



Who Do You Think You Are?

Dorothy Lenarčič



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Recently, I met a young woman attending the same university as my daughter and I noticed she had a Slovenian name. In fact, I wondered if she was related to a Slovenian friend of mine. I asked where her father came from and learned that it was a French speaking country. I pressed further, asking about her grandfather. He too had been born there. I persisted, as I couldn't see a French last name ending with "čič". The student said she thought her great-grandfather was from Poland... or Czech Republic...or possibly Slovakia, she wasn't sure.

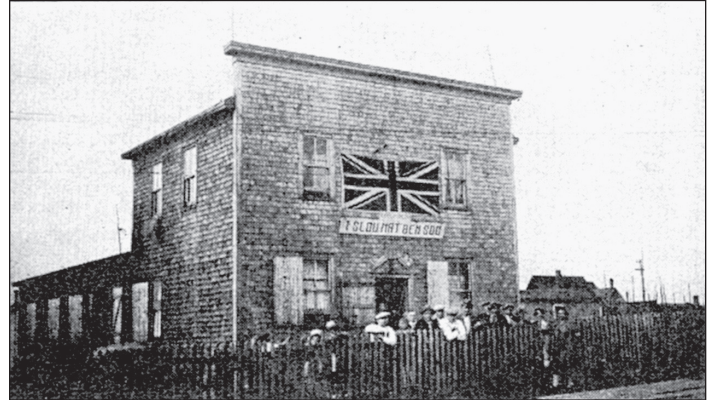
"Could it be Slovenia?" I asked.

"Maybe," she replied. "I don't know".

Soon after this encounter, I happened upon a television program called "*Who Do You Think You Are?*". In it, celebrities, with the help of genealogists explore their past to learn about their ancestors. Like the university student I met, they have only a vague idea of their past history.

This made me wonder about the future and my great-grandchildren. Will they know that their ancestors came from Slovenia? It seems that with each generation, we risk the chain of family knowledge being broken. I grew up aware of the struggle and sacrifice my parents made to come to Canada. But what about my grandchildren and great-grandchildren? Will they know that my parents altered the future by making a decision to leave their homeland? Considering the mobility of people today, will my great-grandchildren even live in Canada? Perhaps they will be in the US or Australia and simply say that their grandmother was Canadian.

As I ponder these questions, I am haunted by a photograph we have in the Archives of the Canadian Slovenian Historical Society. It is labelled "Slovenian National Benefit Society" and shows a building that once stood in New Waterford, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. At one time, this was a thriving community, whose men worked in the nearby coal mines. Apparently there were enough Slovenians there to have their own



Slovenian National Benefit Society Home in New Waterford, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia - circa 1930

meeting place. Who were they? When did they arrive? What happened to them? Do they have descendants in Canada? Despite our best efforts, we have been unable to learn more, nor can we trace Slovenian Canadians in the Maritimes today.

The information we collect in the Archives of the Canadian Slovenian Historical Society serves at least two very important needs. One is to preserve the record of our people's contribution to Canada through its clubs, businesses, cultural groups, sports and other community organizations. Another is to preserve the individual histories of Slovenian Canadians, by way of interviews (*Povejte nam kaj*), photographs and private papers (originals or copies are welcome).

We belong to the Archives Association of Ontario, following its policies and regulations, as well as the Canadian Oral History Association. Our collection stays in our Archives located at Dom Lipa. If for any reason the Archives should ever cease to exist, our records will be preserved by the Association. The archived material will never leave Canada. For privacy purposes, a donor may put a restriction on who can access their material and when. Donated photographs, papers, videos and artefacts are stored in compliance with approved archival standards, so they will not fade or deteriorate (unlike the boxes of papers in some our basements). The data we collect now will help future generations when there is no one living who can provide this knowledge. We invite you to share the story of your life, or of your organization today. Contact the Archives of the Canadian Slovenian Historical Society at: cshistorical@gmail.com.

Zgodilo se je pred 50. leti Slovensko društvo Sava

Cvetka Kocjančič

Letos marca je poteklo pol stoletja, odkar so se zbrali Slovenci iz Kitchenerja, Waterlooja, Cambridgea, Guelpha in Breslaua in ustanovili svoje društvo, ki so ga poimenovali po slovenski reki Savi. Ustanovni sestanek se je vršil v Poljski dvorani in se ga je udeležilo 32 zavednih Slovencev in Slovenk. Druženju in kulturnemu delovanju se je pridružila želja po



lastnih društvenih prostorih. Leta 1968 so kupili 3.8 akrov veliko zemljišče v vasi Breslau v bližini Kitchenerja. Na zemljišču je ob reki stal stoletni štirinadstropni mlin s hišo. Vse je bilo

zapuščeno in zaraščeno, toda člani so z ogromnim prostovoljnim delom uredili okolico in stavbo, ki jim je služila za društveno dvorano. Ker je bil kraj močvirnat, so navozili okoli 600 tovrnjakov zemlje in peska. Začeli so prirejati piknike in bankete, dohodke pa so hranili za ureditev svojega društvenega doma.



Leta 1973 so se odločili za gradnjo nove dvorane in jo do maja 1975 tudi dokončali. Vse je bilo opravljeno s prostovoljnim delom društvenih članov.

Lastni prostori so jim omogočili, da so se lahko bolj pogosto zbirali na piknikih in banketih in da so razvijali živahno kulturno dejavnost. Pri društvu so občasno delovale razne sekcije, kot slovenska šola, pevski zbor, folklorna skupina, lovski odsek. Prirejali so razne proslave in kulturne dneve, pogosto so gostili tudi razne glasbene skupine iz Slovenije.

Slovensko kulturno društvo Sava je bilo zelo aktivno tudi na področju meddruštvenega sodelovanja, saj je sodelovalo pri številnih meddruštvenih odborih in meddruštvenih prireditvah Slovencev v Južnem Ontariu in je že več kot dvajset let član Slovenskega koordinacijskega odbora Niagarskega polotoka in Vseslovenskega kulturnega odbora. Od leta 1975 pa aktivno deluje tudi pri organizaciji znamenitega Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfesta, ko se v jeseni njihov društveni dom spremeni v »Oberkrajner Haus« in društveni člani obiskovalcem pripravijo razne slovenske dobrote ob odlični slovenski glasbi.



Društvo Sava se vedno izkaže kot odličen organizator svojih piknikov in banketov, kakor tudi meddruštvenih prireditev. Posebej je treba omeniti tudi aktivno delovanje njihovih članic, ki navadno poskrbijo za odlično pogostitev gostov, pomembno mesto pa zavzemajo tudi v upravnem odboru društva.

Pred leti so se člani odločili za obsežen projekt prenovitev dvorane in dozidave prizidka. Z veliko truda, prizadevnosti in prostovoljnega dela, pa tudi ob finančni podpori organizacije Trillium Foundation, so svoj plan junija 2010 uresničili.

Pripomba: Slavnostni banket se bo vršil 14. aprila 2012 in na tem praznovanju društva bosta nastopila slovenska trubadurja, pevca in glasbenika, Marjan Zgonc in Tomaž Vrhovnik. Za ples bo igral Murski Val. Nastopili bodo otroci Slovenske šole SAVA. Pričakujejo goste iz USA, Evrope in drugih krajev Kanade.

Congratulations! SAVA

All of us at The Canadian Slovenian Historical Archives warmly congratulate CLUB SAVA on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of their founding. How much has been achieved! How many reasons to be justifiably proud of their club!

We know from records kept in the CSHS archives that this is not the only Slovenian club in Canada with reasons to celebrate. We would love to hear about other significant milestones in the history of the Slovenian community all across Canada. Tell us what anniversaries your group or club is celebrating. We'll share the stories and pictures of your club in future editions of Our Story.



Archive Detectives:

Anne Urbančič

Sometimes archival work is similar to the work I imagine a detective does. Look at the group picture here, which comes from my own family collection but which remains a mystery for me. What can I tell about it? First, I can tell it was taken in the church hall of Our Lady Help of Christians on Manning Avenue in Toronto. I can surmise, from the central position of the Bishop, that this must be a Confirmation picture, and therefore taken around Pentecost, in the spring. I don't recognize the children, though. In the early years of the parish, Confirmation was generally conferred upon 8 and 9 year olds, and the faces of the children support this theory. But in what year was the picture taken? That's where some detective work comes in: some of the girls are not wearing hats or veils, so that means that the picture was probably taken after the Vatican 2 councils in the early 1960's. Previous to that, it was customary for girls and women to have their

heads covered in Church. The bouffant hairstyles of a couple of the girls confirms the time period. The short slicked-back hair of the boys and the fact that the girls are wearing short bangs or no bangs, means the picture could not have been taken later in the 1960's when long hair and bangs came into style for both boys and girls. On the back of the picture, the official photographer has his stamp: Sesar Studio. His phone number is given as a combination of letters and numbers, and his address is listed as Toronto 4, instead of the later 6 element combination of numbers and letters in use today. From these clues, my guess would be that the picture must have been taken in the years between 1963 and 1966.

Are you in the picture? Can you help with the identification?

Contact the archivist at cshistorical@gmail.com or at the address given on p.4 of this newsletter. We'd love hear from you.

Did you know?

The settlement of Ljubljana goes back to prehistoric times when during the first millennium B.C. a sponce (small fort) was established on the site of present castle. This has been proved by the latest archiological excavations in the town. Ljubljana is proud of its tradition connected with Roman Emona, the first stone-built town in Slovenia. Emona developed from the original military camp in 18 A.D. on the terrace of the present settlement. Emona was probably in decay

after Attila's invasion but rose again before new people swept over it, such as the Slavs after the year 580; they were the ancestors of the present Slovenians. It is evident that the Slovenians also used parts of the town area. In the Middle Ages, the castle and the settlement were first mentioned in 1144 by the name Laibach. Two years later as Luwigana (Ljubljana).

Source: »Settlement Culture in Slovene Lands« by Nace Šumi

Meet Our Volunteers



Laurie O'Handley

Having worked on previous archival projects, I am excited to take part in this important work of the CSHS. I am most recently a graduate from the Gender, Media and Culture program (MSc) at LSE in London, UK. My academic program provided me a unique cultural perspective, preparing me to consider positive understandings and representations that I can now apply to the Slovenian-Canadian community. The CSHS archives represent an exciting cultural, cross-cultural and multicultural opportunity for me. I believe we live in a culture of constant change and innovation. Participating as part of the CSHS team helps me see from close up how tradition and contemporary living intersect.



Rachael Pinter

Volunteering with the Canadian Slovenian Historical Society has given me an opportunity to learn more about my Slovenian heritage and language. I have learned about many Slovenian authors and writers. My job is to catalogue donated books and periodicals written by Slovenian individuals. This helps me to learn more about the Slovenian language, culture, stories and traditions. I am a grade ten student at Bishop Ryan High School in Stoney Creek. I play school and club volleyball, and my volunteer experience with the CSHS has provided me with balance in my extra curricular activities. I have grown up in the Slovenian community, attending St. Gregory the Great Parish Church, and spending time at Slovenski Park as my parents, grandparents, and great grandparents have been members there. I have fond memories with friends and family in the Slovenian community. While travelling to Slovenia in the summer of 2010, I became even more interested in my Slovenian heritage. It was exciting to meet so many of my relatives and I had so much fun spending time with them. We continue to keep in touch and I look forward to visiting and seeing them again. I am thankful for this volunteer experience with the CSHS because it allows me to give back to my Slovenian Community so that our history will continue to be passed down to future generations of Canadian Slovenians.



Želimo vam vsele Velikonočne praznike!

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