



THE CZECH HERITAGE SOCIETY OF TEXAS, INC.

DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF OUR "CZECHOSLOVAKIAN" HERITAGE

A Non-Profit, Tax-Exempt Under IRS Code Section 501(c)(3), Charitable Texas Corporation

"About Us"

The Czech Heritage Society of Texas, Inc. (CHS) was founded on October 30, 1982, in Taylor, Texas, at SPJST Lodge 29. Thirty-two (32) Charter Members were present at this meeting called by the Society's founder, the late Albert J. Blaha. CHS was formed as a non-denominational, non-political, non-profit, charitable corporation to operate as an all-volunteer organization.

The mission of CHS is to preserve and promote the genealogy, history, heritage, culture, and language of Texans who trace their ancestors to Bohemian, Moravian, Slovakian, Silesian, or Rusyn (Ruthenian) regions within the boundaries of the former Czechoslovakia, as created in 1918 at the end of World War I. Although immigration to Texas from the general area became a steady flow by the late 1850s, it was not until the dissolution of the predecessor ruling entity, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, at the end of World War I that the above five regions became better defined within the boundaries of the new country of Czechoslovakia.

In 1988, in memory of the founder of CHS, the **Albert J. Blaha Research Fund** was established by friends of Albert J. Blaha and designed to give financial backing to studies that increase knowledge of the history and genealogy of the Czechoslovakian immigrants to Texas. The Bell and Belfry Fund was established to defray expenses related to the Wallachian Belfry given to CHS by the Czech Republic and the Wallachian Museum in Roznov pod Radhoštěm. The Bell and Belfry now stands on the grounds at the Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center (TCHCC) located at 250 West Fairgrounds Road in La Grange, Texas. The library that CHS had temporarily located in Houston, Texas, has been moved and is now combined with the TCHCC Library. Additions to the library come from genealogical research made possible by funds from the **Albert J. Blaha Research Fund**, and from gifts and memorial donations.

CHS administers two scholarships annually. In memory of Victor A. Peter [pronounced 'Petter'], the **Victor A. Peter Memorial Scholarship Fund** was established by the Harris County Chapter of CHS, and the **Albert J. Blaha Memorial Scholarship** was granted by Milady "Bunny" Blaha, the eldest child of Albert J. Blaha. Applications for both scholarships can be downloaded from the State CHS website (<https://czechheritage-texas.org>).

CHS holds three (3) State meetings annually: the Spring meeting is a genealogy conference with guest speakers; the Summer meeting hosts a Miss Texas Czech-Slovak Queen Pageant concurrently with a Youth Pageant; and the Fall meeting consists of a candle-lighting ceremony commemorating deceased CHS members from the previous year, a presentation of annual honorary awards, a tribute to the United States Armed Services, and a membership meeting to conduct State business such as election of Officers, ratification of Trustees, or approval of amendments to CHS Bylaws.

CHS publishes *Český hlas* (Czech Voice), a newsletter printed three (3) times annually that keeps members informed about the activities of the State Society and its member Chapters and includes articles of cultural, historical, and genealogical interest, as well as activities for youth members. *Český hlas* is now available in an electronic format which has all photos in color in every issue. CHS publishes an annual membership roster that includes surnames being researched by members. The roster is available through Chapter Presidents. CHS has published numerous genealogical resource books which have been placed in various libraries, and the Society has been involved in cultural and genealogical exchange programs between CHS members and people of the Czech Republic and Slovakia. CHS has members who can assist people in locating their ancestors and documenting their family histories, at no cost.

CHS has Chapters established in 15 locations where people who trace their ancestry to regions in the former Czechoslovakia, have an active interest in preserving and promoting their heritage. CHS Chapters with dates founded are shown here:

Victoria County – 1984
Harris County – 1985
Wharton County – 1986
Fayette County – 1986
Concho Valley – 1987

Fort Bend County – 1987
Ellis County – 1987
Galveston County – 1989
Bexar County – 1990
Lavaca County – 1991

McLennan-Hill Counties – 1991
Burleson County – 1991
Travis-Williamson Counties – 1993
Brazos Valley – 1997
Gonzales County – 2006

CHS Chapter members, including youth, must pay State dues to be in good standing. Members-at-large pay State dues only since they are usually in areas where a Chapter does not exist, including other states and countries. The membership year is January 1st to December 31st with memberships of anyone joining after October 1st extending through December 31st of the following year. Membership is open to anyone interested in the Czechoslovakian culture and celebrating the heritage of their ancestors.

Basic Annual **State** dues are:

Regular Member with Chapter Affiliation or Member-at-Large (not affiliated with a Chapter) - \$10.00

Lifetime Member (with or without Chapter Affiliation) - \$500.00 (one-time payment)

Youth Member - \$2.00 (less than 18 years of age with parent or grandparent membership)

Each Chapter sets its own additional dues and should be contacted for information via Chapter links on the State website.

For further information and membership applications, visit <https://czechheritage-texas.org>, call (979) 703- 6220, or write to:

The Czech Heritage Society of Texas, Inc.
PO Box 9433
College Station, TX 77845