

January 24, 1892.

My dear brother Géza!!

I received your letter this minute and I am answering in haste. Do not think that I am lazy, or that I am trying to get out of the trip to America. No. Do not think that because I can hardly wait for that time, and I think and believe that in you I will find my second Father and in your wife my second Mother because, believe me, my dear brother, I am so alone, I am more alone than an orphan because at least strangers feel sorry for an orphan, but no one feels sorry for me. My dear, one, good brother. May God bless you for taking care of me. My mother behaves with me as if she would not even be my mother, she never writes as much as a word, and if I per chance meet her, she looks at me, as if I would have killed her Father. Her complaining letter, I know that nothing is true, what she wrote you because she would not have to work as a servant because she could be with her own children, but of course, her difficult, stubborn nature does not let her do that. She receives pay/rent from Sapoloka [The word "bér" could mean either "pay", or "rent". Depending on what the Sapoloka, or Tapoloka, or Topoloka means, if this is a house, people, or a location]. Believe me, my dear brother that I wept bitterly when I heard that you sent her the money you meant to send me. When I asked her once for 10 krajczars,[or koronas] then she answered that she would rather give it to the beggar because at least the beggar would pray for her. Well how could this not hurt? It would have helped me an awful lot, if you would have sent the money to me because I have been expecting it as if it was the Messiah. It cannot even be expressed how hurt I felt about this. You are telling me, my dear brother that an agent will be expecting me. How is he going to recognize me!? And can he/she speak Hungarian? Because you know that I speak only Hungarian and Slovak. Father will accompany me to the ship. I am only afraid that I will not find you and whether I will have enough money to go to you with the ship because from here I will not even get a penny. My dear brother, I am only asking the Good Lord to help me get to you, I mean to both of you, soon. Send a few forints in a letter, I ask you humbly. Write also to Father that I should leave on the 20th, so that he, too, should know about it. I answered to your other letter, maybe you have not received it. Let us know. We wrote it together with Anna.

Please, write immediately. I cannot take a pillow; at most I can take a small pillow because I cannot take a big suitcase. Please, write immediately. I send my kisses to your wife and to the dear little Angel, I also kiss you innumerable times your loving sister

Margit

My dear brother, write to me the name, that is, the address of that agent. I bought a dress and a pair of shoes on credit. If I could just pay that, just send me money for that. But I ask you, do not be angry with me because of that. Write to Father too what date I should get on the train in Homonna.

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July 28, 2005

Ms. Diane L. Brady
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Dear Diane,

In answer to your questions: there is no equivalent for the name, Géza. It is a heathen Hungarian name from the days when the Hungarians entered the Carpathian Basin (896 A.D.) and were not Christians yet. St. Stephen was our first king. His father's name was Géza. It is a very popular name in Hungary, as are several other such names, as Attila, Zsolt, Zoltán, Árpád.

The general on the photo is Hungarian, probably Army. In Hungary there was no Navy, the uniform of the people in the Air Force was very different and they were mostly younger because it was a new way of fighting in World War 2 in Hungary. The picture of the family, if her name was also Margit, can only be a daughter or granddaughter, not the same Margit

who wrote the letter. In Hungary very often children were named after their parents and grandparents. I was the third Helen, our daughter the fourth, John the second John, and son John the third, while grandson John the fourth.

Neither John, nor I can think of any reason why Margit and her family would have lived in a cellar. In this latest letter she writes about her mother serving somewhere? Unless, maybe they lost everything during and/or after the fight for freedom (1849+).

After the 1848/49 Revolution against the Habsburgs [this is how we spell it in Central Europe] the revenge was terrible. For example, John's great-grandfather was blinded because he was collecting and sending money to people who had escaped to foreign countries because they took part in the Revolution.

In 1867 finally the Austrian Hungarian Compromise was born and from then on people in general considered that they were living in the "golden ages". At that time owners of an Austro-Hungarian passport did not need any visas for travel, only to a few countries (like Russia, Albania and Turkey, but not the USA), just like citizens of the USA do not need visas now. This is how John's Father was talking about those times. So the 1890ies should have fallen within that. This period ended when the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was broken up by the Paris peace treaties after World War 2.

Maybe you have more letters that would tell us what went wrong with the family's fortune. The old gentleman's photo definitely points to a well-to-do family. His letter shows he was a great patriot. So this may have been his downfall after the Revolution, and he, along with his family, may have still suffered from that. Maybe that is why his son immigrated because he did not see any future for himself in Hungary. It seems that Margit spoke Slovak. This means they lived in a part of Hungary that later became Czechoslovakia, after World War 2, then Slovakia recently, when the Czechs and the Slovaks split up in the mid 1990ies.

I just looked it up in my book of locations, which were in Hungary before World War 2, but no longer are in Hungary now, and Homonna is now Humenné and is located in Slovakia.

Yes, it definitely looks like Margit wanted to immigrate. Did she in the end? People could "visit" the USA ONLY if they were very rich. So, she probably did not immigrate, if she is related to the Hungarian general in any meaningful way, but stayed in Hungary and had a family there.

A "korona" was worth around 50 U.S. cents of those days (1890ies). There were 100 "krajczárs" in 1 korona. But, remember, money was worth much more then.

I hope we can figure out more as we go along. If you do not understand something I wrote, do not hesitate to call: 425-576-8997.

Best regards

Helen