

My homeland  
Of the sad months of January  
I cannot overlook you  
Even now  
The clouds are rolling  
Over an empty potato field.  
  
Each little root  
Has haggled about  
Its life  
With the soil.  
Deep in the heart  
A solid contract  
Is hidden  
Which ties  
All living creatures  
To this land.

Miloslav Bureš: *Fountains Opening*. Praha 1970, p. 49.

## I N T R O D U C T I O N

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This book, devoted to the various aspects of community life of Sulkovec and Polom and their inhabitants, was initiated by the current mayor František Mareček. It was also greatly supported by other inhabitants of Sulkovec, both residents and weekend visitors. It is worth mentioning that these owners of weekend houses and cottages (called *chalupáři* in Czech) who commute from towns and cities have been a specific phenomenon of Czech village for several decades. They take active part in the life of the village and have their say in it.

The authors involved in writing this book have discovered the hospitality of the inhabitants of both communities and have also found out that the alleged reservedness of the people of the Highlands (*Horácko* in Czech) is only on the surface. The authors would like to express their thanks for the support and readiness to help which was provided by mayor František Mareček, the priests of both parishes – Mr. Vítězslav Grmela and Mr. Jan Plecháček, several families and individuals, namely Ms. Marie Marečková, Mr. Emil Břenek, Mr. Emil Nykodým, Mr. Karel Smolík, Mr. Stanislav Dvořák, the Mareček family also called Pavlů, and the Jandla, Gregor, Ondráček, and Teyschl families.

While writing the following chapters and gathering pictures and photos, we have worked with records in chronicles, archive sources located in the Moravian Regional Archives, the State Archives of the Žďár nad Sázavou District, the archives of the parish community of the Moravian Church in Veselí, documents located at the vicarage in Sulkovec, and the manuscript collection of the Institute of Ethnology of the Academy of Science in Brno. We have checked various records and articles in magazines, art books, and scholarly literature. Nevertheless, our knowledge and definitive image of the Highlands would be incomplete and possibly even superficial if we had not personally experienced the landscape and got to know the communities of Sulkovec and Polom, especially their inhabitants.

In the making of the book, our effort was guided by the spirit of the words of one honorable inhabitant of Sulkovec – the teacher Kovářík. This was his introduction in the newly founded school chronicle one hundred years ago:

*I have welcomed this work; I have done it with a certain interest and love; I have used many sources. I knew it was an important work which in its harvest would bring the fruits of solace and memory of past times to future generations and show how much times have changed. It was high time to record the memories, because many of them would soon disappear from the collective memory of the citizens.*

The following chapters strive to serve as a reminiscence of the old days when life for the people of Sulkovec and Polom was not easier, but harder than today. However, it was also filled with ideas about learning, the welfare of the community, the joys of daily life, and holiday celebrations, as well as common concerns about living.

*Jana Pospíšilová*