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## 80 years ago, on September 1st, WWII began

*Karolina Tima Szabó*

Because the end of World War I deprived Hungary of 71% of its territory, it pushed the country into the arms of Hitler, who proclaimed that he would bring about a revision of the peace treaties. Given the results of the Treaty of Trianon, that was exactly what the Magyars so ardently desired. They saw in Germany their only hope of changing their situation for the better.

This was partly realized by the two so-called Vienna Awards. The First, in November of 1938, returned to Hungary part of the Felvidék which had become part of Southern Slovakia after World War I. The Second Vienna Award, in August 1940, returned to Hungary Northern Transylvania – including Kolozsvár – which had been taken over by Romania after WWI.

Adolf Hitler, the German Chancellor had a plan to take over Poland; the only reason he postponed it was that Great Britain and France promised to fight to save Poland. Finally, on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1939, at 4:40 in the morning, the German air force started to bomb the Polish city of Wielun. A false provocation was used: German soldiers dressed in Polish uniforms took over the radio station in Gliwice, a small border city.

Prime Minister Count Teleki Pál let Hitler know that Hungary would remain neutral, and would not take part in the fight against Poland. Indeed, he made it possible for tens of thousands of Polish citizens to enter Hungary. The thousand years' friendship between Poland and Hungary was a major factor in his decision.



*Count Teleki Pál*

So how did Hungary get into the war?

Romania had agreed to the request of the Soviet Union, returning Bessarabia and giving up North Bukovina, which never belonged to Russia; but it re-

fused Hungary's request to give back Northern Transylvania, Partium and Székely land.

By the summer of 1940, Teleki had the Hungarian army lined up at the Romanian-Hungarian border. Hitler didn't want a conflict between two of his allies; and he needed Hungary's rail line for his troops to reach the Soviet Union. So on August 30<sup>th</sup>, by the Second Vienna Award, he gave back Northern Transylvania and Székely land to Hungary, which forced Teleki to become committed to the Germans.

In December, Count Teleki signed a permanent friendship agreement with Yugoslavia. A few months later, Hitler asked Hungary to take part in the attack on Yugoslavia. Teleki found himself in a dilemma, and

on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, he allegedly committed suicide (an event which is still debated to this day).

It was under Bárdossy László, the new Prime Minister, that the areas of Bácska, Muraköz and the so-called Baranya Triangle were reannexed from Yugoslavia.

On June 26<sup>th</sup>, 1941, "unidentified" airplanes bombed Kassa and Munkács, and Bárdossy declared war against the Soviet Union.

In 1942, the Germans ordered the Hungarian army, 207,000 soldiers and 45,000 people on forced labor (*munkaszolgálatos*) to the Don River. In January of the next year, that army was destroyed at the Battle of Voronezh. Regent Horthy Miklós appointed Kállay Miklós to replace Bárdossy. Kállay's main aim was to get the country out of the war, but his efforts were unsuccessful. Hitler asked Horthy for a new army to send to the front, and also demanded that he replace Kállay, which Horthy refused to do. Therefore, the Germans occupied Hungary on March 19<sup>th</sup>, 1944.

In October 1944, Regent Horthy tried again to get out of the war by announcing that he was making a separate peace treaty with the Soviet Union. Hitler had Horthy's son, ifj. Horthy Miklós kidnapped. Seeing that his other son, István, had lost his life in a "military airplane accident", Horthy gave in to the blackmail. He named Szálasi



*Prime Minister Dr. Kállay Miklós*

Ferenc the new Prime Minister, and resigned. Hitler immediately had Horthy interned in Germany.

With that, Hungary's darkest period of history began, with the rounding up and deportation of the Jews and other anti-Nazi individuals by Szálasi's Arrow Cross Party. This dark period continued after the war with the Rákosi era and up to 1990 when the Russians finally left Hungary.

The Soviet army entered Hungary by the Valley of the Úz and Csobányos River on August 26<sup>th</sup>, 1944. They completed the country's takeover on April 4<sup>th</sup>, 1945, when the last of the German army left Hungary by Nemesmedves. (In 1985, it came to light that the actual date was April 13<sup>th</sup>, and they left by way of Pinkamindszent.)

In the history of the world, WW II was the most devastat-

ing. About 55 million people died, including 6 million Jews, 2.6-3.1 million Japanese. On both sides of the spectrum, the terrors civilians and prisoners suffered were unprecedented, inflicted by the Japanese in China and Manchuria and against the American prisoners; by the Soviets in Eastern Europe; by the Germans in the bombing of England, and in the occupied Soviet territory, and in the Holocaust. And by the Allies, who bombed Europe.

Considering the ratio of lives lost to the total population, after Poland, the Soviet Union and Germany, Hungary lost the most lives. According to one source, approximate Hungarian losses amounted to 350,000 soldiers, 60,000-100,000 civilians, and 400,000 Jews. After the war, the relationship between the Allies – the United States and the Soviet Union – fell apart, and the long Cold War began.

*Karolina Tima Szabo is a retired Systems Analyst of the Connecticut Post newspaper and Webmaster of Magyar News Online.*

## **Magyar News Online**

242 Kings Hwy Cut-off  
Fairfield, CT 06824  
[www.magyarnews.org](http://www.magyarnews.org)

Editor: Erika Papp Faber  
Founder, Editor and Publisher  
Emeritus: Joseph F. Balogh  
Editorial Board:  
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## Budapest to Danbury

*Olga Vállay Szokolay*

*Seven-Eleven*, as a moniker for convenience stores in the United States, obtained a new meaning this summer. On July 11<sup>th</sup>, our beloved *Editor-in-Chief*, *Erika Papp Faber* observed the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her arrival in America with her family. More than 50 of her friends and extended family filled the lovely venue, Anthony's Lake Club in Danbury, Connecticut for a festive luncheon, to partake in her celebration.

The rain of the forecast politely waited until most of the guests were leaving. Yet, few availed themselves of the lovely terrace adorned with flowering plants, overlooking Lake Kenosia. The event's attractions were plentiful to keep people indoors. Pictures from the Papp family's life were projected in a continuous stream, courtesy of *Zsuzsa Lengyel* and *Karolina Szabo*.

The guests were seated at tables of eight. The center pieces at each table, hand-crafted by Erika and her friends, had a red-white-and-blue theme. At each setting, a "party favor", a copy of her new book "*With God's Little Finger Over Us*" greeted the participants. Title of the book was inspired by her Mother, who used to say that they had survived that horrendous bombing attack in April 1945 only because "God held His little finger over us." In ad-

dition to her childhood memories, selections from her Dad's diary and correspondence provide details of the daily lives of regular people who lived through World War II and after, details that one does not find in history books.



*Erika Papp Faber*

Benediction by *Father Gregg Mecca*, Pastor of St. Peter's Church, opened the festivities. *Father Ivan Csete*, whom Erika met when he was still a layperson standing in line to hear Cardinal Mindszenty at Fordham University, followed with greetings.

*Erika* welcomed the guests. She expressed thanks to all who made the day possible:

- to the good Lord for having helped them through the war, its aftermath and kept her for 70 years;
- to her aunt and uncle who helped her family survive and who sponsored them to come to this country;
- and to the United States for taking them in and giving them the opportunity to live free and to prosper.

Erika introduced her cousin, *Peter Vajk* and his wife *Dr. Helen Vajk*, who flew in from California for the occasion, representing his late parents "Uncle Raul" and "Aunt Louise". "Little Peter" was there with his siblings when the

Papp family arrived at the railroad station of Princeton-Junction, New Jersey on that memorable July 11<sup>th</sup>, in 1949.

The guests gave a warm appreciation to the couple of veterans – *John Edmond*, a Navy veteran of World War II, and *Paul Soos*

of Hungarian parentage who served as a Bombardier in the Vietnam War.

A special treat of the occasion was the participation of an Olympic champion. The world knows her as *Ekaterina Sabo*, but we call her *Szabó Kati*. She is the sister of *Zita Balogh*, Treasurer of our monthly webpage *Magyar News Online*. As part of her 20-medal collection, Kati won four gold medals in gymnastics at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics.

The event was enhanced by the visit of Erika's paternal third cousin, once removed, *Haeffner Donát* and his fiancée. Don just finished an assignment as Communications and Press Officer at the Hungarian embassy in Paris, France.

Erika also introduced two non-Hungarian fellow-immigrant

couples: *André and Gedi Campé* from Lithuania who arrived by boat the same year as she did, as well as *Joseph and Anna Thampoe* who came from Sri Lanka 25 years ago. She also presented an adopted member of her family, *Amy Doorga* and her Mom *Sheila* from Guyana. Her son, *Scott* was born here, so he is a "native American". She also thanked all those who had helped her with the arrangements, including *Eva Wajda* and *Barbara Raimundo*, both of whom had offered decorating suggestions and provided much appreciated assistance.

The culinary offerings and the service were certainly exquisite and greatly appreciated. All raised their glasses of champagne to a toast to the United States and sang *God Bless America*.

At dessert time, *Charles Balintitt* introduced *Olga Vállay Szokolay* who read her congratulatory poem of 10 seven-line stanzas, depicting the synopsis of Erika's lifeline, from Budapest to Danbury... each stanza ending with our heartfelt wishes:

**"Happy Anniversary!"**

The inscription on the cake expressed Erika's feelings concisely:

1949 – 2019  
*Deo gratias!*  
*Alleluia!*

*Olga Vállay Szokolay is an architect and Professor Emerita of Norwalk Community College, CT after three decades of teaching. She is a member of the Editorial Board of Magyar News Online.*



top: Erika with Cousin Peter Vajk, with Zita Balogh and Olympic Champion Ecaterina Szabo (Szabó Kati); middle: cake, Olga Vállay Szokolay (our "Poet Laureata") reading her poem; bottom: the "MNO Bunch" - seated: Karolina Szabó, Olga Vállay Szokolay, Éva Wajda, standing: Paul Soos, Zsuzsa Lengyel, Charles Bálintitt, Erika

# A Song About Soldiers Going Off to War

Erika Papp Faber

During the 20th century, young men in Hungary were called upon twice – in World War I and World War II – to fight in wars they did not want. Here is a popular song that describes them boarding trains in Budapest to be taken to the front at the border.

Budapesti vasútállomáson  
három gőzös áll a negyedik vágányon .  
Az elsőnek, jaj de füstöl a kéménye,  
azon visznek a magyar határszélre.

At the Budapest railroad station  
three train(s) (lit. steamers) stand on the fourth track.  
O how the chimney of the first one is smoking,  
on it they are taking me to the Hungarian frontier.

Szépen szól az egyes honvéd banda,  
magyar fiúk szépen menetelnek raja.  
Menetelnek messze idegen határba,  
mindegyik csak a szabadulást várja.

The number one national guard band sounds nice,  
Hungarian boys march nicely to it.  
They are marching to a distant foreign frontier,  
every one is only waiting for his discharge.

Budapesti vasútállomás – railroad station of Budapest – (abbreviated as "v.á.") In addition to several railroad stations, there are three major railroad terminals (*pályaudvar*, abbreviated as "p.u.") in Budapest: *Nyugati* (Western), and *Keleti* (Eastern), are located on the Pest side, and *Déli* (Southern) *pályaudvar*, is located on the Buda side.

***Déli pályaudvar's*** predecessor was opened in 1861. Its name is not derived from its geographic location, but from the name of the railway company that built it – the Déli Vasút. It was the end station of the Buda-Kanizsa line at the time.

It was totally bombed out during World War II, and reconstruction was completed only in 1975. It is the largest station on the Buda side, with trains servicing western Hungary. Some international trains arrive here and leave from here.

***Nyugati pályaudvar*** was opened in 1877, replacing the end station of Hungary's first railway line (1846) which ran be-

tween Pest and Vác. It is the largest station in Budapest, and has domestic train service to the outskirts and to eastern Hungary.

***Keleti pályaudvar*** was opened in 1883. It is the most frequented. Most international trains arrive and leave from here.

gőzös – meaning "steamer". A *gőzös* may be a locomotive, a railway train or a steamboat.

határszél – area next to the frontier – soldiers were sent to the area bordering Austria after World War I, before the plebiscite there – also, to the various border areas in World War II

határ – border; outlying fields  
egyes honvéd banda – the number one (egyes) national guard band –

egy – one  
egyes – number one  
Hányas szoba? What is the room number?  
Egyes. Number one.

***In Hungary, showing numbers on you fingers begins with the thumb!***

honvéd – term used first in the Freedom Fight of 1848-49 for the national guard set up by Kossuth Lajos to defend Hungary against the Austrians and the national minorities whom Austria was inciting to fight against the Hungarians. It literally means: "hon" – homeland, "véd" – defends.

According to the Compromise of 1867, the Hungarians were allowed to have their own homeland defense forces integrated into the Austro-Hungarian army, as the ***Honvédség***. The name has been continued to refer to the Hungarian defense forces to this day.

(Today's Budapest Honvéd Football Club used to be the army soccer team.)

szabadulás – being freed; liberation; discharge from the army –

"felszabadulás" was the term applied to the Russian take-over of the country at the end of WWII, and liberation from the Nazis

# “Operation Freedom” – Siamese Twins Separated by Hungarian Medical Team

*Erika Papp Faber*

*A Hungarian medical team, led by dr. Csóky András, made headlines around the world when, at the beginning of August in Dhaka (formerly Dacca), Bangladesh, its members separated a pair of 3-year old Siamese twin girls conjoined at the head. They had to develop their own protocol for the extremely difficult – and lengthy – procedure.*

“It would be impossible to separate these two”, thought dr. Csóky András, neurosurgeon, when he first encountered Rabeya and Rokaiya in Bangladesh in November 2017. But then he consulted another neurosurgeon, dr. Hudák István, who suggested a pioneering approach, and together they worked out a protocol for the entire procedure.

Dr. Csóky is the leading physician at the Neurosurgical Department of *Honvédkórház* in Budapest, and co-founder, with plastic surgeon dr. Pataki Gergely, of *Cselekvés a kiszolgáltatottakért alapítvány* (Action for Defenseless People Foundation). Purpose of the Foundation is to provide help for those who can do little or nothing to protect themselves due to their health or economic condition. They volunteer to perform free surgery, at home and abroad, provide instruction and assist in the acquisition of medical instruments, specialized hospital furnishings and rehabilita-

tion equipment.

The first phase of what became known as “Operation Freedom”, separating Rabeya and Rokaiya, took place in Bangladesh a year ago. At that time, 85% of the shared cerebral veins were separated in a series of three operations. Dr. Csóky András, head of the team, who himself has developed several new techniques for treating brain and spinal injuries, stated, “Dr. Hudák István, who is world-famous for endovascular matters (using catheters in the brain) was the only one in the world capable of performing this unique procedure.”

Next came preparatory surgery in Budapest, in January of this year. During the seven months the children (with their parents) were in Budapest, dr. Pataki performed a series of 44 surgeries, grafting a specific Hungarian-designed tissue-expanding implant system into the girls’ heads to stretch the skin and soft tissue.

As Dr. Csóky relates, he practiced, in autopsies, the individual steps laid out by Dr. Hudák. What helped them, he said, was the knowledge that people in Nigeria (where *Cselekvés* has a mission), and a million people in Hungary were praying for them. (Clergy and Catholic media in Hungary had asked people to pray especially on August 1st and 2nd for success of the surgery.)

Finally, a team of 35 doctors traveled to Bangladesh to perform the actual separation of the twins’ skulls and brains. There were no textbook models to follow – the entire procedure was

designed by the Hungarian doctors. With Dr. Csóky András as the team leader, and Dr. Csapody Marcell leading the anesthesia group, the girls were finally separated from each other on August 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> in a very intricate, 33-hour procedure. In the course of the grueling operation, the team paused three times to pray, together with their Moslem and Hindu colleagues.

In an interview with Hungarian TV, Dr. Csóky said, “It is never the doctor who heals; the doctor only treats. Only God heals.” In another interview he added, “Two of the neurosurgical innovations with which my patients recovered better, or for which I received recognition or prizes, occurred to me while I was praying the Rosary. They did not come from myself.”

Rabeya came out of the induced coma first, and as of this writing (August 22<sup>nd</sup>) is smiling, speaking and eating on her own. Her twin, Rokaiya, opened her eyes only some days later, and although she is currently fighting a special viral fever, is said to be in stable condition at this time.

During a press conference, Dr. Csóky stated that, during the surgery, they had been on a physical, mental and emotional rollercoaster. At times they thought they were losing the children. They also experienced situations that they could not explain, such as a kidney function irregularity of one of the girls, which disappeared all of a sudden and the kidney began to work normally.

He also related a heartwarming incident: once the operation was over, the girls – both still under

anesthesia – instinctively reached for each other’s hand!

Some of the doctors on the team remained in Bangladesh afterwards for more volunteer neurological and plastic surgery as well as giving professional lectures. They had taken along two tons of medical equipment and left most of it in Bangladesh as a donation. The entire team will be returning there in three to six months, to carry out further surgery on Rabeya and Rokaiya. However, this will not be the last intervention for the girls. Secondary skull construction and other rehabilitation will probably take years.

Dr. Csókay says, "We can't speak of success even now. It's not the successful application of techniques that signify success, but when the patient says, it is better now than it was before."

We pray for the complete recovery of Rabeya and Rokaiya, and ask the Lord's continued blessings on the *Cselekvés* team!

### **More about *Cselekvés* a *kiszolgáltakért***

Founded in 2002 on the inspiration of Mother Teresa, Action for Defenseless People has helped thousands since its inception. According to their mission statement posted on the internet, "The essence of *Cselekvés* is that we try to help, in an active and direct way, here and now, at home and abroad, in proportion to our abilities."

They travel to areas hardest hit by a lack of doctors and by poverty to perform special surgical procedures. Since in Third World countries there are many children

who suffer from burns, dr. Pataki began the Bangladesh mission for restorative plastic and burn surgery in 2010. In 2016, dr. Csókay was led to establish a neurosurgical mission in Nigeria. "Children's deformities and injuries must be treated as fast as possible, because they are developing and their behavior is shaped by their physical possibilities. For example, it is very important whether or not someone can use his hands, which will determine whether he will be able to work or will become a dependent person." They have separated, in many patients, fingers which had grown together, put together injured faces, done plastic surgery.

It is their firm belief that the greatest need must be addressed first; they have to help those who have the least chance for healing, where the greatest good can be achieved with the least amount of money. Their work is supported by donations.

Quoting again from their mission statement, the doctors

of *Cselekvés* perform their charitable work "according to the demands of our time, the highest value being a high level of professional preparedness, the humility necessary for the task, the strength of our teams' faith in each other and in the local community – but perhaps most importantly, the real service of the person in need."

As mentioned above, they have established missions in Bangladesh and Nigeria. There they spend two weeks every year, performing some 70-80 neurological and plastic surgeries on needy patients, and on patients born with developmental disabilities who otherwise would have no chance for a normal life.

The funds they raise are spent on providing bandages and medical instruments for Hungarian hospitals; on electric hospital beds and other hospital furnishings; on health lectures; and on continuing professional education for medical personnel at home and abroad, to enable them to help as many people as they can.



# Szeptember elején / At the Beginning of September

Kosztolányi Dezső

Fall is described as lounging in a golden cape among the rich toys of summer, surrounded by its burning red fruit, and nodding in agreement that life is one, the beginning and the end. The author declares that he does not feel it painful either that he has to lose everything that is beautiful. He wraps himself in the heavy golden mantle of wisdom, and all his words are "smiles and indifference".

A hosszú, néma, mozdulatlan ősz  
aranyköpenybe fekszik nyári, dús  
játékai közt, megvert Dárius  
és nem reméli már, hogy újra győz.

Köröskörül bíbor gyümölcse ég  
s nem várja, hogy a kedvét töltse még,  
a csönd, a szél, a fázó-zöldes ég  
fülébe súg, elég volt már, elég  
s ő bólogat, mert tudja-tudja rég,  
hogy egy az élet, a kezdet s a vég.

Nekem se fáj, hogy mindent, ami szép,  
el kell veszítenem. A bölcsesség  
nehéz aranymezébe öltözöm  
s minden szavam mosolygás és közöny.



*Kosztolányi Dezső (1885 – 1936) became a journalist, and contributed to the literary magazine NYUGAT, among other publications. He exhibited great virtuosity with the Hungarian language, and started a philological movement in the 1930s which strongly influenced the writers of his time. He was a linguist and a literary translator. Marked by social concern, his versatility was evidenced by his short stories and novels written from a psychoanalytical point of view. He was among the very few writers who could make a living from his craft. A follower of Bicsérdy (see the January 2019 issue of Magyar News Online) and a hypochondriac, Kosztolányi eventually developed cancer of the throat.*

## Apples in a Robe / Alma pongyolában



*With the fall comes the apple harvest, with all different varieties available at farm stands. This recipe calls for some type of tart apple, ac-*

*ording to your taste and what is available in your area.*

2 eggs, separated  
2 tsp sugar  
1 ½ cups milk  
¼ cup white wine  
pinch of salt  
1 2/3 cups flour  
1 ¼ lbs tart apples  
about 2 cups of oil for deep-frying  
ground cinnamon and powdered sugar

Beat the egg yolks and sugar until frothy. Add the milk, wine and a

pinch of salt. Add the flour little by little, beating constantly, until the mixture has a thick liquid consistency.

Beat the egg whites until stiff, and fold carefully into the batter mixture. Peel and core the apples and cut into ¼-½ inch thick rings.

Heat a generous quantity of oil until bubbling. Dip the apple rings in the batter, then drain off the excess and fry in the oil until golden.

Sprinkle with cinnamon and sugar and serve hot.



## The Battle of Pákozd – Fut Bécs felé Jellasics, a gyáva

Karolina Tima Szabó

“Fut Bécs felé Jellasics, a gyáva,  
Seregének, seregünk nyomába.”

Petőfi Sándor: A Vén Zászlóartó

*These two lines of Petőfi's poem characterize the leader of the Croatian uprising against the Hungarian revolutionary troops, Bán Josip Jellasics as a coward, running off to Vienna after his defeat by the Hungarian national guard (honvédek). These had been called into being by Kossuth Lajos during the Freedom Fight of 1848 as a military force to*



*Memorial of the battle at Pákozd*

*combat the Austrians. Jellasics was beaten by the honvédek in the Battle of Pákozd on September 29<sup>th</sup>, 1848.*

*A Memorial Park has been created to recall that great patriotic battle. This year will mark the tenth time that the Honvédfesztivál (national guard festival) will be organized there September 23-29, 2019.*

North of Lake Velence, between Pákozd and Sukoró, a great battle took place between the Austrian Emperor's army, led by Bán Josip Jellasics (Jelačić), governor of Croatia, and a new Hungarian army led by Móga János.

The Habsburg Empire consisted of many ethnic groups that all wanted independence, which gave a chance to the Emperor to attack Hungary. The Hungarian government wanted to avoid the conflict. Deák Ferenc and Count Batthyány Lajos went to Vienna to negotiate with the Emperor, but they were unsuccessful.

On September 11th, Jellasics crossed the Dráva River with 30,000 men, heading toward Székesfehérvár. Kossuth Lajos sent a proclamation to Hungarian soldiers to return to Hungary; he also recruited soldiers from the Great Plains. By the end of Sep-

tember, 16,000 men were on the hillside with their leader, Lieutenant General Móga János.

The Croatian and the Austrian army were defeated by the Hungarians in battle on September 29th, and Jellasics retreated toward Austria.

The battle was a minor one, but it was a very important part of the war for Hungarian independence. It provided encouragement to the Hungarian cause and was a significant contributing factor to the outbreak of the Vienna Revolution of October 6th. Of course, according to Austrian historians, the battle was insignificant.

September 29th became *Honvédség Napja* (National Defense Day) in Hungary, but was later changed to May 21st, the day of the 1849 Battle of Buda.

The idea of a memorial was first suggested in 1874 by a patriotic group; donations were slow in coming and it was unveiled only in 1890. The National Defense Memorial Park, the only one in Hungary, is located at the battle site on Mészeg-hegy and established in 2002. The main purpose of the park isn't just to memorialize the victims of the battle, but to honor all who were the victims of the absolutism that followed. It is a memorial to the heroism of Hungarian soldiers of the last 150 years.

The Don Chapel memorializes the heroes of WW II. There is also a memorial for peacekeepers. The 41-ft tall Miskahuszár statue is the world's largest huszár statue, made of 100 tons of concrete. It stands on *Bogár-halom* (Bogármound). According to legend, it

is the same place where Jelasics's tent was located, in front of which he watched the battle.

The X. *Honvédfesztivál* will be celebrated between September 23rd and 29th. The program will include competitions for school children, "war of numbers" (a Hungarian children's game), a youth street patrol competition, a military history competition, remembrance of the Pákozd Battle, reenactment of the battle, exhibits, programs for children and much more... A wreath laying ceremony and an ecumenical prayer service will also be taking place.

The mountain and lake area is very rich in wildlife – animals, birds such as the *darázsólyv* and *kabasólyom* (types of hawk and falcon) and vegetation (miniature irises, black *kőkörcsin* – wild anemone). Some 250 varieties of trees and shrubs can be found there.

After you visit the Memorial Park, you might want to see the 240-acre arboretum and *vadspark* (wild animal sanctuary) nearby on the Sukoró side of Mészeg-hegy. There you can see red deer, wild boar, wild turkeys, and pheasants close up.

One part of the museum houses an exhibit dealing with the lives of fishermen and their tools, and another explains the forming of Mészeg-hegy and the *ingókövek* (rocking stones). The *ingókövek*, which form what is sometimes called 'a Magyar Stonehenge', have actually nothing mystic about them. The giant granite rocks were formed naturally when, over thousands of years, the soft minerals were washed away by the elements,

leaving the rocks balancing on one another.

There are playgrounds, picnic areas, trails to walk, and a lookout tower providing a panorama of Lake Velence and Sukoró. It is a beautiful place to visit any time of the year, but why not during the *Honvédfesztivál* to remember all the great men who fought in

Pákozd Battle 171 years ago?

If can you stay longer, on October 4th there will be a memorial remembrance of the 170th anniversary of the execution of Count Batthyány Lajos and the Martyrs of Arad.

*Karolina Tima Szabo is a retired Systems Analyst of the Connecticut Post newspaper and Webmaster of Magyar News Online.*



the WWII memorial, Miska huszár, Reenactment of the battle, wild boars, *ingókövek*

## Explorer Sass Flóra – Florence Baker – part 6

Éva Wajda

*This is our last instalment of the adventures of Hungarian Africa explorer Sass Flóra and her English husband Samuel Baker.*

Mohammed the slave trader who had escorted Speke and Grant to Gondokoro agreed to recruit 50 porters for Sam who would accompany the expedition, together with Sam's 45 armed escort to Faloro, the nearest trading station a 15 days' march South. All were pleased to join Mohamed's large party of 200 men. Sam counted and weighed 54 containers, a hundred pounds each of goods to be transported, the heaviest being beads and copper for trading, and ammunition. No expedition had been more carefully planned; the transport animals were in good condition and all were ready to leave on an agreed upon day.

However, the men belonging to the various traders were determined to prevent the expedition from leaving and would not allow an Englishman to penetrate the country. They were afraid the lucrative ivory and slave trade of the White Nile would no longer be a mystery and that the atrocities of the slave trade would be exposed and likely terminated by the European Powers. They fraternized with Sam's escort and convinced them that he was a Christian



Dog, a spy, and it was a disgrace for a Mohammedan to serve, that they would starve in his service, and would not be allowed to steal cattle and could not have slaves. They were demoralized and neglected all orders; donkeys and camels were allowed to stray; the luggage was overrun by white ants; men were absent without leave and spent their time in camps of other traders.

Sam learned that a mutiny was planned halfway to Faloro, and the rebels would kill him and Florence, take all their guns, ammunition and all their baggage.

Mohammed and his party deceived Sam by leaving Gondokoro two days before the agreed upon date. Five of Sam's men deserted to join them with their guns and ammunition. They threatened that if Sam followed their party on their road, they would fire upon them.

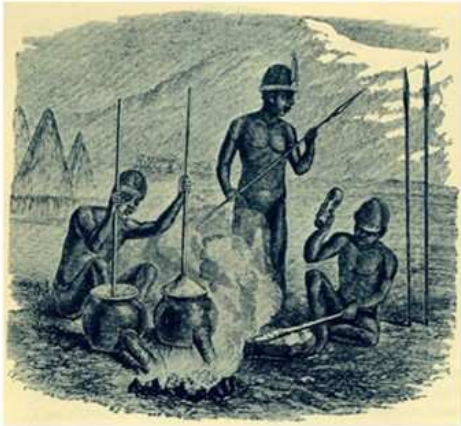
Sam planned to follow another slave trader heading South, but

at the last moment another mutiny took place which so seriously threatened Sam's and Florence's life that no other alternative remained but for Sam to discharge his men who had already been paid in advance for one year of service.

After leaving the bulk of supplies with a friendly native chief, Sam was able to secure a small party of Latooka natives and started his land journey for the Central Lake Basin.

Florence and Sam encountered innumerable hardships, suffered from diseases, malarial fevers, starvation, death and desertions, the loss of their animals, but they pushed forward with strong determination toward their goal. Finding porters was a constant problem. They sought the assistance of Kamrasi, King of Bonyoro, who with cunning, lies, empty promises to provide food and an escort delayed their progress for several months.

While waiting near a village to meet Kamrasi, Sam and several of his men sat beneath a large shady tree, a beautiful Persian carpet in front of them. A large crowd of 600 villagers came to gape at them. Suddenly, the entire crowd jumped to their feet and ran yelling and screaming toward the hut where Florence was staying. She had washed her long blond hair (a constant amazement to the Africans) that morning and stood by the doorway of the hut, brushing her shimmering curly hair in the strong sunlight as it dried. She was a sensa-



Arabic as he had not heard in his life! She shrieked at him, denounced his morals, his character, intelligence, hospitality. She called him a son of a dog, a lying savage, an impotent eunuch, criticized his people, his manner, personal hygiene and honesty, of which there was none. A slave woman translated but could hardly keep up with this verbal assault. When her anger was exhausted, she glared at Kamrasi with pure fury, who wanted no part of such a troublesome woman. He explained his custom to give his visitors one of his pretty wives in exchange for theirs. He ordered several of his people to accompany the expedition. Florence and Sam mounted their oxen and rode off with the porters picking up their load. In the next village they were met with a savage farewell parade, 600 warriors came rushing, screaming and jumping, shaking their lances and shields, dressed like demons with antelope horns strapped to their heads and dressed in leopard and monkey skins.

Top 4 pictures drawn by Sam Baker. Left: episodes during the expedition; right: a rhinoceros, and Murchison Falls. Bottom left: dedication of Sass Flóra memorial plaque; right: Hungarian and English text of plaque.

tion. The natives started to call her *Myadue*, the Morning Star (*Hajnalcsillag*). People came from far away villages to see Florence. They watched her every move. Some tried to touch her. There was no escaping her audience; she had no privacy. When Sam covered the doorway of the hut with a blanket, they pried spy holes in the thatch of the hut and dozens of brown eyes followed her every move.

Finally, Kamrasi made himself available to meet Sam and his party and was given the Persian carpet as a gift.

His greed and demand for more gifts was endless, and when he finally promised Sam escorts to resume their journey, he demanded Florence in exchange for one of his wives! Florence flew into a rage and gave Kamrasi such a dressing down in

They continued their quest South, exhausted and weak. Florence suffered from sunstroke, dehydration, malnutrition and malarial fever and was unconscious for a number of days. She had to be carried on a litter and Sam gave up all hope for her recovery when she fell into violent convulsions. Sam fell upon a mat, exhausted, worn out with sorrow and fatigue; he hadn't slept for seven days. When he awoke the next morning, Florence's

eyes were open, calm and clear. Two days' rest and the party moved forward. They were getting closer to the lake.

Finally, on May 14, 1864, the glorious prize suddenly burst upon them in the shape of a mighty sea. In the distance, on the western shore, a range of blue mountains rose to a height of 7,000 feet above its level.

The lake, lying between modern Uganda and Congo, the discovery of which was the crowning achievement in the lives of Sir Samuel Baker and his wife, Sam named Albert Nyanza (Lake Albert) in honor of Queen Victoria's Consort.

Twenty miles East of Lake Albert is Murchison Falls, named by Sam for geologist Sir Roderick Murchinson. There the Nile squeezes through a twenty-foot wide gorge and plunges with a thunderous roar, dropping 400 feet in a series of cascades, creating a rainbow. In 1951, the movie "The African Queen" was filmed on Lake Albert and the Nile in Murchison Falls National Park. It is Uganda's largest and oldest conservation area, hosting 76 species of mammals and 451 kinds of birds.

The return journey occupied almost a year; it was September, 1865, before they reached England. Their marriage took place at St. James's Church, Piccadilly on November 4, 1865. That evening they had dinner with the Murchisons. (Sir Roderick Murchison was the founder and president of the RGS – the Royal Geographical

Society.) At a later time, Sir Roderick wrote glowingly to a friend about "Baker's little blue-eyed Hungarian wife who is still only 23 years of age, who we like very much." Sam was formally welcomed home at a meeting of RGS's headquarters where he gave a brilliant talk about his African encounters. His humorous anecdotal style won the listeners' hearts. He ended by introducing his wife to the audience as "one, though young and tender, has the heart of a lion, without whose devotion and courage he would not be alive." He was awarded the Royal Geographical Society's gold medal in 1865.

London society lionized Sam and Florence; they were the celebrity couple of the season, and their fame grew rapidly. In December they traveled to Paris where Sam was awarded the Gold Medal of the French Geographical Society. He was knighted by Queen Victoria in 1866 and Florence became Lady Baker. But she was not invited to the ceremony. The details of how they met were meant to be kept secret but the story circulated and the Queen excluded Florence from Court.

Samuel, as Governor General of the Equatorial Nile, returned with Florence to Africa in 1869 for the purpose of eliminating the slave trade. Unfortunately, they were not able to accomplish this lofty goal. The second expedition commenced on April 1, 1869 and lasted four years.

Upon their return to England in 1873, Flóra and her husband spent the rest of their lives at their house, Sandford Orleigh, in Newton Abbot in Devon. Florence was renowned for her kindness and welcoming home. Sam wrote books, newspaper and magazine articles on a variety of political and sporting subjects. They traveled extensively, visited many countries, among them Cyprus, India, Japan.

Sir Samuel Baker died of a heart attack in December 1893, and Florence died 23 years later, on March 11, 1916. They were both buried in the family crypt in Grimley near Worcester.

In her will, Flora requested that all her personal papers be destroyed, but a hundred years after her death her journal was discovered in an attic in an old wooden box in which she recorded the events and her observations of their Second Africa expedition.

*Sources: Samuel Baker: In the Heart of the Nile*

*J.W. Buel: Heroes of the Dark Continent*

*Pat Shipman: To the Heart of the Nile*

*Books by Samuel Baker, to name a few:*

*"The Nile Tributaries of Abyssinia" 1867;*

*"Ismaïia". 1874*

*"The Albert Nyanza, Great Basin of the Nile and Explorations of the Nile Sources"*

*Two books were published in Hungarian, based on the African Expeditions:*

Anne Baker's "Rabszolgák Földjén - Egy Magyar Nő Felfedezőik és

*Rabszolgák között 1870 – 1873", based on Florence's diary, and*

*Samuel Baker's "A Nílus Rejtélye" describing their First Africa expedition.*

*Eva Wajda is a member of the Magyar News Online Editorial Board.*

### English Text of Bilingual Memorial Plaque Dedicated in Uganda

In memory of Flóra Sass

The first European woman to reach the Murchison Falls 155 years ago.

Flóra Sass, locally called Myadue (morning star) was a Transylvanian-born Hungarian explorer and Africa researcher.

In memory of Flóra Sass' and her husband Samuel White Baker's journey in 1864, when they gazed upon the Murchison Falls and Lake Albert for the first time.

Erected by the Hungarian Africa Society – African Hungarian Union  
Inaugurated by dr. László Kövér, Speaker of the Hungarian National Assembly  
March 2nd, 2019, on the 155th anniversary of naming the Murchison Falls.

### Did you know ...

... **that** while we were on vacation, 19-year old Hungarian

swimmer Milák Kristóf beat Michael Phelps' 10-year world record in the 200 m butterfly event at the Gwangju, South Korea world championships this July? Congratulations for setting another world record with a time of 1:50.73!

At the same venue, Kapás Boglárka won the 200 m women's butterfly championship, while Hosszú Katinka won the 200 m backstroke championship.

Congratulations to all our Magyar swimmers!

... **that** Hungarian Rubik Ernő, father of the world-famous Rubik's Cube, celebrated his 75th birthday? We wish him many more!

...**that** Suhajda Szilárd is the 1<sup>st</sup> Hungarian mountain climber who reached the Himalaya Mountain's 8,611 m high K2 summit without oxygen and baggage carriers?

The K2 is more dangerous than Mount Everest, due to steeper slopes, and is further North so the weather is unpredictable; but mostly because of avalanches and rock falls. K2 is also known as Savage Mountain.

Suhajda is a member of the "Eseményhorizon" team, and their aim is to reach the 14,000 m Crown of the Himalaya; but before that they had to climb K2 and the Everest without oxygen. His partner, Klein Dávid, had to re-

turn to base due to stomach problems and nausea.

One down, one to go. Congratulations to Suhajda Szilárd and his team!

...**that** a temporary whale sculpture made out of plastic waste recovered from the ocean was on exhibit in Budapest in front of the Parliament building? The statue was erected by Greenpeace, an international movement to protect the environment, to stop pollution of the oceans.

Most of the plastics are single use items, life spans are measured only in minutes, but it takes 400 to 1000 years for them to disintegrate.



*Suhajda Szilárd with companion and the temporary whale structure*

# It's a Small World!

*Karolina Tima Szabó*

When we think of Hungarian emigrants, we think of places such as the US, Canada or Australia. Paraguay is not the first place we would associate with Magyar settlements, but they were scattered even there!

Maria Rodriguez and I have been friends for over 30 years. Maria came to the U.S. from Paraguay. At one time we talked about visiting each other's birth country.

In 2016, I visited my family in Hungary, and in the last two weeks of my vacation Maria joined me there. She loved Hungary, Budapest, Balaton, the countryside, my sisters and their families.

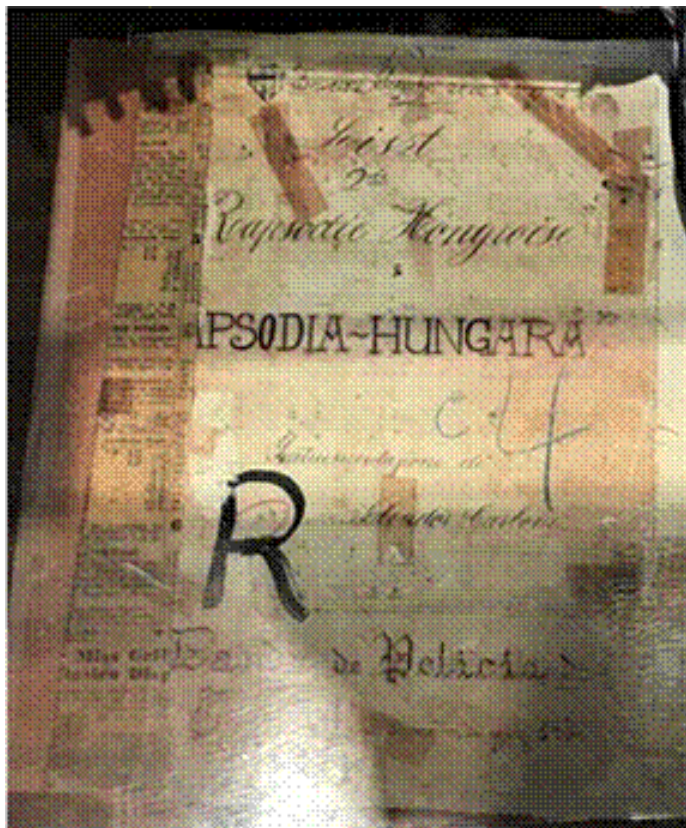
This summer Maria went back to Paraguay for a visit; sorry to say, I wasn't able to go with her. During her visit there, we were communicating via emails. The other day she sent me one with five attachments.

She visited a museum, the "Centro Cultural de la Republica" that operates in the building of the Town Council.

The photos are of items created by Hungarian immigrants in Paraguay.

I am looking all over the internet to see how many Hungarians are in Paraguay, but I cannot find anything. Yet I am sure there are some, because Maria found a record of them. How small is the world!

By-the-way, next time I am going with her!



Top: Hungarian Bible; Hungarian Embroidery; Embroidery Sampler; Photographs.

Left: Liszt Hungarian Rhapsody