The Texas Czech dialect will most certainly die in the next fifteen years, which makes its documentation paramount. Literally hundreds of tapes that sit disintegrating in boxes hold not only the key to preserving the dialect for future generations of Texas Czechs and for scholars, but also priceless information on Texas Czech culture and heritage in the context of Texas and American history.

The **Texas Czech Dialect Archive** will be the only comprehensive Texas Czech archive in the world, a central place for a variety of audio-recordings and print documents (newspapers, autobiographies, immigrant letters, photographs, etc.) gathered from ethnic Czech Moravians in Texas over a forty-year period. The recordings will be searchable by topics and linked to the speakers’ home communities using an interactive map. You will be able to listen to a recording and read its transcript simultaneously. Access will be easy and free. The Project has been inspired by the Texas German Dialect Project (www.tgdp.org) also housed at the University of Texas at Austin and first envisioned by John Tomecek, a graduate student at UT-Austin, in the early 2000s.

Our goal is to digitize and/or digitally organize interview and event recordings featuring different generation ethnic Czechs in Texas, using three principle sources: Lida Cope’s 1997 Archive of 327 hours of speech (interviews and other events); John Tomecek’s 2007-2009 Archive of 150 hours interviews); and Svatava Pírková-Jakobson’s Archive of all things Texas Czech collected in the 1970s and 1980s (only 97 recordings from her vast database have been digitized; her former students, TCHCC, and the Briscoe Center for American History in Austin own her other materials – all need to be identified, preserved, and made available!!!). The Archive will be dedicated to her.

The Texas Czech Heritage Cultural Center in La Grange, TX, has already expressed interest in setting up a computer station for access to the TCDP in its genealogical library. As such, the TCDA will become a popular community resource searchable for oral histories and language features, and a helpful genealogy tool.

What next? Our website (search for “Texas Czech Dialect Archive”) should be available in the next three to four months. It will then need to be further developed and expanded to create a user-friendly searchable Archive. The team is small and funds are lacking. Modest funding might become available should the Texas Humanities grant proposal submitted mid-March be funded. Just consider: It takes about 48 hours of work to fully process one hour of speech! If you see value in this project and like what you see once you visit the site, please become a supporter of the project. In the spirit of the first call to the community issued by John Tomecek in the early 2000s, “Náš jazyk, naše dědictví, naše povinnost!”

![Lida Cope deposits her Texas Czech recordings with Hans Boas at UT Austin in April 2012.](image-url)