

HUNGARICA CANADIANA – ARCHIVAL SOURCES

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The material known as *Hungarica Canadiana* goes back to the 1880s, when a group of Hungarians in Pennsylvania, U.S.A., had expressed interest in immigrating to Canada and settling in the Canadian prairies. The first documents, mainly Cabinet discussions in Parliament, followed by extensive correspondence between the Canadian Government and Paul O. Eszterházy, a settlement agent in New York, are housed in the National Archives of Canada. During a century-and-a-half, the subject of Hungarian-Canadian studies and its archival collections has grown into an extensive and highly complex literature of print and non-print material, of official and semi-official documents issued by the Hungarian and Canadian governments and their related establishments, of societal and institutional records, of the cultural and religious organizations, as well as the private and family holdings of correspondence and photoalbums and handwritten manuscripts. Because of the enormity of the material, this essay is designed to focus on one aspect only: the archival records and their sources.

As an ever growing interest has occurred over the years in Hungarian studies in Canada, the purpose of this survey is to make the vast amount of information on archival sources readily available to the student and the information specialist. For further information the reader is advised to consult this author's bibliography *Canadian Studies on Hungarians 1886–1986*, published by the University of Regina Press, Canadian Plains Research Center, 1987, and its 3rd supplement, put out by the *Hungarian Studies Review*, 1998. Both publications have special sections on archival sources and their organization. The Publications listed at the end of this study should also be reviewed.

Keywords: Hungarian-Canadians, records of Hungarians in Canada, archives, manuscript collections, relating to Hungarian-Canadians both in Canada and Hungary

Official and semi-official records on Hungarians are held by several establishments in Hungary and Canada. The major repositories of documents are the national and regional archives, certain government ministries, related public agencies, and ecclesiastic as well as educational institutions in both countries.

Archival Sources in Hungary

Official and semi-official records relating to Hungarian-Canadians are held mainly by the National Archives of Hungary, but other regional and ecclesiastical archives, such as those of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Esztergom and Kalocsa, and the archives of the Reformed Church of Hungary, also contain relevant material. Non-government holdings and literary archival material are collected by such establishments as the National Széchényi Library, the Library of the National Academy of Sciences, and the Petőfi Literary Museum.

The National Archives of Hungary (NAH), Budapest

This is the national repository for official and semi-official documents. Perhaps the richest source of information on Hungarian-Canadians and their community life are the records of the Hungarian consulate that existed in Winnipeg from 1927 to 1941. These records are part of the holdings of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs that also include the records of the Hungarian Consulate General of Montreal (which operated from 1922 to 1941), the records of the Ministry's bureau in charge of the affairs of Hungarians outside of Hungary, and the records of the Ministry's Press Bureau.

Other relevant record collections at NAH include the collection of the Prime Minister's Office (relating mainly to the pre-1914 period), those of the Emigrants and Remigrants' Protection Bureau, and those of the Ministry of Agriculture – mainly documents pertaining to the emigration of agricultural labourers from Hungary, and the efforts to curb this out-migration. Some of the records of the World Federation of Hungarians (WFH) – in particular, those generated between 1928 and 1980 – are deposited in NAH, while those generated after 1990, and whatever records survive from Communist rule – are still housed in the WFH's headquarters in Budapest. Before 1989, the Institute of (Communist) Party History – later renamed the Institute of Political History – held extensive document collections that included some Ministry of the Interior records as well as memoirs of Hungarian communists living outside Hungary.

Archival Sources in Canada

In Canada, records on Hungary and Hungarians are held by the National Archives of Canada (NAC), the various provincial archives, and the archives of Hungarian church and community organizations and private collectors.

National Archives of Canada (NAC), Ottawa

This is the national repository for official and semi-official documents generated by federal government departments and other government agencies. NAC also houses Canada's most extensive collection of private manuscripts. The most voluminous documentation on Hungarian migration and settlement in Canada can be found in the records of the government bureaus that handled immigration. These agencies used to exist within one or another of Canada's government departments: the Department of Agriculture; the Interior; and from 1936 to 1949, Mines and Resources. At times, the part of Canada's bureaucracy dealing with immigration existed as a separate department: the Department of Immigration and Colonization (1917–1936), the Department of Citizenship and Immigration (1949–1966), and simply, the Department of Immigration, after 1966.

Other parts of Canada's federal government have also, on occasion, produced documents relating to Hungarians in Canada and Canada's dealings with Hungary. These include the Governor General's Office (Canada's Governors General played important public and even political functions in the first half century of the country's existence), the Privy Council (whose holdings include the records of the Cabinet and its various committees), the Department of External Affairs (which deal with Hungary and matters concerning Hungarian aliens in Canada), the Department of Labour and the Department of Justice – which was in charge of Canada's chief of police and intelligence agency, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) – most of whose early records are also at NAC.

Still another government-owned corporation whose records are also at NAC is the Canadian National Railways (CNR) – which at times was also involved in attracting immigrants to Canada and settling them here. Occasionally information on Hungary and Hungarian-Canadians can be also found in the papers of various Canadian politicians and other public figures, including the Hon. W. J. Pickersgill, Minister of Citizenship and Foreign Affairs during the 1950s, many of whose manuscripts are also held by NAC. One private corporation some of whose records are found in this archival repository, and which had at times extensive dealings with Hungarian immigrants and settlers, is the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) Company.

From 1972 on, NAC has made an effort to collect archival material relating directly to the history of Canada's ethno-cultural groups, including the Hungarians. Although the quest to gather documentary evidence relating to the Hungarian-Canadian evolution is far from comprehensive, the Hungarian collection of NAC's Ethnic Archives Section has grown over the years and houses some very valuable record and private manuscript collections. These include the records of the social organizations, such as the Canadian Hungarian Association, the Rákóczi Foundation and the Széchenyi Society; of religious organizations, i.e., the Hungarian Re-

formed Church of Montreal, St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Montreal; the Hungarian-Canadian press, amongst them the *Kanadai Magyar Újság*, which contain detailed information, among other things, on the establishment and short life of the Canadian Hungarian Federation (established in 1928, but ceased to function in the early 1930s). The Ethnic Archives Section also has most of the records of two other prominent (post-World War II) Hungarian-Canadian newspapers: the *Magyar Élet* and the *Kanadai Magyarország*. The collection also includes the private papers of several individual authors, namely George Faludy, Ferenc Fáy, Gyula Izsák, John Miska, Imre Székely Molnár, Ferenc Thassy-Plavensky, and Tamás Tűz.

In addition to NAC holdings, the reader should also consult the *National Photography Collection* located in Ottawa. Organized under the headings, Immigration and Colonization – Austrians-Hungarians, and Immigration and Colonization – Hungarians, some of the photographs go back to the 1890s and the 1920s, showing Hungarian agricultural labourers doing harvesting and threshing in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and photographs of 1956-ers interviewed by Canadian officials.

Provincial and regional archives

A wealth of information is collected by the provincial archives. These are listed in alphabetical order as follows:

Archives of Ontario, Toronto, ON

Formerly known as the Public Archives of Ontario, which houses the records of the Government of Ontario and its agencies, as well as numerous manuscript collections. References to Hungarians can be found in such collections as the records of the Prime Minister's Office, those of the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade (in particular the files of the Hungarian Refugee Program, 1956–1961). (For a much larger collection on Hungarians, see the Multicultural Society of Ontario entry.)

Glenbow Archives, Calgary, AB

Has a large collection of documents, e.g., manuscripts, photos, sound recordings, slides, films, videos. The bibliographic information is held on fonds. Some of these are: (1) Canadian Pacific Railway Fonds, incorporates colonization

files, Advisory Committee minutes and records related to 29 ethnic groups. Hungarian-related records are Land Holding Colonization: Calgary Hungarian Colonization Co.; Milk River Hungarian Society; Raymond Hungarian Colonization. (2) The Coyote Flats Historical Society collection includes manuscripts, photos, sound recordings, slides, films and videos on Hungarians. (3) The Csávossy Fonds hold reminiscences, manuscripts, photos, sound recordings, financial and income tax return records. (4) The Hungarian Cultural Society Collection, 1972–1974, contains 110 slides, 1 audio cassette relating to Hungarian fashion show, embroidery and the like. (5) Peoples of Southern Alberta Oral History Project 1987–1991. Contents: 345 audiovisual cassettes. Hungarians interviewed were: Michael Földessy, Károly Forgács, Barbara Mátyás, Tom Pajkos, and Rose Pelyhe.

Multicultural History Society of Ontario, Toronto, ON

MHSO holds the largest collection of archival materials on Hungarians in Canada. Some of the benevolent, social, political organizations whose papers are in MHSO are: the Brantford Hungarian Mutual Benefit Society; The Royal Hungarian Gendarmes Veterans' Fraternal Benevolent Association; the Canadian Federation of Democratic Hungarians; the Canadian-Hungarian Federation; the Delhi Hungarian House, the Délvidék Club (Waterloo, Wellington), the Hungarian-Canadian Cultural Centre (Toronto), the Hungarian-Canadian Engineers' Association, and the Hungarian cultural associations of Oshawa, St. Catharines. Educational, cultural: Association of Hungarian Teachers in North America; Hungarian School Board; Scout Movement; Hungarian Chair; Hungarian Art, Theatre; Kodály Ensemble (Toronto). Religious: Canadian-Hungarian Christian Association (Niagara Falls); Church of the Ancient Magyar Faith; First Hungarian Baptist Church (Toronto); First Hungarian Reformed Church (Windsor); Hungarian Greek Catholic Church (Courtland, Hamilton, Welland); Hungarian Presbyterian Church (Calgary, Delhi, Hamilton, Kipling, Toronto, Welland, Winnipeg); Roman Catholic Church of Canada (Courtland, Toronto, Welland, Windsor). National organizations: Rákóczi Foundation (Toronto); Széchenyi Society (Calgary); World Transylvanian Federation. The MHSO also has an extensive oral history collection, tape-recorded interviews with many hundreds of immigrants to Ontario, including Hungarians.

Provincial Archives of Alberta, Edmonton, AB

Its holdings contain photocopies of letters, documents and pamphlets from the Immigration Branch Records, Ottawa, pertaining to Hungarian immigration to Canada, including published letters from the Esterházy Colony, 1902–1904. Also includes photographs of hunters and their catch, photographs of Hungarian women taken before emigration to Canada, c. 1890–1915.

Provincial Archives of British Columbia, Victoria, B.C.

Holds a few publications on Hungarians entered under the subject heading: Hungarians in British Columbia. It also houses a copy of the Strathcona Project Collection, which includes 121 sound cassettes, interviews with people, including Hungarians of B.C.

Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Man.

This archives has the following manuscripts and photographs on Hungarian-Canadians: Emerich Duha: A Presentation of Hungarian-Canadians to the Canadian Unity Council. 1943. 5 p. In: H.A.J. Brodhal Papers, Mg14, C90, Box 2; Hungarian Protégés – Karl Nagy et al. 1957–1963, in: Ralph Maybank Collection, MG14, B35, File 46. Some photographs included are under the heading: Huns Valley.

Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, Fredericton, N.B.

This archive includes records relating to post-1956 Hungarian arrivals hospitalized with tuberculosis. For the time being these are closed, but might become available to the researcher with a promise of confidentiality. Within the records of the New Brunswick county courts, there are references to the naturalization of Hungarians, as these courts exchange information with the Federal Court of Canada. The Premier Flemming Records, the records of the Provincial Secretary and those of his (or her) deputy, also contain references to Hungarians.

Saskatchewan Archives Board, Saskatoon, Sask.

Has a sizeable collection on Hungarians, including the Records of Re-settlements of Hungarian immigrants, generated by the Department of Interior, Domin-

ion Land Branch. Also, papers on the first Hungarian settlers in Saskatchewan; the Rev. Frank Hoffman Papers, 1922–1945; the Gabriel Szakács Papers (Diary, 1953, 1961); Reminiscences, news bulletins of the Békevár Presbyterian Church, Kipling; Notes re: Békevár settlement. Individual files by Imrich Immer, Rev. Jules J. Pirot, Rev. Pál Sántha, Gabriel Szakács, etc.

Private Archives

Although most of the Hungarian benevolent, cultural-educational, scientific and religious organizations are known to have maintained their establishment records, such as by-laws pertaining to operational and financial matters, commemorations, annual and other meetings, very few of their holdings are professionally organized and made available to the researcher. No attempt has been made to conduct an extensive survey of the overall resources, and there is no union list available to coordinate the large amount of material to make the bibliographic information and location of material available to the user. The Hungarian Canadian Heritage Collection is the only professionally maintained private collection in Canada.

Hungarian Canadian Heritage Collection, Ottawa, ON

This collection started in 1981. Its founder, Mr. George Demmer, an educator of music, now retired, started to organize a large collection of his audio cassettes prepared with individual Hungarian folksingers across Canada. As the collection grew, he extended the scope and nature of the holdings. Today, the HCHC includes a sizeable collection of books by Hungarian-Canadian authors and complete sets of several Hungarian-Canadian newspapers. It also holds manuscripts of memoirs, newspaper clippings and correspondence by scholars, clergymen, authors and common folks. The music section, the largest of its kind in Hungarian-Canadian circles, contains more than 3500 audiotapes. Special holdings are the Rev. Kálmán Tóth archives, the Andrew Haraszti manuscripts, the total archival material of the Toronto-based and now defunct *Krónika*, and part of the *Kanadai Magyar Munkás* documents.

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Some years ago, I saw a display of archival collections in the National Library of Canada relating to a Jewish minority group in China. It was inspiring to notice that, although the community, as we came to realize, has hardly exceeded over the

centuries 500 souls at any given time, and yet its leaders were farsighted enough to preserve and organize an archival collection showing their existence. In fact, the collection was deemed to be significant enough to be put up on display in the major national libraries and public archives throughout Europe and North America. This accomplishment, I maintain to this day, should serve as an exemplary model for all of us. It should inspire the Hungarian communities outside and within Hungary in unearthing, gathering, organising, and preserving for future generations the very perishable archival documents relating to our history. The existence of history without tangible records is unimaginable, and no nation can hope to survive without the preservation of its history.

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