

# Kalendář Pionýr na rok 1919

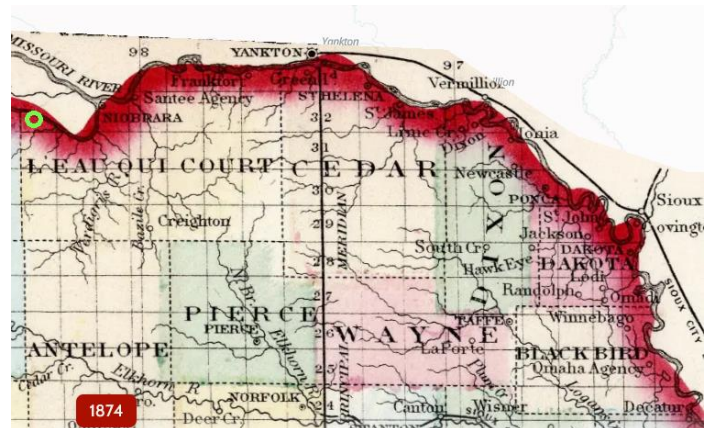
The Almanac Pioneer (**Kalendář pionýr**) was a literary magazine printed in Omaha by the National Printing Company (Národní tiskárna). Rose Rosicky edited and compiled the articles. The Pionýr was published annually for the years 1917 – 1921. Of note, in the 1919 issue is the story **“Tragedie rodiny Brabencovy”** by Josef P. Šedivý and tells of the arrival of the Hrbek family to Nebraska. At our February meeting, guests Larry and Gloria Hrbek of Lincoln (originally from Verdigre) brought a copy of the 1919 issue from their family archives. Adolph Hrbek’s name was handwritten at the top of the well-aged magazine printed over 106 years ago.



Jos. P. Šedivý

Josef Šedivý was born in Nymburk, coming to America with his parents as a young boy-nine years old. His father owned a grocery store in Chicago and was a member of the Czech colonization club “Česká Osada” (Czech Colony). Founded in 1868, the club received reports of a suitable location to establish a colony along the Niobrara Valley in what is now Knox County. Šedivý’s family was part of the 2nd group of Chicago Czechs to arrive in then named L’Eau Qui County, Nebraska on 2 Nov 1869.

A third group left Chicago headed for the Niobrara in the spring of 1870. Led by Václav Randa, the party included the families of Matěj Hrbek (Larry’s great-grandfather), Tomáš Brabeneč and Jan Prášek. The three families together purchased a pair of oxen and an old wagon for \$240 in Sioux City, departing for the “promised land” of Nebraska on 25 Mar 1870. The families scouted land to stake claims in early April, selecting three adjoining claims along the river northwest of what would become Pishelville, close to the county line known then as “Third Bottom”.



**NOTICE!**  
The neat Bohemian Almanac “Pionyr” for the year 1919 contains history of some of the earliest settlers of the western part of Knox County. Also the tragedy of the Brabenc family which was massacred by Indians is told by an eye witness, and many other interesting stories and valuable information will be found in it. It contains many illustrations. Every Knox County citizen should read it. On sale by J. P. Sedivy. 50-1

Šedivý’s story for the Pionýr was likely written in the fall of 1918, as Josef P. Šedivý died in Omaha on 13 Dec 1918 at the age of 62. Most of his article was based on the interview of Matěj Hrbek, then 84 years old and the only surviving eye-witness to the tragedy of the Brabeneč family shortly after they arrived in Nebraska. A translation of the original Czech was made sometime ago. A typewritten copy from the vertical files of the Nebraska State Historical Society can be found [online](#), along with five other articles written by Šedivý’s accounting the early history of Czechs in Knox County.

Sadly shortly after arriving: Tomáš Brabeneč’s two children: Caroline, aged 14 and John, age 12 were both killed by Sioux Indians and his wife Magdaléna was injured during the attack – thought to be

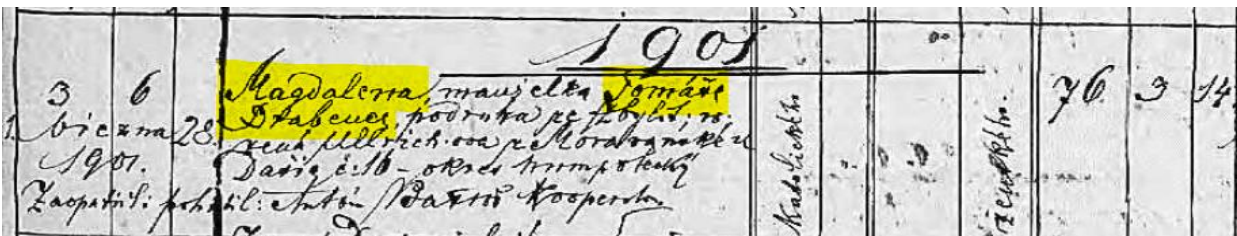
dead, but she survived. Both children had run from the family's dug-out and were not initially found – John shortly after the attack, but Caroline wasn't found until a day later. Both were buried on the Brabeneč's claim in Knox County – unmarked and nearly forgotten today. *“Bohemian blood, the blood of two little children was the sacrifice which gained us our western country!”*

Having no other children and being nearly 50, Tomáš and his wife stayed on their claim - proving the homestead in May 1878. A series of ads from July-October 1878 in the **Pokrok Západu** note a farm for sale, *“I'll leave everything as it is, I'll just take my clothes and bedding. We are old, without children and farming is already difficult for us.”* There is no trace in the US of Tomáš and Magdaléna Brabeneč after this. Šedivý states they returned to Chicago. Other sources say they returned to the old country.



Luckily I found that Caroline and John were both born in Vienna, as well the marriage of Tomáš Brabeneč of Zbilidy, near Jihlava and Magdaléna Ulrich of Dašice, near Pardubice on 22 Apr 1855. I found that Magdaléna died in Zbilidy on 3 Mar 1901. The family had come to America in 1866, then to Nebraska in 1870

only to have their dreams dashed shortly after they arrived – losing their children to tragedy. *“After a very few years they returned to Bohemia, to try to forget their sorrow amid other scenes.”* 1929 – A History of Bohemians in Nebraska.



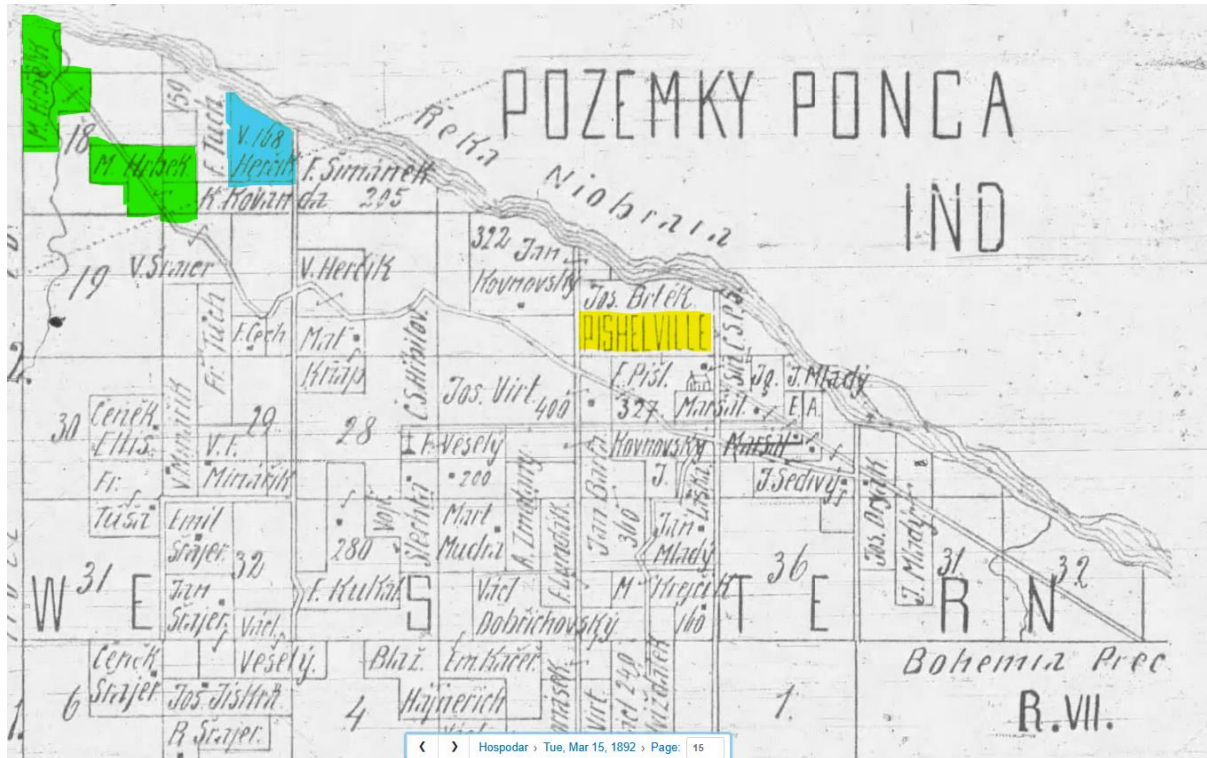
Šedivý's article is unclear the exact date of the Indian attack. It states "April 28", but this doesn't align with other records. The 1870 census dated 2 Sep 1870 lists both Brabeneč children, alongside the families of Matthias Hebrk and John Prášek.

Andreas' History of the State of Nebraska, tell that the children living in Knox County were killed in fall of 1870. An 1884 Amerikán Národní Kalendář, published in Chicago provides a similar account as told by Josef Holeček. Sadly, I could not locate any newspaper articles at the time of the attack confirming the exact date of the Brabeneč family tragedy.

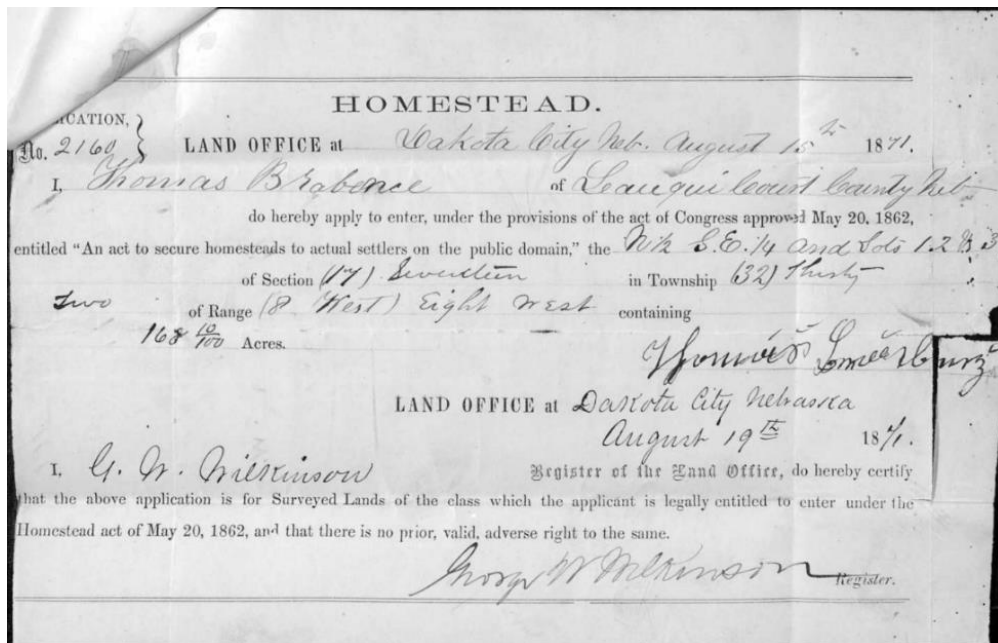
1870 United States Federal Census for Thomas Brabeneč												
Dwelling No.	Family No.	Name	Age	Sex	Race	Occupation	Real Estate	Personal Estate	Birthplace	Father/Mother Foreign Born	Birth Month	Marriage Month
979	914	Brabeneč, Thomas	50	M	W	Farmer		300	Bohemia	/	/	
		" Magdaléna	49	F	W	Keeping House			"	/	/	
		" Caroline	13	F	W				"	/	/	
		" John	11	M	W				"	/	/	
980	919	Hebrk, Matthias	40	M	W	Farmer		320	"	/	/	
		" Anna	38	F	W	Keeping House			"	/	/	
		" Frank	7	M	W				"	/	/	Feb
		" Anna	8	F	W				"	/	/	
981	920	Prášek, John	52	M	W	Farmer		200	"	/	/	
		" Anna	38	F	W	Keeping House			"	/	/	
		" John	14	M	W				"	/	/	
		" Maria	16	F	W				"	/	/	

The story ends, Šedivý a true store teller: *“Two large tears stole down his cheeks as he finished his speech. He was much affected, good old grandfather Hrbek.”*

The Brabenee homestead (in blue) was owned by Václav Hřík by 1892 when Frank Mares wrote his account of Knox County for the Hospodář, and František Tuch owned the Prášek homestead. Matej Hrbek's land is shown in green.



15 Aug 1871 – Brabenee Homestead Application, signed by Tomáš.



27 May 1878 – Final Affidavit to Prove the Brabenec Homestead

**Final Affidavit Required of Homestead Claimants.**

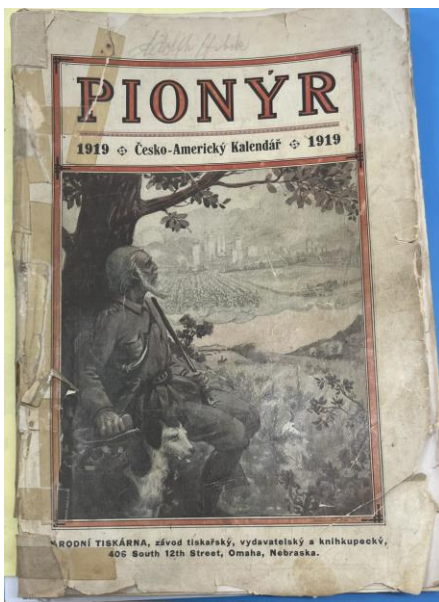
*Section 2291 of the Revised Statutes of the United States.*

I, Thomas Brabenee, having made a Homestead entry of the N42 SE 1/4 1. 2 & 3 section No. 17 in township No. 32 of range No. 8 W, subject to entry at Nebraska Nele under section No. 2289 of the Revised Statutes of the United States, do now apply to perfect my claim thereto by virtue of section No. 2291 of the Revised Statutes of the United States; and for that purpose do solemnly swear that I am a citizen of the United States; that I have made actual settlement upon and have cultivated said land, having resided thereon since the 19<sup>th</sup> day of Aug<sup>st</sup>, 1876 to the present time; that no part of said land has been alienated, except as provided in section 2288 of the Revised Statutes, but that I am the sole *bona fide* owner as an actual settler; that I will bear true allegiance to the Government of the United States; and further, that I have not heretofore had the benefit of the homestead laws of the United States.

James Stott Riccanni  
James Stott Riccanni

I, James Stott Riccanni, of the Land Office at Nebraska Neb, do hereby certify that the above affidavit was taken and subscribed before me this 27<sup>th</sup> day of May, 1878.

James Stott Riccanni



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