

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Řád Sladkovský (Č.S.P.S. Čis. 68; Z.Č.B.J. Čis. 8) (KX09-1)

and/or common Pishelville Hall

2. Location

street & number Pishelville not for publication

city, town Verdigre vicinity of congressional district First

state Nebraska code 031 county Knox code 107

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: <u>Community Hall</u>

4. Owner of Property

name Z.C.B.J. Sladkovsky Lodge No. 8

street & number c/o William Vesely, Secretary; Route 2, Box 72

city, town Verdigre vicinity of state Nebraska

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Knox County Courthouse

street & number N/A

city, town Center state Nebraska

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date On-going federal state county local

depository for survey records Nebraska State Historical Society

city, town Lincoln state Nebraska

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Pishelville Lodge Hall Sladkovsky is a modest, one-and-one-half story frame structure, long and narrow in plan and highlighted at the front with a distinct, segmentally-pedimented false front in a vernacular Renaissance style. The walls are horizontally clapboarded and windows are of the four-over-four, double-hung type. The original gable roof is of wood shingles, presently covered with asphalt, and the foundation is of native rock. A tetra-styled, hip-roofed porch shelters the main, double-doored entrance. The lodge name and affiliation are proclaimed on the front with two painted plaques, one semi-circular, the other rectangular, in shape.

Located in the west-central Knox County, Nebraska Czech settlements, Lodge Hall Sladkovsky is situated on the "second bottom" of the Niobrara River. Facing slightly north-northeast toward the river, the lodge fronts on the major east-west public road of the Pishelville community.

The hall is a one-and-one-half story frame structure measuring 6.2 by 16.6 meters. The original, 1884, construction measured 6.2 by 12.3 meters and is the front portion of the present hall. In ca. 1920, a 4.3 meter extension to the rear (south) completed the building as it exists today -- a long, narrow, rectangular building sheltered by a gable roof, and highlighted at the front with a distinct, false-fronted facade.

The overall effect of the building is modest, being built of ordinary frame construction and sheathed with horizontal clapboards. Fenestration is minimal, with two symmetrically placed windows on each side of the original section, and functionally placed openings on the rear extension. Two windows in each gable light the second floor. All windows are double-hung, four-over-four sash. Hood-molds enhance all windows but are more elaborated on the north front.

Emphasis is placed on the symmetrically arranged front facade. Distinction and a certain monumentality is achieved through the use of a large, segmentally pedimented false front. A simple cornice with miniscule "brackets" enframe, along with the corner pilasters, the entire front facade. Two windows on each level are symmetrically arranged about the central, double-door. Two plaques on the facade, one enframed and set into the clapboard surface, and one applied over the clapboards, proclaim the lodge affiliation, and the lodge name. Further emphasis is given the front facade with the elaborated hip-roofed porch addition, which features turned porch columns and decorative brackets.

The interior is simply and tastefully arranged. The original portion of the hall is still the main hall space. Visual and physical access to the rear extension is provided through the original south wall via two large, symmetrically placed, truncated-triangular arched openings.¹ The original brick stove-flue is still utilized between the two openings.

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The rear extension behind the two openings is divided into two separate but interconnecting spaces. The one to the east is open, functioning as a food and beverage service space with access both to the storage area beneath the stairs, and the rear outside door which provides exit to the outhouses beyond. Access to the stage, and the second floor lodge rooms also occurs from this space. The western half of the extension is a complex arrangement of raised-stage and stair-access to the lodge rooms above.

Finishes throughout the interior are modest yet decorative. The main floor features wood floors, suitable for dancing and other recreational activities, and plastered walls. The ceiling and wainscoting is of beaded board. Decorative moldings cap the wainscot and provide a picture-rail at the spring line of the truncated-triangular arches. Decorative emphasis is placed on the lodge-rooms of the second floor. Here, the wood floors are covered with linoleum while the walls and ceiling are covered with paneled pressed-metal in a floral Art-Nouveau pattern.

1. This "truncated-triangular" arch represents a significantly repeated motif in the Pishelville community. Within the lodge itself the motif is utilized on the two openings just mentioned, represents the shape of the space of the half-story lodge room on second floor, and is visible both in the outline of the hip-roof section, and the space defined by the columns and decorative brackets, of the north porch extension. Elsewhere in the community, numerous half-story spaces in houses share the shape, and the motif occurs on some barn doors and related openings. Another subtle utilization of the motif occurs on the gable ends of many second generation dwellings where decorative ornaments truncate the peak of the gable in a fashion reminiscent of the gable of a jerkinhead roof.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900- present	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) ethnic
	<input type="checkbox"/> invention			

Specific dates 1884; c. 1920 **Builder/Architect** Vaclav Hvizdalek

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Lodge Sladkovsky Z.Č.B.J. (Západní Česko-Bratrské Jednoty) number 8 in Pishelville is significant to the community and Nebraska in several areas: ethnic culture, settlement, social/humanitarianism, and architecture -- ethnic culture, because of its associations with Bohemian immigrants who settled Nebraska more heavily than in all the other Great Plains states combined, and where they largely engaged in agriculture; settlement, because the establishment of fraternal lodges locally coincided with a commitment to community permanence among freethinking Czechs on the Great Plains; social/humanitarianism, as a result of the significant role the lodge played in the social and cultural development of the community, and because the lodge represents the principal fraternal and benevolent society among Great Plains Czechs; and architecture, as a result of its distinctive design and formal qualities which distinguish it architecturally as one of the notable lodge halls in the state, and because Lodge Sladkovsky is believed to have been the first lodge hall building constructed in Nebraska.

Bohemian settlement in Knox County (then known as L'Eau qui Court) began in 1869. The first expedition to the territory was led by Frank Bem and Frank Janousek, both members of the Czech colonization club known as "Česká Osada" which was founded in Chicago in 1868. In October of 1869, a second expedition led by Joseph Šedivý arrived in the Niobrara valley (Rosický: 183-84). By 1870, Bohemian and Bohemian-German settlement was proceeding rapidly along the Verdigris, and the rich bottom-lands of the Niobrara River valley. Of the forty-four families settled in western L'Eau qui Court county in 1870, thirty-one were Bohemian (1870 Census).

The Pishelville, or "second bottom" community was first settled in 1869-70 with the Pišl, Šedivý, Barta, Maršal and Mlady families indicated among the first settlers (1870 Census). In 1872 the Pischelville post office was established and on January 11, 1880, permanent settlement led to the organization of Lodge Sladkovsky Č.S.P.S. (Česko-Slovenský Podporující Spolek) no. 68, at the home of Anton Pischel (Pišl). Organizing members included Frank Tuch, Anton Pischel, Joseph Wirth, Frank Vonasek, Jan Barta, Jan Mlady, Karel Marshall, Frank Marshall, Joseph Dryak, Ignatz Marshall, Jan Ruzicka and Vaclav Hvizdalek (Vesely: 1-2).

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In its first years, the Lodge met at the Pischelville school, but by 1884, a need to locate a permanent meeting place was fulfilled. A small parcel of land was purchased from Anton Pischel, and members donated the materials and labor to erect the present structure under the supervision of local carpenter Vaclav Hvizdalek. Materials were hauled by team from Niobrara, some fifteen miles to the east. Some lumber was cut from native timber and milled locally by E. W. Wall. Native rock, which was quarried from Stoney Butte twelve miles southwest of Pishelville, was used for the foundation (Vesely: 2).

In 1897, Lodge Sladkovsky was among thirty-one midwestern and plains lodges to found the new Zápvní Česko Bratrské Jednoty (Z.Č.B.J.) or Western Bohemian Fraternal Association in Omaha. Sladkovsky, which withdrew from the Č.S.P.S., was a charter lodge of the Z.Č.B.J., being incorporated in that year as lodge number 8. By ca. 1920, continued growth and success led to the expansion of the hall and lodge rooms, resulting in the structure's present appearance.

The significance of the Pishelville Hall to the history, culture and architecture of the community and Nebraska is wide-ranging and complex, and includes the areas of ethnic culture, settlement, social/humanitarianism and architecture.

Czechs from Bohemia and Moravia form one of the prominent immigrant groups to Nebraska, more having settled here than all of the other Great Plains states combined (Luebke: 418). By 1920 over 140,000 Czechs had settled the Great Plains, accounting for more than 22 percent of the Czech-speaking population of the United States. Of these, 40.3 percent lived in Nebraska (Garver 1980: 151-152). In Knox county, Bohemians accounted for 30 percent of the foreign born population in 1890 (Wheeler: 180) -- and if one only counts the Bohemian settled townships (Western, Bohemia, Jefferson, Niobrara, Sparta and Verdigre; Van Hoff: 1), the figures would undoubtedly be over 75 percent for that year.

1884

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More importantly, of all the European immigrant groups that settled the Plains, the Czechs were the only among them whom were a majority of freethinkers -- those who had severed all ties with organized religion (Garver, 1980: 148). As many as 55 percent of the Czechs called themselves freethinkers (Garver, 1980: 148), and they formed an even greater majority in the Knox County settlements (Van Hoff: 19). In the Pishelville community, where the majority of settlers were of the artisan rather than the peasant class (Fry: 8), the entire community subscribed to anti-clerical thought (Van Hoff: 21). Significant physical evidence of this historical fact is manifest in the Pishelville Hall, the only non-domestic, non-commercial structure to be erected in the community, other than the school.

While the intellectual origins of freethought lie in the European Enlightenment, with less powerful influences from French positivism, German materialism, and Darwinism (Garver, 1980: 149), what is important here is the intellectual basis it provided for the Czech National Revival, particularly the politicization of that Revival following the Revolution of 1848, which led to the establishment of the first Czech political movements (Garver, 1978: 13).¹ It has been said by many that the establishment of an independent Czechoslovakia in 1918 was the crowning achievement of the National Revival (Garver 1978: 6).

So too did the political and intellectual environment created by 1848 aid the movement toward freedom. Significant in this effort was the Young Czech party, whose social and intellectual orientation provided concrete examples of the ideals of freethought and help to explain the reasons so many American emigrants were freethinkers upon arrival. The Young Czechs had larger numbers of peasants, farmers and tradesmen among their rank and file (Garver, 1978: 81) than did their Old Czech counterparts who were primarily prosperous, upper middle class scholars, lawyers and businessmen (Garver, 1978: 65). The young Czechs also espoused very liberal, civil libertarian, secular, anti-clerical, national and democratic views.

1. Of the two chief Czech political factions during this period, a majority of the Old Czechs, and almost all of the Young Czechs, were freethinking, or at best only nominally Catholic. (Garver, 1978: 66).

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Prominent among the Young Czech politicians was the lawyer, Karel Sladkovský.

"Karel Sladkovský, a former radical democratic revolutionary of 1848, . . . became the first Young Czech party chairman. He remained one of the most popular and influential party members until his death at age 56 in March, 1880. For his part in leading the June 12, 1848 Prague uprising and in planning a second. . . the Hapsburg authorities had sentenced him to death for treason. . . but later commuted the sentence. . . On May 13, 1857, he emerged from prison. . . and resumed political activity. . . By that time he had come to advocate the achievement of civil liberties and national autonomy by peaceful as opposed to violent means." (Garver, 1978: 75).

Martyred by the Hapsburgs, his name was commemorated by the Pishelville, Nebraska Bohemians with the naming of Lodge Sladkovsky in 1880.

The growth of Czech freethought on the Great Plains was fostered primarily through voluntary fraternal and benevolent associations. The first such was founded in 1854 in St. Louis as the Česko-Slovanský Podporující Spolek (Č.S.P.S.) or Bohemian-Slovakian Benevolent Society. The Č.S.P.S. began organizing on the Great Plains in the 1870's. Among its many aims was the provision of mutual life and health insurance as well as many of the benefits that religious people sought through church-related channels such as fellowship, entertainment, community service, and charitable and educational activities (Garver, 1980: 158).

Bohemian settlers first established Č.S.P.S. Lodges on the Great Plains. Continued dispute, however, led plains and midwestern Czechs to cede and form a new organization, Západní Česko-Bratrské Jednoty (Z.Č.B.J.) or Western Bohemian Fraternal Association, in 1897. Meeting in Omaha, Nebraska, the new association was founded by thirty-one Č.S.P.S. Lodges, including Sladkovsky at Pishelville. Primary among the reasons for the Z.Č.B.J.'s organization was the admittance of women as full insurable members, institution of life insurance payments based upon age, and a loosening of anti-clerical stances. Sladkovsky was chartered as Z.Č.B.J. number 8 on July 4, 1897 (Fraternal Herald: 4), and is one of 50 active lodges of the 90 which once existed in Nebraska (Fraternal Herald: 3-12). The Z.Č.B.J. is the largest of the Czech fraternal organizations in the state.

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Freethinking Z.Č.B.J. lodges have had not only a powerful influence on the development of Czech-American society (Garver, 1980: 165), but have also been principal conservators of Czech heritage. The history and background of the Pishelville community provide the Sladkovsky Hall with archetypal significance to freethinking Czech-American settlement, society and culture. Prototypical too is its significance to Nebraska architecture.

Architecturally Lodge Sladkovsky embodies features which are characteristic of the finest Lodge buildings in Nebraska, though on a lesser scale. Typically basic rectangular structures, the developed Z.Č.B.J. Lodge hall is much longer than it is wide, with the major space being a large, open hall with wood floor occupying the front of the building. Overlooking the hall (and in the larger examples occupying the entire front of the hall) is the raised stage -- utilized by bands for dances or concerts, and, in the larger buildings, as a stage for plays and other similar events. Like others, the stage, service areas and vertical circulation space are arranged at the rear of the hall. Unlike the larger structures which usually place the lodge rooms above one or the other end of the building, the Sladkovsky Hall's lodge rooms are above the hall itself. This placement, however, is not unusual among the many extant, smaller halls.

Additionally, the design of many notable Z.Č.B.J. halls cannot be adequately described by the major public building styles which were popular in the United States before and after the turn of the century (Whiffen: 147-158, 167-171). Common to most is an emphasized front facade of symmetrical design with distinct Renaissance characteristics. But within these confines, much variety of architectural expression is found around the state -- in fact, even locally. Three of the most architecturally distinct lodge buildings in Nebraska were built by Knox County Czechs. In addition to Sladkovsky, only Lodge Bílá Hora number 5 in Verdigre (KX14-1) is still extant. Lodge Vyšerad number 53 (KX08-36) was demolished as a part of a Corps of Engineers relocation of the town of Niobrara in the late 1970's (recorded by H.A.B.S.).

Lodge Sladkovsky stands as one of the fine examples of those halls that might be described as vernacular Renaissance-styled structures with hints of Continental Baroque influences. Sladkovsky's large, segmentally-arched false front, along with its name plaques, enlivens the design of its major facade. Preferences for enlivened silhouettes on false-fronts in the form of stepped-gables, and triangular and segmentally pedimented facades has been noted by the Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey in towns settled by central Europeans. Sladkovsky Hall, as a result of its distinct design, stands not only historically and culturally, but as an architecturally significant entity as well.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Pishelville

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

~~UMR References~~ Latitude: 42 43' 34"; Longitude 98 12' 40"

A

N/A		
Zone	Easting	Northing

B

Zone	Easting	Northing

C

--	--	--

D

--	--	--

E

--	--	--

F

--	--	--

G

--	--	--

H

--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification Described by a lot bounded on the north by the county road; on the east and west by the tree and fence lines approximately 20 meters from the walls of the building; on the south by the tree and fence line approximately 30 meters south of the building; all centered on the coordinates indicated above and constituting all of the historically associated property

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state N/A code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title D. Murphy, Survey Architect

organization Nebraska State Historical Society

date March, 1981

street & number 1500 R Street

telephone 402/471-3850

city or town Lincoln

state Nebraska

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Director, Nebraska State Historical Society

date

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Aspect: NE

Photo by D. Murphy, July 1987, NSHS (8707/7:5a)



Aspect: NW

Photo by John Carter, Aug 1980, NSHS (8008/53:30)



Aspect: SW
Photo by John Carter, Aug 1980, NSHS (8008/53:33)



Main floor looking S
Photo by D. Murphy, April 1988, NSHS (8804/2:24)



2nd floor, detail of robe closet, looking S
Photo by John Carter, Oct 1980, NSHS (8010/1:26)