

FOREWORD

Research on the participation of the Hungarians in the Civil War was begun by Eugene Pivany. His pioneer work "The Hungarians in the Civil War" was published in 1913, twenty-six years ago, and has been out of print for a long time. After him, Géza Kende also wrote on this subject in his book "Hungarians in America" which was published in 1927. He added new data to that already published, but his work is incoherent, and often erroneous. Since then, to my knowledge no one has attempted to continue, although there is a definite need for a work with new material relative to the subject, so that the memory and the names of these old Hungarian heroes may not be entirely forgotten, and that the information so far obtained may be made available for future research.

THE HUNGARIAN REFORMED FEDERATION OF AMERICA, in view of the fact that the seventy-fifth anniversary of the battle of Piedmont, Va., (June 5th, 1864) falls in 1939, where the Hungarian General Julius Stahel-Szamvald so distinguished himself that he received the Congressional Medal of Honor, the highest decoration which can be bestowed by the United States, decided to commemorate this anniversary by paying tribute to those Hungarian Civil War heroes who, together with General Stahel-Szamvald, are resting in the Arlington National Cemetery.

THE HUNGARIAN REFORMED FEDERATION OF AMERICA is publishing this commemorative book, adding in it the results of extensive research to that already available upon the participation of the Hungarians in the Civil War. The motive for this decision is partly found in the fact that the FEDERATION is the only Hungarian organization with headquarters in the national Capital, and so is in a position to avail itself of the services of libraries and archives in its quest for new material.

THE HUNGARIAN REFORMED FEDERATION OF AMERICA, always desiring to fulfill its obligation to the past, present and future of the Hungarians in America, launches this book with the hope, that through it, it has fulfilled at least a small part of this obligation.

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Search for information on the Hungarians in the Civil War is made doubly hard by the fact that it must be conducted on two continents. For information about their careers in Europe, naturally only that information could be used which is available here. There is still much to be done in this respect. There were no contemporary Hungarian-American papers, and since the years of the Civil War coincided with the last years of absolutism in Hungary, it is probable that the Hungarian papers of that time, contain very little about the Hungarians in America.

The Civil War Hungarians, despite the fact that a large number of them remained permanently in America, did not write memoirs. This is much to be regretted since a large number of them were educated and in-

telligent, whose reminiscences would doubtless have been very valuable. While on the part of Americans and Germans we find valuable memoirs written even by privates, from among the Hungarians only the unpretentious reminiscences of Charles Semsey of New York and Julian Kuné of Chicago appeared in print, the latter in English and Hungarian. The memoirs of Béla Estván, a colonel of Cavalry who fought on the Southern side, appeared in German and English in 1864, but this book, while still enjoyable reading is considered by some critics un dependable. It also contains very little personal information.

Roderick Rombauer of St. Louis, also published an autobiography of small scope, in English. Philip Figyelmessy of Philadelphia wrote his memoirs in English. This was published in Hungarian in a Budapest daily, but this unhappily is almost equivalent to remaining in manuscript. The reminiscences of Julius Stahel-Szamvald about his military career in the Civil War in 1870 at the request of the War Department, are to be found in the National Archives at Washington. No memoirs remained after General Asboth because by the time the request of the War Department to the former commanding generals to write their reminiscences was issued, he had already passed away. Kozlay, Pomutz, Mundeé and Knefler were only colonels, and received the rank of brigadier-general by brevet when they were mustered out of service.

Robert Julius Rombauer wrote an extensive book about the participation of the city of St. Louis in the Civil War, but he barely mentions himself. Knefler wrote a discourse about the battle of Missionary Ridge, Tennessee (Nov. 24th, 25th, 1863) in which he took part with his regiment, but does not mention himself by so much as a word. This is about all the memoir literature of the Civil War Hungarians can show.

Search for their private correspondence would be a similarly difficult task, which probably would yield very little, although some correspondence would be found no doubt in various family archives and collections. Even if some descendants of these heroes living in America have in their possession any documents, it is hardly probable that they attach much value to them, because scarcely any of their descendants could speak or read Hungarian.

Contemporary American papers wrote comparatively often of the more important Hungarians, such as Alexander Asboth, Julius Stahel-Szamvald, Charles Zágonyi, and others. Often pictures were published of them, most often that of Major Zágonyi, but mostly they were considered Germans, because they commanded regiments consisting mostly of Germans. The Hungarians as a separate group never received any collective recognition. Even President Lincoln, who was not only a great man, but a keen-eyed politician admitted that the advancement of Julius Stahel-Szamvald to the rank of Major General was largely due to the fact that he wished to reward the services of the Germans. (J. D. Cox: Military reminiscences of the Civil War, 2 vols. N. Y. Vol 1. p. 435) Any recognition received by the Hungarians was received individually. The first collective recognition from the highest place is the letter of President FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT, in which with noble words he pays tribute to those Hungarians who fought and died for the Union. This letter in its entirety is to be found elsewhere in the book.

The Germans treated the Hungarians in the same way, simply calling them Germans or at best, German-Hungarians, although this was hardly necessary. The Germans had an army of 216,000 men in the Civil War and are scarcely in need of a few additional hundred Hungarians.

In spite of this the largest German work dealing with the subject of the participation of the Germans in the Civil War (Kaufman: Die Deutschen in Amerikanischen Bürgerkriege, München, 1911) lists at the end about five hundred of the more prominent German officers—fourteen Hungarians also, among them Asboth, Zágonyi, Perczel, Mihalotzy, Stephen Kovács and others.

Several notable Americans of the Civil War sometimes mention the Hungarians, albeit, much less, than one could expect. The idea of having foreigners in high ranking positions was not popular in the Civil War, just as it was not so in revolutionary times. General Philip Sheridan speaks with appreciation of Asboth, but McClellan who was commander-in-chief for one year, probably because of information obtained from General Halleck, was not favorably disposed toward the foreigners. The only exception was Stahel-Szamvald, whom he considered a German. It is possible that the fact that General George Klapka, the defender of Komárom who was invited to America by Seward, then Secretary of State, and who aspired to McClellan's command had something to do with this antipathy. General David Hunter spoke slightly, and with what almost amounted to hatred of the foreign officers, even of the Hungarian Stahel-Szamvald, against whom his enmity abated only after the battle of Piedmont, Va., while General Halleck almost acted as an informer in his confidential reports sent to McClellan. Grant, the commander-in-chief at the end of the war does not mention a single Hungarian in his extensive memoirs, neither do Benjamin Butler or others.

There was no commander under whom more high-ranking officers served, than General John C. Fremont, the first presidential nominee of the Republican party. He was cognizant of their valuable services, and in his reports speaks with highest praise of Zágonyi, Albert and other Hungarians.

The commanders of the divisions and the regiments were more generous with their praise. In official reports we often find individual Hungarian officers praised and cited such as Mihalotzy, Mundeé, Perczel, Németh, Kapus, Pomutz, Zágonyi, Albert, Dunka, Csermelyi, Kozlay and others, of whom their superiors had the highest opinions.

The publication of the Department of War, the monumental "The War of the Rebellion" a collection of the official orders, dispatches, reports, correspondence and court martials, naturally contains much information of interest concerning the Hungarians. Besides using the material to be found in this collection the author looked up about each individual many documents preserved in the records of the Adjutant General's office, and in the National Archives. In several instances the Veterans administration furnished valuable information. The Library of Congress, the libraries of the Navy Department, the War College and the National Archives were also of great help. In some instances the Historical Societies of the various states, or the descendants of the Civil War Hungarians themselves furnished valuable information.

The list of names published by me is not the same as that of Pivany and Kende. The new list contains several new names, while other names are missing. I had to omit some of the names contained in the older lists, because research showed that they were not Hungarians. For instance the name Petri appears as a family name among the Hungarians, Germans, Dutch and Swedes. The Charles Petri appearing in the list of Pivany and Kende was undoubtedly a German. General Albin Schoepl

was not a Hungarian but an Austrian-Pole, but since he fought in the Hungarian Revolution, I included his name, with that of the German Amsberg and the Pole Blandowski, who were also soldiers in the Hungarian War of Independence. I still have doubts concerning the Hungarian extraction of a few more, such as William Kapus, Victor Chandory, (Chandoné), William Esti, etc. Eugene Pivány states that Captain Leonidas Haskell, who served on the staff of Fremont was a Hungarian. I found that he was not Hungarian but came to Missouri from Gloucester, Mass., where his English ancestors settled in 1646.

However, the list of names is not complete, and it is doubtful whether a complete list will ever be obtainable. A large part of the records of both the North and the South were destroyed, although the records of the North are far more complete. Of the approximately one million men who fought for the South, the records of only about one hundred thousand were preserved. It is certain that many more Hungarians, several with foreign-sounding names fought on both sides.

The bibliography to be found in the book is to my knowledge the first attempt in this field. It is far from being complete, because I was able to obtain only a small part of the references available in Hungary. The American list would be complete only if its compilation would have been preceded by a much longer research, extending through several lifetimes. Still, in spite of its shortcomings, let me hope that it will be of considerable help in future research.

I gratefully acknowledge the help rendered by the pioneer works on this subject written by Eugene Pivány, now living in Budapest, whose writings will be always indispensable, and for his personal favor in supplying valuable new information about some of the Civil War Hungarians. Similar thanks are due to the memory of Géza Kende, the eminent journalist, whose untimely death prevented his completion of the third and final volume of his work. His book will be always similarly indispensable in tracing the American-Hungarians of bygone times.

Although the title speaks of Lincoln's Hungarian heroes, I have listed those few Hungarians who according to our present knowledge fought for the Confederacy. Concerning these, I received valuable information from Miss Ella Lonn, of Goucher College, Baltimore, Md., whose book "Foreigners in the Confederacy" will shortly be published. My grateful thanks to her, and to all those in the various libraries and archives, who helped me so willingly.

In the difficult work of translation from the Hungarian to English, I was given much valuable help by my wife, Elizabeth Kalassay Vasvary.

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EDMUND VASVARY