

2013 Sokol Slet to be held in Milwaukee

Last seen in Milwaukee in 1891

The 2013 American Sokol Slet will be held in Milwaukee. This will be the first time since 1891 that the city has hosted such a gathering of Sokols. The word Slet means “a flocking of birds” – in this case the Sokols (or Falcons). Slets are held in the Czechlands every 6 years. By tradition in the United States they are held every 4 years.

The word “Slet” was apparently not used for 1891 national meet in Milwaukee. But the 4 day event included a parade, athletic competitions, and a grand calisthenics exhibition, as well as music, food and fellowship - all the trapping of a Slet.

Planning for the 2013 Slet is underway. Dates have not been set but the event is targeted for June. Stay tuned for further developments and opportunities to be involved.



2009 Slet at Fort Worth.

Read about the 1891 Slet in this article from the Daily Journal, July 31, 1891.

BOHEMIANS TO CELEBRATE

Four Days of Gymnastic Contests Coming in August.

THE PROGRAMME BRIEFLY GIVEN

Thousands of Visitors Expected from All Over the Country and Sharp Competition in All the Contests.

Beginning Aug. 20 Milwaukee will be given up for four days to the Bohemians. The event will be the Bohemian national gymnastic contests arranged by the Narodni Jednota Sokolska (Bohemian association of Sokols), an association with societies in nearly every city of prominence in this country. The aims of the association, as shown by its constitution, are: To develop the physical and mental faculties of its members; to carry out their object, the societies must have a gymnasium open to men and women, boys and girls, at appropriate times. The creation of dramatic and singing sections, establishing of libraries and schools for the benefit of their members. It favors and advocates public school education.

The coming contests will be participated in by every society belonging to the association. The preparations have been made on a large scale and the enthusiasm of Bohemians is aroused throughout the country. This event will be accepted as a general Bohemian celebration and gathering, such as has never been held anywhere in this country. It is estimated that over 7,000 visitors will be present during the contests.

Continued on next page.

Contestants and visitors will begin to arrive Thursday, Aug. 20, and will be escorted by the committee to their respective quarters. A reception will be tendered the contestants at the hall of Turnverein Milwaukee, on Fourth street, in the evening, the use of the hall having been tendered gratis by the society. Mayor P. J. Somers will welcome the visitors to the city, and Gov. Peck has also been invited to be present. President A. Pittner, of the executive committee of the National association of Sokols; Charles Jiran, president of the local society; Frank Kaplan, chairman of the contests committee, and other prominent members will be among the guests.

Promptly at 8 A. M. on Friday, Aug. 21, the contestants will meet at the Bohemian hall and march to the Shooting park, where the contests will be opened formally at 9 A. M. Charles Stulik, of Chicago, will probably be chosen leader by the contestants. The judges elected at the last meeting of the executive committee are J. Kadlec, of New York city; A. Pesout, of St. Louis; A. M. Zahorik, of Cedar Rapids; C. Friala and Dr. J. Patera, of Chicago; P. V. Schissler, F. Mondry, H. Herbek and H. Verba, of this city. They will be heavily taxed with work, as the number is thought to be insufficient for the large number of contestants that will be present. The number of judges cannot be increased, because the constitution is very explicit in this respect, and states that nine judges shall be selected for the general contests and six judges for the district contests.

These contests will be of considerable interest on account of the rivalry existing between the New York societies. The New York contestants have to this day held the first place, having received the first honors at every contest held so far, but the Chicagos will try to be the victors this time. Chicago will be represented by nine societies and fourteen classes. The St. Louis society expects to make a hard fight, as do those from Omaha, Baltimore and Cedar Rapids. As all societies have been training very hard for the last twelve months, the contests will certainly be very exciting and close.

In the contests held in Chicago the Milwaukees, though the youngest among the contestants, received fourth place as a class, with first individual honors for vaulting by Joseph Berka, and for rapier fencing by Stephen Kostlan. This time again the Milwaukee class will probably be composed of the youngest material of all; but the boys are working hard and will show good staying qualities. They are exercising five times a week.

On Friday evening a specialty performance will be given at the Shooting park, in which the Bohemian favorites, Messrs. Joseph Jurka and O. Farsky, of Chicago, Anton Jurka, of St. Paul, and others, will appear. Contestants will be required to be at their headquarters at 10 P. M. each evening.

The contests will be continued on Saturday. A feature for the afternoon will be the concerts by the Bohemian Gymnastic orchestra, "Plzenska Kapela" of Chicago, consisting of thirty musicians. This orchestra is the original Holecek orchestra from Prague, Bohemia, and playing only compositions from the best composers. Their selections here will be principally from Bohemia's world-renowned composers as Dvorak, Smetana, Czibulka and others. Many business houses and manufactories close in the afternoon, thus giving an opportunity to a great many to listen to it.

Saturday evening a dramatic entertainment will be given at the North Side Turner hall, by the dramatic section of the local gymnastic society, when the play entitled "Nation's Nobleman or the Worldly Man," will be presented. The principal actors are Messrs. V. Zajicek, J. Vasicek, V. Rotbauer, V. Chadim, Miss E. Zajicek and Miss F. Jiracek, under the direction of Mr. H. Verba.

Continued on next page.

The programme for Sunday will be made interesting for everybody. Bohemian societies regardless of creed or politics will come from all parts of the state of Wisconsin and Illinois. Nearly 100 societies have been invited for this day, and many have already reported. About 50 Bohemian agriculturists from the vicinity of Racine have promised to attend, mounted on horseback. All the German turner societies of the city have been invited, and the committee has received cordial replies from all with promises to turn out in the parade in full numbers. The invitations of the committee to these societies have been received with intense interest and enthusiasm, and their replies were that

they will take part in the parade, and that they will show by this act that the bitter feeling that exists between the Germans and Bohemians in Europe, is not known in this country, and that the two nations can work hand in hand to develop and elevate the country of their adoption. The first Polish society, "Gymnasticzne Towarzystwo Sokol," of Chicago, will take part in the exhibition. Upon the arrival of the parade at the Shooting park, after a short rest, Lieut.-Gov. Charles Jonas will make an address in English, and L. J. Palda, of Cedar Rapids, will speak in the Bohemian language.

The gymnastic exhibition will be opened with calisthenic movements, participated in by contestants, then will follow exercises on all kinds of gymnastic apparatus, by contestants and other Bohemian gymnasts, and Polish gymnasts of Chicago. The tug of war contests between the German Turners of this city, Milwaukee Athletic society, and Bohemian gymnasts will be the exciting feature of the day. These will be for five handsome gold medals, to be given to the victorious teams. The medals will be placed on exhibition shortly. Heavy-weight lifting for a gold medal will be competed for by the contestants.

In the evening members of the young ladies' gymnastic societies from different parts of this country will give an exhibition. This part of the programme will be a pleasing one. The exercises will consist of calisthenic movements, Indian club swinging, fencing, marches and tableaux.

"All the German turner societies of the city have been invited, and the committee has received cordial replies from all with promises to turn out in the parade in full numbers. The invitations of the committee to these societies have been received with intense interest and enthusiasm, and their replies were that they will take in the parade, and that they will show by this act that the bitter feelings that exists between the Germans and Bohemians in Europe, is not known in this country, and that the two nations can work hand in hand to develop and elevate the country of their adoption."

