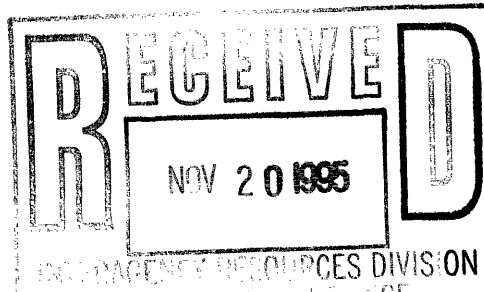


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Řád Saline Center čs. 389 Z.Č.B.J.

other names/site number Saline Center Lodge Hall, # 389 (NeHBS #SA00-043)

2. Location

street & number 1100 and M County Road Marker not for publication

city or town Western vicinity

state Nebraska code NE county Saline code 151 zip code 68464

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Lawrence Sommer
Signature of certifying official

11/9/95
Date

Director, Nebraska State Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain): _____

Entered in the
National Register

1.4.96

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
	1	structures
		objects
1	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL: meeting hall

SOCIAL: meeting hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

No Style

foundation Concrete

walls Wood

roof Asphalt

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ETHNIC HERITAGE: European
SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1939-1945

Significant Dates

1939

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/ Builder

N/A

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

Saline Center Lodge Hall, # 389
Name of Property

Saline County, Nebraska
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Three acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1.	14	654335	4487390	3.			
2.				4.			

[] See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lisa Maly

organization Řád Saline Center řs. 389 Z.Ř.B.J. date August, 1995

street & number R.F.D. 2, Box 89 telephone (402) 821-2597

city or town Wilber state NE zip code 68465

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Lodge Saline Center

street & number R.R. 2 telephone (402) 946-6621

city or town Western state NE zip code 68464

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Saline Center Hall

Name of Property

Saline County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 7 Page 1

Description

Rád Saline Center čis. 389 Z.Č.B.J. is a large one-story frame building constructed in 1939. It is located on Highway 15, 11 miles west and 3 miles north of Wilber, Nebraska, the county seat. The lodge purchased three acres of land on which the hall was built. Interior and exterior integrity is very good. The nomination consists of one contributing building and one non-contributing structure, a transmission tower located directly behind the hall.

The Rád Saline Center Hall was built in 1939 by lodge members and friends following the merger of four lodges. The building is a one-story frame structure, rectangular in shape, measuring 72 by 120 feet. The lumber used in the construction came from the three previously existing lodge halls which were dismantled. The basement was dug using shovels and horse-drawn scoops. The foundation is poured concrete with walls measuring 7.5 feet high. The gable roof is covered with asphalt shingles.

On the main facade of the hall, facing south, are two sets of double wooden doors. Above each set of doors is a segmented transom. A small gable roof porch covers the entire entrance. The south side also has six, 6 over 6 double-hung windows. These windows are symmetrically arranged with three on each side of either set of doors. There are also six small basement windows on the same facade: again, arranged three on each side of the doors. Leading up to the front doors is a two-step concrete slab. On the right hand side of the slab is a short ramp with a decorative railing.

On the east side of the hall there are fifteen 6 over 6 double-hung windows; two of which have been closed in to utilize exhaust fans. From the front (south) to the back (north), the windows are arranged in sets of two, three, three, two, and then two single windows. There are also eight basement windows on this side and a newly completed handicap ramp that runs along the building. The ramp is 49 feet long rising from ground level at the south end to the north end of the building where it reaches a large wooden door located on the upstairs level of the hall.

On the rear facade (north side) of the hall are two 6 over 6 double-hung windows. In addition there are two basement windows.

The west side of the hall has thirteen 6 over 6 double-hung windows, one of which has been closed in to utilize an exhaust fan. From front (south) to back (north), the windows are arranged as three sets of three, a set of two, and two single windows. There are also nine basement windows, two of which have been permanently closed in and one that has been closed in to utilize an exhaust fan. Finally, on the west side a set of steps lead up to a large wooden door at the main level.

The interior of the building retains a high degree of integrity. The main entrance leads into a small vestibule from which one stairway leads down to the basement and another up to the main hall. To the immediate left (west) of the upstairs entry is a small cloak room that measures 13 by 19 feet. Next to it is a 17- by 19-foot storage area. To the right (east) is a 19- by 28-foot open room used for storing table and chairs. The main hall has a maple wood floor measuring 68 by 71 feet. The four interior walls have wainscoting 6 feet in height. Above this are colorful hand-painted advertising signs purchased by local businesses.

The stage, located at the north end of the hall, measures 20 by 24 feet. It is approximately 3 feet above floor level. The rear of the stage is decorated with an original hand-painted canvas scenery backdrop. On either side of the stage

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Saline Center Hall

Name of Property

Saline County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 7, 8 Page 2

Description (continued)

is a door that leads to the back stage area. This space contains two stairways leading to the basement, a dressing room (6 by 10 feet) in the northwest corner and a storage space (11 by 16 feet) in the northeast corner.

The ceiling of the hall has a slight arch and is covered in the original brown and white pressed wallboard tiles. Each tile is a 2- by 2-foot square and arranged in an alternating pattern.

The basement runs the full length of the hall. At the south end behind the stairs is a 7- by 19.5-foot furnace room. Next to the furnace room is a women's restroom which measures 14.5 by 19.5 feet. The kitchen (14 by 19.5 feet), which is adjacent to the bathroom, occupies the southwest corner of the basement. Extending out from the kitchen are the bar areas, which run the length of the west wall.

The north end of the basement includes storage rooms, beverage coolers, furnace rooms and restrooms. In the northeast corner a newly completed handicap ramp winds its way from the upstairs to the basement.

The rest of the basement is occupied by the main seating area. This space measures 75 by 89 feet. Also located in this area are two original wood/coal burning stoves that are still used for heat.

Statement of Significance

Řád Saline Center čis. 389 Z.Č.B.J., in Saline County, is significant at the local level under Criterion A for its association with the Czech-American ethnic culture. This lodge hall is one of two buildings currently identified as being associated with a period of Nebraska history when Czech immigrants were assimilating American culture and establishing a more cooperative attitude amongst themselves. The period of significance, 1939, is derived from the year it opened as a lodge hall.

In the mid-1860s, Czech immigrants began entering Nebraska in large numbers. By 1890, nine major settlements had been established. In the first two decades of the 20th century, many of these settlements showed substantial growth. As these areas grew and prospered, their Czech culture did the same.

The majority of Czech immigrants were freethinkers. The freethinking movement, with origins in the 18th century European Enlightenment, began in Czechoslovakia in the mid 19th century. The movement was made up mostly of peasants, farmers and tradesmen who organized as a force against the upper middle class Czechs. The freethinkers broke away from organized religion and promoted liberalism and strong national and democratic views. Held amongst the freethinkers was a special disdain for the Catholic Church. The Hapsburgs, who ruled the Austro-Hungarian Empire and suppressed Czech nationalism, were Catholic. Because of this association, the Church was perceived as anti-Czech and hence the animosity.

The perpetuation of Czech freethought on the Great Plains was fostered primarily through voluntary fraternal and benevolent associations which were unique to the United States. The Žápadni Česko Bratrskí Jednota (Z.Č.B.J.) or Western Bohemian Fraternal Association emerged from the Česko-Slovenský Podporující Spolek (Č.S.P.S.) or Bohemian-Slovakian Benevolent Society in 1897. The Č.S.P.S. (formed in 1854) is the oldest fraternal Czech

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Saline Center Hall

Name of Property

Saline County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 8 Page 3

Statement of Significance (continued)

organization in the United States. The purpose of this group was to provide life and health insurance to members (which it still does), aid immigrants in getting settled in this country, and provide 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). In 1897, Czechs in western states who had become disenchanted with the Č.S.P.S. broke away from the organization and formed their own group (Z.Č.B.J.). The new association instituted by-laws that corrected the perceived shortcomings of the Č.S.P.S., including adjustable insurance premiums and accepting women as regular insurable members rather than just as social members. The ZČBJ became the largest voluntary association of Czechs in the United States. Freethinking Z.Č.B.J. lodges have not only had a powerful influence on the development of Czech-American society, but have also been principal conservators of Czech heritage in America.

The maintenance of this strong cultural identity was largely dependent on the influx of new immigrants from the homeland. By the mid to late 1920s, this important source of cultural rejuvenation began to dry up. Between 1924 and 1935, only about 5,000 Czechs entered the United States (as compared to the approximately 350,000 who had emigrated prior to 1914). The drastic decline in the number of immigrants played a major role in the assimilation of Czechs into American culture (Dubovický, p.197).

Assisting in Czech-American cultural assimilation was the attraction many second- and third-generation Czechs had for the American lifestyle. The liberal political environment in the United States, material prosperity, and technological advancements made assimilation more attractive (Dubovický, p.201).

Besides the incorporation of Czechs into the American lifestyle, decreased immigration had another effect. The former tensions between freethinkers and Catholics began to subside. Many of the second and third generation Czech-Americans, whose acculturation resulted in greater mutual tolerance, did not associate Catholicism with hatred towards Czechs. "The ideological conflicts of their fathers seemed completely strange..." (Dubovický, p.201). The result was greater collaboration among formerly antagonistic groups.

The Saline Center Hall is a physical by-product of this period of cooperation and assimilation, which occurred roughly from 1920 to 1960 (Murphy, 1991). The building itself is utilitarian and lacks any native Czech architectural influence or exterior decorations. Many halls constructed in earlier periods of Czech immigration displayed architectural elaborations identifiable with the Czech national style. Two such examples are the Řád Jan Kollár čis. 101 Z.Č.B.J. (PW00-050) in Pawnee County, constructed in the Baroque Revival style; and the Lodge Sladkovský Z.Č.B.J. (KX09-001) in Knox County, built in a style best described as vernacular Renaissance, with Continental Baroque influence. An absence of similar features and style on the Saline Center Hall is evidence of the gradual cultural assimilation of Czech-Americans. Rather than utilizing elements of traditional Czech architecture, the third- and fourth-generation Czechs were inclined to use more basic American designs.

The origins of the Saline Center Hall demonstrate the cooperation and collaboration associated with it. Originally, there were four local lodges (housed in three different halls). Lodge Mír No. 132 was located one mile east of the present Saline Center Hall. Organized in 1903, this hall was built in 1904 with an addition in 1907. It had 130 adult members and 24 juvenile members. Czech language classes were taught there for several years. Lodge Ladimír Klácel No. 92 was a mens-only lodge. Their first meeting was held in a stone building west of Wilber, Nebraska. They were organized in 1900. After outgrowing their original hall a new one was built in 1910. The lodge had 75

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Saline Center Hall

Name of Property

Saline County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 8 Page 4

Statement of Significance (continued)

adult and 22 juvenile members. Lodge Vlastenky Západu No. 117 was a womens-only lodge. Organized in 1901, they held their meetings in the same building as Lodge #92. Lodge Vlastenky had 41 adult members and 1 juvenile member. Lodge Kolumbus No. 133 was formed in 1903. It also was a rural lodge located near Friend. It had 88 adult and 14 juvenile members. At that time, a lack of good roads and slow modes of transportation dictated that each community have its own hall. Additionally, lodges preferred to maintain their own individuality rather than share a common identity with other similar groups.

In late 1937, the four local lodges began discussing merging into a single lodge. By this time, the cultural situation had changed so dramatically that a merger became a realistic option. The automobile facilitated easy travel between communities and reduced earlier isolation. Also, the Great Depression caused people to reevaluate their economic situation, and the lodges were no exception. The members determined that by merging they could all save money on management expenses; one hall would be cheaper and easier to maintain than three. Finally, the decline in the adherence to the freethought movement, due to the "Americanization" of the Czech community and its related divisiveness, allowed for closer collaboration between formerly less cooperative groups.

In 1938, the lodges actually merged and rotated their meetings amongst the three existing halls while they discussed plans for a new building. Mr. Rudolph Burda sold a three acre parcel of land to the newly formed lodge. The three former halls were disassembled and the lumber was used in the new building. The name Saline Center was chosen for its location near the center of Saline County. Total cost of the construction was just over \$8,800. Members and friends provided the labor under the direction of the contractor, Frank Dejml. The workers recorded their hours and were paid when the money became available. General workers received \$.20 per hour, while workers with trucks and tractors received \$.70 per hour. Construction began in 1939, and the lodge opening was held on September 3 of that year. A dedication program in the afternoon followed by a dance in the evening were the first public functions at the hall.

The former lodges and subsequently Saline Center were the hub of the Czech community for the early settlers of Saline County. These early settlers who had left friends and family in the "old country" came to a new land and had many new experiences. The early lodges gave these people a sense of home. They provided not only a sense of financial security, but a sense of unity after arriving in a foreign land.

Over the years, a variety of social activities have been held at Saline Center Hall. Dances, parties, anniversary celebrations, graduations, funerals, and even weddings have all taken place there. Today, the hall continues to host social functions and still serves as a social gathering place for the Czech descendants of the community.

While the financial reasons for merging the four lodges were sound and more efficient transportation made merging possible, the collaboration was something of a rarity for this time. Between 1897 (when the ZČBJ organization was established) and 1972, the merging of lodges occurred only twenty times in Nebraska (not including Saline Center). Of these, however, only three took place prior to the Saline Center collaboration in 1938 and no buildings were constructed as a result of the mergers.

Saline Center Hall, then, is the only example of a lodge hall constructed as a collaborative effort. It illustrates the assimilation of Czech immigrants into American culture through its utilitarian style. According to current NeHBS survey data, no other hall was constructed as a result of lodges merging together. As far as is known, when other

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Saline Center Hall

Name of Property

Saline County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 8, 9, 10 Page 5

Statement of Significance (continued)

mergers took place one hall and the name of one of the lodges remained in use. In the case of Saline Center, four independent lodges abandoned their halls, collaborated to construct a new facility, and adopted an entirely new name. Saline Center Hall, then, is significant at the local level under Criterion A for its association with the Czech-American culture in Nebraska. Specifically, it is a good, rare example of a building constructed during a period when Czech immigrants were loosening ties with the homeland and increasingly adopting the ways of their new country. It also represents a period when ideological differences, which had previously divided the immigrants, were lessening to the point where an unprecedented unity led to the possibility of collaboration.

Bibliography

"A Brief History of Our Association." *Fraternal Herald* LXXV:7 (July 1972) pp. 3-10.

"Czechoslovak Day Festival Souvenir of Conventions of Nebraska Lodges," 1937.

Dubovický, Ivan. "Czech-Americans: An Ethnic Dilemma." *Nebraska History*, 74 (1993): 195-208.

Garver, Bruce. "Czech-American Freethinkers on the Great Plains," in Luebke, Frederick C. (Ed). *Ethnicity on the Great Plains*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press for the Great Plains Studies, 1980, pp.147-169.

Murphy, David, "Czech Settlement in Nebraska," *Historic Context Report 18.05.05*. Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1991.

Saline Center Lodge, Z.Č.B.J. meeting records.

Wilber Republican

Zumpfe, Betty, RR 1, Box 23, Friend, Nebraska, Informant.

Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at the Southwest Corner of Section 35, in Township 7 North, Range 2 East of the 6th P.M. in Saline County, Nebraska, thence North 363 feet; thence East 360 feet; thence South 363 feet; thence West 360 feet to the place of beginning, and containing three acres.

Boundary Justification

The boundary contains that parcel of land which has historically been associated with the property.