and by perceptions of their identity. The texts also show that the authors were limited by an incomplete mastery of Czech. They use Czech words, names, diacritics and suffixes to decorate the stone and to mark Czechness rather than as features integral to Czech grammar.

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[44] C. Myers-Scotton, 'Code-switching', in F. Coulmas (ed.), *Handbook of Sociolinguistics*, Oxford–New York (1997), pp. 217–37.

Figure 15.

The inscription displays characteristic features of language atrophy such as omission
of a preposition marking a locative phrase (*Frenstate* for *ve Frenštátě* [in Frenstat]),
phonetic spelling of names (*Inřich* for *Jindřich*),
and inconsistently used diacritics and declensional endings
(e.g. *otče* voc. *a matka* nom. [addressing the father and mother]).

CONCLUSION

Cemeteries record cultural assimilation in yet another way. Modern tombstones
obliterate distinctive elements of ethnic traditions, take away choices of individuals
in inscribing texts and replace lavender bushes with plastic. Photographs, greetings
of the bereaved, personal identities of the deceased, biblical verses, vernacular
terminology, dialectisms, grammar mistakes, and misspellings characterizing
the early stones have vanished. Informal messages in stones of various sizes,
shapes and materials have yielded to formal language and content, as dictated
by new social expectations, as in the tombstone below:

The goal of cemetery inscriptions has changed from elaborating upon one's life
for posterity and situating an individual within his or her community to keeping
a record of the deceased. The inscriptions lost meaning to the Czech community
since it ceased to function as a social unit. The Czech rural settlements, once
prosperous, are represented only by names with Czech historical and religious
connotations today, and their cemeteries remain stones on the prairie.[45]

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[45] S.N. Gallup, *Journeys into Czech-Moravian Texas*, College Station 1996.

The last name retained the Czech spelling Fajkus, but the first names assumed
the English variants. Months are in Czech and so is the epitaph,
commonly occurring especially from the 1960s onwards.