

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received FEB 20 1986

date entered MAR 20 1986

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

1. Name

historic Rad Plzen cis. 9 Z.C.B.J. (SD10-6)

and/or common Same

2. Location

street & number N/A

N/A  
not for publication

city, town Morse Bluff N/A vicinity of

state Nebraska code 031 county Saunders code 155

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: fraternal

4. Owner of Property

name Z.C.B.J. Lodge Plzen; Frank I. Vlasak, Treasurer

street & number 140 E. 9th Street

city, town North Bend N/A vicinity of state Nebraska 68649

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Saunders County Courthouse

street & number N/A

city, town Wahoo 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

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## 7. Description

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<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<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 N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

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### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Lodge Plzen is a rectangular hall building, measuring thirty by seventy feet and one story in height. Built of locally manufactured concrete block, the hall is designed in a vernacular Renaissance Revival style featuring a round-arched entrance porch and decorative concrete block cornice.

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Rad Plzen Z.Č.B.J. number 9 is a single-storied structure of locally-manufactured rock-faced concrete block measuring thirty by seventy feet. The front section, which incorporates a balcony at the back of the hall, is a raised pavilion enhanced with corner pilasters and decorative block cornice surmounted by a central metal pediment which incorporates the date of construction. Entrance is gained in the three-bay facade through a central recessed, round-arched porch which is enhanced with decorative block surround. Above the entrance, in pressed-metal, is the lodge's identification. Executed in a simplified, vernacular rendition of the Renaissance Revival style of architecture, the hall is the most prominent building located in this rural village.

The interior is essentially a large open hall with a balcony at the rear, and a raised stage at the front. The balcony is visually supported by two cantilever beams, with a closed, paneled-pine railing overlooking the hall. Beneath the balcony is the vestibule, flanked on either side by small rooms--one for ticket sales, the other used as a food-service area.

The raised stage at the front is framed by a rectangular opening, trimmed in pine. Focus is provided by the large, hand-painted curtain which features a pastoral scene. The hall is lit on either side by large rectangular windows of one-over-one configuration. Finishes are painted plaster, with a painted wainscot on the walls, pine wood floor and trim, and a pressed-metal ceiling and cornice.

Original furnishings, including ritual stations, records, artifacts, and memorabilia are still housed in the hall.

# 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 type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1911	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) ethnic

**Specific dates** 1910-11      **Builder/Architect** J. P. Shavlik, J. P. Mowrer, Karel Urban

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Lodge Plzen hall building is an architecturally significant expression of Czech-American Romanticism in early twentieth century Nebraska, manifest as a distinct vernacular product of the Renaissance Revival style. Significant ethnic associations are evident in the membership of Řad Plzen, charter lodge number 9 of the Západní Česko Bratrské Jednoty (now Western Fraternal Life Association), and with the contractor, mason and carpenter credited with the building's design and construction.

Lodge Plzen was first organized on June 6, 1880 as Lodge number 63 of the Česko-Slovenský Podporující Spolek (Č.S.P.S.). Shortly thereafter a frame hall was built on Spring Creek south of Morse Bluff. When the Lodge reorganized in 1897 as part of the newly-formed Z.Č.B.J., the hall was moved into Morse Bluff to lot 14 of Block 6, where it was used both as Town Hall and Lodge Hall (Vlasak: December 26, 1985). When the city built its new hall in 1909, the lodge also started the planning of a new hall (the present structure), which was completed in 1911.

Czechs from Bohemia and Moravia form one of the prominent immigrant groups in 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: 151-152).

Of all the European immigrant groups that settled the Plains, the Czechs were the only among them whom were a majority of freethinkers, that is, those who had severed all ties with organized religion. As many as 55 percent of the Czechs called themselves freethinkers (Garver: 148). The intellectual origins of freethought lies in the European Enlightenment, eventually providing a basis for the Czech National Revival of the second half of the nineteenth century (Garver: 149).

The growth of Czech freethought on the Great Plains was fostered primarily through voluntary fraternal and benevolent associations. The first was founded in 1854 in St. Louis as the Český-Slovenský Podporující Spolek (Č.S.P.S.), or Bohemian-Slovakian Benevolent Society. The Č.S.P.S. began organizing on the 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 communities sought through church-related channels such as fellowship, entertainment, community service, and charitable and educational activities (Garver: 158).

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name North Bend, Nebr. (1968)

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

Described as lot 14, Block 7, Original Town of Morse Bluff, including all historically improved real estate.

### 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, Acting Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

organization Nebraska State Historical Society date December, 1984

street & number 1500 R Street telephone 402/471-3270

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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature James A. Hanson

title Director, Nebraska State Historical Society date February 4, 1986

### For NPS use only

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

Joyce M. McCheson date 3/20/86  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

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Czech 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, the Zápvní Česko-Bratrské Jednoty (Z.Č.B.J.) or Western Bohemian Fraternal Association (now Western Fraternal Life Association) in 1897. Meeting in Omaha, Nebraska, the new association was founded by thirty-one Č.S.P.S. lodges, including Plzen at Morse Bluff. Primary among the reasons for the new organization was the admittance of women as full insurable members, the institution of life insurance payments based upon age, and a loosening of anti-clerical stances. Plzen was chartered as Z.Č.B.J. number 9 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, and the most important conservator of Czech heritage in the state. Lodge Plzen embodies the historic importance of Czech culture in the Morse Bluff vicinity.

Architecturally the building is characteristic of the finest halls in Nebraska, reinforcing associations with Czech material culture through its vernacular Renaissance Revival design. The emergence of the Czech National Revival in the nineteenth century is associated with Renaissance designs in the European homeland, particularly with late Renaissance Baroque architecture. While the more difficult-to-execute Baroque is reflected in only a few Nebraska halls (Řad Sladkovský and Řad Bílá Hora, both in Knox County), Renaissance-inspired design is characteristic of the best of the remaining halls, including the now demolished Řad Vyšerad of Niobrara, and Řad Tabor at Pleasant Hill (recently listed NRHP). Lodge Plzen distinguishes itself as one of the finest, more explicitly Czech vernacular (e.g. non-Anglo or French) renditions of the style in hall architecture in Nebraska.

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Continuation sheet

Bibliography

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ARTICLES

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

Luebke, Frederick C. "Ethnic Group Settlement on the Great Plains," The Western Historical Quarterly, 8 (October, 1977), pp. 405-430.

MISCELLANEOUS

Vlasak, Frank I., correspondence to David Murphy, December 26, 1985 (in NeHBS SD10-6)

Vlasak, Frank I. "Z.C.B.J. Lodge Hall, Morse Bluff, Nebraska", Nebraska Historical Sites Survey Form, March 21, 1984.