



What is the Texas Czech Legacy Project?

The **Texas Czech Legacy Project (TCLP)** in [the Department of the Slavic and Eurasian Studies \(DSES\)](#) at [the University of Texas at Austin](#) aims to offer comprehensive information about the language and culture of Texas Czechs. Our first and most ambitious undertaking is the **Texas Czech Dialect Archive (TCDA)**, the user interface and database with audio recordings collected from ethnic Czech Moravians in Texas.

The goal of the **TCLP** is to create a central place documenting the language, culture, and history of ethnic Czech Moravians in Texas. The first stage involves creating the **Texas Czech Dialect Archive (TCDA)**, a repository of audio-recordings gathered from ethnic Czech Moravians in Texas since the 1970s through the 2000s. We have found our inspiration in the successful [Texas German Dialect Project](#) led by Professor Hans Boas of the University of Texas at Austin, which, in turn, motivated John Tomecek, a student of Hans Boas and graduate of UT, to begin documenting the language of Texas Czechs in the early 2000s and call for establishing an archive that would preserve this unique immigrant dialect.

Our Project's mission is to create a *community resource* for Texas Czechs, as well as a scholarly resource for anyone fascinated by your language, culture, and history. As a legacy archive, the **TCDA** will be a central repository for irreplaceable oral histories, spoken in the Texas Czech dialect, reflecting the change in the historically Czech Moravian communities of Texas from the early 1850s to the present.

We dedicate the Project to Professor Svatava Pírková-Jakobson who, fascinated with Czech Moravian communities in East Central Texas, began documenting their rich history by collecting folkloric, language and musical materials during her tenure at the University of Texas at Austin (1967-1978). Working through her archives at the Briscoe Center for American History (UT Austin) and Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center & Library (La Grange) is an important part of this Project. I am especially thankful to Janis Hrnčíř and Retta Chandler of the TCHCC and to John Wheat of the Briscoe Center for their dedicated assistance in this endeavor. If you knew Svatava Jakobson, would you please get in touch with me? I would love to hear from you!



What do we want to accomplish?

Now a team of very few but hoping to grow, we will continue:

- To create the Texas Czech Dialect Archive documenting the unique Texas Czech dialect for current and future generations of Czech Moravians in Texas
- To document the history and development of the original settlements to the present day through oral histories and various other cultural artifacts gathered from Texas Czechs
- To aid in any revitalization efforts acknowledging the Texas-grown variety of the Czech language as a resource in language learning by Czech heritage speakers in Texas.

- To inspire more attention to the dying dialect of Texas Czechs in scholarly research both in the United States and the Czech Republic.
- To inspire and nurture concrete collaborative projects between activists in Texas Czech organizations, local educators enthusiastic about bringing the community legacy into the classroom, and scholars at the University Texas at Austin and in the Czech Republic.

Three principle sources of Texas Czech data, spanning the 1970s to the early 2000s, will be gradually processed and added to the TCDA:

- (1) 2000s: **John Tomecek's** 2007-2009 Archive of 15 hours of digitally recorded interviews.
- (2) 1990s: **Lida Cope's** 1997 Archive of 327 audiocassette recordings with sociolinguistic interviews and language tasks, digitized with the generous assistance of the team led by Michael Heidenreich of [The Liberal Arts Instructional Technology and Services](#) (LAITS) at the University of Texas at Austin.
- (3) 1980s: **Karel Kučera's** 1986 Archive of 18 hours of audiocassette recordings with interviews.
- (3) 1970s-1980s: **Svatava Pírková-Jakobson's** Archive of which 97 audiocassette recordings have been digitized by LAITS. The remaining recordings and other artifacts are held at [the Briscoe Center for American History](#) in Austin and at [the Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center](#) in La Grange, Texas, waiting to be organized, identified, and processed. First steps toward this goal were taken in 1997. Making this vast and diverse collection accessible to the general public is the best way to honor the pioneering work of Professor Jakobson. Our work on this vast collection is in progress. The steps accomplished thus far are chronicled under [Our News](#) on the TCLP website.

Ultimately, the Texas Czech Legacy Project will offer a web-accessible database of audio and textual materials in and about Texas Czech. The holdings of the Texas Czech Dialect Archive will include audio recordings of sociolinguistic interviews conducted with ethnic Czech Moravians in Texas, of cultural events, and Texas Czech music. With time, we will add print (e.g. newspapers like *Svoboda* and *Našinec*), photographs (e.g. Texas Czech tombstone inscriptions courtesy of Professor Eva Eckert of the Anglo American University in Prague, Czech Republic & Connecticut College), personal photos, autobiographies, and diaries. A multi-media resource, the TCLP will be a site to visit for reflection, scholarly research – planned and published – educational activities for school children and college students, and for genealogical work.



Who are we?

The Project is led by [Lida Cope](#), associate professor at East Carolina University in Greenville, NC, and external research associate at the University of Texas at Austin. [Ryan Miller](#), a software developer at the UT Austin, is our chief web designer. Our current collaborators are listed at [Who We Are](#). We are thankful to the Department for Slavic and Eurasian Studies at the University of Texas at Austin, specifically to Professor Mary Neuburger, the Department Chair, for the expressed support for and commitment to this Project, and to Hans Boas of the Texas German Dialect Project at UT Austin for serving as the Project's advisor. Last but not least,

John Tomecek, who initiated first efforts to begin this Project in the early 2000s, serves as the Project's Consultant.



So – what do we do?

Processing of audio recordings is a time-consuming task that requires native-like proficiency in Czech and English and training in transcription and translation using special editing software, [ELAN](#). It takes cc. 60 hours to process one hour of interview. First, each digitized audio recording needs to be edited into smaller segments based on the topics that are being discussed. Second, each edited file is transcribed and translated using the TCLP Transcription and Translation Guide. Transcriptions and translations are checked and checked again for accuracy. Next, the audio data are aligned with the transcription and translation text files. Once all the data are aligned, the material is ready to be put into the database for web-delivery. Each recording is accompanied by speaker metadata including such information as the date and location of the interview. Interview files are then uploaded to the [TCLP archive](#).



Please visit the [website](http://www.laits.utexas.edu/txczechproject/home) at <http://www.laits.utexas.edu/txczechproject/home> and let us know what you think at texasczechproject@gmail.com! You can reach me directly at copel@ecu.edu or (252) 328-6411.

We do hope you'll like what you'll see and return to the website as more becomes available!

Děkujeme and nashledanou v Texasu!

For Texas Czech Legacy project

Lida Cope