DEDICATION

This book is respectfully dedicated to the pioneer Rejčeks that blazed new trails; to those who sacrificed their worldly possessions to seek a new home in America; to those who made the ultimate sacrifice in settling the vast Texas wilderness; and to those who have passed on to their eternal reward may God shine His perpetual light upon their souls and rest in peace.
FORWARD

My father is a quiet and patient man with a strong aptitude for perseverance. These qualities have worked in his favor in producing this record of our relatives. Because it has taken hours of dogged checking to recover the stories, names, and dates that were needed to make this record complete and accurate. He had the vision to see that if this were not recorded soon, the second and third generations would pass away and their story would be forgotten. In a spirit of simplicity and clarity he has worked hard at collecting the true accounts of our family.

James Rejček
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PREFACE

“A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches…” Proverbs 22:1

I would imagine that most people possess some curiosity to know where they came from. My own desire to know my origins began with a conversation with my doctor, who had observed high oxygen content in my blood and asked if my ancestors lived in a high altitude area. The question inspired me to look (with the help of many people and hired genealogist) for some answers. This book is my attempt to record some of the facts I have found. The first record of a Rejcek in America is, April 10 1893, when Anton Rejcek Sr. arrived at Ellis Island in New York with his aunt Frantiska (Konecny) Smetak as a chaperone at the age of 12. He and his aunt Frantiska traveled by boat around the east coast of America and then into the Gulf of Mexico to land at Galveston Island to join his uncle Frank Smetak, who had arrived a year earlier and settled in Fayetteville, Texas. Anton worked on his uncles’ farm and later at Branecky General Store in Engle, Texas. After three years of saving his money he helped pay for the immigration of his parents Raymund and Kristyna (Konecny) Rejcek along with other family members. Raymund and his family left from a little community five miles southeast of Lipnik, Moravia by the name of Nově Dvory house number 11.

Raymund and Kristyna (Konecny) Rejcek arrived at the port of Galveston around April of 1896. Research and interviews with direct descendants indicate that Bozena (Bessie) was born about three weeks after arrival into America (May 25, 1896), thus making her the first Rejcek born in America. My many years of research have been a joy. I have learned many facts about my ancestors, most of them good. It was truly a wonderful experience going back in time and putting together the missing pieces.

This work is far from complete, but it is a beginning. It is my wish that this will spark the interest of others will want to continue the search. Most of the family history tells of the American descendants. After a personal two-week visit to the Czech Republic, and meeting with Rejcek relatives, I have added an ancestor section to this book. With the World Wide Web available as a research tool, I hope that family history research will continue into the Czech lands farther back to where our ancestors originated.

I would like to be informed of any errors found in this family history so that corrections can be made. I sincerely hope this reference will help other family members learn more about their ancestors. I hope you enjoy what has been written about our kin, and remember to smile because it is God’s love being reflected.

Vladimir (Laddie) J. Rejcek
Burleson, Texas  76028
June 2000 - Revised June 2006
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I must first give thanks to God and then to my wife, Lillie Jean, and to my children, James, Beckie, and Thomas for their patience. They have put up with me through these many years of research, helped me gather records, and sacrificed a lot of attention from me. In addition, they taught me the basics of the computer.

I am also greatly indebted to many other people who have helped gather information. Among them are my parents, Valentine and Mary Rejcek, who provided several leads to information, pictures, and memorabilia about Raymund and Kristyna Rejcek’s family and to my son Dr. James M. Rejcek, who helped me in assembling this book.

I am grateful to the professional Genealogist, Karel Kysilka, from Napajedla, Czech Republic, who researched the ancestors and provided all charts. Also, to Dr. Karel Muller PhD. of “Zemský Archiv of Opava” in Olomouc, Czech Republic for certification records. Also, to Vladimir Rejček and Petr Kuda families in Lipnik n. BEČ, Czech Republic, for the research of their family link to us.

I would also like to thank the Rejcek reunion representatives of the second generation who have contributed family tree information. The representatives are as follows: Millie Acrey for Anton Rejcek Sr., Milton and Irene Peterson for Marianna Picha, Bill and Josephine Kozlovsky for Florian Rejcek, Lillian Fuller for Josef f. Rejcek, Rudolph and Janie Rejcek for John F. Rejcek, Richard and Anna Urbanovsky for Bozena (Bessie) Kaska, and James and Gerry Neslony for Valentine Rejcek. I would also like to thank Josephine Sulak and Frances Tichavsky for the long hours of interviews we’ve had, and the valuable information about our family history.

I am sure there are many other people who have helped over the years that I cannot recall. To them, I am eternally grateful.

Vladimir (Laddie) J. Rejcek
PART I

ORIGINS

A Brief History of the Czech People

Origins of the Rejceks

Things in Common

Famous Rejceks

Book of Family Records

Stories and Recollections
A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CZECH LANDS

Where did the Czech people come from? How long have there been Czech people? The following is a short history as presented by W.J. Malina for the Vestick paper in 1993.

Once upon a time, there were no Slavic people in Central Europe. The traditional Czech Land (Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, Slovakia, and parts of Poland and Ruthenia) was inhabited by Celtic (or Keltic) tribes. The strongest and largest of these tribes were the Boii, from whom Bohemia got its name.

Slavic people began to migrate into Central Europe in approximately 500 AD. The original Slavic tribes came from an area east of the Carpathian Mountains, in what is now the country of Ukraine.

The first attempt to unite the several Slavic tribes in Central Europe took place in 620 A.D. Samo, a Frankish merchant, successfully united the Slavic tribes in Bohemia into a Slavonic empire or kingdom that extended westward into Eastern Germany (Bavaria). The empire disintegrated when Samo died in 658 AD.

After 800 AD, Bohemia and Moravia became tributary provinces of the Germanic kings of Western Europe. Meanwhile, the Slavic people in Slovakia remained relatively independent. In about 830 AD, Mojmir, the Lord of Moravia, organized the Slavic tribes of Moravia and Slovakia into “The Great Moravian Empire.” At its greatest glory, The Great Moravian Empire included Moravia, Bohemia, Silesia, Slovakia, Pannonia (Hungary, Slovenia and Croatia), and parts of Poland, Austria and Serbia. In the late 800s, the Serbs and the Czechs of Bohemia broke away from the empire. In 906 AD, the remains of The Great Moravian Empire fell into Maygar hands.

After the fall of The Great Moravian Empire, and after the Maygars were driven out Austria, Bavaria and Moravia, the greater part of the traditional Czech Lands came under the rule of the Germanic Holy Roman Empire. Meanwhile, Slovakia became an integral part of Hungary, which was controlled by the Maygars.

During the reign of Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV, Bohemia became a kingdom, Silesia remained a duchy, and Moravia became a Margraviate or March (frontier territory). After Charles IV died, Bohemia and Moravia became involved in religious and political wars that literally tore the Czech Lands apart.

In 1611, the capital of the Kingdom of Bohemia was moved from Prague to Vienna. After the Battle of White Mountain (Bila Hora), the Czech Lands were firmly in the hands of the Austrian Hapsburgs, who had assumed the kingship of Bohemia in 1526. The Hapsburgs continued to rule Bohemia and Moravia after the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire and until the end of World War I, when Bohemia, Moravia, Moravian Silesia, Slovakia, and Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia were formed into the independent nation of Czechoslovakia.

In 1938 Czechoslovakia came under the rule of Nazi Germany. Bohemia and Moravia were declared protectorates of Germany, while Slovakia was given quasi-autonomy and Czechoslovakia remained intact.

On December 18, 1992, the Czech and Slovak parliaments approved the separation of the country into two independent and autonomous republics—The Czech Republic and The Slovak Republic (Slovakia). Thus, as of December 31, 1992, Czechoslovakia ceased to exist as a nation and the Czech Lands entered into a new epoch in their history.
ORIGINS OF THE REJCEK FAMILY

The Czech lands can be divided into three separate regions. The western or Bohemian region is more Germanic in heritage. The eastern region is Slavic in heritage. The central region between these is called Moravia, which is a mix of the east and west cultures.

It is not currently known where the name “Rejcek” comes from or what it means. From 1763 – 1894 the spelling of the Rejcek name was recorded in different languages. The name Rejcek is pronounced the same but spelled different. Rejček is Moravian, Reigček is Bohemian, Reitschek is Germanic, and Reyczek is Latin. It is not known if the name is Germanic or Slavic in origin nor how far back in time the name goes. It is hoped that some day this will be discovered.

Records have traced the Rejček origins back to Thomas Rejček born December 21, 1763 in Buk, Morava. He married Marianna Kubicek born 1764 in Cekyne #15, Moravia. Thomas’ father’s name was Antonious and mother was Marina and they were farmers. Thomas Rejček (1763) had a son named Isidor Rejček (1809), Isidor had a son named Florián Rejček (1832), and Florián Rejček had a son named Raymund Rejček (1854).

Raymund Rejček received his passport in 1896 to leave the old country from the town of Lipnik nad Bečvou (above the Bečva river), Moravia (see maps next page). At the time of their emigration Rejček family lived in a community of homes named Nové Dvory, Moravia. Nové Dvory means “New farmsteads” and is located five miles south of Lipnik. Family records recently discovered (Appendix A, Figure 2) show the birth dates of several of Raymund’s children that were used as birth certificates for U.S records. The documents refer to a town called ‘Tyne’. This has been traced to the town Tyn nad Bečvou located three miles southeast of Lipnik, Moravia. A church named “Our Lady of Tyn” is where the birth records originated.

An obvious question that arises concerning the Rejček family is why they came to America. Some motivations for immigration from the Hungarian-Austrian empire were: the Immigration Act of 1832 allowing immigration, extremely poor conditions in Czech lands, property was still owned by Austrians, protestants seeking religious freedom, Austrian military obligations, personal freedoms and opportunities, and to escape from debts, justice or personal relations. There must have been a lot of risk involved to sell all and leave their homeland to face an uncertain future in a foreign land. It is known that there were advertisements to come to Texas and settle. Perhaps there was a lot of talk at first before they mustered up the courage to come. The records show several families from the same area arriving in America. Relatives sent over one or two family members at first to ‘scout’ the new land. When they were established more family and friends would follow.

We, the descendents, can count ourselves blessed because of the risks our ancestors took. We have prospered here in the United States of America, where we enjoy freedoms, riches and privileges many nations only dream of having. Emigration from the Czech lands enabled our ancestors to escape two world wars and subjection to a totalitarian state. By immigrating to the United States they became part of a nation building liberty and prosperity for future generations.

I wonder if our future descendents will once again be faced with a decision to remain or emigrate. If so, our descendents will carry with them a heritage of success brought by that first generation that came to America.
REJCEK ORIGINS IN THE CZECH LANDS.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA 1918

PASSPORT OBTAINED IN LIPNIK, MORAVIA

CZECH REPUBLIC DECEMBER 1992

LIPNIK, CZECH REPUBLIC NOW

Area of origination next page.
Passport obtained in Lipnik

Community the Rejcek family left for the U.S.A.
Figure 1  House #11 in Nove Dvory Nad Bec, Moravia, which Florian, Raymund, and Anton Sr. built before immigration to the U.S.A.

Figure 2  Memorial plaque, the birth home of JOSEF OCELKA a WWII Victim. There is evidence that house #11 was either sold or given to Antonie Rejcek (1879-1939) when Raymund left for the USA.
Introduction

Our ancestors were village people: farmers, cottagers, and familiants (a familiant is a farmer who owned farmland on the former landlord’s land). They lived in several villages and parishes in area between Moravian cities of Přerov and Lipník nad Bečvou. (Lipník, above the Bečva River).

Name

The Rejček surname is written in vital registers with various forms of spelling. The spelling could be different but the pronunciation was always the same. The reason is that the oldest records are written in Latin, later ones were in German and Czech. Older Czech written records used an ancient spelling, (for example, Regczek, Slamienik, Pawel, Czech). In German records the spelling was Germanized, as for instance Reitschek. Later Czech written records used a modern spelling, (using the above examples, Rejček, Slamenik, Pavel, Cech). This also was true for the spelling of the first name. As an example, a person who was born as Franciscus (written in Latin), later had married as Franz (written in German) and died as Frantisek (written in Czech). Since he was Czech, his only name was Frantisek (Fran-tee-sheck).

The Rejčeks share many things in common. Obviously the name and I am sure that often every Rejček has had to deal with miss pronunciations like Reject, Resect, and Redgkek, as well as various spellings. Where the name originally comes from is still a mystery. However, in the Bohemian dialect the surname Rejček means little spade. It is hoped that future research and correspondence with the Czech lands might shed light on the origin of the name.

Also note that the name has several conjugations in Czech and so the name will have different spellings in a sentence. For example, Vasi Rejcci z Texasu' is translated, "Your Rejčeks in Texas" and 'Drahé rodiny Vladimíra Rejčka a Petra Kudy', means "Dear relatives Vladimir Rejček and Petr Kuda".

Farming

There are Rejčeks in many occupations, but the one common to most is farming. There have been four or five generations of farmers in the family. There are many shared experiences of plowing the fields, chopping cotton, cutting maize, wheat and corn. They have raised cattle and hogs and bailed hay. The first two or three generations developed a strong work ethic among those who farm. They have not strayed far from the land and lead a simple but hard life.

Family Life

There is a strong sense of family values that has existed for several generations. Large families, care for the children and respect for parents have been typical in most Rejček families. Closeness in family is also evidenced by the large turn out for the family reunion over the past 40 years.
Language

The Czech language was commonly spoken among family and community for the first three generations, (authors experience). By the fourth generation the language was almost forgotten except for a few words and phrases. There are those who have kept the language alive by taking classes that are taught at many colleges, but generally the language has ceased to be spoken here in Texas.

With the desire to communicate with our relatives in the Czech Republic, the Czech language has increased in interest to many American Czechs. In Czechoslovakia, no one was allowed to learn the English language until after the Velvet Revolution of 1992 that created the Czech Republic. It has been a challenge to read and write the Czech and Moravian dialects that exist in the eastern part of the Czech Republic next to the Carpathian Mountains as shown below.

Texas

The great state of Texas is the stomping grounds of our family. The beautiful valleys of the hill country, the island mesa’s of west Texas and most notably the black lands of north central Texas have been home to the Rejčeks since they came from Nove Dvory, Moravia, which is located between the Becvou river and the Carpathian Mountains. The Climate in Lipnik and Nove Dvory is temperate, with cool summers and humid winters, at about the same latitude as Montana or Washington State here in the United States. It is much warmer than that in Texas. I have seen many of the family who are most comfortable wearing cowboy boots and a straw hat in the field and a Stetson hat in town.
Food
Czech food is distinctive and has at times been popular in Texas. There are a variety of pastries, most notably are koláč, bread pastries filled with various fruits including apricot, apple, peach, cherry and prune. It is suspected that most of these fruits are a Tex-Czech adaptation from the Czech lands. In addition to koláč are strudels, pecan and poppy seed rolls and coffee cake. Those who have remained close to the first few generations may know about the smell of fresh hot pastries coming from mom or grandma’s kitchen. Other foods include klobása (pork sausage), jitrnice (liver sausage) and kyselé (sauerkraut). Some recipes and Old World customs can be found in ‘Czech Reflections’ of the McLennan-Hill Chapter of the Czech Heritage Society.

Music
The distinct “umpah” sound of Czech polka can easily be recognized. There must be an endless supply of polka tunes to play. Many are still performed in the Czech language today. The origin of the polka goes back to 1830 to the town of Kostelec, Bohemia, where a young girl, named Anička Chadimova, while taking care of her master’s children, teaching them to sing and dance, invented her own dance in 2/4 time. Soon, the village heard about this, including the village teacher Josef Neruda. He was the first to write the tune down in music and called the dance polka, which means ‘half’ (4/4 time). Soon, the půlka got to be called polka, the same as today.

The polka soon conquered all Europe and later was brought to America by the immigrants. It survived many other dances and is much danced today, 175 years after its invention.

Webster’s New World Dictionary of the American Language says: Polka – Czech ‘pulka’ – fast dance for couples, developed in Bohemia in the early 19th century.
Funk and Wagnall’s Standard Reference Encyclopedia: Polka, a species of dance of Bohemian origin, invented in 1830 and introduced into England in 1843. The music is in two-quarter time and has the rhythmical peculiarity of being accented on the third quaver of the measure.

The ‘Beer Barrel Polk’ comes from a Czech love song by Jaromír Vejvoda, of Zbráslav, Czechoslovakia named ‘Skoda Lásky.’ It was brought to England by Czechoslovak airman, and with translated lyrics became General Dwight D. Eisenhower’s favorite melody. He had the author come to England to thank him personally for the morale building effect of the song.

Religion
The Rejceks are predominately Catholic in faith. Catholic weddings and funerals have been a central part of social life for our family from the beginning. This is evidenced by the large number of wedding pictures seen in all of the family albums. There is a strong moral sense among family members, which might help explain the lack of criminals in the family.
FAMOUS REJCEKS

It would be great if there were Olympic champions, Nobel Prize Laureates, famous musicians or political statesmen in the Rejcek family, but none have come forward yet. What the family does have is a few family achievements that can be noted inside the family. The list that follows is not comprehensive and it is hoped other achievements and facts will be recorded in the future.

VALENTINE F. REJCEK

On April 30, 1923, Valentine filed for a patent on his invention of his anti-skid device now known as the tire chain. Patent number 1502878 was granted on July 24, 1924. Unfortunately, he did not get it manufactured right away and someone else modified his original design slightly and started production. Valentine was saddened by the loss of credit and fortune for his invention. He had no money to go to court and challenge the patent rights for his invention. The family still has the paperwork from the original patent (Figures 1 & 2) as well as some of his other inventions (Figure 3).

Figure 1  Patent certificate number 1502878, Valentine Rejcek’s tire chain idea.
Figure 2 Illustration in Valentine’s patent certificate.
Figure 3 A photo of Valentine Rejcek’s other inventions, a table saw and a jig saw.
JOHN F. REJCEK

John enjoyed the life of a happy musician. He had a family band pictured below. They played mostly polka and traditional waltzes. One famous friend with his family is Willie Nelson, who grew up with Willie Rejcek in Abbott.

Figure 4  John Rejcek’s family band in 1952.

Figure 5  Willie Nelson on a drop by visit with Willie Rejcek.
BOOK OF FAMILY RECORDS

Just like the Guinness Book of World Records there are a few notable records achieved inside the family. The list that follows is not comprehensive and it is hoped that other achievements and facts will be recorded in the future.

First to immigrate to America  Anton Rejcek Sr. arrived in U.S.A. on April 10, 1893 at the age of 13. The German ship “Bruanschweig” was the name of the vessel he and his aunt Frantiska (Konecna) Smetak journeyed to the U.S.A. (Ellis Island ship manifest page #10, line 0338). Port of departure was Bremen, Germany.

First born in America  The first Rejcek born in the United States was Bozena (Rejcek) Kaska, who was born May 25, 1896.

Most kids  The title of family with the most kids goes to John Frank and Agnes Rejcek with 16 kids (six girls and ten boys).

Ten-piece Brass Band  The only Rejcek orchestra was John Frank Rejcek and nine of his children who played polka and traditional waltzes.

Oldest person  The Rejcek who lived the longest is Anton Rejcek Sr. who died on April 17, 1976 at the age of 96 years and 5 months. Born 11-11-1879. (From the only document of proof available U.S.A. – Certificate of Naturalization #1239803 – vol.6/#631).

Tallest  Josef F. Rejcek is considered the tallest, based on family photos.

First to receive a U.S. Patent  Valentine Frank Rejcek filed for a patent in April 30, 1923 for anti-skid (tire chains) device. He received Patent #1502878 in July 29, 1924 (Figures 1 – 3).
STORIES AND RECOLLECTIONS

Raymund Rejcek

One of the hardships Raymund Rejcek’s family experienced happened after they sold their property and possessions and were on their way to the port of departure to leave for America. They were robbed of all their remaining possessions and all their money. Unable to depart for America, Raymund wrote to his oldest son Anton who was already in Texas, and asked for help. In the meantime, Raymund and his family lived around the port town and lived by doing odd jobs to sustain themselves until they had enough money to pay for boat passage to Texas.

Another story told by one of his granddaughters happened after the family moved to West, Texas. They had a big old Ram (Koza) by the name of Barron. Raymund’s two sons Valentine and John trained Barron to chew tobacco. Barron couldn't spit, so when he was chewing the tobacco it would run from the corners of his mouth. Old Barron liked it so much, that when he wanted a chew of tobacco he would go as far as a half mile down to the field next to Aquilia Creek where they were working. He would throw a fit and try to hurt them until he was given a chew of tobacco. One day Raymund went to feed their hogs and found the pig trough turned over, as most hogs will do. And while he was leaning over the trough cleaning it, old Barron butted him in the rear and almost hurt him seriously. Shortly thereafter a barbecue was served at Raymund’s house.

Kristyna Konecna

One story told by Kristyna (Konecna) Rejcek happened while her family was on their way to Galveston. John Rejcek, who was 18 months old at that time, fell from the ship into the water. He was wearing a white gown type of shirt that trapped air inside and brought him to the surface. Kristyna told how she contemplated the idea of jumping into the ocean in an attempt to rescue John regardless of being eight months pregnant. Fortunately a fellow passenger was able to reach down and snatch John out of the water onto the ship.

Anton Rejcek Sr.

Anton never went to any type of school in his life. Mary Hajicek, Anton’s wife, and her sister Anna Valenta also had no formal education. But her sister Julie did have some schooling and the wife of Frank Rebec. She went to a country schoolhouse that was converted from an old house to learn English, which was taught by an English schoolteacher there. Mary told her children about how every one bragged of Julie learning English very well.

Josephine Rejcek (born in 1903) was one year old when Anton moved to West, from Praha, Texas. Between the times that Anton sent for his parents in 1896 to the time he married in 1902 he worked in a general store in Engle, Texas. He moved to West, Texas in 1904. There, he rented the Frank Marak Farm, soon after arriving in West. Raymond Rejcek was born while he was renting the Marak farm. When Mary Hajicek’s parents died, they were able to buy farming land west of West, Texas with the inheritance money she received.

1 As recalled by Josephine (Rejcek) Sulak
2 As recalled by Frances (Rejcek) Tichavsky
3 As recalled by Frances (Rejcek) Tichavsky
**Anton Rejcek Sr.**

I remember grandpa having a big handlebar mustache, smoking a curved pipe and having a large hat he wore in the field. He seemed to be very comfortable in that large hat because he was accused of always carrying his own shade with him.

One of the things I remember about Grandpa Anton was giving a stick of chewing gum to all the children and grandchildren that came to see him. All the children were always pleased when they received a stick of gum from papaw (veliky dedecek). I remember how I loved to receive gum. It so impressed me that I do the same for my grandchildren and the neighbor’s kids.

Anton Sr. was well known for his talent at making wine. He would fill a fifty-five gallon wooden barrel with mustang grapes that were gathered from the creek bottom on his land. He would prepare the grapes and let the juice drip into a five-gallon crock-pot from the barrel. When friends and family came to visit him, he would bring the wine jug out and treat everyone with a small whisky glass full. And that was all you got. I remember the time two cousins and I found where he made the wine. We enjoyed drinking it so much that we were sick for the next two days.

Farming was his main business. Growing corn, oats, cotton, sorghum and wheat were his principle source of income. Fall harvest was an exceptionally busy time of the year. Anton Sr. would setup the stationary thrashing (or separating) machine on his farm for harvesting oats, sorghum and wheat. Since he had the only thrashing machine in his community, he would set it up on neighboring farms for grain separation (See back cover). Setting up the stationary hay-baler for his needs and his neighbors was a well-known tradition. I seem to remember that I would always get the dustiest part of the work around the thrasher or hay-baler as a youngsters.

**Mary Hajicek**

One of the stories Mary related to her children that happened on their journey to America was aboard the ship they were on. Many of the passengers were from the same village that she was from. On the final day or two of their journeys, Mary noticed one of the ladies clinging to a baby at her breast. The ship’s captain knew that the baby had died, but let her keep the baby until the ship docked in New York for burial on American soil instead of the ocean as most ship deaths were handled.

This and many sad stories of Czech immigrants occurred on the ships coming to the United States. The courage and dedication for a better life and future for their children is something that all of us should be thankful to God for. Their dream has become a reality for us, their descendents.

Mary’s parents, Michael and Katerina Hajicek lived for a time in Praha, Texas (Fayette County). The original name was Mulberry, but Czech pioneers went round and round in their efforts to change it until the decision was made in 1856 that the new name should be Praha for the city in Bohemia. It was here that the first Bohemian Catholic parochial school in the United States was established (Post Office from March 25, 1884 – Nov. 31, 1906, population 25).

Mary and two sisters were born to Mike and Katerina Hajicek in Praha, Texas. During this period, Mike and Katherina rented land to farm and raise cotton. One year in

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4 As recalled by Laddie Rejcek
5 By Josephine Sulak, edited by James Rejcek
the fall after harvest, Michael took 2 bales of cotton to old Mexico to sell for $1.00 per pound. He had to cross the Rio Grande, which was low and easy to cross. After selling the cotton and returning to cross the Rio Grande, he found the water had risen to an uncrossable condition. He had to wait until the water receded so crossing was possible. This waiting on the water to recede took some time. From the time he left home to his return from Mexico was a total of 3 months. Katerina and the girls almost gave up hope, thinking that Mexican bandits may have killed him, until he returned home one morning at 4 am. With the money for cotton he received that year from his trip to Mexico he was able to purchase 160 acres of land for 50 cents an acre. That became their business and way of life.

**John Frank Rejcek**

While coming over to our country on the ship, John Rejcek, being only a toddler, tried to crawl out of a porthole, but someone saved him by grabbing his foot. The Rejcek family landed in Galveston, Texas, with five of their eight children (Anton, the eldest, was already here and two were born in the United States). From Galveston, they moved to Houston, Schulenburg, Angla, Praha, Flatonia and finally settling in West, Texas. John loved music. At the age of ten, he ordered a two-row accordion from the Sears Catalog and at age of fifteen he bought his first cornet.

On February 12, 1917, he married Agnes Kohut of West, Texas. This union produced sixteen children, all living to adulthood except one, Johnny Frank, who died at the age of eight on November 8, 1941, who was killed in Abbott by a car driven by a collage kid at a high rate of speed.

Between 1927 and 1929, John Rejcek moved his family to Abbott and farmed, producing a good cotton crop. But a short time later, he bought a blacksmith shop where he worked for forty-four years. He purchased his blacksmith shop from a Mr. Nelson. (It is believed, but not confirmed, that the blacksmith was Willie Nelson’s grandfather.) John built the gates to St. Mary’s Catholic Cemetery in West, Texas. He also designed and built machinery for tractors and hay bale rs for many farmers. He remained a blacksmith nearly all his life before he retired. He also enjoyed the life of a fun loving musician. He was known to have been very content around his children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren.

John’s wife, Agnes, passed away at the age of fifty-seven on February 1, 1954. John passed away at the age of eighty-six on January 20, 1981. One son, Willie Rejcek, moved back to Abbott in 1974, and is carrying on the blacksmith work his dad taught him when he was a youngster at home.

**Agnes Elizabeth Kohut**

I'm writing about my family while growing up. Those were the good old days, hard days, and happy days. I was the fourth one born into the family. I want to express my thanks to daddy (John Rejcek) and mother (Agnes) for raising us kids. They were a good hard working couple. We are a very close family and love one another very much. I remember the time Martha and I had to help in the blacksmith shop, when the boys were working at the Ruzicka Gin and cutting wood for neighbors.

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6 Abbott, Texas’ first 100 Years
7 Parent’s tribute by Rudolphina Gaiser, edited by James Rejcek
Mother died when she was 57 years of age. I am thankful to daddy for raising six children after she died. I am also thankful to Willie Mae and Edna who were old enough to keep house and cook for the rest of the family.

We have a family reunion once a year that lasts an entire weekend at Lake Whitney. At the last reunion, the count was 275 and there is still more to come. We love to get together. Our parents always told us to love one another and keep up the reunion.

We have kept daddy and mother's house in memory of our brother Johnnie, who was killed as a boy in Abbott in a car accident. A lot of grandchildren have had the opportunity to share in their old home. We have lots of fun there and love to sit on the front porch. There were many happy days with my parents. Again I want to thank them. I love them and I miss them very much.

Bozena (Bessie Rejcek) Kaska

Bozena (Bessie Rejcek) Kaska was born May 25, 1896 about 3 weeks after the Rejceks landed at Galveston. She was born in Flatonia in Fayette County. She moved to the West area when she was about 12 years old. Bessie met and married Frank Kaska on Aug. 18, 1914. Bessie reared four children, had a difficult life and died at the age of 88. Those are the statistics of her life, but the following is the story of her life. Bessie's mother, Kristyna, told her stories about the voyage from the old country. The first ship caught fire and sunk with all of their possessions, so they waited until another ship was outfitted. Anton sent them money to help with the second ship. While they were on the water, Bessie's mother told her that Uncle John, who was about 2 years old, almost fell overboard, but someone caught him by the hem of his dress. Bessie also told us that her mother told of "mermaids" who would swim along the ship and sing after a storm. We suppose they were dolphins, but we like the mermaid story better. Bessie's mother also told stories that Marianna was such a pretty girl that she had a hard time keeping the sailors away from her.

Bessie told very few stories about her childhood except that they had to work very hard. She did say that she was very close to her dad and used to help him in the fields to clear trees so he could plant. Most of the boys had moved to their own farms by that time. The only stories that she told us of her childhood were about animals. She said that once a bull chased her and one of her brothers out of a field. She described walking up on a snake that rose up like a cobra and she prayed and prayed until it just went away. She remembered how one brother was snake bit and they had to cut the wound and suck the poison out of it.

After Joe and Florian came to the West area to farm, Teresa went to help cook and clean and take care of them. Bessie cried and cried when Teresa left. She said, "I told her that I would never see her again." As it turned out, Teresa moved to West, married Divin, and died in 1907 before Bessie could see her. Teresa died from an infection because the doctor didn't deliver the afterbirth. Shortly afterward the rest of the family moved to West.

Bessie does remember the "house dances" where the neighbors from surrounding farms would get together and make their own music and have fun. She met Frank Kaska at one of those dances, fell in love and married him in August of 1914 when she was 17. Bessie told of more hard work and once said of her marriage, "You know, it wasn't fair that we

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By Anna Urbanovsky, edited by James Rejcek
only had ten years." Bessie and Frank lived on 3 different farms in the West area. She told of a time when a terrible storm hit their farm (probably a tornado) and the winds killed all their chickens and the hail killed their cow. They had to start over again with everything including the crops. She gave birth to Tony in 1917, Frankie in 1918, and the twins, Henry and Henrietta in 1922. Frank got TB from taking care of his sister and her husband when they had TB. He might have lived, but he went back to the fields too soon since he was worried about his family, and got a relapse and died the month before the twins turned 3 years old.

Bessie had an extremely difficult time for many years after he died. She had to move in with her mother (Kristyna) where she and her 4 children had to live in one room for about 5 years. She did all the cooking and cleaning for her mother who had a boarding school. Farmers would send their children to live there and they would go to school at St. Mary's. She made extra money by staying with sick people or with dying people. Once she stayed with Mrs. Clemicek until she died. Because of a heavy rain and muddy fields, no one could get to them until two days after she had died. Grandma Bessie had to hang a sheet in a tree to signal the next farmhouse that she had died. They couldn't drive there so horses picked up grandma and the body. She said the dogs would howl and howl missing Mrs. Clemicek.

She also worked in fields with the 2 older boys and would have to finish their rows so she would be paid. When she finally got a job at the cotton mill, she moved out with her kids to an old, rundown house that was close to the where the West Elementary School is today. When it was cold and icy, Frankie would walk her to work. Later the family moved to a house on Elm Street. It would be closer for her to walk to work. She had some pet guineas that would walk her to work most days and when the doors were open at the cotton mill, they would follow her in, so she had to "shoo" them out much to the chagrin of her boss. Grandma Bessie told us about a time that the guineas saved her from a pack of wild dogs. She had to go to work before daybreak and the dogs attacked and growled, but the guineas started screaming and chased the dogs off.

When the big house across the street, right behind the Capital Service Station burned down, the lot was cleared and Grandma Bozena bought it to build her house. Those who remember her home know flowers and plants surrounded it. She had such a green thumb, that she once broke a limb from an apple tree that she raised from a seed and put it into a plant for support and the branch sprouted! Grandma also had many animals. Her garage was turned into an animal shed. At different times, she raised guinea pigs, doves, and rabbits. She always had cats, too.

Some of our fondest memories were the traditions of Christmas. She always made the best chicken soup in the world! We could pack more people around her little table and after soup; we'd have 2 or 3 meats, all kinds of vegetables and homemade kolaches and pies. One of our favorite pies was cottage cheese flavored. (She would make her cottage cheese from clabbered milk). Then Santa would come and we'd hear the bell as he left and we could go into the living room.

When Bessie's kids were little they would hear the chains of Dabel, Cert (‘e’ pronounced as ‘a’) (Czech devil that would come for the bad boys and girls). Uncle John would rattle chains outside. Other traditions we remember were centered on the Catholic Church holy days. She was very devout and passed down her faith and charity to us. She would also take in washing and ironing for the church and others to make ends meet.
Frankie told of a time late at night that grandma was crying because she had to go to work the next day, but she had to wash and iron some other cloths that were wrinkled. Bessie passed her work ethics down to us, too. Grandma was always doing something fun or funny.

Before she retired from the cotton mill, she began crocheting for people, again to add to her income. Grandma made a bedspread for all of her granddaughters and made a quilt for all of her grandsons. One of her favorite pastimes was to watch wrestling! She really believed in it and would yell at the TV. I'll never forget her sitting in her recliner, crocheting, and watching wrestling. There are so many memories of Grandma Bessie that I can't tell them all, but in the end she lived for the Rejcek reunion. She lived her last 11 years in the West Rest Haven Nursing Home before she died at age 88. We all loved her very much and I still miss her.

Valentine Frank Rejcek

Valentine was born to Raymond and Kristyna (Konecna) Rejcek on February 14, 1898 in Fayetteville, Texas, the last of eight children. His baptism was at Praha, Fayette County, Texas. His Godparents were Frantisk and Frantiska Smetek. The family later made their home in West, Texas. His family was musically talented; Valentine was also and played in several bands and orchestras. He played the bass tuba, clarinet, accordion and harmonica. He became a blacksmith by trade.

Before Valentine married Christine Frances Makovy on November 7, 1923, he had already opened his own blacksmith shop in Penelope, Texas. He made and sharpened farm implements like sweeps on plows, and made horseshoes and shod horses. He also operated a commercial corn grinder powered by a gasoline engine that ground corn into cornmeal for his customers. Valentine was able to build almost anything from iron, including a tractor with iron wheels, powered by an engine owned by an old friend. Unfortunately, blacksmithing did not prove profitable enough to survive the depression. People had no money to pay for his services. To get through these years, he worked as a hand in the fields, dug water wells and cisterns, and worked in the gin to feed his family.

He then found work as a carpenter and brick mason working in towns, from Lubbock to Orange, to Killeen, Texas, as work would become available. He helped build motels and houses and the Lutheran Church in Malone, Texas. He was sometimes gone for weeks at a time. His only transportation was by train to and from home or by relatives or bosses since He did not have a car. He eventually specialized in finishing carpentry and worked in and around Waco. He designed and built his own guides for his table saws to make very decorative woodwork.

In 1950, Valentine built a new house for Christine on their lots in Penelope using lumber from the old house there to save money. He made beautiful handmade doors and woodwork in the house and latticework on the porches. Gerry remembers that she and other members of her family begged their daddy to build them a wooden glider swing they had seen in a magazine, which he did after the house was completed. Many hot evenings were spent outside on that swing because it was too hot in the house. Stargazing was quite popular in those days.

Lucille and Wilma remember that daddy would always bring home a sack of candy after returning from his trips out of town. They also remember seeing daylight

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9 Biography by Gerry Nesolony, edited by James Rejcek
through the ceiling of the old house and the coal oil stove that was also used in the new house until Valentine bought Christine a new gas stove. The floor in the old house was so unleveled that they remember slopping water on it while mopping and sliding down the floor. They also remember that Valentine made and repaired fishnets and made watch fobs and watch chains. After the tornado of 1953, Valentine, who was in downtown Waco at the time came looking for Lucille and Wilma to see if they were all right

Gerry remembers her neighbor Wesley Kocian, who lived on the next block, and daddy sitting on their back porches and playing dueling accordions. What fun! On Sunday afternoons, their other neighbors, the Horaks, would come and play dominos and Christine would have freshly baked kolaches and coffee. In Czech, this snack is called sva-che-na. Gerry also remembers going to the Percy's next door with her daddy in the early 1950's to watch the Lone Ranger on their new TV set. At home, they only had a radio.

Unfortunately, Valentine lived in his new house only five years before he was diagnosed with lung cancer from years of smoking Lucky Strike cigarettes and died on December 2, 1955 at the age of 57, the youngest in his family and the first of his siblings to die. Gerry was eight years old, and she remembers him as a kind and loving daddy to her. It was still the custom in 1955 for the deceased family member to lie in state at their home in the family living room with neighbors coming over to sit with the deceased all night. The rosary was also held at the house with an overflowing crowd having to stand outside. Valentine's funeral mass was held at the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in Penelope, Texas with burial at St. Mary's Cemetery at West, Texas on December 5, 1955. Valentine and Christine had nine children, George, Albert, Lucille, Wilma, Josephine, Bernadette, Edmund, Lawrence, and Geraldine.
PART II

REJCEK’S IN AMERICA

The First Family to Immigrate

The Children of the First Family
THE FIRST FAMILY TO IMMIGRATE

Figure 6 Raymund Rejcek and Kristyna Konecna around 1902.

Figure 7 Raymund and Kristyna (Konecna) Rejcek family. This picture is the earliest known photo available, which was taken about 1902, possibly at Anton Sr.’s wedding day. Valentine appears to be about four years of age and six years after the arrival of Raymund and Kristyna Rejcek at Galveston, Texas. Bozena and Valentine were born in America. All others were born in the Czech lands.
THE CHILDREN OF THE FIRST GENERATION

Figure 8  This picture was made in about 1915 as surmised by the fact that Terezie was not in the picture having died in 1907 and before Raymund died in 1918.
RAYMUND REJCEK

Raymund was born on August 31, 1854 in house #44 in the village of Velselicko to Florian and Rosalia (Awrad) Rejcek. Velselicko is located west of Lipnik Nad Becvou (near the Becva river), Moravia. This house and many of the other houses mentioned here still stands today. Unlike here in America, the houses in central Europe are constructed with the expectation that they will last for centuries. It is believed that some of the houses here mentioned are still owned by some of the Rejcek descendents. Around the year 1865 Raymund’s parents moved to house #27 Nove Dvory Nad Becvou, Moravia. Here Raymund grew into a young man learning a trade as a carpenter and common laborer. He helped his father build many houses, including house #11 in Nove Dvory Nad Becvou where his family moved to before 1867. A brother, Joseph, was born here on April 19, 1867 and died the same day. A sister, Marianna was born April 30, 1868 and also died the same day. Records show they both had emergency christenings.

At the age of 24, he married Kyristina (Christina) Konecny, age 17, on September 10, 1878. It has been determined that Kyristina lived in house #26 Nove Dvory and must have been a nearby neighbor to Raymund. Her father Antonin Konecny was a familant, a farmer who owned a farm on the former dominical - landlord's land. It is believed that the bride and groom must have lived at either house #11 or house #26 until their first-born child Anton (1879) arrived. Sometime before 1880 they moved to Pod Hurou #457, Moravia where their second child Marianna and later Florian (1882) was born. Pod Hurou village is located approximately two miles north east of Nove Dvory. After Raymund's father died in 1892, they moved back to Nove Dvory, where he earned a living as farmer, carpenter, and laborer. From there he sent Anton to chaperone his aunt Franciska Smetak to the United States in 1893.

Three years later he obtained a passport from the Austrian/Hungarian Embassy in Lipnik, Moravia on April 3, 1896. He then booked passage on a ship bound for the United States and at the age of 41, Raymund and his family emigrated to the United States of America. They arrived at Galveston, Texas around the month of May 1896. The exact day is not known because the passenger arrival records in Galveston were destroyed in the famous 1900 hurricane that killed over 6000 people. But their arrival must have been between the issuance of the passport (April 3, 1896) and the birth of their seventh child Bozena (Bessie) on May 25, 1896. Raymund received his certificate of naturalization at the age of 56 on November 14, 1910.

He and his family settled on a 160-acre farm located 16 miles southwest of La Grange, Fayette County, Texas that he bought November 1, 1900 and later sold on October 1, 1912. He moved from there to a new location at West, McLennan County, Texas by railroad, using an entire boxcar to move horses, cattle, furniture, and all their belongings. They settled into an old log cabin that was built by early settlers on the property of the Marak family, he bought a farm and upon retirement sold his farm to his

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10 As researched by Laddie Rejcek
11 Volume 1 page 22, Sub volume 3492-page 16, certificate number 42291
12 Ref. Texas Land Records Vol. 68/p10-12 and 94/p266/267
son and daughter, Florian and Marianna (Picha), and moved to the city of West, Texas. It is unclear if this is the same farm now owned by his grandson, Anton Rejcek.

**KRISTYNA ROSENA KONECNA**

Kristyna Konecny was born July 2, 1861 to Anton and Barbara (Velicky) Konecny while they lived in house #26 in Nove Dvory, Moravia. She grew up with two older stepbrothers, Ferdinand (born 1852) and Vincenz (born 1855), whose mother was Anna Zour. Kristyna learned to cook from her mother and helped work on their farm.

At age 17, Kristyna married Raymund Rejcek on September 10, 1878 at Hlinsko #44, Moravia, located approximately one mile south of Nove Dvory Nad Becvou. It is believed that the bride and groom must have lived at either house #11 or house #26 in Nove Dvory Nad Becvou until their first-born child Anton (1879) was born. She gave birth to six children before leaving for the United States.

Kristyna was 35 years old and eight months pregnant when she emigrated to the United States. Arriving at Galveston Bay, Texas on May 1896, she and her husband Raymund met their son Anton there and traveled to Fayette County, Texas to stay with her half-sister, Frantiska (Frances) and spouse Frank Smetak. Frantiska, along with Anton, had arrived at Ellis Island, New York, three years earlier (April 10, 1893) aboard the ship Bruanschweig. Frank and Frantiska Smetak had settled in Fayette County. Kristyna and Raymund stayed with the Smetaks until their seventh child, Bozina (Bessie) Rejcek, was born on May 25, 1896, approximately three weeks after their arrival in the United States.

Later, Kristyna and her family settled on a farm near Fayetteville, Texas. In 1909 they moved to a farm they purchased west of the town called West, in McLennan County, Texas. She lived there the rest of her life.

Research has determined the following facts on Kristyna. The spelling of her name was recorded in the birth registers of Nove Dvory, Parish Hlinsko, #6775, page 287, as Christina. Her father is listed as Anton Konecny, Familiant in Nove Dvory, and son of Georg Konecny, farmer in Lhota and Rosalia Pawel from Radotin. Her Mother was Barbara Velicky, daughter of Franz Welidsky, (German spelling) cottager and Magdalena Pumperla from Osek.

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13 As researched by Laddie Rejcek
Figure 9  The home #26 where Kristyna Konecna was born. Picture taken by Petr Kuda and his wife Yveta (Rejcek) Kudova in 2006.
# FAMILY GROUP SHEET

## Husband: Raymund Rejcek
- **Born:** Aug 31, 1854 in: Veselicko #44, Moravia  
- **Married:** Sep 10, 1878 in: Hlinsko #44, Moravia  
- **Died:** Aug 14, 1918 in: West, McLennan County, Texas  
- **Burial:** Aug 16, 1918 in: St. Mary's Cemetery, West, Texas  
- **Father:** Florian Rejcek  
- **Mother:** Rosalie Awrath  
- **Other Spouses:**

## Wife: Kristyna Rosena Konecny
- **Born:** Jun 02, 1861 in: Nove Dvory #26, Moravia  
- **Died:** Jan 27, 1940 in: West, McLennan County, Texas  
- **Burial:** Jan 29, 1940 in: St. Mary's Cemetery, West, Texas  
- **Father:** Antonin Konecny  
- **Mother:** Barbora Welitzky  
- **Other Spouses:**

## CHILDREN

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<th>#</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sex</th>
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<th>Married</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Anton Rejcek, Sr.</td>
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<td>Nov 11, 1879</td>
<td>Apr 17, 1976</td>
<td>Apr 19, 1976, St. Mary's Cemetery, West, Texas</td>
<td>Nov 10, 1902, St. Joseph, Moulton, Lavaca County, Texas</td>
<td>Mary Hajicek</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Marianna Rejcek</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Feb 14, 1881</td>
<td>Feb 18, 1970</td>
<td>Feb 20, 1970, St. Mary's Cemetery, West, Texas</td>
<td>Abt. 1900, St. Mary, West, McLennan County, Texas</td>
<td>Cyril M. Picha</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>Mar 21, 1885</td>
<td>Tyn, Moravia</td>
<td>Jan 17, 1967</td>
<td>Waco, McLennan County, Texas</td>
<td>Mary Ann Snokhous</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Terezie Rejcek</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Dec 24, 1887</td>
<td>Tyn, Moravia</td>
<td>Sep 22, 1907</td>
<td>West, McLennan County, Texas</td>
<td>Jan Divin</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>John Frank Rejcek</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Feb 08, 1894</td>
<td>Tyn, Moravia</td>
<td>Jan 20, 1981</td>
<td>West, McLennan County, Texas</td>
<td>Agnes Elizabeth Kohut</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Bozena Rejcek</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>May 25, 1896</td>
<td>Fayetteville, Fayette County, Texas</td>
<td>Jun 24, 1984</td>
<td>West, McLennan County, Texas</td>
<td>Frantisek S. Kaska</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Valentine Frank Rejcek</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Feb 14, 1898</td>
<td>Fayetteville, Fayette County, Texas</td>
<td>Dec 02, 1955</td>
<td>Penelope, Hill County, Texas</td>
<td>Christine Frances Mokavy</td>
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**FAMILY GROUP SHEET**
PART III

THE NEXT GENERATION

Anton Rejcek Sr.
Marianna Rejcek
Florian Rejcek
Josef Rejcek
Terezie Rejcek
John Frank Rejcek
Bozena Rejcek
Valentine Frank Rejcek
1. Anton Rejcek Sr.

Figure 9  Anton Rejcek and Mary Hajicek wedding on November 10, 1902

Figure 10  Anton and Mary Rejcek family in 1940.
INDIVIDUAL SUMMARY

ANTON REJCEK SR. 14

There is some mystery concerning the date and circumstances of Anton’s birth. The only known original document that suggests his date of birth is his U.S.A. naturalization certificate. The certificate of naturalization was granted September 13, 1921 - #1239803 - vol. 6 / 631 and states his age to be 41. This places Anton's date of birth back to the year 1879. All record searches in the birth register archives of Olomouc, Czechoslovakia by the author as well as the work of hired professional genealogists has produced no account of Anton’s date of birth. In addition to this, soon after Anton passed away, his youngest daughter asked the author to come and visit her. She claimed that on his death bed, Anton stated that he was a twin of Marianna and no records were recorded of his birth, only Marianna's date of birth in 1880 at Nove Dvory, Czech Republic.

Based on existing records, Anton was born to Raymund and Kristyna (Konecny) Rejcek on November 11, 1879 at Nove Dvory nad Becvou, Moravia. It is not known which set of parents they lived with, Raymunds in house #11 or with Kristyna’s in house #26 before the year 1880. He grew up in Nove Dvory nad Becvou and the surrounding villages of Pod Hurou and Tyn nad Becvou learning his fathers trades as a carpenter, farmer, and laborer until the age of 13 when he was asked by his father to take an adventure of a lifetime and take a trip to the United States.

Anton entered New York harbor and passed the Statue of Liberty on board the ship Braunschweig landing at Ellis Island, New York on April 10, 1893. He was a guest or chaperone of his Aunt Frantiska (Frances Konecna) Smetak who was the half-sister of Anton's mother, Kristyna (Konecna) Rejcek. Frances was joining her husband Frantisek Smetak, who came to the United States in 1892, a year before.

Here a second mystery of Anton's history occurs. No records have been found in the Ellis Island emigrations or passenger lists of Anton’s arrival in the United States. Many stories among relatives consistently claim that Anton came over to the United States with his aunt Frances Smetak. However, the passenger records show Frances and four daughters Marie, Adolphine, Ludmila, and Josefa. Anton supposedly took the place of a Smetak daughter who remained home in Moravia to marry. He may have taken the place of Josefa, because no records can be found of her in the 1900 census nor is there any knowledge of her existence among the Smetak relatives. Or he possibly came to America as a stowaway.

After a brief stay at Ellis Island, as required by United States customs, Anton and the Smetak family booked passage on a ship to Galveston, Texas. As payment for his trip from Lipnik, Moravia, Anton worked for the Smetak family on a farm as a helper. He later found a job with the Frantisek and Marie Branesky General Store in Engle, Texas. Mr. Branesky helped Anton save the money needed to send for his parents, brothers and sisters. The passage fee for a ship to the United States was $43.50, which Anton sent to

14 Appendices A. Documents
his parents in early 1896. His parents, Raymund and Kristyna (Konecna) Rejcek, with brothers and sisters Marianna, Josef, Teresie, Jan (John) arrived in Galveston, Texas from Lipnik, Moravia around the month of May, 1896.

After the arrival of his parents, Anton continued to work at the general store in Engle, Texas and help on the farm his father purchased in 1900 in Fayette County. He married Mary Hajicek in 1902 and had his first-born, Josephine (1903), while living in the Praha, Texas area. In 1904, he moved to West, Texas where he rented the Marak farm. The Marak farm was the birthplace of his next two children, Raymond and Mary. Anton farmed the Marak land until he purchased 160 acres on the west side of Aquilla Creek, eight miles west of West, Texas in 1909. Anton spent the remainder of his life raising his family there. This same farm was eventually bought by his son Anton junior who has since passed it on to his son Anthony, who still farms it to this day (2005).

MARY HAJICEK

She was born December 8, 1880 in the community of Nemejic, Nad Vltavou, Bohemia. The village was located approximately 80 kilometers south of Phara near the Vltava River. She and her parents left Nemejic, Bohemia while the village was under the control of the Austrian/Hungarian Empire and later became the country of Czechoslovakia in 1918.

Mary made the journey to United States on May, 5, 1888, with her parents Matthew and Katerina Hajicek, at age of seven. (Reference Declaration of intention State of Texas, County of Lavaca). Her journey across the ocean was a memory that they treasured the remainder of their lives, as Mary has reflected to her children many times. The memory of the Statue of Liberty at Ellis Island in New York Port, where she first set foot on United States soil as unforgettable.

One of the stories Mary related to her children that happened on their journey to America was aboard the ship they were on. Many of the passengers were from the same village that she was from. On the final day or two of their journey, Mary notice one of the ladies clinging to a baby at her breast. The ships captain knew that the baby had died, but let her keep the baby until the ship docked in New York for burial on American soil instead of the ocean as most ship deaths were handled.

This and many sad stories of Czech immigrants have occurred on the ships coming to the United States. The courage and dedication for a better life and future for their children is something that all of us must be thankful to God. Their dream for us has become a reality at the present time.

Mary and her parents settled in the community of Praha, Fayette County, Texas (one hundred miles east of San Antonio. This Community was named after the city of Praha in Czechoslovakia) It was here that the first Bohemian Catholic Parochial School in the United States was established. Post Office - Mar. 25, 1884 to Nov. 31, 1906 - Pop. 25.

15 Josephine (Rejcek) Sulak
# Family Group Sheet

**Husband: Anton Rejcek, Sr.**
- Born: Nov 11, 1879 in: Nove Dvory nad Bec., #11, Moravia
- Married: Nov 10, 1902 in: St. Joesph, Moulton, Lavaca, Texas
- Died: Apr 17, 1976 in: West, McLennan, Texas
- Burial: Apr 19, 1976 in: St. Mary's Cemetery, West, Texas
- Father: Raymund Rejcek
- Mother: Kristyna Rosena Konecny

**Wife: Mary Hajicek**
- Born: Dec 08, 1880 in: Nemejic, Sk, Bohemia
- Died: Jul 31, 1954 in: West, McLennan, Texas
- Burial: Aug 02, 1954 in: St. Mary's Cemetery, West, Texas
- Father: Matej Hajicek
- Mother: Katerina Hajicek

## Children

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</table>
2. Marianna Rejcek

Figure 11 Cyril M. Picha and Marianna Rejcek wedding 1900

Figure 12 Cyril Picha family’s picture was taken in about 1920 as evidenced by Christine being born in February 1920.
INDIVIDUAL SUMMARY

CYRIL M. PICHÁ

Cyril came to the United States with his mother Anna in the year of 1889 at the age of 9 along with his 10-year-old sister. His father's name is George Picha who came to America in 1879 and his mother came 10 ten years later in 1889. The 1900 census of the United States of Fayette county Texas states that there were 6 children born to George and Anna Picha but only 3 living. Only two were reported on the census, Mary and Cyril. Possibly one was married.

Cyril lived and grew up on a farm near Praha, Fayette County, Texas. At the age of 19, he met and married a lady by the name of Marianna Rejcek, next farm neighbor at Praha, Fayette County, Texas. Two of their children were born in Praha, Texas and moved to West, McLennan County, Texas in 1907 before John J. Picha was born.

MARIANNA REJCEK

Marianna immigrated to America at 16 years of age with her parents Raymund and Kristyna Rejcek on the last of April 1896. She assisted in the birth of her youngest sister (Bozina) who was born May 25, 1896 immediately after arrival in the United States.

The birth records of Marianna stated as place of birth was a small village in Pod Hurou, - more of a hamlet than a village, it is different when we compare it with certificate written by the parish of Tyne received in April 1914 (Tyn nad Becvou, today). Tyn was perhaps the seat of municipality even for Nad Hurou. Godparents are Anton Kunovsky, cottager at Tyn, and his wife Teresia.

Marianna married her next-door farm neighbor Cyril Picha on the last of 1900 or first of 1901. She moved with her family to West, McLennan County, Texas before her third child was born in 1907. There she and Cyril bought her father's farm soon after Raymund retired. The farm was located about three miles west of West, Texas where she retired the rest of her life.

16 Irene A. (Soukup) Peterson
17 Laddie Rejcek
# Family Group Sheet

## Husband: Cyril M. Picha
- **Born:** Aug 1880  
  **in:** Moravia  
- **Married:** Nov 20, 1900  
  **in:** St. Mary, Praha, Fayette Texas  
- **Died:** Nov 22, 1949  
  **in:** West, McLennan, Texas  
- **Burial:** Nov 24, 1949  
  **in:** St. Mary's Cemetery, West, Texas  
- **Father:** George Picha  
- **Mother:** Anna

## Wife: Marianna Rejcek
- **Born:** Feb 14, 1880  
  **in:** Pod Hurou #457, Moravia  
- **Died:** Feb 18, 1970  
  **in:** Praha, Fayette, Texas  
- **Burial:** Feb 20, 1970  
  **in:** St. Mary's Cemetery, West, Texas  
- **Father:** Raymund Rejcek  
- **Mother:** Kristyna Rosena Konecny

## Children

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<tr>
<th>No.</th>
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<td>Nov 22, 1932</td>
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| 4 | Name: Anton J. Picha  
    | Born: May 17, 1911  in: West, McLennan, Texas  
    | Died: Sep 02, 1974  in: West, McLennan, Texas  
    | Burial: Sep 05, 1974  in: St. Mary's Cemetery, West, Texas |
| M |  |
| 5 | Name: Frank Felix Picha  
    | Born: Nov 18, 1913  in: West, McLennan, Texas  
    | Married: Jun 28, 1948  
    | Spouse: Mildred Viola Downing |
| M |  |
| 6 | Name: Albina E. Picha  
    | Born: Nov 25, 1916  in: West, McLennan, Texas  
    | Married: Apr 05, 1937  in: St. Mary's, West, McLennan, Texas  
    | Spouse: George J. Soukup |
| F |  |
| 7 | Name: Christine Marie Picha  
    | Born: Feb 08, 1920  in: West, McLennan, Texas  
    | Died: Aug 25, 2003  in: West, McLennan, Texas  
    | Married: May 08, 1944  in: West, McLellan County, Texas  
    | Spouse: Henry P. Urban |
3. Florian Rejcek

Figure 13  Florian Rejcek and Theresa Mynarcik wedding November 13, 1906

Figure 14  Family picture was made about 1922 before Theresa was born in 1928.
INDIVIDUAL SUMMARY

FLORIAN REJCEK

Florian was born as the third child of Raymund and Kristyna Rejcek. He came to the United States in 1896 with his parents at the age of 14. His Godparents were Anton Kunovsky (cottager at TYN) and his wife Teresia. The birth records showed as place of birth is a small village "Pod Hurou"- more a hamlet than a village; it is different when we compare it with birth certificate where it is written Tyne (Tyn nad Becvou, today). Tyn was perhaps the seat of municipality even for Nad Hurou. He was born as the third child of Raymund and Kristyna Rejcek. He came to the United States in 1896 with his parents at the age of 14.

Florian and Theresa (Mynarcik) Rejcek raised six children on a farm that is located west of West, Texas. Their livelihood was farming. In the fall of each year, Florian set up his syrup mill and produced syrup from sugar cane grown on his farm. Also, made sugar cane syrup for many of surrounding local farmers and neighbors. Florian played the accordion and he would entertain us when the kids came over.

In their later years, they moved to the town of West, Texas, in about the late 1940’s. They purchased a house with a barn in the back yard where they continued to have a milk cow and chickens until the city of West passed an ordinance against animals in town.

THERESA MYNARCIK

Grandma Theresa developed a Christmas tradition over the years. Every Christmas Eve, all the children and grandchildren came over to visit. Grandma would cook a big pot of Brown potato soup, cream of wheat, English peas, and fish along with fruit. This was when we had to fast, and no meat.

18 Biography by Josephine Kozlovsky
# FAMILY GROUP SHEET

## Husband: Florian Rejcek
- Born: Jul 18, 1882 in: Pod Hurou #457, Moravia
- Married: Nov 13, 1906 in: West, McLennan County, Texas
- Died: Oct 29, 1962 in: West, McLennan County, Texas
- Burial: Oct 31, 1962 in: St. Mary's Cemetery, West, Texas
- Father: Raymund Rejcek
- Mother: Kristyna Rosena Konecny
- Other Spouses:

## Wife: Theresa Mynarcik
- Born: Apr 15, 1886 in: Hutiska, Moravia
- Died: Jan 16, 1966 in: West, McLennan County, Texas
- Burial: Jan 18, 1966 in: St. Mary's Cemetery, West, Texas
- Father: George Mynarcik
- Mother: Rosalie Dolinek
- Other Spouses:

## CHILDREN

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<td>Millie Anna Urban</td>
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**Note:** All events and information are in West, McLennan County, Texas.
4. Josef J. Rejcek

Figure 15 Josef F. Rejcek and Mary Snokhous\(^{19}\) wedding in October of 1911.

Figure 16 Josef and Mary Rejcek family circa 1954.

\(^{19}\) By Lillian Fuller
INDIVIDUAL SUMMARY

JOSEPH F. REJCEK

Josef Frank was born as the fourth child of Raymund and Kristyna Rejcek. He was born March 21, 1885 in Pod Horou #457, Moravia. His Godparents were Anton Kunovsky (cottager at TYN) and his wife Teresia.

The birth records showed as place of birth is a small village "Pod Hurou"- more a hamlet than a village; it is different when we compare it with birth certificate where it is written Tyne (Tyn nad Becvou, today). Tyn was perhaps the seat of municipality even for Nad Horou and is located 2 miles northeast of Pod Hurou. The birth and christening records were kept at Our Lady of Tyn parish in Tyn nad Becvou, Moravia.

At the age of 11 he immigrated to the United States, arriving at Galveston, Texas in May 1896 with his parents and traveled to Fayette County to live. In about 1908 he and his parents moved to West, McLennan County, Texas and helped his parents with farming until the age of 26. Josef met Mary Ann Snokhous and married on October 17, 1911.

Josef and Mary Ann (Snokhous) Rejcek raised seven children on a farm that is located west of West, Texas. Their livelihood was farming.

Mary Ann Snokhous

Mary Ann was born September 05, 1891 in Hill County, Texas. She was the third child born since her parent’s arrival to Texas in 1888 from Bohemia. Frank and Alzbeta Snokhaus were married two years when they arrived and had their first child in 1889.

Mary Ann or Marie as she was known by, had seven brothers and sisters and grew up on a 142-acre farm her parents rented in Hill Count Texas as shown by the 1900 census.

At the age of 19 she met and married Josef F. Rejcek and was blessed with seven children.

---

20 By Laddie Rejcek
**FAMILY GROUP SHEET**

**Husband: Josef Frank Rejcek**

- Born: Mar 21, 1885 in: Pod Horou #457, Moravia
- Married: Oct 17, 1911 in: St. Mary's Ch. West, McLennan, Texas
- Died: Jan 17, 1967 in: Waco, McLennan, Texas
- Burial: Jan 19, 1967 in: St. Mary's Cemetery, West, Texas
- Father: Raymund Rejcek
- Mother: Kristyna Rosena Konecny

**Wife: Mary Ann Snokhous**

- Born: Sep 05, 1891 in: Hill County, Texas
- Died: Mar 27, 1979 in: Corsicana, Navarro, Texas
- Burial: Mar 30, 1979 in: St. Mary's Cemetery, West, Texas
- Father: Frantisek Snockhous
- Mother: Alzbeta Kostechia

**CHILDREN**

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<td>Name: Martha Agnes Rejcek</td>
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<td>Name: Elizabeth Christine Rejcek</td>
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<td>Born: Nov 17, 1931 in: West, McLennan, Texas</td>
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<td>Name: Lillian Josephine Rejcek</td>
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<td>Spouse: William Joe Fuller</td>
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5. Terezie Rejcek\textsuperscript{21}

\textbf{Figure 17} Frank Divin and Terezie Rejcek wedding 1906.

Terezie Rejcek was born on December 24, 1886 in Tyn Nad Becvou, Moravia that is located three miles southeast of Lipnik Nad Becvou, Moravia. The death register records at St. Mary’s church state that she died on September 22, 1907 in West, Texas from childbirth fever. She was buried on September 23, 1907 in St. Mary Catholic Cemetery in West, McLennan, Texas.

She was married to Frank Divin on November 27, 1906 at ST. Mary’s Catholic Church West, Texas. Frank Divin was born on Apr. 15, 1882 in West, Texas. He died on Oct. 3, 1961 in West, Texas. He was buried on Oct. 4, 1961 in ST. Mary’s Catholic Cemetery in West, Texas. One son was born to this family.

\textsuperscript{21} By Henrietta (Kaska) Urban
# FAMILY GROUP SHEET

**Husband:** Frank Divin  
Born: Apr 15, 1882  
Married: Nov 27, 1906  
Died: Oct 03, 1961  
Burial: Oct 04, 1961  
in: West, McLennan County, Texas  
in: St. Mary, West, McLennan County, Texas  
in: West, McLennan County, Texas  
in: St. Mary's Cemetery, West, Texas

**Wife:** Terezie Rejcek  
Born: Dec 24, 1886  
Died: Sep 22, 1907  
Burial: Sep 23, 1907  
Father: Raymund Rejcek  
Mother: Kristyna Rosena Konecny

| CHILDREN |  
|----------|---|---|
| 1        | Name: Raymund Divin | in: West, McLennan County, Texas |
| M        | Born: Aug 28, 1907 | in: West, McLennan County, Texas |
6. John Frank Rejcek

Figure 18  John F. Rejcek and Agnes Kohut wedding day February 12, 1917.

Figure 19  John and Agnes Rejcek family about 1948.
INDIVIDUAL SUMMARY

JOHN F. REJCEK

Jan was born Feb. 8, 1994 in the village of Pod Hurou house number 457. The records are written in the regional archive of the district Opava, filial Olomouc, birth registers of village Pod Hurou, which was entered in volume # 6952 by the Catholic Church at Parish "Our Lady of Tyn" in the city of Tyn nad Becvou.

John immigrated to the United States with his parents Raymund and Kristyna Rejcek, arriving in Galveston, Texas around May 1, 1896 at age of 2. He lived in Fayette County, Texas helping his father (Raymund) produce farm staples and learn the farm trade. Around 1910 (age 16), he moved with his parents to a new farm about three miles west of West, McLennan County, Texas. There he continued farming with his father until the age of 23, when he married Agnes Kohut on Feb. 12, 1917. It is believed that he and Agnes farmed and had their first seven children near by this farm.

Between 1927 and 1929, John moved his family to Abbott and farmed cotton. But a short time later, he bought a blacksmith shop where he worked for forty-four years. He purchased his blacksmith shop from a Mr. Nelson. It has not been confirmed, but is believed that this was Willie Nelson's grandfather who was known to be a blacksmith. John built the gates to St. Mary's Catholic Cemetery in West, Texas. He designed and built machinery for tractors and hay balers for many farmers. He also enjoyed life as a musician. His life had been very content around his children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren.

AGNES ELIZABETH KOHUT

Agnes Elizabeth was born on November 06, 1897 in West, McLennan County, Texas to Joseph and Annie (Sykora) Kohut. She lived all of her life in and around the West-Abbott area growing up learning the ways to make a living and remained devoted to the Catholic Faith. She passed on to her children many Czech-Moravian customs she learned from her parents.

She married John Frank Rejccek on February 12, 1917 at St. Mary's church in West, McLennan County, Texas is believed that she and John lived and farmed land in the West, Texas area and during that time the first seven children were born. Around 1929, her family moved to Abbott, Hill County, Texas where the rest of her children were born. Agnes was blessed with 16 children.

She died on February 01, 1954 at the age of 57 and is buried in St. Mary's Cemetery, West, McLennan County, Texas.

22 Tribute by Martha M. Veselka
# FAMILY GROUP SHEET

**Husband: John Frank Rejeck**
- Born: Feb 08, 1894 in: Tyn, Moravia
- Married: Feb 12, 1917 in: West, McLennan County, Texas
- Died: Jan 20, 1981 in: West, McLennan County, Texas
- Burial: Jan 22, 1981 in: St. Mary's Cemetery, West, Texas
- Father: Raymund Rejeck
- Mother: Kristyna Rossena Konecny

**Wife: Agnes Elizabeth Kohut**
- Born: Nov 06, 1897 in: West, McLennan County, Texas
- Died: Feb 01, 1954 in: West, McLennan County, Texas
- Burial: Feb 03, 1954 in: St. Mary's Cemetery, West, Texas
- Father: Joseph Kohut
- Mother: Annie Sykora

**CHILDREN**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Name: Jerome Steve Rejeck</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Born: Dec 19, 1917 in: West, McLennan County, Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Died: Dec 08, 1982 in: Dallas, Dallas County, Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Burial: Dec 10, 1982 in: Dallas, Dallas County, Texas</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Married: Jun 25, 1949 in: Dallas, Dallas County, Texas</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spouse: Genora Evelyn Taylor</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Name: Raymond John Rejeck, Sr</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Born: Feb 26, 1919 in: West, McLennan County, Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Died: Jan 20, 2003 in: Dallas, Dallas County, Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Burial: Jan 24, 2003 in: National Cemetery, Grand Prairie, Texas</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Married: Jun 21, 1947 in: Dallas, Dallas County, Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spouse: Mertie Fay Bradley</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>|   | Name: Martha M. Rejeck                   |
| F | Born: May 04, 1920 in: West, McLennan County, Texas |
|   | Died: in:                                |
|   | Burial:                                  |
|   | Married: Nov 06, 1944 in: Waco, McLennan County, Texas |
|   | Spouse: Louis J. Veselka                 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Born</th>
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<th>Spouse</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Rudolphina Anna Rejcek</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Apr 19, 1922</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Oct 05, 1942</td>
<td>William John Gaiser</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Louise Rejcek</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Jun 07, 1924</td>
<td>Sep 02, 1988</td>
<td>Sep 04, 1988</td>
<td></td>
<td>Edward Cooper, Sr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mary Agnes Rejcek</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Oct 08, 1927</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Albert Frank Miller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Alphonse Louis Rejcek</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Aug 02, 1929</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nov 26, 1949</td>
<td>Billie Marie King</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Name: Felix Rejcek</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Born: May 19, 1931 in: Abbott, Hill County, Texas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Died:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Married: 1951 in:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spouse: Barbara Ann Ludwig</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Married: Mar 19, 1962 in: Houston, Harris County, Texas</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spouse: Clara Loma Mills Burris</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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|   | Name: Johnnie Rejcek             |
| M | Born: Jul 03, 1933 in: Abbott, Hill County, Texas |
|   | Died: Nov 08, 1941 in: Abbott, Hill County, Texas |
|   | Burial:                           |
|   | Spouse:                           |

|   | Name: Willie Mae Rejcek          |
| F | Born: Aug 23, 1935 in: Abbott, Hill County, Texas |
|   | Died:                             |
|   | Burial:                           |
|   | Married: Jul 17, 1954 in: Abbott, Hill County, Texas |
|   | Spouse: Ernest Janecka, Sr        |

|   | Name: Willie J. Rejcek           |
| M | Born: Aug 23, 1935 in: Abbott, Hill County, Texas |
|   | Died: Jul 09, 2004 in: Abbott, Hill County, Texas |
|   | Burial: Jul 11, 2004 in: Fatima Cemetery, Abbott, Texas |
|   | Married: Apr 19, 1957 in: Bellmead, McLennan County, Texas |
|   | Spouse: Dorothy Matus             |

|   | Name: Edna Rejcek                |
| F | Born: Jun 11, 1937 in: Abbott, Hill County, Texas |
|   | Died:                             |
|   | Burial:                           |
|   | Married: Nov 25, 1961 in: Abbott, Hill County, Texas |
|   | Spouse: Bernard Knapp             |

<p>|   | Name: Edward Louis Rejcek         |
| M | Born: Jun 11, 1937 in: Abbott, Hill County, Texas |
|   | Died:                             |
|   | Burial:                           |
|   | Married: Jun 29, 1957 in: Dallas, Dallas County, Texas |
|   | Spouse: Bernice Marie Vrana       |</p>
<table>
<thead>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 15 | Name: Rudolph Rejcek  
    | Born: Apr 12, 1939 in: Abbott, Hill County, Texas  
    | Died: in:  
    | Burial:  
    | Married: Jul 14, 1962 in: West, McLellan County, Texas  
    | Spouse: Janie Hubik  
|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 16 | Name: Leonard Alois Rejcek  
    | Born: Jan 02, 1944 in: Abbott, Hill County, Texas  
    | Died: in:  
    | Burial:  
    | Married: Aug 08, 1964 in: Ennis, Ellis County, Texas  
    | Spouse: Carol Zaidle  
|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
7. Bozina (Bessie) Rejcek

Figure 20  Frank S. Kaska and Bozena (Bessie) Rejcek, 1923.

Figure 21  Frank and Bozena Kaska family (composite photo).
Figure 22  Bozena Kaska and family circa 1944/45.
INDIVIDUAL SUMMARY

BOZENA (Bessie Rejcek) KASKA

Bozena was the first Rejcek to be born in the United States. She was born on May 25, 1896, only three weeks after her parents (Raymund and Kristyna) arrived at Galveston, Texas port about May 1, 1896. Her parents traveled to Fayetteville, Texas by horse and wagon to her mother’s sister’s (Frances Smetak) home. The Smetak's had arrived in 1892 and set up a farm. Bozena's mother just made the trip when she was born on the Smetak farm, in Fayette County, Texas.

She lived on a rented farm with her parents until 1900, when her parents bought a 160-acre farm in western Fayette County. Here she lived until the age of 11 or 12 when her parents moved to a new farm west of West, McLennan County, Texas around 1907/8. Farming was a hard and difficult way of life, but Bessie developed into a beautiful young lady. She later met and married Frank Kaska on August 18, 1915 at the age of 18.

Bessie reared four children, had a difficult life and died at the age of 88. For the rest of the story, refer to stories and recollections in Part I of this book.

FRANTISEK KASKA

Frank was born on September 26, 1890, however the location has not been determined. It is unknown even if he was born in Texas or the Czech Republic. It appears that he grew up in the McLennan County area.

At the age of 25, he married Bozena Rejcek on August 18, 1915 at St. Mary’s Catholic Church West, McLennan County, Texas. He farmed on three different farms in the West area and they had four children. Frank contracted TB while taking care of his sister and her husband who both had TB. He may have lived, however he went back to the fields too soon because of his concern for his family. The disease relapsed and he died the month before the twins turned three years old. He died on February 25, 1925 at age of 35 and buried in St. Mary's Cemetery, West, McLennan County, Texas.
# Family Group Sheet

## Husband: Frantisek L. Kaska
- Born: Sep 26, 1890
- Married: Aug 18, 1915
- Died: Feb 25, 1925
- Burial: Feb 27, 1925
- Father: Frank Kaska
- Mother: Catherine Jaska

## Wife: Bozena Rejcek
- Born: May 25, 1896
- Died: Jun 24, 1984
- Burial: Jun 26, 1984
- Father: Raymund Rejcek
- Mother: Kristyna Rosena Konecny

## Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date of Birth</th>
<th>Date Married</th>
<th>Spouse</th>
<th>Located in</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Anton Kaska</td>
<td>Jan 04, 1917</td>
<td>Aug 20, 1940</td>
<td>Adela Dolezial</td>
<td>West, McLennan, Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Frank Leonard Kaska</td>
<td>Nov 26, 1918</td>
<td>Apr 15, 1939</td>
<td>Bertha Lee Saddler</td>
<td>Waco, McLennan, Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mar 19, 1988</td>
<td>Ada Irene Salburg</td>
<td>Fort Worth, Tarrant, Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Henrietta Kaska</td>
<td>Mar 15, 1922</td>
<td>Aug 11, 1947</td>
<td>Willie Urban</td>
<td>West, McLennan, Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Henry Kaska</td>
<td>Mar 15, 1922</td>
<td>Feb 24, 1995</td>
<td>Oleta Schulze</td>
<td>Weatherford, Parker, Texas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. Valentine Frank Rejcek

Figure 23 Valentine and Christine Rejcek wedding day 1923.

Figure 24 Valentine and Christine Rejcek family on January 29, 1968.
INDIVIDUAL SUMMARY

VALENTINE FRANK REJCEK

Valentine was born to Raymond and Kristnya (Konecna) Rejcek on February 14, 1898 in Fayetteville, Texas, the last of eight children. Baptism was at Praha, Fayette County, Texas. His godparents were Frantisk and Frantiska Smetak. The Rejcek family later made their home in West, McLennan County, Texas. Valentine was a musician and played in several bands and orchestras. He played the bass tuba, clarinet, accordion and harmonica. Valentine became a blacksmith and was able to secure a U. S. Patent for his invention of tire chains.

Valentine died on December 2, 1955 and his funeral mass was held at the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in Penelope, Hill County, Texas with burial at St. Mary's Cemetery at West, Texas on December 5, 1955. For more information refer to Stories and Recollections in Part I of this book.

CHRISTINE FRANCES MOKAVY

Christine Rejcek was born February 17, 1904 at Aquilla, Texas, the daughter of Joseph & Aloisie Makovy Sr. She attended Brooken School. She married Valentine F. Rejcek in West on November 7, 1923 and they made their home in Penelope, Texas, where they raised nine children. She was a homemaker and a skilled seamstress known for her smocking and dressmaking. In 1964, at the age of 60, after her children were grown, she fulfilled her lifelong dream of becoming a nurse. She retired at the age of 78.

She had been a member of the chapel family at Regis-St. Elizabeth Center. Prior to that, she was a member of The Nativity of The Blessed Virgin Mary Catholic Church in Penelope, Texas. She had been very active in the Alter Society, where she constructed many vestments and altar linens. She had been a member of the KJZT and the N.C.C.W. Christine Rejcek died on Good Friday, April 5, 1996 at St. Elizabeth's Center in Waco.
### FAMILY GROUP SHEET

**Husband: Valentine Frank Rejeck**

- Born: Feb 14, 1898 in: Fayetteville, Fayette County, Texas
- Married: Nov 07, 1923 in: St. Mary, West, McLennan County, Texas
- Died: Dec 02, 1955 in: Penelope, Hill County, Texas
- Burial: Dec 05, 1955 in: St. Mary's Cemetery, West, Texas
- Father: Raymund Rejeck
- Mother: Kristyna Rosena Konecny

**Wife: Christine Frances Mokavy**

- Born: Feb 17, 1904 in: Aquilla, McLennan County, Texas
- Died: Apr 05, 1996 in: Waco, McLennan County, Texas
- Burial: Apr 08, 1996 in: St. Mary's Cemetery, West, Texas
- Father: Joseph Mokavy
- Mother: Aloisie Brezik

**Other Spouses:**

### CHILDREN

| 1 | Name: George John Rejeck, Sr.  
|   | Born: Jun 22, 1925 in: Penelope, Hill County, Texas  
|   | Died: Sep 15, 1981 in: Dallas, Dallas County, Texas  
|   | Burial: Sep 17, 1981 in: West, McLennan County, Texas  
|   | Married: 1946 in: Dallas, Dallas County, Texas  
| M  | Spouse: Velma Loneta O'ldfield |

| 2 | Name: Albert Bohuslav Rejeck  
|   | Born: Jan 24, 1928 in: Penelope, Hill County, Texas  
|   | Died: Nov 29, 1980 in: Penelope, Hill County, Texas  
|   | Burial:  
|   | Married: May 08, 1954 in: Church of the Nativity, Penelope, Hill County, Texas  
|   | Spouse: Bessie Flora Matula |

| 3 | Name: Lucille Valerie Rejeck  
|   | Born: Feb 18, 1932 in: Penelope, Hill County, Texas  
|   | Died:  
|   | Burial:  
|   | Married: Nov 14, 1953 in: Nativity of Blessed Virgin, Penelope, Hill County, Texas  
|   | Spouse: Louis Anton Kubala |

| 4 | Name: Wilma Evelina Rejeck  
|   | Born: Dec 03, 1933 in: Penelope, Hill County, Texas  
|   | Died:  
|   | Burial:  
|   | Married: Jan 01, 1955 in: Penelope, Hill County, Texas  
|   | Spouse: Patrick Anastatus Kallus |
# FAMILY GROUP SHEET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Born</th>
<th>Died</th>
<th>Burial</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Spouse</th>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Josephine Lois Rejeck</td>
<td>Mar 19, 1937 in: Penelope, Hill County, Texas</td>
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<td>Nov 09, 1957 in: Penelope, Hill County, Texas</td>
<td>Robert Lee Cervenka</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Bernadette Marie Rejeck</td>
<td>Mar 31, 1939 in: West, McLennan County, Texas</td>
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<td>Nov 21, 1959 in: Penelope, Hill County, Texas</td>
<td>Edward James Gerik</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Lawrence Jerome Rejeck</td>
<td>Aug 08, 1943 in: Penelope, Hill County, Texas</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Nov 07, 1964 in: West, McLennan County, Texas</td>
<td>Joan Marie Hennig</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Geraldine Janette Rejeck</td>
<td>Aug 09, 1947 in: Penelope, Hill County, Texas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jun 29, 1968 in: Penelope, Hill County, Texas</td>
<td>James Joseph Neslony</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sitting in the truck is Valentine P. Rejcek. One standing in the bed of truck and one besides truck are unknown. Mr. John Kubala is in the wagon. Standing on the thrasher is Raymond Rejcek. Joe Jezek is in the other wagon holding bundle. Standing in the open area is John Marek of West. Standing in the empty bundle wagon is Frank Karlik. Standing besides the Case tractor is Mr. Anton Rejcek Sr. the owner of the 1913 thrasher and the Case tractor and the 1917 Dodge truck. Dan Urbanovsky took this picture in 1924 on the Anton Rejcek Sr. farm.