

MAGYAR STUDIES OF AMERICA
MAGYAR NEWS ONLINE

August 2007

Interview With Joseph F. Balogh, Founding Editor of Magyar News

For 17 years, 1990 to 2007, the Hungarian-American community of Fairfield County, Connecticut, and Hungarians in 35 other States, looked



forward every month to MAGYAR NEWS, founded and edited by Joseph F. Balogh. In his last issue dated January 2007, Joseph explained the origin and development of MAGYAR NEWS. We were interested in his own life, which spanned the better part of the 20th century.

Is it true that you were born in America?

Joseph F. Balogh:

Yes, I was born in Bridgeport 85 years ago. I grew up in "Little Hungary", as the West End was then known. I attended St. Stephen School, and drawings in my early schoolbooks already showed that I had an artistic bend. I spoke Hungarian at home and attended Hun-

garian school at the Bostwick Avenue Byzantine Catholic Church.

Then, when I was 10, my family moved to Hungary because of the Depression, and because my Mother's health required a "change" (that was a medical prescription in those days). Everything was strange to me already on the train to New York.

Where did your family settle in Hungary?

J.F.B.:

We went to live in my Mother's native village, Zemplénagárd, in the northeastern part of Hungary. We lived in a house with a thatched roof and an earthen floor. I had to get used to a one-room schoolhouse, to walking home from school through puddles, to being attacked by ganders. We began building our new house in the village in the spring, and it was finished by the fall. But then I was sent to boarding school in Kisvárda, where they changed my name. From then on, I was always "Balogh Joe."

You mentioned artistic tendencies. How did they develop later on?

J.F.B.:

I was enrolled in the school of the Norbertines in Kassa, where I won the district competition of a national poster contest. As a result, the artist Béla Löffler became my mentor in sculpting.

Is that what you studied?

J.F.B.:

My Mother wanted me to become a priest. My father wanted me to study medicine. So I went to Budapest to study medicine. We did a lot of dissecting. At the end of the year, I decided to enroll in the Academy of Fine Arts, and took sculpting classes. For a while I lived in two places, partly in the student dorm and partly in the sculpture studio. Consequently, I received my draft notice only when I happened to run into the mailman.

How come you were drafted? Weren't you an American citizen?

J.F.B.:

When World War II broke out, my father was harassed on account of his American citizenship. So he applied to regain his Hungarian citizenship. Being still a minor, I too became a Hungarian citizen with him, and was called up. I was assigned to a motorcycle unit, but because of my knowledge of English, was soon transferred to Communications, setting up phone lines, etc. Then we were sent to military camp in Esztergom Tábor, where we were digging tank traps. While there, I met a girl in Budapest whose roommate was dating an officer. I thought nothing of it, and made no bones about my dislike of Szálasi (the Hungarian Nazi who came to power in October 1944. Ed.) As luck would have it, that officer became my superior in the army! So next day I went to see the army doctor, and there swiped a lot of gauze and red ink. I slipped into the

woods, wrapped the gauze around my head and arm, and applied the red ink. Knowing that Hungarian military trucks were being searched, I stopped a German military truck. (My German was still pretty good then.) I said I was going to the hospital in Budapest, and they took me along. Once in Budapest, I went to the student dorm, changed into civilian clothes and hid my uniform. Two days later, as I went out to buy cigarettes, I spotted my captain across the street. Luckily, he didn't see me! I hid behind an advertising kiosk. There were several episodes where I escaped by the skin of my teeth.

How did you survive the siege of Budapest?

J.F.B.:

We transformed cellars into air raid shelters. In Pest, walls were broken through, and a tunnel system developed. We would shoot a horse, and get bread from the bakery in exchange for horsemeat.

What did you do after the war?

J.F.B.:

I got married and moved to Nyíregyháza. My wife was a pharmacist. She got a job as a cashier in a Party movie house. I was doing linocuts and etchings for a printer and making large advertising posters for a movie house. A barter system developed: you paid or were paid in salt or vinegar. My daughter Katika was born at that time.

Then, due to a Communist Party initiative, I was made "Cultural Supervisor" in Szabolcs County. I had no notion what I was supposed to do. Finally, I hit on the idea of making up fact-finding questionnaires. We learned that about one fifth of the population (over 40,000 people) was illiterate. So I organized literacy programs, with such good results, that even years later, people would come up to me on the street and thank me.

Were you in Budapest at the time of the 1956 Uprising?

J.F.B.:

Because of work at the office, I was able to join the march to the Bem statue only later, but I was close to Péter Veres when he spoke. Then we all went to the Parliament, where some official told us to go home, and the lights in the square, except for the red star on top of the building, were turned off. The students then lit their notebooks, producing torches that lit up the night.

A truck brought us news of the AVH shooting at the people in front of the radio station, and the older students rushed there. A tank came up as reinforcement, in front of the radio station, and stopped at the corner. But it had no ammunition, so it just kept moving around. It hit my leg, and chipped a bone. I was limping, but friends helped me to the Kárpátia restaurant where many from the Bólyai Kollégium, who became members of the Nagy Imre government, had gathered.

Friends started a daily paper called "Igazság" ("Truth") in the offices of Élet és Tudomány, where I was editor, with information provided by friends, and I took lots of pictures. Those pictures were found later by the Communist Secret Police and used to identify participants in the Revolution, whom they then jailed or executed.

When did you come to America, and how?

J.F.B.:

In 1965, I managed to get a visa to Austria, for my daughter and myself. (My wife had passed away by then.) Only in Vienna did I tell my daughter that we were not going back. Instead, we managed to get to England, where I made signs for a Hungarian-owned fast food restaurant and restored old English family albums from negatives. Our visas were expiring, and

the American consulate was not helpful at all. So I went to see a reporter for the Sunday London Times, who, as I remembered, had been to Hungary. Our story was published in the next Sunday's issue, reporting my remark that people were concerned for the humane transportation of chickens (an article on which had just appeared in the paper), but that on the other hand no one cared for my daughter and me who were facing deportation. As a result of the article, Senator Abraham Ribicoff of Connecticut pushed through a private bill, authorizing the admission of my daughter and myself to America. My daughter, however, stayed in London and got married there.

Did you return to Bridgeport?

J.F.B.:

My cousin picked me up at the airport and took me to Spruce Street, Bridgeport, to the house where I had lived as a child. I was first given a job as a housepainter, then worked in the family business, the Balogh Screw Machine Factory, located where the bus terminal is now. Then I went to work at the Screw Machine at Congress Street in Fairfield.

My cousin, Margit Havery, was working at Caldor's in Norwalk. She asked me to do some drawings, so I copied some things from magazines, and she took them in. I was hired on the spot as a "hard goods illustrator." When some time later they gave me only a \$5 raise, I left Caldor's. I bought enlarging equipment and worked at home, doing catalogs and illustrations, for Perkin Elmer, Benrus, Mr. Clubwoman, Control Data Corporation.

Do you have any plans for your "retirement" from MAGYAR NEWS?

J.F.B.:

I will still be involved² with MagyarNewsOnline, and will try to contribute an artistic point of view.

A Hungarian (???) French President

On May 16, 2007, Nicolas Sarkozy (nagybócsai Sárközy Miklós, to give him his full name) was sworn in as the 23rd President of the French Republic.

His father, nagybócsai Sárközy Pál, was born in Budapest in 1928. The family owned land and a small castle in Alattyán, southeast of Jászberény. They fled to Germany in 1944, but returned to Hungary the following year, to find that all their possessions had been seized. Pál fled to the West to escape being drafted, or rounded up and sent to Siberia. He enrolled in the French Foreign Legion, and was about to be sent to Indochina (Vietnam). But a Foreign Legion doctor, who also happened to be Hungarian, gave him a medical discharge, saving him from probable death.

Pál Sárközy moved to Paris and worked in advertising. He married Andrée Mallah, daughter of a Jewish doctor who had converted to Catholicism. They had three sons, Guillaume, born in 1951; Nicolas, born in 1955; and FranVois, born in 1957. He left his wife and children and remarried.

Nicolas Sárközy was more influenced by his grandfather than by his father, who was often absent. He studied Law, and graduated with a master's degree in French Business Law. He also practiced Family Law, which enabled him to help his mother take legal action against his father to raise alimony. Nicolas divorced his first wife, Marie-Dominique Culioli, by whom he has two sons, Pierre and Jean. He has one son, Louis, from his second wife Cécilia Ciganer-Albeniz. Pál Sárközy did not teach his children Hungarian, or anything else about their Hungarian heritage. So the new

French President is Hungarian in name only! Perhaps some day we'll have an American president with a Hungarian.

A New Hungarian Invention To Save the World

By

Joseph F. Balogh



Anyone who knows the people of Central Europe will recognize that Hungarians will always find a way to help the world. The generator, television (including color television), the carburetor used by many of us day by day, and many other inventions have their roots in the Carpathian Basin. Now, at the Medical University in Pecs, Hungary, a research group under the leadership of Laszlo Szabo is obtaining permits to conduct research on an exciting new area, with the experimental population consisting of several hundred volunteer medical patients.

This research will focus on the stem cells of the human body. A great deal of discussion is taking place here and abroad regarding human stem cells, on both the medical and political fronts. On the political front, particularly, stem cells continue to be the subject of controversy.

But what are stem cells? "Stem cells are primal cells found in all multi-cellular organisms that retain the ability to renew themselves through cell division, and can differentiate into a diverse range of specialized cell types" as you find it written in the encyclopedia. Research in the human stem cell field grew out of findings by Canadian scientists

Ernest A. McCulloch and James E. Till in the 1960's. These cells can be found in a fertilized egg in a fetus. Stem cells have the capacity to convert to different types of cells found in the human body. They are also found in the umbilical cord, and scattered throughout the human body where they do the repair job when a tissue experiences damage, such as when someone cuts a finger. The number of stem cells tends to diminish with age, as they are used up in the process of repairing body tissue.

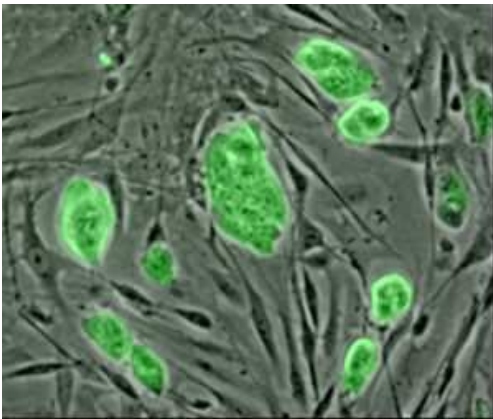
Bone marrow stem cells can produce red blood cells, white cells, platelets, and brain cells. Dr. McCulloch was able to go a step further. He concluded that blue algae facilitates the growth of stem cells, and causes them to multiply. Unfortunately, he stopped there. At this point the Hungarians stepped in. They broadened the scope of the research related to Dr. McCulloch's conclusion, testing a variety of materials to determine their effect on stem cells. They found, for example, that the pit of an apricot slows down the functioning of stem cells, while garlic speeds up their functioning.

A research group at the Universities of Pecs and Eger have identified a variety of substances which appear to have an effect on stem cell functioning. These are not conventional pharmaceuticals, but rather additives such as one might find in a multi-vitamin capsule. At the University of Pecs, Dr. Laszlo Szabo is creating an experimental group consisting of several hundred volunteers, who will test the effectiveness of these substances which have been created in capsule form. Permit applications for the study are now being finalized.

Some preliminary test results appear to be significant. A woman wearing thick glasses simply stopped

wearing them as though she had never needed them. A man suffering from multiple sclerosis began to move his legs, and after a while began to take steps on his own. While these are very preliminary observations, Istvan Ember and Istvan Kis view their research as something very much worth doing. They will be testing a variety of substances, and looking at results and side effects.

So far about nine substances, contained in capsules manufactured in Eger, are suggesting positive results. If successful in the long run, this approach may achieve results which are presently achieved in other countries at a very high cost. Perhaps soon stem cell therapy will not require one to travel long distances and spend large amounts of money. One might be able to sit at home, undertake treatment without pain, and avoid personal bankruptcy. It is good to have Hungarians around.



Joseph Balogh has had long careers in journalism in both Hungary and the United States, and is presently the Editor of Magyar News Online.

SOULS THAT MAKE HUNGARIAN FUTURE

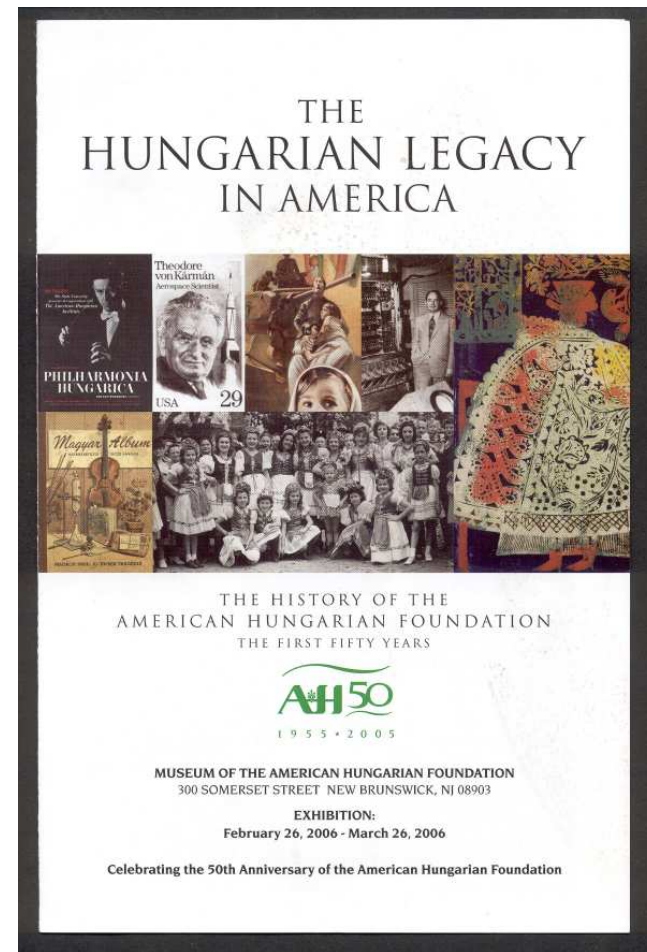
Claudia Margitay-Balogh

New Jersey has always been a very diverse state and prides itself on this fact which can be traced throughout its history. I learned this at the Champagne Gala Reception that I attended with my husband Joseph Balogh on Wednesday, June 27, 2007 at the Museum of the American Hungarian Foundation in New Brunswick, New Jersey. This celebratory event launched the publication of the book The Hungarian Legacy in America: The Story of the American Hungarian Foundation, The First fifty Years.

the museum. On Plum Street which is off of Somerset Street, there is the Sziechinyi Magyar Iskola and on the corner is a bronze relief, created by the sculptor Gyuri Hollssi, commemorating those Hungarians who fought in the 1956 Hungarian Revolution.

Yet, when I looked up and down the streets as I was traveling to the museum, I did indeed see a different neighborhood than what was in the past. The refugees of the 1950's have moved to the outskirts of the city. The homes on Somerset Street are now occupied by

new immigrants from countries that are far removed from Hungary. It is these new immigrants' turn to create restaurants that feature their countries' cuisine and establish stores which sell their countries' products. I must admit that I was disappointed to see a rental sign on the building that used to house the Hungarian restaurant Csarda as we drove past it on our way to the museum. I realized that the restaurant with its menu of gulyas leves, borju porkolt, and gesztenye puri was meant for the past and not the present so I will have to be satisfied with my gastronomical memories. Ethnic neighborhoods are



New Brunswick was indeed filled with Hungarians for many decades. Somerset Street, even today, is the site for the Magyar Reformed Church, the Hungarian Athletic Club, St Ladislaus Roman Catholic Church, and, of course,

changing not just on Somerset Street but throughout America. This is just the natural progression, and all of us need to accept this change and embrace diversity. With this said, I must admit that I felt so proud to be an American

born Hungarian as I listened to Professor August J. Molnar introduce the dignitaries in attendance and their contribution to the American Hungarian Foundation. I immediately understood why this foundation has continued to grow and get stronger through the years. The answer lies with Professor Molnar. His love and respect for the Hungarian people who immigrated to this country is evident in each word he speaks, each thought he ponders, and each sentence he writes. It was with such joy that Professor Molnar spoke of those Hungarians who worked in the mines of Pennsylvania or settled in New Jersey making New Brunswick, a little Hungary.

Professor Molnar, a third generation Hungarian, in his remarks, thanked his mentor Dr. Barnabas Dienes (1895-1950) who founded the program of Hungarian studies at Elmhurst College in Illinois in 1941. It was Dr. Dienes' leadership and vision that instilled the idea of the American Hungarian Foundation which was established as a non-profit corporation in 1955.

Since that time, Professor Molnar has made the foundation his life's work. It is through the museum, the library, the archive, and all of its programs that continue to in-



Professor August Molnar

crease and enhance the appreciation and understanding of the Hungarian cultural heritage and legacy in America. Professor Molnar's devotion to preserving the Hungarian legacy in America has been tenacious. He has never been swayed by negativity and has created a museum on Somerset Street that applauds the achievements of American Hungarians. So the neighborhood around the museum will continue to change in its ethnicity, yet it is my prayer that with knowledge and understanding of the American Hungarian Foundation's purpose, the museum, library, and archive will continue to thrive and expand. The museum on Somerset Street in New Brunswick, New Jersey must always be the base for American Hungarians so that the neighborhood's spirit from the older population can be passed on to the new population and into the future.

Each time I visit the museum, I always leave with more knowledge; yet after this event, I was thrilled to be able to see the past and connect it to the future.

HAPPY 112TH. BIRTHDAY!

Joseph F. Balogh

Elizabeth Molnar Stefan living in Norwalk, CT with a hearing aid watches TV sitting in her wheelchair. Presently she is in the Honey Hill Nursing Home where she visits other patients every day. She speaks Hungarian and English and is one makes a mistake she take the trouble to correct them.

The following article was published in the MAGYAR NEWS on June 1998

“I RATHER GO TO AMERICA”

“MEMORIES ON THE ONE HUNDRED AND THIRD BIRTHDAY”

It happens to all of us, young and old, that we don't remember some events that we were part of, we forget names, even somebody we used to date. Years go by, a few decades, and we run out of storage place. So just imagine how much room is need it to keep on file 103 years of memories.

I met a lady, naturally a Hungarian, who put me to shame because she recalled a century with more precision and accuracy than I could with many decades less.

One day I ran into an old friend, Bela Szabo from Norwalk. Catching up with things since we last got together, he said that he has something for me. Not that much of something, rather somebody. This led us to knock on the door of Mrs. Elizabeth Stefan. She is an elderly lady, living on a separate apartment of her son's house. The son's exemplary support probably added years to her life. She walks with the aid of a cane, moves around the house, takes care of her self, and does the cooking and other household chores. She is also quite a talker. She doesn't search for words or mix up sequences. She sits in an easy chair with a commanding posture and she is in charge. All you have to do is ask her a question and the floodgate of memories open and you hear the stories of four generations.

I will try to 'remember' what Elizabeth Molnar Stefan told me about her life. As an interesting coincidence her mother, Polly Tárcy, was born in the same village, Zemplenagard, where my mother came from. The grandfather, Joseph Tarczy, who was some sort of an official, a law enforcement person, died early in a confrontation with criminals. The grandmother then moved to Szabolcsveresmart with her children. Though they didn't go far, the new place was OnN the other side of the river, a few villages down. In those days that was quite a distance.

Elizabeth's mother got married there and had four daughters and two boys. The older daughter, Emma, was the first to immigrate to the United States. She married Lajos Szabo from the

same village. He came to America and his wife followed him. After Bridgeport they tried Cleveland, but shortly they came back to this area. That is when Elizabeth made up her mind to follow her sister. She was eighteen years old then. Her grandmother already had a wealthy man from the old village lined up. He asked Elizabeth to marry him. He was a widower, married twice. Both wives died. Elizabeth's answer was a definite no. she said: "I don't want to marry a widower and for sure I didn't want to be the third wife to die. I rather go to America". Well, so she did, found a husband for herself, had two boys and a daughter. Today she is the grandmother of four, ages up to 50 years. She spent 85 years in this country. She celebrates her birthday on May 15.

Elizabeth received a \$50 ticket to cross the ocean on the President Grant ship to New York. On the ship she was separated from the other girls from the same village. There was limited access between different parts of the ship. So she went to the captain to let her spend time with her friends. She succeeded despite the fact that she spoke no English at all. The problem started when they reached the shores of the United States. She was separated from all the people she knew and was taken off the ship two days earlier than the others. The special treatment was the result of having a paid-up ticket. A man who spoke no Hungarian took Elizabeth on the tender across the water to the railroad station. All she had was her luggage and a tag pinned to her coat giving the address where she was heading. On the train she found no Hungarians, those who came off the ship were Slavs and Germans, and various other nationalities. She had a strange feeling that was compounded when she set foot on the platform in Bridgeport. There was nobody for her! I'm sure that panic struck though she denies it. But, some people have luck coming out of the blue sky. A woman who

got off the same train, probably measured Elizabeth up, or heard her say some Hungarian words, asked if she is Hungarian. At this point it sounded like a guardian angel. Well this angel took her under her wings and brought her safely to the sister's house. It turned out that they received the telegram and went to the station. A train arrived from New York and Elizabeth wasn't on it. So they went home to wait for some other news. They were at the wrong train. What has a bad start, as it is said in Hungary, has a good ending, and in this case the 103 years prove it.

There were still many hurdles to get over. Elizabeth had to find work so she could pay back the \$50. She also had to pay rent. In those days it was imperative to establish financial security. All "greenhorns" were doing the same thing. Once they were able to have an apartment they became landlords. City ordinance did not regulate renting and there was no concept about subletting. Elizabeth's sister had a two bedroom apartment. She and another girl lived in the same room with her sister and her husband. The other room was rented to young men. Circumstances and necessity could make strange bed-fellows. These tight quarters went on for almost two years when Elizabeth moved out and with two other girls rented a room at a different family in the same neighborhood.

Naturally to find a job and be paid for the work was extremely important. In a way the knowledge of English language wasn't that necessary. In this area the Hungarian community was sizable. At the work places Hungarians were all around. Most of the work was paid by the pieces they made. Elizabeth was on the assembly line at the electrical factory. Then she went to the corset factory for better pay. Unfortunately there was a slow-down in production and she ended up working a couple of hours a day. This way she made \$12 and she had to dish out \$6 for rent. So

she went to an Irish couple as a maid. As you could guess communication was nil. She kept the place nice and neat and did some light cooking. It was an easy job but not enough money. During this time the corset factory came back with more work and better pay and Elizabeth went back sewing.

When I asked her about her social life her face lit up. There were several proposals. Two of them were funny. "Life was very different to what it is now", she said. "There was no TV and if you wanted to go somewhere most of the time it was a long walk. We girls were in front of the house to see what was going on in the neighborhood. But we never stood outside of the fence, we were on the inside. One day a young man stopped and started a conversation. He was nice and we talked a bit. Later, when I happened to be standing at the fence, he came by, we talked a little. After a while he came straight out with the question asking me to marry him. I figured this was very fast and I said no."

The other funny one she remembered had some of the same characteristics. With many giggles she told the story. "I was at the fence when a boy stopped and started a conversation. This one didn't wait for the second time. He immediately asked me to marry him. He said he cuts hair and he is going to make a lot of money. He looked at my shoes that were old fashioned kind with three buttons on the side, and said that he wouldn't let me wear them with black buttons. He would buy me shoes with real gold buttons. So I asked him how old he was. He told me that he was eighteen. I just looked at him and with this the conversation came to an end."

Curious about social life in those days, I asked if there were something more exiting then standing inside the fence. Well, it looks like there was no shortage there either. The West End movie for 5 cents was one of the choices. The others were the many social events of the Hungarian churches in the neighborhood.

churches, the Slovak, German and Croatians. The best was the Rakoczi Hall on Bostwick Avenue. Elizabeth happened to live across the street and didn't have to walk far. Every weekend they organized dances. To go to these one had to make a decision. While the movie cost only a nickel, the dance was ten times more, it was 50 cents. But as the young people were concerned it was worth it.

As Elizabeth remembered: "Many times we were hesitant to go to the Hall, but the orchestra came out to the front of the Hall and played weekend evenings. The sound of the good Hungarian music tickled our feet and we ended up at the dance." As she was talking about the good Hungarian music, sitting in her easy chair with the cane next to her, she wiggled around rhythmically, demonstrating that she never had to play the wallflower; she was on the dance floor all the time.

Aside from the social life, I couldn't miss asking about her husband. Knowing that they had 52 years of happy marriage, I figured that the events leading up to it should have some extraordinary significance. The first meeting happened just after she moved away from her sister. By coin-

idence Elizabeth rented a room where her future husband used to live. He, Andy took off to the mining region in Pennsylvania. One day he came back to Bridgeport to find work here. Hoping to get his former room back, he called on the landlord. As they were having a chat in the kitchen, Elizabeth came home. She doesn't remember saying a hello or anything. She was struck and stunned. She clutched on her heart, showed how she was gasping for air, putting her hand on her forehead, leaning back in her easy chair as if she was about to die. Pretty good performance on romance for a 103 year old lady.

She said: "I couldn't figure out what happened to me. As I stepped into the kitchen and saw the man sitting there, I felt a big thump in my heart. I got so weak that I thought I was going to faint and collapse. I was hardly able to walk through to my room. My room mate had to help me sit down and it took quite some time to get my breath back. I'd never experienced anything like this."

This sounded like a full-blown case of love at first sight. Next day the landlord told Elizabeth that the young man came back during the day and asked about her. He said that he was

really interested in meeting her. Despite the fact that a situation like this requires immediate action, a very restrained courting went on for almost two years. I am sure that for young girls of today this sounds amazing, but no happy end could be happier than this was.

Andy put his foot down and they got married. An interesting fact played a roll in this delay. It wasn't financial. In some cases we run into this now days too. This fact was religion. Andy was Catholic, Elizabeth was protestant. Thought the happy couple didn't seem to have a problem with this, the relatives on both sides made it a crucial point; relatives here in America and relatives back in the old country. Even after the marriage it was kept on the surface, so much so that relatives broke off contact with the new couple. As it happens in these circumstances an uncontrollable rumbling of rumors took place. There was nothing in this world that could separate them.

In the beginning of their marriage they moved around, depending on where they found work. First they went back to the mining region, then they pulled through the depression in Yonkers, came back and finally settled in Norwalk. Andy lived till the age of 77 but was in bad health later on because of the black lung disease he developed in the mines.

Elizabeth still cherishes the wedding picture. She sent a copy of it after the wedding to Szabolcsveresmart, as she said: "I want them to see what a nice tall and handsome husband I have."

We wish her many happy returns and God's blessings.



Your Roots in Historic Hungary

by Vic Berecz

2. Using the Ellis Island Website – Part 1.

In the first article of this series, I wrote of the four basic pieces of data about your immigrant ancestors needed to get started with your search for your roots in historic Hungary. They are:

1. Their birth name – both given name and family name.
2. Their approximate year of birth – preferably no later than 1895.
3. The town or city in historic Hungary in which they were born.

Their religion.

For some, finding this information may be easy ... for others, it may be quite difficult. One *free* on-line resource that may be helpful in finding or confirming your basic data is the so-called *Ellis Island Website* found at [Ellis Island Website](http://www.ellislandrecords.org) the actual URL being www.ellislandrecords.org This is the website of the *Statue of Liberty - Ellis Island Foundation, Inc.* It contains records of all the ship arrivals at the Port of New York from 1892 to 1924 along with their passenger manifests. Remember, the great bulk of immigrants from historic Hungary first arrived in the US between 1897 and 1914.

Even if you don't need this website to find your basic data, it's an interesting and fun site to explore ... and you may gain some very significant insights into your family history. The principal focus of this Part 1 is what the manifests look like, and what information they include. Part 2 will address the mechanics and problems of using the website. But, try the website right away ... it's not too difficult to learn on your own.

General Notes on Immigrant Ships.

Immigrants from historic Hungary departed from ports all over Europe. Bremen, Antwerp, and Rotterdam are most common for pre-1910 immigrants from Hungary. Southampton, Cherbourg, Hamburg, Genoa, and Tri-

este also are found as embarkation points. For later immigrants, Fiume (the only seaport in Hungary) was by far the most common port of embarkation. All citizens of historic Hungary, no matter what their ethnicity, traveled with Hungarian passports. An example of a Hungarian passport is shown in my tutorial at [Hungarian Family History Tutorial - Personal Document Examples](#).

Most ships had three classes, and were built specifically for the immigration routes. First Class (also called *Saloon*) passengers tended to be wealthy *world travelers* or business travelers. Second Class (also called *Cabin*) passengers were a variety of travelers of lesser means, and better-off immigrants (often females traveling alone). Third Class (usually called *Steerage*) passengers were the masses of immigrants who made the trip in cramped dormitory-like quarters in the bowels of the ship. By way of example, the SS *Statendam*, which was built in 1898 for the immigration trade, carried 200 1st class passengers, 175 2nd class passengers, and 2,000 steerage passengers.

Steerage passengers were processed through the Ellis Island immigration center ... most other passengers were ferried directly to Manhattan. But, the website database includes the manifests for all passengers.

The Beginnings of Ellis Island and Standardized Passenger Manifests.

In 1890, the Federal Government took over responsibility for immigration from the states. Ellis Island in New York harbor was established as the principal immigration center in the U.S. Some immigrants from historic Hungary arrived in Philadelphia, but the great majority arrived in New York and so their arrival records are available on the *Ellis Island Website*.

1893-1903 Manifests. In 1893, Congress required a relatively standard manifest of passengers to be used by arriving ships. [Figure 2-1](#) shows a page from the **1899 manifest of the SS Kensington** which arrived from Antwerp on August 12. This example is the standard form, *but* many shipping companies printed their own forms and so slightly differing data is found on some manifests through 1903. These forms were used before the arrival of my grandparents in the US, so the example here shows the ancestors of a close friend. The SS *Kensington* example shows the Kardos family, on lines 5-8. They immigrated in 1899 to South Norwalk, CT.

1903-1907 Manifests. Congress mandated a standardized form for passenger manifests in 1903 that was to be used by all shipping lines. [Figure 2-2](#) shows a **1905 manifest of the SS Statendam which arrived from Rotterdam on April 25**. This example shows the arrival of Second Class (Cabin) passengers including my grandmother Eszter Nemes (#21) and her friend Mariska Löwinger (#20).

For a few months in late 1906 and early 1907 a Personal Description Adendum (PDA) was attached to the manifest form of 1903, and provided additional personal data for each immigrant in unnumbered columns. [Figure 2-3](#) is a **1906 steerage manifest of the SS Chemnitz arriving from Bremen on December 1** with the PDA attached, and includes my grandfather, Viktor Berecz as #23.

1907-1914 Manifests. In 1907 Congress revised the immigration law requiring the personal description information as well one major new piece of additional information on the manifest. The new form, which is two pages, was used from mid-1907. With the onset of World War I in the summer of

Summary Table of Manifest Data by Column

Data Item	1893 Form	1903 Form	1906-7 w/ PDA	1907 Form	See Note (s)
Number on List	1	1	1	1 & 13	
Name in Full	2	2	2	2	a
Age (Years & Months)	3	3	3	3	b
Sex (M or F)	4	4	4	4	
Married or Single	5	5	5	5	
Calling or Occupation	6	6	6	6	c
Able to (Read & Write)	7	7	7	7	
Nationality	8	8	8	8	d
Race or People		9	9	9	d
Port of Entry to US	9				
Last Permanent Residence	10	10	10	10	e
Nearest Relative at Home				11	f
Final Destination in US	11	11	11	12	g
Ticket to Destination?	12	12	12	14	g
Who paid passage?	13	13	13	15	g
Carrying how much money?	14	14	14	16	g
Ever before in US? If so when?	15	15	15	17	g
Who are you joining?	16	16	16	18	g
Have you been in prison, etc?	17	17	17	19	h
Are you a polygamist?	18	18	18	20	h
Are you an anarchist?		19	19	21	h
Are you on a work contract?	19	20	20	22	h
Condition of Health	20	21	21	23	i
Deformed or Crippled?	21	22	22	24	i
Height (Feet & Inches)			yes	25	j
Complexion			yes	26	j
Color of (Hair & Eyes)			yes	27	g
Marks of Identification			yes	28	j
Place of Birth			yes	29	k

Figure 2-4 shows a 2nd class manifest of the 1910 arrival from Bremen of the SS Kronprinzessen Cecilie on October 5. My Berecz grandparents had both been in the U.S. for a few years, as you saw from the previous examples. Both returned to Hungary during the winter of 1908-09 for differing personal reasons. They never met in the US, rather they met aboard their returning ship. There was a quick courtship in Hungary, they married in Inota in September 1909, and their honeymoon trip was a return to New York immediately after the wedding. So you will find their arrival as #4 and #5 on this example manifest.

General Comments on Manifests. The manifest forms were pre-printed for the various classes of passengers aboard ship, since steerage passengers were treated differently than cabin passengers by the US immigration officials. The name of the ship, the date of sailing, and the date of arrival were hand-written at the top of each page.

Virtually all pre-WWI manifests are hand-written, usually by the ship's purser who may or may not have spoken the language of the immigrants. Therefore, legibility and misunderstandings are a very common problem, especially for those immigrants who were themselves illiterate. The manifests were usually signed by both the captain and the ship's doctor. Each page of the standard manifests is numbered from "1" – but some early manifests on shipping company forms were numbered otherwise. The two pages of the 1907 form are each numbered identically to ensure data for two individuals is not confused.

You will see many annotations made upon arrival. These often obliterate information previously recorded by the purser. Check it

out carefully, something useful may be under those notes.

Notes on Manifest Data Items.

a. Name in Full. The 1907 form specifies *Family Name* and *Given Name*. The earlier forms did not and so were subject to misinterpretation. For example, a problem waiting to happen is a Bridgeport, CT immigrant named *István Pál* whose family I recently assisted.

b. Age. Typically, the months field was only used for infants, for example see the Kardos baby (#8 in the SS Kensington manifest). This means that the age-in-years given here only provides an approximation of the year of birth. Also remember that some immigrants "fudged" their age for various reasons (too young to travel alone, avoiding the military draft in Hungary, didn't want husband to know how old she really is, etc).

c. Calling or Occupation. People with skills often specified how they were employed in Hungary. But, many unskilled immigrants simply listed the type of job they hoped to get in the US – often *laborer* for men and *servant* for women.

d. Nationality and Ethnicity. For citizens of historic Hungary, nationality should always be listed as *Hungary*. But, occasionally you will see Hungarian immigrants listed as *Austrian* (especially on British and French ships) due to confusion about status in the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy. The *Race or People* column listed the ethnicity with which people identified themselves ... typically Magyar, Slovak, German, Croatian, etc. There was a limited list of ethnicities that could

be used. For example, *Wend* was not included so my other grandmother listed *Slovak* – an easy answer for many Slavic people. Religion was not listed on any manifest forms, but *Hebrew* was a permitted ethnicity. Therefore Jews are identifiable ... though note in the SS Statendam example that my Hungarian Reformed grandmother was listed as Hebrew, probably because she was with a Jewish friend and the purser didn't inquire with both girls.

e. Last Permanent Residence. On earlier manifests, this is your only clue to the immigrant's birthplace ... but remember there is no certainty it is (or is even near) their birthplace. Usually, only the town name is given, not the county (*megye* in Hungarian). But, there are relatively few town names that existed in multiple counties. Note in the SS Kronprinzessen Cecilie example that my grandparents gave their last permanent residence as New York and that their entries were stamped *Non-Immigrant Alien*. This is typical for people who previously lived in the US.

f. Nearest Relative in country from whence you came. This (in addition to the PDA data) is the major change made in the 1907 form, and it can be very important. Usually the relationship, name and address are all specified. For instance, in the SS Kronprinzessen Cecilie example, my grandfather gave the name and address of his father as his closest relative in Hungary (which is evidence that my great-grandfather was still living in 1909); my grandmother simply indicated the same person as her *father-in-law*, and therefore we learn nothing additional

about her family. But, there can be implicit knowledge gained – probably if a mother is listed as the closest relative, the father is deceased (or living in the US). Occasionally, you find someone (perhaps a spouse or sibling) who you didn't even know existed.

g. Where are you going? and can you get there? From an immigration service perspective, these six columns all relate to these two basic questions. From a family history perspective, where the immigrant is going, and who they are joining often confirm that you have the correct person, and perhaps identifies a relative in the US that you were unaware of. Plus, it's always interesting to see how little money our ancestors ventured across the sea with.

h. Questions to which everyone answers NO. These four questions will always have an emphatic *no* for an answer. Simply stated, if you had been in prison, a poor house, an insane asylum, are a polygamist or anarchist, or are coming to the US as an indentured laborer you almost certainly won't be admitted.

i. Health and deformities. Most people listed their health as *good*, and listed *no* deformities. Occasionally you see a note from the ship's doctor (as with the SS Chemnitz example), or that a person has a missing finger or some other minor deformity. But, even these notes are rare.

j. Personal Description. From our perspective, this information may be of interest, but is not important to family history research. Sometimes visible *scars* are listed in the *Marks of Identification* column, and I have seen *pock-marked face* listed ... which may be indicative of a smallpox survivor.

k. Place of Birth. This, of course, may be the most important piece of data you find in a post-1906 manifest, because it is often the most difficult of the four basic data items needed for successful research. Good Luck!

Summary. In general, post-1907 ship's manifests give the most information about immigrants, and can be critical to establishing a good starting point for your research into vital data in Hungarian church records. There are additional examples that may be of interest in the Ship's Manifests section of my tutorial at [Tutorial: Ship's Manifests](#) ... also note that the first five articles in this series will be a basic introduction. I'd like to tailor subsequent articles to reader's interests. Therefore, your feedback would be appreciated. Write me at Vic@Berecz.us

Next: Using the Ellis Island Website – Part 2.

Did You Know....

that the greeting "hello" had a Hungarian origin?

Tivadar Puskás, assistant of Thomas Edison for a time, was the first to come up with the idea of a telephone exchange. While demonstrating it at the Paris Opera, his partner at the other end of the stage asked, "Hallod?" ("Do you hear it?") Puskás replied, "Hallom!" ("I hear it!") As the French were puzzled by the different endings (-d and -m), they dropped them, and so we have "Halló" - or "Hello".



Ti-
vadar

Puskás

Magyar Konyha

Csöröge

Eliz's recipe

Knead 350 g of flour (2 cups)
20 g of sugar (3 tablespoon)
5 egg yolks,
One whole egg,
2 tablespoonfuls of sour cream,
One tablespoonful of rum and
A pinch of salt

Roll dough to matchstick thickness, cut into stripes and shape around your fingers.

Deep-fry only one layer of cookies at the time in hot oil. Turn cookies with fork as they rise to surface. Drain cookies, and sprinkle top with vanilla sugar.



LIST OF MARINE VESSELS

Required by the regulations of the Secretary of the Treasury of the United States, under Act of Congress approved March 3, 1869, to be delivered to the Commissioner of Immigration by the Commanding officer of any vessel having such passengers on board upon arrival at a port in the United States.

No. in List	Name in Full	Age	Sex	Color	Rank	Prof.	Religion	Maritality	Last Residence	Support in United States	By whom was support paid?	Whether ever before in the United States, and if so, when and where he arrived.	Whether going to sea a relative and if so, what relation, and name of address.	17	18	19	20	21
31	David Rosenberg	32	M	White	Single	None	Russian	Single	None	None	Self	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
32	Finkel, Isidor	26	M	White	Single	None	Russian	Single	None	None	Self	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
33	Jan, David	35	M	White	Single	None	Russian	Single	None	None	Self	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
34	Marina, Abraham	34	F	White	Single	None	Russian	Single	None	None	Self	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
35	Maria (Banya) Mendel	32	F	White	Single	None	Russian	Single	None	None	Self	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
36	Abraham, --	33	M	White	Single	None	Russian	Single	None	None	Self	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
37	Abraham, --	33	M	White	Single	None	Russian	Single	None	None	Self	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
38	Abraham, --	33	M	White	Single	None	Russian	Single	None	None	Self	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
39	Abraham, --	33	M	White	Single	None	Russian	Single	None	None	Self	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
40	Abraham, --	33	M	White	Single	None	Russian	Single	None	None	Self	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
41	Abraham, --	33	M	White	Single	None	Russian	Single	None	None	Self	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
42	Abraham, --	33	M	White	Single	None	Russian	Single	None	None	Self	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
43	Abraham, --	33	M	White	Single	None	Russian	Single	None	None	Self	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
44	Abraham, --	33	M	White	Single	None	Russian	Single	None	None	Self	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
45	Abraham, --	33	M	White	Single	None	Russian	Single	None	None	Self	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
46	Abraham, --	33	M	White	Single	None	Russian	Single	None	None	Self	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
47	Abraham, --	33	M	White	Single	None	Russian	Single	None	None	Self	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
48	Abraham, --	33	M	White	Single	None	Russian	Single	None	None	Self	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
49	Abraham, --	33	M	White	Single	None	Russian	Single	None	None	Self	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
50	Abraham, --	33	M	White	Single	None	Russian	Single	None	None	Self	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
51	Abraham, --	33	M	White	Single	None	Russian	Single	None	None	Self	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
52	Abraham, --	33	M	White	Single	None	Russian	Single	None	None	Self	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
53	Abraham, --	33	M	White	Single	None	Russian	Single	None	None	Self	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
54	Abraham, --	33	M	White	Single	None	Russian	Single	None	None	Self	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
55	Abraham, --	33	M	White	Single	None	Russian	Single	None	None	Self	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
56	Abraham, --	33	M	White	Single	None	Russian	Single	None	None	Self	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
57	Abraham, --	33	M	White	Single	None	Russian	Single	None	None	Self	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
58	Abraham, --	33	M	White	Single	None	Russian	Single	None	None	Self	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
59	Abraham, --	33	M	White	Single	None	Russian	Single	None	None	Self	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
60	Abraham, --	33	M	White	Single	None	Russian	Single	None	None	Self	no	no	no	no	no	no	no

Affidavit of the Master or Commanding Officer or First or Second Officer

Affidavit of Surgeon

Figure 2-1

Form No. 1
Bureau of Customs and Border Protection

SALOON, CABIN, AND STEERAGE ALIENS MUST BE COMPLETELY MANIFESTED.

LIST OR MANIFEST OF ALIEN PASSENGERS FOR THE UNITED STATES IMMIGRATION OFFICER AT PORT OF ARRIVAL

THIS SHEET IS FOR SECOND-CABIN PASSENGERS.

Required by the regulations of the Secretary of Commerce and Labor of the United States, under Act of Congress approved February 20, 1907, to be delivered to the United States Immigration Officer by the Commanding Officer of any vessel having such passengers on board upon arrival at a port in the United States.

S. S. *Argentinean* sailing from *Buenos Aires* *Argentine* 11th 1909

Arriving at Port of *New York* 1909

No.	Last Name	First Name	Sex	Age	Profession	Place of Birth	Date of Birth	Date of Departure	Date of Arrival	Where you were in the last 12 months (with date)	Where you are going to (with date and address)	IMMIGRATION INSPECTION RECORDS BY ARRIVAL AT PORT OF ARRIVAL		Place of Birth
												23	24	
1	<i>Salcedo</i>	<i>Francisco</i>	M	35		<i>Spain</i>				<i>Spain</i>		23	24	
2	<i>Alvarez</i>	<i>Jose</i>	M	30		<i>Spain</i>				<i>Spain</i>		23	24	
3	<i>Alvarez</i>	<i>Jose</i>	M	30		<i>Spain</i>				<i>Spain</i>		23	24	
4	<i>Alvarez</i>	<i>Jose</i>	M	30		<i>Spain</i>				<i>Spain</i>		23	24	
5	<i>Alvarez</i>	<i>Jose</i>	M	30		<i>Spain</i>				<i>Spain</i>		23	24	
6	<i>Alvarez</i>	<i>Jose</i>	M	30		<i>Spain</i>				<i>Spain</i>		23	24	
7	<i>Alvarez</i>	<i>Jose</i>	M	30		<i>Spain</i>				<i>Spain</i>		23	24	
8	<i>Alvarez</i>	<i>Jose</i>	M	30		<i>Spain</i>				<i>Spain</i>		23	24	
9	<i>Alvarez</i>	<i>Jose</i>	M	30		<i>Spain</i>				<i>Spain</i>		23	24	
10	<i>Alvarez</i>	<i>Jose</i>	M	30		<i>Spain</i>				<i>Spain</i>		23	24	

Figure 2-4