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This website is in memory of Marcela Borkovec-Voboril (1927-2017) and Milos Borkovec (1922-2012). Their curriculum together with other material can be found on the following pages.



Marcela und Milos Borkovec near Gilley, Franche-Comté, France, 1985

Curriculum of Marcela and Milos Borkovec

Miloš Bořkovec was born in 1922 in Prague, then Czechoslovakia. He was the eldest of three brothers of his parents Jan Bořkovec and Hermína Bořkovcová-Schererová. His two younger brothers were Alexej (also called Sáša or Sasha) and Ivan. Miloš had completed the Civil Engineering School in Prague in order to take over his father's construction business.

Marcela Bořkovcová was born as Vobořilová in Prague in 1927. She was the second child of Václav Vobořil and Marie Vobořilová-Mančalová. Her younger brother, whose name was also Miloš (also called Miloušek or Míša), had already died at school age. Marcela was trained as a modiste because she wanted to take over her mother's fashion business.

Miloš and Marcela met in the village Ostrov after the country was devastated by the Second World War and thrown into chaos by the Communists takeover. Ostrov is located in Bohemia, near Vlašim south of Prague, with a view on the Blaník mountain. According to a legend, an army of knights are sleeping in this mountain, which will free the Czech people when they are at its worst.



Jan und Miloš Bořkovec around 1945



Václav, Miloušek und Marie Mančal around 1940

Marcela often stayed in Ostrov on holiday because her mother Marie was born there. Miloš and his brothers spent their holidays with relatives at the nearby Vitus mill (Vítův mlýn). Obviously, the three brothers visited the girls in the neighbouring village. During this time, Sasha left Czechoslovakia, and he settled later in America.

Miloš and Marcela married in Prague in 1952. Marcela took the name Bořkovcová and her only son Michal was born in 1956. They both worked as employees in Prague, because family businesses were not foreseen in the communist plan economy. However, they regularly visited the Vitus mill and Ostrov.

Marie, Marcela's mother, was also every summer in Ostrov with her new husband, Josef Vokoun. That is why her mother was later called Marie Vokounová-Mančalová. She spent most of her time playing cards with her relatives.



Village Ostrov with the Blaník mountain in the background around 1980



Marriage of Marie and Josef Vokoun around 1950

The invasion of the troops of the Waschau Pact after the Prague Spring of 1968 had prompted them to leave the country. Although they first wanted to go to America and meet Sasha, they stayed in Europe. They found their new home in Switzerland, more precisely in Berne. At this time they have, probably involuntarily, made small name changes. Miloš Bořkovec and Vobořil became Milos Borkovec and Voboril, because the Swiss Foreign Police official probably found neither a "š" nor a "ř" on his typewriter. Bořkovcová also became Borkovec, because derived women's surnames are only common in Slavic languages.



Marriage of Marcela und Milos Borkovec 1952

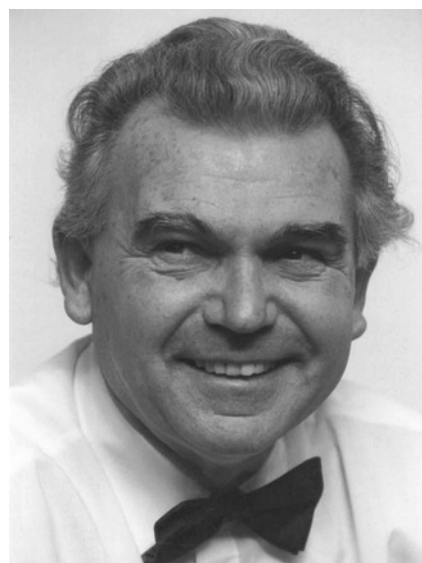


Marcela und Michal Borkovec around 1960

In Switzerland, they quickly found work in the flourishing economic situation of the time. Milos was employed as a civil engineer at the company Geotest AG and worked there until his retirement. He was heavily involved in the investigation of the subsurface of the western motorway bypass of Solothurn.



Meeting of Milos, Ivan and Sasha Borkovec around 2005



Milos Borkovec around 1995

Since in the meantime wearing hats had completely gone out of fashion, Marcela had retrained herself and then found a job at the publishing house of Peter Lang in Berne. They spent their leisure time with travels that were denied to them in Czechoslovakia. They visited Austria, Italy, Spain, Greece, Egypt, America, but most frequently France. The gentle hills of Franche-Comté probably reminded them of the Bohemian landscape, which they have not been able to visit since 1968.

Only after the Velvet Revolution in 1989 could they travel back to their original homeland, which soon became the Czech Republic. The situation there had normalized and they had enjoyed meeting their old friends and relatives again. After more than half a century the three brothers Milos, Sasha, and Ivan met again. Here a photo of this event.

Milos Borkovec, Ivan Borkovec, Sasa Borkovec Milos Borkovec

Milos, Ivan, and Sasha Borkovec around 2005 Milos Borkovec around 1995

Marcela and Milos also built a small holiday cottage in Ostrov, where they spent every summer when they were old. However, they remained faithful to their new Swiss homeland. The cottage in Ostrov was sold and they both died in Bern, Milos in 2012 and Marcela in 2017.

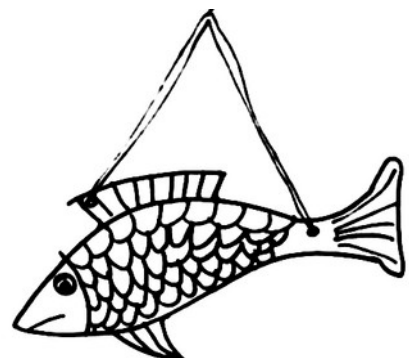


Marcela Borkovec around 1990



Cottage in Ostrov around 2005

When she was old, Marcela has written a short essay about her memories. An English translation can be found on the next page. A drawing by Milos, which is shown in the bottom right, dates from the same period. A list of the immediate ancestors can be found after the essay.



Essay

We all return here

When I was as a child in Ostrov on holiday, the river Blanice had so much water that in many places even adults could not stand [1]. The river was full of fish, and we often had white fish, perch, pike and sometimes even eel for dinner. For my great-uncles Anton, Bohouš, Karel, and Johan fishing was both pleasure and benefit. As children we went to the forests to pick mushrooms, raspberries, blackberries, and strawberries. This was enrichment to our menu. I remember that there were crayfishes in the creek on the way to the forest. Once I went with Karel to catch them. But I found them so ugly that I refused to come along a second time. My great-uncles were very enterprising; they cycled, went swimming and played volleyball. I remember their carts, which they took into the forests to collect wood. At that time, cooking was done in wood-fired ovens. It was a nice heat, which heated not only the kitchen, but also other rooms. That's why back then the forests were so clean and tidy, not a single branch or fir cone lay on the forest floor. I write this down because now as my life is coming to an end, and after the many years I have not been to Ostrov, these memories are very clear.

I imagine meeting these long deceased people on well-known places and paths, as if decades had not already passed. Our great-uncles and grandfathers, who came from Ostrov, were: Franz, Anton, Karel, Bohouš, Johan and Josef. Even today I see them clearly, playing cards, walking around with a book in their hand, or talking to each other. Their children were: My grandfather Franz had Marie, Táňa, Otilie, Růžena, František and Karel (darling of all, because he was good-looking and charming) [2]. Anton's daughter was Andělka (she actually reminded an angel, because of her gentle nature and delicate appearance) [3]. The children of Bohouš were Anička and Ruda. Johan's children were Mařka and Jenda. Karl's daughter was Lidka (I liked her very much due to her kindness and laughter). Everyone liked being together, enjoyed life and good mood. We played theatre together, made a parade when going for barbeque under the rocks, or danced to the music of record players; young, old and children. It was peaceful in Ostrov back then. Maybe I'll embellish my memories by keeping only the pleasurable ones. The uncles had no big income, so they lived modestly, but contently. In particular, they lived from what gave the house, garden, forest and river. My mother loved the Ostrov, so we used to spend our holidays here.

At home in Prague she was always very busy, and she often has left me with aunts or maids during the week. She herself came Sundays. Sometimes she would take time off and then stay the whole week. She was always elegant, had beautiful dresses and smelled of French perfume. She was distant from my life. In Ostrov she played passionately cards with my great-uncles. That's why I didn't see her much. (It's weird that I'm the only one in the whole family who inherited her passion for playing cards.) Only later, when she married her second husband JUDr. Vokoun (a honorable man who loved my mother endlessly), she calmed down a bit and we got closer [4].

My mother had a unique relationship with Ostrov, particularly since she was born here as the eldest daughter of František and Františka Mančalová. Around 1900 her parents had a

farm, an inn and a shop there. Already as a child, my mother had to take care of the shop. She went on foot to school every day to Veliš and to the secondary school to Vlašim [5]. She often told me how terribly afraid she was, especially in autumn and winter when it was dark in the morning and in the evening. She was the only one from the whole village whose parents wanted her to go to school in Vlašim, 7 km there and 7 km back.

At the age of 15, her parents sent her to an uncle in Vienna, where she was trained as a modist. There she had endured the First World War, with all the horrors, cold and hunger. On her return to Bohemia she became a successful businesswoman. The Czechs wanted Czech shops and Viennese elegance, and my mother could meet both requirements. However, her greatest wish to buy her own house in the beloved Ostrov was denied to her. During the time she had the necessary means for a purchase, nobody in Ostrov would sell her a piece of land. This was the disappointment of her life. When the children grew up and their uncles' houses filled up, she had to move into different places, sometimes uncomfortable ones, but she would not give up Ostrov. For years she took care of our son Michal during the holidays with Pepa [6], who, like me, spent his holidays in Ostrov during his childhood. In spring and autumn, we often went to visit Beauforts in Zbraslav, where my beloved aunt Otilie lived [7].

I often imagine how happy my mother would have been, since together with Miloš we now own a house in Ostrov with the view on Blaník [8]. In this way her wish came true, and I also bought the house to be reminded of her. In Ostrov, she appears to me again and again together with Pepa and with the others who are already dead, all together in their best years and full of life. Without them, I am sad in Ostrov.

Marcela Borkovec, 2001

Explanations

[1] Ostrov is the name of a village near Vlašim south of Prague. The river Blanice flows through the village, hence the name of the village, because "ostrov" means "island" in Czech.

[2] Marcela was Marie's daughter.

[3] "Anděl" means "angel" in Czech, which are similar words.

[4] In the Czech Republic, JUDr. is used as an abbreviation for Juris Utrisque Doctor, which nowadays corresponds approximately to a Master of Law. An attentive reader, who compares the English translation with the Czech original, may have noticed that further above "Vokoun" was translated as "perch", but here was left as "Vokoun" because it is the family name. Animal species, plant names and food are not uncommon surnames in the Czech Republic.

[5] Veliš is the neighboring village of Ostrov, Vlašim is the next larger municipality.

[6] In Czech, Pepa is the short name for Josef, which is the first name of Marcela's mother's second husband, Josef Vokoun.

[7] Otilie was Marcela's aunt, and after her marriage she took the family name Beaufort. Beauforts lived in Zbraslav, a suburb of Prague.

[8] "Blaník" is the name of a prominent mountain near Ostrov, known throughout the Czech Republic for a legend about a sleeping army of knights. The name of the river "Blanice" is derived from the name of this mountain.

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Ancestors

Ancestors of Milos Borkovec

Parents

Jan Bořkovec (*11.06.1892, Praha, †12.07.1963, Praha) ∞
Hermína Bořkovcová-Schererová (*01.12.1897, Praha, †17.10.1955)

Children:

- 1) Milos Borkovec (*10.01.1922, Praha, †01.06.2012, Bern, Switzerland)
- 2) Ivan Bořkovec (*1923, Praha, †2014, Praha)
- 3) Alexej-Sasha Borkovec (*17.10.1925, Praha, †10.06.2010, Silver Spring, MD, USA)

Grandparents

Bohumil Bedřich Bořkovec (*01.03.1863, Sedlečko, Vlašim, †05.12.1935, Praha) ∞
Růžena Bořkovcová-Hozáková (*01.06.1867, †03.09.1945)

Children:

- 1) Jan Bořkovec (*11.06.1892, Praha, †12.07.1963, Praha)
- 2) Pavel Bořkovec (*10.06.1894, Praha, †22.07.1972, Praha)
- 3) Iluška Bořkovcová (*27.06.1898, Praha, †26.11.1918)

František Scherrer (†1916, Praha) ∞ Madam Schererová-Ritteshainová

Children:

- 1) Hermína Bořkovcová-Schererová (*01.12.1897, Praha, †17.10.1955)
- 2) Františka Šimková-Schererová († ~1975)
- 3) Further unknown.

Ancestors of Marcela Borkovec-Voboril

Parents

Václav Vobořil (*13.04.1892, Pavlovice) ∞

Marie Vobořilová-Vokounová-Mančalová (*27.11.1895, Ostrov, †20.10.1973, Praha)

Children:

1) Miloš-Miloušek-Míša Vobořil (1.06.1922, Praha, †20.06.1934, Praha)

2) Marcela Borkovec-Voboril (*07.12.1927, Praha, †03.02.2017, Bern, Switzerland)

Josef Vokoun (*1902, †1984, Praha) ∞

Marie Vobořilová-Vokounová-Mančalová (*27.11.1895, Ostrov, †20.10.1973, Praha)

No children.

Grandparents

František Vobořil ∞ Františka Vobořilová-Brzková

Children:

1) Václav Vobořil (*13.04.1892, Pavlovice)

2) Further unknown.

František-Franz Mančal (*02.09.1868 Ostrov, †06.06.1945, Vlašim) ∞

Františka Mančalová-Kozlová (*18.06.1877, †26.06.1954)

Children:

1) Marie Vobořilová-Vokounová-Mančalová (*27.11.1895, Ostrov, †20.10.1973, Praha)

2) Antonín Mančal (*02.07.1887, Ostrov, †12.05.1915)

3) František Mančal (*20.09.1900, Ostrov, †19.01.1937)

4) Táňa Mančalová (*1902?, Ostrov)

5) Karel Mančal (*19.10.1905, Ostrov, †06.06.1981)

6) Otilie Mančalová-Beaufortová (*13.01.1907, Ostrov, †23.02.1986, Zbraslav u Prahy)

7) Růžena Mančalová-Straková (*16.03.1910, Ostrov, † 09.11.1992)

Further links and comments can be found on the website.

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