

Hundreds of Sokols Will Attend Annual Convention Here



CHARTER MEMBERS •• OMAHA KATOLICKA JED SOKAL •• BOTTOM ROW LEFT TO RIGHT—JAS. RYNES, FRANK KREJCI—REV. JNO. VRANEK—VACLAV VACHAL—TOP ROW—PRAKOP. KRUML—ANTON BENDA—EMIL CILEBORAT—JOE FUXA—JNO. VAMPOLA.

Remarkable World Order Will Open 3-Day Meeting In Omaha On September 3

Big Athletic Event at Creighton College Will Be One Of Principal Features of Conference—First Chapter of Society in America Was Founded in Omaha, July 18, 1893.

By H. R. HARRIS.
When the national convention of the Catholic Sokol society is assembled in Omaha, September 3, 4 and 5 there will be gathered in this city one of the most remarkable orders in the world today, an order founded along the lines of the old Greek doctrine that for a healthy mind there should be a healthy body, an order possessed of the purest principles of democracy.
The coming convention is looked forward to with particular interest by both Omaha Sokols and those from elsewhere for the St. Wenceslaus parish of this city founded the society of Catholic Sokols in the United States, July 18, 1893.
There are some 5,000 Catholic Sokols, 3,000 men and 2,000 women, in this country today and a large number of them are expected to attend the Omaha convention. There are also many non-Catholic Sokol lodges.
"All Sokols are equal," is a motto of the society. Men, women and children of all classes of society, in simple dress, meet periodically in the Sokol halls for systematic training in gymnastics. "Sokol" means "eagle" in Bohemian and stands for swiftness and sureness.
In the great drills in the international congress at Prague, Bohemia, as many as 50,000 men have taken part at one time.
Some of the most famous gymnasts in America will appear in the exercises of the Omaha convention.
Dr. Miroslav Tyrs, professor of aesthetics in the University of Prague, at that time only 29 years of age, organized the Bohemian Sokols in 1862 at Prague, Bohemia. He called the first general gymnastic meeting of the society February 16, 1862.
Dr. Tyrs was a Bohemian patriot of the highest ideals and he devoted his life to the Sokol movement.
Advocate Morality.
Dr. Jindrich Fungar, father-in-law of Dr. Tyrs, was elected president of the first meeting of the Sokols at Prague. The two doctors share alike in the tribute of Bohemians and all Sokols as founders of the society.
Dr. Tyrs and Fungar aimed to make men physically fit and inspire them with patriotic resolve to make the best of themselves. They sought to set as a goal not mere prize winning, but to improve the morale of the nation.
The Sokol society was struck a severe blow in 1865 by the death of Dr. Fungar and on the heels of this misfortune came the Austro-German war.
Dr. Tyrs drew up an elaborate plan to utilize the Sokols for defense of the inadequately protected German frontier. This was forwarded to Vienna.
Much to the surprise of the doctor, the proposal was met with the assent of the government. It was a war between Germans and the Sokols should have no part in it.
Dr. Tyrs' plan, though impelled by the highest patriotism, was looked upon with suspicion by the powers at Vienna and in 1873 a period of active suppression was started.
The publication of the organization's magazine, The Sokol, was stopped and other measures to stamp out the organization were put into effect.
In 1881, however, Dr. Tyrs started up the society again and from this time forward the growth of the organization was remarkable.
In 1882 the Sixth congress of Bohemian Sokols was held at Prague. There were 17,000 drilling and 20 years later there were estimated to be 50,000 in the exercises at the grand congress in Prague.
At the congress in 1912 there were Sokols from all parts of Bohemia, from Moravia and Bohemia from America, England and Germany. There were also Montenegro, Croatian, Russian, Polish, Servian and Bulgarian Sokols. Every Slav nation was represented in the Slav Union of Sokols. There were estimated to be 200,000 at that time and today these numbers have greatly increased.
The Sokols have been anti-German in protest of one race against absorption by another. Germany steadfastly opposed the Sokols. During the 1912 congress in Prague no mention was made of the affair in the German newspapers of that city.
The ideals of the Sokols, most ably set forth by Frantisek Palacky, great Bohemian historian and patriot, call for a noble, just democracy, strife for the victory of truth and right and for liberty and justice for all; equal justice to individuals, to all classes of society and to all nations. Sokols, he said, must be guided by the desire to improve not only the material condition but also the moral, to get culture and to enlighten and raise the whole nation.
Has Rapid Growth.
The first lodge of the Catholic Sokol society was organized in Omaha, July 18, 1893. There were 28 charter members in the original St. Wenceslaus parish. In addition to the athletic aims of the society it was also formed to aid in the Americanization of members of the Sokol lodges and for religious purposes.
A year after the founding of the Omaha parish the Conception parish was organized in South Omaha. Recently St. Adelbert's parish has also been organized in Omaha.
Following the organization of the Omaha parishes others were formed in Plattsmouth, Detroit, Baltimore, etc.
In the St. Wenceslaus parish there are classes of 50 girls, 25 small boys, 40 young ladies and 20 young men who engage in drilling calisthenics and gymnastics.
Over the entire organization of Catholic Sokols in the United States there is one head athletic instructor, Joseph Simciz of Chicago.
The president of the Catholic Sokols in the United States is Hynek Dostal of St. Louis, editor of a Bohemian newspaper in that city. John Straka of Chicago is vice president. V. B. Havel of Chicago is secretary. John S. Kramolish of South Omaha is treasurer.
The society is divided into western, eastern and southern divisions. The Right Rev. Josef M. Koudelka of Wisconsin is protector.
The Rev. John Vranek, pastor of St. Wenceslaus, was one of the founders of the national organization.
When Property Was Bought.
The first tournament was held in Omaha in October, 1894. Sixteen Turner took part. Joseph Fuxa had charge. His assistants were Vaclav Vachal and John Vampola.
In 1901 a beautiful silk banner was made in Bohemia for the Omaha lodge.
In 1908 all of the Catholic lodges were organized into the Catholic Union of Sokols.
In 1915 the St. Wenceslaus parish purchased the property at 1248
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"John Full of Pep," Only Surviving Paleface to Hunt Buffaloes With Pawnees, Recalls Days When Hoof Beats Resembled Thunder on Plains

Bison Saved from Total Extinction Only by Intervention of United States and Canada—Easterners Made Wholesale Slaughters—Indians Pursued Real Sport for Food.

By H. R. HARRIS.
Herds of buffalo were once so tremendous on the plains of Nebraska that the earth shook beneath their tread and in the stampedes into which they sometimes fell the sound of their hoof beats was like heavy thunder.
Today there are only 7,360 head of buffalo on the entire North American continent. In 1889 there were only 1,091 and it was only through the intervention of the United States and Canadian governments that the animal was saved from extinction.
As the thousands upon thousands of bison have joined the phantom hosts, so have most of those who remember them passed over the Great Divide.
One of Accepted Few.
Of those who took an active part in the buffalo hunt of the 50 years or so ago, there are only a very few in the entire state. One of the most famous of Nebraska buffalo hunters, however, John H. L. Williams, is now living in Florence. Williams was famed throughout the state as a marksman and he was one of a favored few who were allowed to take part in the great Buffalo hunts of the Pawnee Indians among whom he was accepted as a brother.
Judge Robert W. Patrick of the municipal court recalls a boyhood experience with his uncle, Algernon Patrick at Trabing, Wyo., when he slept one evening on a great pile of buffalo rugs.
Judge Patrick has shot buffalo, but he was never so great a hunter as his Uncle Algernon.
Entertains Russ Noblemen.
Algernon Patrick at one time was host of a famous party of Russian noblemen headed by the Grand Duke Alexis. He initiated them into the hunt in the Red River district in the western part of the state.
Zach Ellis, constable in Judge Patrick's court, tells of a huge herd which the train on which he was riding encountered at Ogalla in 1870.
"We saw buffalo stretching from the side of the train in a great swarm when we awoke that morning," he said.
"The train was traveling eight or 10 miles an hour. We were out of the herd until 3 or 4 o'clock that afternoon and we traveled all the time."
"Little John Full of Pep."
"There must have been thousands and thousands in that herd. I remember the easterners on the train fired their revolvers from the car windows at the buffalo and the animals would only scamper away. You couldn't kill a buffalo with the kind of firearms those fellows were carrying."
Williams is perhaps the only Omahan living today who went with the Indians on their fall hunts. Williams had a name among the Indians which in present day Americanized Indian slang would be translated "Little John Full of Pep." He earned this title by his many successful physical encounters, although a comparatively small man, and by his remarkable accuracy with the rifle.
Friendship Grows.
Williams met the Pawnee Indians when his father, Enos Williams, moved to the Pawnee Indian agency at what is now Genoa in 1853. Later young Williams ran a sawmill at the agency.
A strong friendship sprang up between Williams and the Indians and the red men invited him to one of their hunts. It later became a regular thing to join them at this time.
The Pawnees started on their fall hunt after the first frost.
For Meat Only.
"The Pawnees killed only such buffalo as they needed for meat to last through the winter," said Williams. "They deeply resented the wholesale slaughter of the animals by white men. Most of the wholesale killing was done by easterners."
The hunts were conducted in the territory along the Little Blue and Republican rivers.
The squaws accompanied their braves to the hunting camp. On the day of the hunt the men would set out on their ponies armed with bow and arrow. They would approach the buffalo herds and single out the more desirable animals. Then they would cut these out and, riding along beside them, would discharge their arrows into the buffalo, aiming for the heart.
Squaws Prepare Meat.
Williams used a rifle and a saved-off shotgun in his hunting.
After the Pawnees had killed enough of the buffalo for their wants they would take the carcasses to the hunting camp, skin them and stretch the meat out on sticks to dry for the winter supply. They also killed antelope on these hunts and dried the meat.
The squaws did much of the work of preparing the meat.
The Pawnees used the buffalo robes for their own clothing and bedding.
Mounted Means Safe.
In 1866 the Henry rifle, the first high-powered gun used in the west, was introduced in Nebraska. The Indians called it "The Man Who Spoke with Fire" and were much awed by its deadliness.
Williams had a number of narrow escapes from death while on buffalo hunts.
As long as a hunter kept on his horse he was comparatively safe



around the buffalo. The animals were used to the horse and were not particularly aroused by the presence of one. But the hunter who happened to lose his mount was faced with almost certain death.
Wounded Buffalo Charges.
On one hunt Williams shot a big bull buffalo and as the animal sank to the ground he dismounted and started toward it to cut its throat to allow it to bleed.
The wounded buffalo drew itself upon its legs as Williams approached and the horse bolted.
Then the buffalo charged. Considering their cumbersome size, buffalo cover ground at an amazing speed.
Williams ran as fast as he could, but the buffalo was closing the distance between them rapidly and was blowing blood over the young hunter from its nostrils when "Little John" escaped.
Fight for Leadership.
The buffalo in going to a watering place nearby had worn ruts in the ground two or three feet deep and Williams ran crosswise over these. The buffalo stumbled and was unable to catch up with Williams and bullets from other hunters soon stopped it.
Williams said that the great herds of buffalo used to travel with the calves in the middle, the cows next and the bulls on the outside.
The hardest of the bulls used to fight it out for the leadership of the herd. Whenever a old bull was defeated by a youthful and sturdier rival, the old bull was forced to take a place among the stragglers.
Wolves Get Stragglers.
"The big Lofaer wolves used to get the stragglers," said Williams. "We would find the old dehorned bulls lying behind the herds with their hamstrings cut and carcasses eaten by the wolves."
The herds used to repel attacks from packs of wolves by huddling together with the bulls outside to toss off the attackers with their horns. They used to meet the assaults of the wolves with a bellowing roar which was terrible to hear.
Williams learned the language of the Pawnees and Sioux. At one time he had great quantities of buffalo robes, but he has given many of them away.
Pioneer Railroad.
Williams has been connected with much of the pioneer railroad building in this part of the country. He later took up farming and then went into the contracting business. He retired four years ago.
"You would never have dreamed, seeing those vast herds in the old days that they would all be wiped out," said Williams rather sadly.
Omaha's "herd" today numbers only 10 while a few years ago there were 14.
Daddy of Them All.
One young one was forced to death by a near-sighted mother and three others have died of old age. As the oldest of the park is now only 20

greatly augmented by the building of the Union Pacific in 1866. Marketing facilities were afforded. Between 1871 and 1875 the great southern herd, estimated at more than 3,000,000 head, was wiped out.
Death Knell Sounded.
The opening of the Northern Pacific in 1880 sounded the death knell of the northern herd. The half-breeds of Manitoba, the Plains Cree of Qu'Appelle and the Blackfoot of south Saskatchewan practically cleaned out a vast stretch of country extending east and west through the Rocky mountains and Manitoba. Only a few straggling bands were left.
In 1889 there were 256 buffalo in captivity, 200 under protection in Yellowstone park and 635 running wild—a total of 1,091.
Then the governments of the United States and Canada stepped in. Under protection the remnants of the millions that formerly roamed the plains have increased to a few thousand.
Seek Huge Ranges.
As the protected herds have increased the question of providing large enough ranges has arisen. Additional reservations will be given for this purpose. Some of the surplus buffalo will be donated to municipalities, public organizations and institutions.
Omaha's herd may in time be increased from the surplus government animals.
It has also been suggested that some of the surplus be sold to farmers to be handled as cattle. In view of the high price of beef and the value of the buffalo robes it is said that this may be feasible. It is contended that though the problem of providing fences is a hard one, it is not insurmountable.
Hazardous Hunting.
Hunting buffalo on horseback was the method originally employed by the Indians, who would charge a herd on their fleet ponies and kill the animals with bows and arrows as they rode beside them.
This was a hazardous game and undertaken only at the risk of the hunter's life.
Impounding of buffalo was employed by the Indians of the northwest. The pound was made of logs and the gate was placed below a ledge down which the animals could jump but which was too high for them to climb again.
Driven Into "Dead Men."
A fan-shaped runway made of bunches of branches and bushes, known as "dead men," lined up 50 feet apart was extended from the gate several miles out into the plains. The buffalo were then driven into the runway and kept in the path by Indians hidden behind the "dead men," who would jump out and frighten them when they started to break away.
When a bison were gathered in the pen they were slaughtered.
With the coming of the railroads and the demand for buffalo robes the "still hunt" was inaugurated. The hunter approached within 100 to 250 yards of the herd and proceeded with a high-powered rifle to shoot down the animals one at a time without stampeding the herd. The hunter first dispatched the leader, usually the oldest cow, and then the rest. Any animal that started to lead the others away was cut down by the hidden rifle.
Another method employed by the Indian on the prairies where timber was scarce was the "surround." In

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