



Our Family
A Journey Through History

By Mary Horvath

**"...Where oh where is my old home?
It has disappeared into the foggy night.
The road, meadow, garden, the scent of flowers
The well and gate, pleasures, romance, melody: all gone
Back to the quiet, old garden:
Where all the old trails disappeared
Now I can hear it from far away through the fog and night:
Someone is trying to unlock the old gate..."**

Endre Ady

"Listen, now, all of you: There is nothing better nor more sacred than good memories. The best memories are from our childhood and our families. There is much talk about memories; but believe me, the early, beautiful and sacred experiences help us to mature and become valuable members of society. Even if we encounter hard times, illnesses and tragedies, childhood memories can help us through all of life's miseries."

Gitta Lieber-Kardos

First Generations

The Sziebert family history began in the small Hungarian village of Nemetboly (county of Baranya). Turkish troops occupied most of Hungary for 150 years; killing most of the people and burning the countryside. In 1687 the united European troops forced the Turks out of Buda. They retreated to Nagyharsany, a village in southern Baranya. Adam Batthyani and his seven thousand soldiers defended the area. A large battle was fought there at Nagyharsany. Eventually the weary Turks retreated to their homeland. Batthyani and his troops were stationed in and around Boly and Borjad. Although the area was destroyed, Batthyani realized the value of the rich fertile soil (today it is still considered the most fertile region in Hungary). He requested this area when the Habsburg dynasty gave away some land. Batthyani was rewarded with part of Baranya, including forty villages. The area consisted of beautiful hills, meadows and forests. According to documents written in 1700, Bolly, or Boly, was described as a farm with approximately twenty-five (25) homes. Documents listed Adam Batthyani as landowner in 1703. Unfortunately, he did not enjoy his land for long. He died shortly thereafter.

Adam Batthyani's widow, Eleanora Strattmen, inherited the land. She was considered beautiful, intelligent, lively, and wealthy. In the years ahead, she acquired more land. She made wise and impressive purchases, including Uszog (a village just outside of Pecs) and the castle in Siklos. Eventually the Batthyani family owned half of Dunantul. (This area is surrounded by the Austrian Alps on the west, the Danube River on the north and east, and the Drava River on the south.) Let's go back to the Turks for a moment: as we know by now they occupied Hungary for 150 years. The Hungarians tried, but were unable to free the land from the Turkish occupation. The prominent Hungadi family tried in vain to organize troops from other European countries. Finally, the Turks were beaten by a European coalition. The fleeing Turks burned Buda, killed, raped or enslaved Hungarians as they retreated.

All over Europe the church bells were tolling. People were praising the Lord. "150 years of Turkish occupation is over!!" Right after the Lord the people sang the praise of Charles from Lotharingia and Eugene of Savoy, but most of all, Salamon Oppenheimer. He was a banker in Vienna who organized the financial end of this undertaking (ridding Hungary from the Turks).

We know by now there were some people who did realize: there can be some successful speculation connected to patriotism.

Adam and Eleanora Batthyani had a son named John. When he died, there were no successors. The land was returned to the Habsburg crown. The estate was given to Princess Julia, wife of Prince William Montenouvo I. Prince

William was the son of Prince Neiperg Montenouvo and Maria Louise, Napoleon's widow. (Maria Louise loved to write letters. Her interesting letters were never destroyed. After World War II the Montenouvo family was penniless. They sold Maria Louise's letters in order to raise money.)

In 1730 the first families arrived to Boly. Each settler family received one-half ocherung and the opportunity to earn a living. The new inhabitants of Boly came willingly. Here they found fertile soil, work, and the opportunity to raise families.

Some of the inhabitants of Boly were known as "Rac" people. They came from the deep southern region, escaping from the lingering Turks. In Boly there were some disputes among the different nationalities. In 1748 the Rac people moved to Ractottos. The village of Boly was renamed Nemetboly. The population grew quickly. In one year 123 homes were built. By 1752 there were 206 homes.

One of the earliest members of the Sziebert family was Michael Sziebert. We only know that his wife's name was Margareth. He and his family arrived to Nemetboly from Fulda. (The settlers from Fulda brought with them a delicacy: a hard salami known as Stif-Fulda. Future generations were raised on this salami.) Michael Sziebert became a judge in Nemetboly. He was straight as an arrow. He was well loved by his family and friends. People frequently sought his advice. He worked hard for the common good: building schools and churches, helping widows and orphans. (Years later a church Michael helped build needed restoration work. When the steeple cross was removed, the Sziebert family-name was found there as the largest benefactor.) Michael died in 1763 at the age of 40.

Michael's son George was a schoolteacher. He signed his last name Szieberth, instead of Sziebert. Later the family divided. Ironically, they lived next door: Sziebert at 6 Florian Street and the Szieberth at 8 Florian Street.

George and his wife had seven children: Five sons and two daughters. Only their son, Ferdinand (Oct 27, 1793 - March 14, 1850) lived to adulthood. What caused all the childhood deaths? Who knows? Four little boys and two little girls died in early childhood. Ferdinand and his wife, Anna Werner (Dec 9, 1792 - April 30, 1852) were married in Boly by Felix Hess, a Franciscan priest, and had eight children.

Ferdinand, a tailor, lived to age 57. On his deathbed, he was deeply concerned about the welfare of Johann, his youngest child. Ferdinand's children stood around his bed, the room was darkened, only one candle flickering at the table. The father was breathing heavily. Finally, he had enough strength to ask his children: "Who will raise him?" pointing to his youngest son, the handsome, blue eyed 14-year-old Johann. From the semi darkened room came the answer: strong loud and clear "I will, Father!" The voice belonged to 27-year-old Karoly (January 28, 1823 - May 8, 1905). Many members of the Sziebert family were quick to offer their help to those who needed assistance.

This kind and generous family trait was passed through the generations. Those who were particularly blessed with this trait included Dia, Terus, Ili, Julishe, Eszti and Sari.

Karoly also tried to help his brother Gottfried. In July 1849, Gottfried was traveling from Fiume, where he purchased wine. On the way home he became weak. He rented a room in an inn in the village of Laska. Gottfried became infected with cholera. Unfortunately, Karoly arrived too late and Gottfried died alone in the rented room. Due to the fear of cholera, people refused to remove the body from the room. Karoly carried his brother's remains downstairs on his shoulders and buried him.

Karoly was a man with a big heart. In addition to loving his family, he loved Lizzie. Karoly didn't have to look far to find a wife; Lizzie Schultz lived next door. On her wedding day, January 14, 1845, Lizzie only had to take a short walk across the backyard. All of the Szieberts were tall and lean, but Lizzie was short and round. She was also smart and lively.

Karoly and Lizzie had one son, Stephan. They had quite an active household. In addition to Stephan, they also raised Johann (Karoly's youngest brother), "little" Ferdinand (Gottfried's son), and Gustov (Lizzie's nephew). Karoly Sziebert was a very caring man. He looked after his boys, even when they left his home. Gustov studied religion and became a priest.

"Little" Ferdinand decided to call himself Nandor, a modern version of Ferdinand. He became a lawyer. His law office was located in Pecs. Nandor's political hero was Lajos Kossuth, a radical rebel.

Nandor courted and married Miss Vizkelety. She was pretty, poor and pure. Her old noble family was left without money; however, they had a family crest. Nandor and his wife had many children. Nandor was unable to earn enough money for his growing family. He turned to Karoly for financial assistance. Generous Karoly gave Nandor a bankbook and told him to use as much as he needed. Nandor almost emptied the account!

Nandor was not considered a friendly person. He often had arguments with family members. Although Nandor lived next door to his cousins, the Liebers, he did not speak to them. The silence was broken by an unfortunate tragedy. One autumn day, during World War I, a telegram was mis-delivered to Mr. Lieber. He opened the telegram without reading the address. Sadly, one of Nandor's sons had died. Mr. Lieber told Nandor the news. The two men cried together.

Johann (Karoly Sziebert's youngest brother) became a tanner. Karoly had arranged for Johann to marry Maria Kovacsevics. Maria was a pretty woman with Croat blood. Although the marriage was a success (as all marriages were seemingly happy then), Maria never liked her husband's family. She went out of her way to greet strangers walking on the opposite side of the street. But she ignored Johann's family who lived next door.

Maria was a very ambitious woman and a proud mother. Every Sunday

morning she prepared six white, starched shirts for her sons. This was quite an undertaking. Before the advent of Whisk, women used wood ashes as a water softener. Housewives made soap from fatty scraps and lye. The shirts were washed by hand in huge wooden tubs. Then they were boiled in copper lined kettles. After the shirts dried outside, they were starched. Starch was made from sliced potatoes soaked in water. Finally, the shirts were ironed. Irons were heavy and clumsy. Red-hot charcoal was placed in the iron. Women had to iron energetically in order to keep the charcoal hot.

Maria's sons dutifully wore the immaculate shirts every Sunday. They would have preferred to wear more comfortable shirts, but they loved and respected their mother.

Maria and Johann had six sons. Ferenc (Frank) sold leather in Mohach. Charles remained in Boly and worked as a tanner. Johann moved to Pecs and had a large leather goods shop on Jokai Ter. Jenő (Eugene) owned a leather factory in the town of Baja. Elek was a farmer. Robert became a teacher and principal of a school in Pecs.

After Robert completed his education as a teacher, he became a boarder in the Hoffman household in Pecs. Mr. Hoffman was a successful cabinet and furniture maker. He saw many fine qualities in Robert and hoped Robert would marry his granddaughter, Justine. Robert didn't show much interest in Justine. Mr. Hoffman even offered Justine's hand to Robert, but reluctant Robert said, "No, no. She is too young and too weak." Mr. Hoffman replied angrily, "The mouse is weak, but can still move a haystack." Mr. Hoffman died with a thorn in his side. At the wake Robert proposed to Justine, she quickly accepted.

Justine and Robert had three children: Justine, Heidi and Robert. Justine was loved by her mother-in-law. Unfortunately, Justine became ill with TB while she was a young woman. Her family was devastated. A home was purchased for her in the Mecsek Mountains. Before her death, Justine prepared a will. She left the Hoffman fortune to her children. Her husband received nothing. Robert never remarried. He raised his children and made sure they were well educated.

Education was very important to Robert. He worked hard to establish the first school in Pecs exclusively for children of coal miners. Robert encouraged citizens of Pecs to donate money for this worthy cause. Occasionally funds ran out, Robert borrowed money from his family and friends. When the school opened, it was called Robert Szieberth School. (In 1945 the Communist government had the school sign whitewashed. For years the name was hidden and almost forgotten. Slowly, the rains of Pecs washed away the paint. Once again the name is visible. The Robert Szieberth School is located beside Route 6 at the entrance of Pecs.)

Johann Szieberth loved to read. He subscribed to the magazine of "Leipziger Intelligent Blatt Über Land Und Meer" since 1867 (*Leipziger Scientific Magazine about Land and Sea*.) Next door to Johann and Maria Szieberth lived

Karoly Sziebert. Karoly and his family were avid readers also. Reading was permitted at night, after all the chores were done. Karoly and his family were puritans. Knowledge came from "Michael's Calendars". They printed an answer concerning every question -- life, illness, man, mammal, house and garden. Of course, there was always the holy bible, and selected prayer books. In the village of Nemetboly, not too many people had the luxury of books. Soon it was rumored that the Szieberts had a room full of books.

Karoly Sziebert loved to travel from Boly to Pecs. Pecs was considered to be a large city with bright lights, restaurants and theaters. Lizzie Sziebert thought her husband squandered too much money in Pecs. She decided not to accompany her husband on "frivolous" trips to Pecs. Karoly had a new traveling companion, his granddaughter Julia. They enjoyed carriage rides throughout the city of Pecs, the driver would ask "Where sir?" "Just keep on driving!" - was the surprising answer. Karoly particularly enjoyed the Royal Theater. At times he was an over-enthusiastic spectator. He would become very involved in the production as the drama intensified, much to the dismay of other audience members, and would often applaud and shout, "Bravo! Bravo!"

Karoly became annoyed with his wife when she ordered new tailored suits. But when the suits arrived, he loved them and wore them regularly.

Karoly was a very generous man. He often donated money to people in need, especially orphans and missions. He tried to donate money anonymously, but the recipients would find their benefactor and write glowing letters of thanks. Lizzie often said "Oh no, not again!"

Karoly was considered to be a fun loving grandfather. He loved his family and had a zest for life. He had a lovely gold ring with an onyx stone - he wore the ring all the time - this family ring is now in the possession of another Karoly (Chuck Horvath). Karoly was extremely proud of his grandson, Karoly, who was the first college graduate of the family, having attended the University of Agriculture of Magyar Ovar. In his later years, Karoly used to sit in front of his house for hours waiting for his grandson. When he finally arrived on horseback, Karoly would exclaim, "My Karl, my beloved grandson!"

Karoly became a tailor; however, he was not particularly interested in his trade. He loved to buy and sell fine wines. He made a fortune with his wine business. Karoly and his son Stephen were clever businessmen. They knew when to start and when to stop business dealings. Karoly and Stephan acquired land. They purchased farms: "New Farm," "Lukas Farm" and "Farm Ziegelofen." They also purchased vineyards: "Tukar," "Marieberg," "Dreispitz" and "Hochkeller."

The Szieberts worked very hard. Life was frugal, but at times a bit frivolous. Karoly told his wife and daughter-in-law, "Here is a hundred for a pig. Another hundred for coffee, sugar and spices. Another hundred for the girls' dresses. And another hundred for anything else you want."

Stephan (Stephy) Sziebert (August 19, 1846 - Dec 9, 1907) met and fell in

love with Kathleen Trischler, (August 24, 1854 - November 22, 1922.) Her father was a farmer. They were married on February 6, 1871. The beautiful bride was sixteen years old. The groom was twenty-four years old. Stephy first became a baker, then a tailor before finally dealing in wine. He built a wine cellar. He hung a sign above the door, which read, "It was a pleasure to build - but who knew it would be so expensive." Stephy did not speak a lot when his children asked him what inflation was; he said, "When one krohne will be one penny." A child complained about the lack of toys, his answer was "Always look down - not up". Upon hearing a local scandal, he remarked "Everyone takes his own hide to market." They had five daughters and three sons: Anna, Julie, Theresa, Maria, Kathleen, Karoly, Johann and Istvan.

Kathleen Trischler was an intelligent woman. She advised her husband and son in business and all other matters. She was, of course, the "boss" of her household until her dying day.

Stephy was gentle, quiet and humble. Although he had a wine business, he never drank. Stephy was fortunate in business. One day a woman wanted to sell her grapes to Stephy. They haggled over the price. Stephy thought the price was too high. The woman thought the price too low. Eventually Stephy won. The following day a hale storm ruined all the local grapes, except for Stephy's new purchase. Stephy made a lot of money from the grapes.

One afternoon Stephy took a nap on the sofa he was suddenly awakened by his wife, who clapped her hands and shouted, "How about getting up and doing something!" Stephy opened his eyes half way and remarked; "Kathy, stop it, I make more money snoozing with my thoughts than I would if I would split wood." Stephy was a generous man. He often contributed to local charities.

Unfortunately, Kathleen became ill with lung problems. She moved to the furthest part of the house (so the children should not be infected.) Kathleen and her daughter, Anna, went to Austria, with its high mountains and trees; clean air and rest was prescribed to people with lung conditions. After returning from the Alps, Kathleen insisted she was cured. To prove it, she brushed her traveling clothes herself. But Kathleen had lung problems until the end of her life.

As Kathleen's daughters came of age, she worried about their future. In those days, young women were assisted with this serious matter. They were introduced to suitable men, approved after a background and bankbook investigation. Kathleen did not have to look far; next door lived the handsome, healthy and wealthy Szieberth boys. They were second cousins!

Kathleen's matches were usually successful. Frank married Anna. Johann intended to marry Theresa; however, he married Julie instead. Eugene was selected for Maria, but this plan did not work out.

Theresa Sziebert (Oct 12, 1877 - Dec 7, 1973) eventually married George Lieber, a Juries doctor. When George visited his family in Boly, he saw the Sziebert family. One day he declared his intention to marry any of the Sziebert

maidens. Anna chuckled in the background, "Who wants to marry this old man?" (George was 36 years old.) Theresa (18) stepped forward and said, "I'll take him."

George loved Theresa very much. He often visited the Sziebert house. In those days even an engaged couple needed to be chaperoned. Little Katica was assigned to sit with them. George was a wise man. Before he reached for Theresa's hand, he reached in his pants pocket for candy. Katica loved candy, and she just loved her future brother-in-law.

Theresa and George were married within two months. Theresa was a beautiful bride with golden hair. Many guests attended the joyful event. They were served meat, soup, doughnuts and roasts. The wedding cake was hazelnut with whipped cream. Theresa's parents gave her a hand-carved crucifix as a wedding gift. Eventually, it traveled to the United States to relieve Dr. Stephan Sziebert's homesickness. The newlyweds lived in Pecs, at Janos Utca 13, where George had his law practice. They had seven children. Unfortunately only four reached adulthood. George, Jr. was the first son. He was an average boy with simple dreams. He was always friendly and helpful. One summer a locksmith employed him. He worked very hard pulling a handcart through the streets of Pecs while his friends enjoyed their summer vacation.

During World War I, George, Jr. went to Boly to look after Karoly Sziebert's farm (Karoly had to join the army.) George was assigned as an overseer of the POWs. Prisoners worked as temporary farm hands. Eventually George was called for duty. Before he left, he requested his favorite meal: cottage cheese strudel. Perhaps this was the last kind thing life gave him. When George was nineteen years old, a cold and cruel telegram ended his life: "Missing in action." Letters from his mother and an inexpensive silver pocket watch was strewn around a bloodied meadow where he died.

Bela was the second son. He became a pharmacist. He loved to cook up things, not just medicines. He made soaps for finicky young ladies. He also made mustache wax. Bela moved to the Great Plains where his wares were very well known. People placed orders long after he moved back to the Duantul. Bela was a loner, especially after his marriage failed. Eventually he remarried and opened a pharmacy in Kaposvar. After Bela's death, his family heard of his many acts of kindness, such as giving free medicine to the needy.

Theresa had three daughters: Anna, Mitzi, and Bozsi. The first two died in one week of scarlet fever. The following year little Bozsi died.

Theresa was devastated. She always remembered the little girls as "My angels" - who never became old, were never fresh, never fought. Later on Ily and Gitta were born. They heard the remarks so often, so they asked: "Mama, isn't it true: the beautiful and good ones die, only the ugly and fresh ones grow up?"

Ily and Gitta got married about the same time, Ily to Laszlo Frigyer, MD and Gitta to Tibor Kardos. Doctor Frigyer was previously married, but his wife died young and left him with a small daughter. Kato grew up to become a

pharmacist. Ily and Dr. Frigyer's daughter, Esther, is a doctor. While in medical school, she married George Gerby. They are the parents of George (a college professor) and Christina (a Pediatrician). They are a close-knit family. Grandma Theresa, and later Ily mama lived with them.

Gitta's husband Tibor was a very famous professor of Italian language and culture. They lived in Rome for a while, Gitta was a great help to her husband: translating and editing his work. Their two children are Marina and Julie. When Ily and Gitta got married they took both their husbands to visit relatives: Tancso and Zdenko. This was customary. The cook produced a fabulous dinner. After the meal the new husbands got up from the table and went to the kitchen to thank the cook for the meal. It was expected to give her a nice tip. Poor Tibor was not sophisticated - he just bent down and kissed the cook's hand. Mrs. Frank never stopped talking about it "Mr. Kardos is a gentleman, a true gentleman."

Theresa was short, round, and looked a lot like her grandmother, Lizzy. She loved to do needlework. When her sister Julie got married she embroidered all the sheets, pillowcases and table clothes. Julie selected a very difficult pattern - so when the embroidery work was going on Theresa was excused from all kinds of household chores.

Theresa was an excellent baker: her coffee cakes were famous. She loved to write letters: when one read her letters, one felt part of the happenings (her namesake Teri Sziebert Schmidt shared the same talent.) Even in her old age she was very witty. When someone in the family dated an older, ugly man Theresa remarked:

"Not hibsich, aber a gute tarsalgo"
(Not handsome, but a good conversationalist)

Her words were quoted over and over again.

Theresa and George Lieber bought a vineyard in 1908 near Pecs. The family loved to spend time there: the children playing, Theresa canning and drying the fruit. She had remarkable soft hands. Her children remembered how she would squat down and warm up their freezing hands. At night she would tuck in her children and softly whisper "Good night, my rosebud". (People did not show such affection in those times.) Theresa nursed her aging husband for years. Money was always tight, but she was too proud to complain.

Theresa's father, Stephy Sziebert, was a very bad diabetic. As he aged he suffered from bad circulation, his toes turned black and he had terrible pain. His leg had to be amputated- the best surgeon was summoned to the Lieber house, the living room became the OR suite - where Stephy lost his leg. The surgery was a success, but the patient died the next morning.

Kathleen Trischler Sziebert took her husband's body back to Boly. Around the same time Lizzi mama died of old age. Kathleen had to bury her husband and her mother-in-law at the same time.

Julia Sziebert Szieberth
August 11, 1879 - July 11, 1951

The next sister, Julie Sziebert was a beautiful young girl. At the local plays she was always selected to play the Virgin Mary.

She was in love with a young man - no relation - whose name was Trischler. Just before they got engaged the young man announced that he couldn't get married because he was ill. Julie was heartbroken and the family, disappointed. The young man died by the end of the year.

Later on Julie married her second cousin, John Szieberth. He had a leather goods store in Pecs. The family lived on Jokai-ter. The store was on the first floor, while the ever-growing family lived upstairs. The house was built around a courtyard, covered with cobblestones. There was a corridor with big windows facing the courtyard. Big beautiful geraniums bloomed in the windows, and all over the courtyard, oleanders grew in old whiskey barrels.

Julie had her children one after the other: Jancsi, Juliska, Denes, Jenó, Steven, Feri, Imre and Bela. The last one Bela died in infancy. The Sziebert and Lieber Kids were not only cousins, but also playmates. They remained friends for life.

Julie loved her children, but loved the store even more. She would work there every day helping the shoppers and sitting by the cash register.

She must have had a hard, difficult life, a difficult marriage. Later in life she told one of her daughter-in-laws "in marriage we must make honey out of vinegar, use one drop of honey, you will gain more than using a barrel-full of vinegar." She encountered plenty of tragedy. Her son, Jenó, died of dysentery as a young man. Denes committed suicide when he was 22 years old. The family never realized how unhappy he was. His early death is still a question mark.

Jancsi was a real Personality! The Szieberths owned a vineyard, Jancsi spent a lot of time there as a teenager. His father put him in charge of the grapeyard workers - and other happenings in the grapeyard.

Jancsi was tall, blond, with the real Sziebert blue eyes and wide smile. He had many friends (both sexes), and the "Szollo" was the perfect place to meet them.

The city of Pecs had a seminary with lots of young men attending to become priests. Each afternoon the young men went on a long walk. The purpose of these walks was to take account of thoughts, temptations, and to pray for a clean life. As young seminarians, they walked along the sidewalk, in pairs, sneaking through Pecs. They always ended up in the Sziebert grapeyard. There Jancsi served them wine. Everybody had a good time. Sometimes Jancsi filled up the casks with water to divert his father's suspicions. After months of doctoring the wine, one of the seminarians gulped down what tasted like holy water. He exclaimed, "Watch out - you ugly pope!"

After graduation, Jancsi went to Germany to attend university. He wanted to become a doctor. His father sent him the tuition faithfully year after year. Jancsi never came home. Finally, after lots of prodding he did return: in a small boat. His sun-bleached blond hair reached his shoulders. He had a healthy beard. He was deeply tanned and wore bathing trunks. When he finally dropped anchor in the town of Mohach people believed Robinson Crusoe had arrived--with a German wife, Elsa, and a small child.

Jancsi became a doctor and lived in Fonyod by the Lake Balaton. After World War II Jancsi lived in Germany with his second wife. Elsa, his first wife returned to Pecs where she raised their three children. No one knows how Elsa was able to raise the children because she was penniless. Eventually, the oldest son, Gunther, moved to Germany where he lived with an older, rich woman. The daughter Mufi worked for Radio Free Europe, the youngest son, Hanzi lived in Pecs with his family.

Julishka, the only daughter of Julie Szieberth became a high school teacher. She married George Adorjan. For years they and their two sons lived in the family's grapeyard. In her later years Julishka and Teri Sziebert Schmidt became great friends. The two would meet daily for breakfast.

Julie's other son, Steven (or Pista) was known as the one most resembling Grandpa Stephy. He became a farmer, inheriting Kozar. This farm was near Pecs and had excellent fertile soil. The house was built by Mayor Aidinger. It was a big, stylish building surrounded by tall, old trees. As the legend goes, the house in Kozar was built when the German Emperor William and Franz Joseph Habsburg, the ruler of Austria - Hungary planned a hunting trip in the area. The hunt was over quickly, but the beautiful house remained.

Pista, an eligible bachelor - went to a fancy dance: the Jurist Ball. He met Clare Racz. She was twelve years his junior, vivacious, beautiful with dark brown hair. He fell madly in love with her, but it took some time to convince Clare to get married. In the end they married, lived happily with their five children. After 1945 the farm and the house was taken from them by the Russians.

As if that was not enough, Pista was imprisoned for years on trumped-up charges. Clare and the children ended up living with her parents in a two-bedroom apartment. They had wall-to-wall beds! But all Pista's children grew up getting a good education.

Frank and Imre, the last two Szieberth boys did get an education in agriculture. They married twin sisters. Frank took Piri and Imre married Hugi Kadar. They all lived in the old (Jokai - Ter 3) Szieberth house.

Frank had three children. Imre had six children; Imre, Bela, Michael, Tom, and twin girls, Piri and Elizabeth. There was never any money in this household, but there was lots of love, lots of children, laundry, diapers, big pots of soup boiling. Piri and Hugi always had a smile. They would sing; all of them had good voices. The Szieberth household admittedly lived on cheap horsemeat. Life was

hard, but they took the blows with a half smile. A few years later tragedy struck again and again. The oldest son Imre became a priest - shortly after his ordination he died in a car accident (suspicious because quite a few young priests died under tragic circumstances). Son Bela was a pilot; his plane was shot down by mistake by the Russian troops. Tom was electrocuted when he tried to fix his mother's washing machine.

Anna Sziebert Szieberth
April 23, 1876 - February 20, 1960

Anna was a tall, thin girl. We all remember; she accompanied her mother, Kathleen Trischler Sziebert to the Austrian Alps. Her mother's fear was that Anna may develop weak lungs, but this was not so.

She was a very finicky child; she did not like to eat. Occasionally she would dig out a small piece of ham from the middle of it. The family was shocked, but forgave her because she looked sickly. Her mother felt Filet mignon would be nutritious and took a small slice to the backyard where Anna was skipping along. "Eat this" - Anna was skipping away to the oleander tree and spat the meat right into the large flowerpot. "Anna come here", the mother called. Another tidbit led to another trip to the oleander tree.

After Anna married Frank Szieberth - another cousin from next door - they moved to Mohach. Frank was in the leather business. Anna became a dedicated mother, she had plenty of help, but she worked, cleaned, cooked all day long. The copper pots were so shiny, like mirrors, all the other pots and pans resembled silver. In her kitchen, the chickens had only legs and breasts - she would never serve wings or backs.

June 26th was St Ann's Day - this was her name day. She had the "whole world" i.e., Mohach at her feet. Family, the Rosary Society, her friends, neighbors all came to congratulate her. There was gaiety once a year. Flower vases were packed, the backyard was full of people; eating cake and drinking lemonade. At nightfall - after the guests were saying goodbye - Anna would run back to the house and gather up her daughters' outgrown clothes. She gave them all to the poor relatives. These dresses had yards and yards of lace, creations of Mrs. Pretzel, the local seamstress. Anna was always hospitable to her nieces and nephews. The visiting children had a hard time choosing from all the goodies offered to them.

As Anna got older she developed lots of facial hair. She wore long skirts and a blue apron. She loved to hug the youngsters, but the children squirmed, due to the facial growth. After 1949 she fell in despair, all her wealth lost to the communists and her health was failing. One day the tax collector even took her favorite china closet for so-called "late taxes". Anna died in 1960 poor and lonely.

Her husband, Frank, was a little known, gray figure who wore dark clothes and had laconic manners. They had five children: Joseph, Mariska, Frank, Anna, Karoly. Joseph, the eldest, was tall and handsome. He married Wilma Reiter. According to the family tales, they looked like a pair of movie stars. Joseph rented a big farm, Sumony. Wilma was an excellent housewife. She roasted turkey (this was back when people did not know about turkey in Hungary) - in the bread-baking oven. The birds were tasty with lovely brown skin. She baked napoleons, canned fruits. When you were invited to Sumony, you were in Heaven. They had

three children; Eta, Joseph and Claire. After 1945, they were also hunted by the communists. They settled in a small village next to the Lake Balaton. They lived there - unknown - until the end.

Anna's daughter, Mariska married Charles Bauer. He owned a general store, where one could find a scythe, a hoe, ribbons, spices and candy. The younger cousins loved to visit, especially the candy counter. She was an excellent housewife: her closets were so neat. Twenty years later she still had her engagement and wedding gown hanging, pressed and cleaned. Her hair was done up in deep waves, and she wore a hairnet over it day and night, a style that was very fashionable then. Her husband Charles was called Karchi, the fresh nephews called him: Xarchi (Szar means BM). Charles and Mariska were childless.

Brother Frank was unmarried and kept to himself. Karoly became a tanner. He was married to Barbara Prakatur. They had three children.

Ann was a redhead with green eyes. She was beautiful - till she opened her mouth. There is a fitting saying; "Beauty fades, dumb is forever." Ann married Steve Vago, a young pharmacist. They lived happily; especially after Teri Sziebert Schmidt hand-delivered the 20,000 Pengo (Hungarian currency) as her dowry. They had two children. Steve died young from a ruptured appendix, back then there were no antibiotics and he was dead in one week.

Ann married again much later. This time she finally tied the knot with her long time live-in brother-in-law, keeping it all in the family, as the saying goes.

Maria Sziebert Schmidt
March 24, 1885 - March 19, 1940

The next Sziebert daughter was Maria - or as she was called Mariska. She was pretty, with a beautiful smile. People noticed her beauty and personality.

Karoly Schmidt was a pharmacist in the town of Mohach. He sent his uncle, Mr. Hoffmeister, to Boly - for Mariska's hand. Mr. Schmidt told him not to mention dowry, for "there was plenty." The good uncle repeated this statement to Stephy and Kathleen Sziebert. They just smiled, because they liked the groom-to-be. Mariska complained of the size of the boyfriend, calling him rotund. Her aunts persuaded her that he was pleasant and in the end they were married.

At this wedding, just like the weddings before (Julie's and Anna's) the bride wore gold jewelry received from their mother - Kathleen Trischler Sziebert. She had contacted Rose Stark, the local doctor's wife. Rosa knew where to get jewelry from Austria. Kathleen Trischler Sziebert marveled at all the splendid pieces. Of course, she started bargaining but the jeweler reminded Kathleen that all the stones and gold were real. At the end all her girls received a pin and earrings. Where are they now? Who knows, probably lost.

Mariska called her new husband: Zdenko, he called her Tancho. Mariska was smart to marry him; she had a fabulous life with him. Although they never had children, they were both very happy. Mariska had everything money could buy; expensive jewelry, warm furs, dream trips and complete control over her man and home. Her numerous nieces loved Mariska. When she went to visit them, the children would sit next to her, stroking her soft pink silk blouse, shiny fur coat or slip their hands into her enormous muffs and smell her French perfume. As she would leave the children would whisper; "Invite us please!"

To go to Tancso's house was a dream come true. She had a big home with soft rugs, sunny windows and more than one bathroom. The house always has a slight pharmaceutical scent, but no one cared. There was a piano, a beautiful pink chaise (one felt like Madame Recamier when sitting on it), surrounded by the softest chairs and many paintings, (not only of saints, but there was one of two little naked girls, next to a fire). There were three levels to this house and a big terrace. Due to the Danube being so close, the basement was flooded occasionally. The children marveled at the fact that the river was in the house and used to spend their day looking for fish in the basement.

Tancho was a born actress - people just loved to listen to her tell a story. She always told a good, funny story, about friends, her mother-in-law's dinner parties, her sister Anna's children escapades, loves, marriages, scandals, her nephews' motorcycle rides, but never spoke of anyone in a malicious way.

She and her husband were very religious, and donated a lot of money to build the big church in Mohach. One of the huge stain glass windows still bears their name. She was not interested in the so-called family crest and the

“Baroness” title. She felt her brother-in-law purchased it all. She loved to have children around, even the second generation: Loya Schmidt spent a lot of time in Mohach. Zdenko would take her to work with him all the time.

Zdenko always had to struggle with his weight. Tancho would put him on a diet and he would come home and eat the diet food without complaints. When she asked him once why he never complained, Loya let the secret out that they stopped every day and had a bowl of gulyas!

There were times when her Sziebert blood won out, she would economize. Travels were frivolous in her eyes. Zdenko planned a trip to the Riviera but she would not hear of it. They compromised and planned to go to Budapest instead, but when they boarded the train Tancho realized she had been tricked and was whisked away to the Riviera despite her original argument. Even though Tancho was not fond of travels, she would take her beloved nieces to the capital, Budapest. She would show them culture, hotel living, the countless bridges between Buda and Pest. She would show them fancy restaurants, museums and old churches. Once while on a bus, going along the Danube, Tancho embarrassed the girls by exclaiming, “Look! Girls! There is Parliament!” When everyone on the bus (and in the country) would know what Parliament looked like from stamps, postcards and newspapers.

In 1939 Tancho’s favorite niece was diagnosed with Leukemia. When she was notified she asked God to take her life instead of her niece’s. Soon afterwards she contacted meningitis and became very ill. The night her condition became critical Gitta Lieber claims; her large cherry wood table snapped in half. When Tancho died Zdenko and the whole family was devastated. Her funeral was attended by everybody. People who knew her were all there. Zdenko cried inconsolably. He was lost without Tancho’s love. He wore his black arm ribbon (fashionable mourning attire), but there were people in the crowd who observed: the grief stricken husband was crying into a red handkerchief instead of the white with black border required by the etiquette books.

After 1945 the communists took over his home and pharmacy. Furniture and rugs were all lost. Zdenko was able to rent a room in his brother’s house, where he lived with his long-time housekeeper, Trudy. Trudy cleaned other people’s houses and shared her earning with the ageing Zdenko. This wonderful man died in great poverty.

Katharina Sziebert
April 12, 1891 - Feb 11, 1967

When Kathleen Trischler Sziebert was about 37 years old she had her last surviving child, a little girl, Katharina, called "Katica". She was showered with attention and was loved and spoiled by all the older children. Christmas was a spiritual holy day in those days but the older sisters were determined that Katica will have a real Christmas. Their mother finally gave in to their pleas and they had joy, laughter, candy and sweets in dishes, poppy seed cake, baked fish for dinner that was called "Rac-ponty". The sweet smell of pine was created by the Christmas tree in the living room which was decorated with scintillating candles, ropes made from silver ribbons, nuts, hazelnuts and red apples. Under the tree a real porcelain doll for little Katica. Her face was shining, her eyes aglow! What a wonderful evening!

No one could have predicted the tragedy awaiting little Katica? When she was only five, there was a funeral. The Sziebert family crypt was built into a hill. On the top of the hill was a great black marble tombstone, surrounded by boxwood bushes. Katica was restless during the funeral, moving around on the top of the grave. All of a sudden a scream, and she fell off the hill right to the bottom of the embankment. The little girl lay motionless on the cobblestone walk. The mourners stood there aghast, silent, breathless, then some cried out. People came forward, tried to coax little Katica to get up, but she couldn't move. She just cried softly on the ground. She suffered serious back injury, pain! pain! The family contacted the best doctors, money was no object. There was also a plan to take Katica to Lourdes - everyone was talking about all the miracles there; lame, sick people got up and walked again, leaving behind their canes and crutches; but Kathleen could not see taking a sick child on such a long journey to a strange land. Prayers were said, daily. Nuns from the order of Saint Vincent were commissioned to get holy water from Lourdes and when it arrived the family began a novena. Each night Katica's back was rubbed with the holy water. On the 9th night Kathleen asked little Katica to stand up and walk. The little girl stood up and started to walk hesitantly. You might say she may have been able to walk without the holy water from Lourdes, but she needed faith to take the first step.

Her carefree childhood was over. The family took little Katica to Vienna to the world famous professor: Lorenza's hospital as she was developing a hump. She wore a girdle all her life, but she was able to walk, to live, to love. The professor ordered a contraption that was mounted on the bedroom doorframe that Katica was strapped onto to hang and hopefully straighten her back. She was in constant pain all her life and became very sympathetic to people afflicted with pain. Years later when her great grandniece had polio; Katica's heart was broken.

As she grew up the family decided Katica's fate; she did not need to become interested in men as no-one would marry her unless for her money. As she got stronger she had chores to fill her days and dreams filled her nights. She loved small pleasures; she gave her love to her family and friends. She planned birthday parties and would bring someone a white hosta flower, small holy pictures, tiny porcelain slippers (she called it a vase for violets). Katica loved everything small. In the garden she created an altar for Mary of Lourdes. She got herself a real bookcase as she was an avid reader and filled her life with the magic of books, religious and novels. She subscribed to "Kranzhen" a German monthly for young girls. At times these small mosaics of happiness can color our lives, but most times we neglect to see the small treasures; meals with loved ones, a book, poetry, a lovely night under the stars, relaxing after a hectic day, getting home after a journey, a flowering tree, a rose bud. Katica saw all of these things. She loved hand-painted folk plates and started a collection - introducing other family members to this passion. As a young girl she was sent to a hotel in Pecs where she learned salad making from the chef. Her salads were famous; potato, tomato, zeller, but the best remembered was her sausage salad, with chopped onion. She also made the best yeast breads, light and fluffy. When she had nothing to fill them with she would use farina or "A little bit of this and that."

In later years, after the Russian takeover in 1945, there was not too much to eat but Katica would surprise the family with her "Smarni", a dish that could never be duplicated by anyone. She would chop up dried up crescent ends, anything left over, milk and beaten eggs. Loya Schmidt loved the yeast cakes and when Katica was not looking Loya would cut a slice from the middle of the loaf, then push the bread back together again. It looked untouched, just a little shorter.

Katica was always thrifty. She was able to make a delicacy from the toughest piece of meat. She would darn the oldest piece of clothing. She would sit at the table at night; push her glasses on top of her graying head, and sort rice. In those days rice came with stones and grass seeds mixed up and while "Carolina Long Grain Rice" was only a dream. She and her sister-in-law would pray the rosary and sort the rice for the next day's meal.

One can still remember her in a blue long apron; and in her Sunday best, black hat, black dress with white polka dots and a lacy white zsabot. She always had some hidden treasures; sometimes good liquor, strong coffee or imported tea. Although in Boly coffee and tea were served in modest mugs she bought a set of china cups so thin you could almost see through them, with light blue flowers painted on them. Szilvia Gyimothy has them now. She lives in Denmark. This set brings the magic of "home" to her in a far away land.

In her brother, Karoly Sziebert's house children were born annually. Katica held them, rocked them, fed them, told them fairy tales and of course,

washed endless clothes and diapers.

After lunch she would relax in her little apartment, resting in her favorite chair and reading. During the night she was up a lot; fighting back the pain. She never complained, but once she said; "If you have pain, the dark of night never wants to end."

As her brother's children were growing up, another task awaited her, while the teenagers attended high school in Pecs, Katica kept house there. She raised them, guided them but mostly loved them. Katica and the kids had a ball. She invited friends for dinner, organized birthday parties and the movies! They were new exciting and romantic! There was life, freedom and adventure under Katica's rule. One night she had planned a trip to the outdoor movie with the kids "The Park-Movie", but Karoly arrived in Pecs unexpectedly and was annoyed that she was bringing his innocent children to a "sin-filled dive". She persuaded him to come along, to prove him wrong, but there were some innocent bedroom scenes in this movie, so afterwards, while the kids ran home, Katica was lectured all the way.

After 1945 most of the family's wealth was taken from the Szieberts, but there was still the family home. In 1950 the family was thrown out of the home in Boly. Katica ended up living in her niece, Terus's, house in Pecs. After 1956's revolution she lost all her income and existed only with the help of her other niece (Idu's) husband, the "Good Vili Manninger." She loved her great nephews and nieces. When she met Betsy Horvath she called her lovingly "My little Mousie."

As she got older her back became more painful, she also developed heart problems. A week before her death she cut her long hair and showed her family where her papers and things were kept. Early in the morning of February 11, 1967 she died in the arms of Idu Schmidt Gyimothy - suffering a massive heart attack. The family adored her. She was wise, loving and made life interested for everyone.

Karoly Sziebert
June 23, 1881 - September 25, 1948

The only Sziebert son, the crown prince of the household was Karoly. He was spoiled and pampered by all the ladies. His younger years were spent at home, the farm and local school. When he turned eighteen he enrolled in the University of Magyarovar. This was famous for its agricultural studies. He was tall, good looking, a Sziebert. Karoly joined the Hungarian artillery in Zangreb. There was more to life than work. Karoly traveled to Pecs where there was culture, social happenings, theater and dances. While attending a ball he met a young lady, who stole his heart. Ida Heckinger had golden hair, beauty and brains. She came from a "respectable" and good family. Her father, Mr. Heckinger, was a high school principal. He and his wife had six daughters, Ida was the eldest, following her came: Theresa, Maria, Valeria, Ilonka and Martha. The family's only son died during infancy because Mrs. Heckinger was not able to produce milk for the little boy.

The Heckinger household was so different from the puritan Sziebert house. A house full of girls! There was a piano, parlor, a father who published books, a mother whose maiden name was Garzo. This was a Spanish name that meant blue-eyed. There were male students in and out of the house and daughters who went to college. They were expected to work (not only to get married). There was discussion of one of the sisters dating an older man, one of them dancing all night with army officers. Stories about one of the girls who lost her teeth as a young girl - she was being fitted with dentures. The dentures were kept in a glass of water next to her bed. One of the partying sisters returned home late, and because she was thirsty, drank the water in the dark, until she felt the clank of denture hitting her in the mouth. This certainly gave her a wake up she wasn't expecting. There was the story about the youngest; Martha, who was born later. The sisters would dote on her. Even when she was two years old they would wrap her in swaddling clothes. Martha's legs were hanging out the side of the swaddling clothes and she was walking around like that. Then there was Ilonka, a schoolteacher who committed suicide by dousing herself with gasoline. There were whispers about a young priest, a pregnancy. All and all it was a tragic end.

Possibly Karoly Sziebert was a bit shook up by all that, but he was in love. Ida graduated from the Elizabeth Academy of Budapest. She was trained as a math and physics high school teacher. She was teaching for two years in the local high school. On that faithful winter night Karoly asked Ida for a dance. They were a handsome couple: he tall, good-looking, wearing his light gray artillery uniform; she petite and beautiful. There was love in the air; the two of them danced all night. Karoly asked for Ida's photo, but she felt that was not proper. Karoly traveled back to Boly, lighthearted, smiling, in love. He

never felt like that before. He had to go back to see Ida and go back again. Finally they decided to marry on leap year day (1908, Feb. 29) in the Cathedral of Pecs - Chapel of Corpus Christi. Many brides in later generations were married there. Ida was 25 years old. Her students waited outside of the church in the cold - and the bride was late. Ida Heckinger was late all her life, but why was she late that day? She was all dressed, but could not find the white imported Italian myrtus buds. No myrtus - no wedding. The frantic search was on! Finally the fragrant flowers were found, she slipped on the beige, pearl decorated silk shoes (the same shoes were worn many years later by her great granddaughter, Bea Biro, when she married Sanyi Lajtos.) Finally, Ida said; "I do" in front of the congregation. The young couple enjoyed a brief honeymoon.

Ida moved in with Karoly's family - as was customary in those days. The Sziebert house was a big, sprawling home. The house had two wings, one story high, with a large door in the middle because horse carriages had to fit through to go into the courtyard. At the back of the property there was a barn housing cattle and horses. Another building housed the feed for the animals. Further back was the garden. The yard had two wells and was covered with cobblestones. Near the house, some pine trees were growing.

Grandmother Kathleen Trischler Sziebert, Katica and later on the children lived in one of the wings. There was a small and a large sitting room. In the large sitting room was a piano and brown upholstered chairs. Later on this room was converted into the dining room. The small living room had a Biedermaier set. This furniture is cherished now in Vili and Dia's home. The floors were scrubbed until they were almost white. No one could walk there with shoes on. Only stocking feet were allowed. In this wing there were also two bedrooms one of which held every child's favorite, the statue of baby Jesus of Prague. The corridor outside of the rooms was huge, with bright windows and a large round green table. The family ate there most of the time, and at this table there was always room for one more. The table was set with Zsolnay plates. Ida loved blue columbines, when they were in season she would put a few in a small vase. On special occasions Ida would set her table with the famous and favorite Matyo table clothes (special occasions like introducing new family members).

There is a story of the famous tablecloth: Ida Heckinger Sziebert's taste was very refined. She would not find just anything suitable to cover her big round table. She could not even find linen wide enough. She went to a linen factory where they enlarged the looms. After the weaving was complete, the material was taken to the nunnery of Mezokovesad. This village, also Tard and Szentistvan, form the so-called Matyo villages. They can be found at the foothills of the Bukk Mountains, where it meets the Hungarian Great Plain. The Matyo people came to Hungary about one thousand years ago. They are the

descendants of the Huns (think of Attila, the Great). Their villages are near to the "Great Hun" and "Paloc" settlements, but the Matyos keep to themselves. They have some Mongolian blood in their veins. Their needlework with the red and blue flowers is world famous. The native Matyo women were drawing freehand their flowers and leaves (if you look closely, you can still see some pencil marks). The huge tablecloth was finished in 1930 (it can be found in the USA - in Mary Horvath's home.)

The other wing of the Sziebert house had lots of small rooms, a laundry room and a mangle to flatten the sheets. There was also a huge corridor in which most of the Sziebert and Lieber children remembered an old painting hanging in one of the dark corners. It portrayed a young soldier. The children were told it was a portrait of Grandpa. In later years, the truth came out, the young soldier was Napoleon. (This was actually the only painting where he sat to be painted.) The painting was the world conqueror's present to his wife, Maria Louise. The painting hung in the Montenouvo castle in Boly. During World War I the Serbs overran southern Hungary. The painting was wrapped in bedclothes, and a loyal servant had to climb over a tall stonewall during the night to bring it to safety. Karoly Sziebert hung the painting in a dark corner of his house, where it survived the Serb invasion. After the war was over, Prince Montenouvo came to visit from Vienna. The Sziebert house was cleaned and scrubbed over and over again. Children and grown-ups were dressed in their Sunday best. Finally the Prince arrived. He paid a grateful visit to his once serf's grandson.

Prince Montenouvo was a great man. He was not only Franz Joseph's cousin, but also the court master to the Emperor. Prince Montenouvo hated the Crown Prince; "Ferenc" Ferdinand and his wife; Sofia Chotek. Montenouvo felt the couple was not worthy to become Emperor and Empress. It was customary for servants to hold the double doors open for guests attending state dinners. One time as Sophia came to enter the dining room, she had to try to get through a partially closed door while wearing her fancy ball gown. The Crown Prince became so enraged that he kicked the doors wide open. The Crown Prince and his wife were shot in Sarajevo; this started World War I. The bodies were returned to Vienna. The Crown Prince's catafalque was several inches taller than the Princess'. Sadly, the truth is, she died trying to shield her husband.

Year earlier the Crown Prince had built a mausoleum near the Danube River in Arnstett. The mourners assembled there waiting during a big storm. The funeral procession was so delayed because the servants could not place the coffins on the riverboat due to the storm. The mourners were bored and began drinking so that when the remains of Ferdinand and his wife Sofia finally arrived only the children were fit enough to pray and cry. The rest of the court members were too drunk to stand up and give the royal couple their last

respect.

After Stephy's death, there was no will to be found. His daughters were all married, except Katica. There was a family feud after the unexpected death. When each daughter married 25,000 gold crone was given as a dowry. In those days it was customary to give money for the daughters. There were no papers signed or found, the dowry was in cash. Cash in gold! It was customary for sons - who were given the family's farm to take care of the elderly parents. No one knew that there was a law in effect that if a person died without a will his estate had to be divided equally. One son-in-law, George Lieber, demanded one sixth of the farm. "Every sixth brick is mine," he said. The only son, Karoly, knew the farm was valuable as it was, divided it would be worthless. Most of the son-in-laws had invested the dowries they had been given and were happy with their investments, except George Lieber, who had invested his money in war bonds, which, after WWI, were then worthless. The court ordered Karoly to pay back each sister 1/6 of the worth of the farm. Whatever became of the money, I don't know. Karoly and his family had a tough time paying it back.

Life after that was hard in the Sziebert household. Payments had to be made. The young couple had four children at this stage. Karoly was called up to serve in WWI, leaving his wife, mother and children behind, but the payments continued as the courts had ordered them. There was no money to buy socks for the children, Katica recalled. "We decided to knit from our own wool, but the wool had been spun so hastily, it had some straw in it. The poor children developed blisters wearing them."

While the grown-ups squabbled, the children did not know the laws, did not understand the arguments. The cousins loved each other and they kept the family ties together.

As we said, Ida and Karoly had a honeymoon, but it did not last too long, as life was hard and controlled in the Sziebert household. All the Sziebert women were strong willed, they ruled the kitchen, kept the keys to the safe, did laundry on Mondays, etc. rules not to be broken. Karoly would say, "Who will love you the way I do, if I am not here anymore?" Ida came from the city from a well-educated, refined family. She loved to play the piano and sing songs about a happy-go-lucky farmer returning to his home and some gypsy music about some love struck bunnies. The Szieberts were puritans, they believed in hard work and no play. Ida arrived to Boly with fine clothes, fancy hats, lots and lots of dreams. Well most of those dreams ended up in the bottom of her trunk. She had one child after another: Mali, Terus, the twins (Istvan and Imre), Lonci, Idus and Laci.

Times were hard; the family feud stripped them of every penny. Then WWI came. Karoly had to join the army and Ida was left behind. Soon she had to learn how to drive the horse and buggy. She had to oversee the work

done on the farm. The first time Ida drove the carriage; she planned to wear one of her hats so as not to get her hair wind-blown. Mother-in-law, Kathleen Trischler exclaimed "You are a farmer's wife, wear a kerchief!" Baking bread in the outdoor oven was another chore she had to learn. Her cheeks would be burning rosy red by the time she'd pulled the bread out of the oven.

Ida learned how to cope with it all. She was happy with her growing family, glad when Karoly finally came back from the war. After the lonely, dark winter, spring was here again!

The Szieberts had lots of joy with their children and felt truly blessed.

The Sziebert Children

Maria, called Mali, was the oldest; she was strong-willed, always lively, full of fun. She was the mothering type. At times she was very strict with the younger ones. Once Istvan was fresh to her and Mali dumped a whole bottle of ink on his closely cropped head. Mali was daring and rebellious. No one wore short-sleeved blouses in the Sziebert household. No one was showing arms or elbows (knees were also off limit). Well, one steamy, hot, afternoon Mali just had enough. She got Katica's scissors and snip-snip, the sleeves fell to the floor. All through her short life she was headstrong and did her own thing.

While Mali was dark haired, Terus, the next girl had silky blond hair and big light blue eyes. She was gentle, loving and unselfish.

The twins were born next, two health big boys! Ida almost lost her life delivering them. She was only able to nurse one of them, Stephen. Another woman who had lots of milk nursed Imre. The boys were lots of fun, playful and loving. Stephen was always taller. Imre wore glasses from a young age. Ida Heckinger Sziebert's father died on April 26, 1916. Ida was still weak from the birth of her twins, so the family decided not to tell her about the sad news. Weeks later as Ida opened up a package with newspaper wrapping she read the news of her father's death.

Lonci was only five years old, with blond curly hair, when she died of pneumonia. No penicillin yet and children died young, and often.

Ida, or Dia, was born next. She was a sweet child who loved to play. She had lots of dolls; the most important one was a tall doll, about 36 inches long, her body was stuffed flat. Even the later generations loved to play with Flatsy.

Laszlo, or Laci, was the youngest child of the Sziebert family. He was loved by all. He was everything a parent could hope for. He was cute, smart and curious. One night he was sitting on his father's lap, Karoly loved to read to the children, listening to a story of Abraham. When they got to the part when God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son, Isaac, Karoly stopped and asked his youngest and favorite son, "Lacko, what would you say if God asked us for this sacrifice?" The little boy, paralyzed with fear, replied, "Then you would have to sacrifice me." And they quickly turned to page.

This conversation was remembered later on when Lacko was really sacrificed by the Nazis.

Kathleen Trischler Sziebert died on November 22, 1921. No one ever discussed her illness; those things were never explained, or talked about. She was ailing for years and in her last days her son begged not to die, but she could not keep her promise, she died on a cold winter morning. Kathleen was well respected, an outstanding Catholic; there was a huge funeral planned. She was laid out in the family's large sitting room in an open casket. People

came in droves. At the side table there was a dish of Holy Water and a bunch of evergreens. The mourners were expected to dip the branches into the holy water and make the sign of the cross by the casket.

As people arrived, they all talked about Kathleen. How she stood by her children! How beautiful she was, and how she dismissed beauty or worldly goods! One day her children came home asking "Mama, is it true that we are the richest people in Boly?" She just waved her hand, "Oh no, we are a little poor, also!" How she loved to cook, people remembered how she held the reins tight in her hand, her family recalled.

Because Kathleen was such an important person the local nuns also got involved. They felt the ceremony would be more intimate if the 8-year-old twins would be altar boys. They were given a crash course in how to serve mass - and the nuns were hoping for the best. The twins were dressed in starched snow-white garments. During Mass Karoly Sziebert observed the altar boys were useless, loitering around, aimlessly. One of the players just stood there at the left side of the altar. The other one (Steven) kept ringing the bell, repeating the prayers - as he remembered them. Finally this busy little player bumped into the big brass bell. The bell rolled down all the way to the bottom of the Altar steps. Karoly Sziebert looked and looked again. Those two couldn't be his boys he thought, but they were. He started to laugh, burying his face in his hands. He was laughing so hard that he was shaking. The nuns looked at each other believing that poor Mr. Sziebert was crying so hard because he had been orphaned. The cemetery was covered with a light frost. Lacko, the youngest grandson, was brought to the services. His little round face was reddened by the cold air.

Life was going on - the children were growing. Plans were made for high school. It was decided the children would attend school in Pecs. Karoly owned a sprawling house on Maria Street. The house was big with a nice backyard. There were flowers, trees, and a row of white spirea bushes along a wall in the back of the yard. Next to the house was the "Casino", a very exclusive clubhouse. The schools were only blocks away. It was decided Katica would take care of the children while they were in Pecs. It was the perfect set-up.

Karoly decided his daughters needed new coats for the new school year. He took the girls shopping "Make sure the coats are big enough" he reminded the owner. The coats picked out were nice, but Karoly wanted bigger ones, the shopkeeper persuaded him not to take it to extremes. They finally purchased the coats and the girls were happy until they hung their coats on the coat hanger at school and realized that their coats were at least 18 - 20 inches longer than everyone else's.

The teachers were all nuns, even the gym teacher. All the nuns wore long black habits. The gym teacher, Sister, kept announcing "I'll have to show

you with my arms, as I can't show the exercise with my legs." "One and two and one and two!" To demonstrate leg lifting she would use her arms.

Life was good in Pecs. Katica made life exciting. There was freedom in the air. Friends, parties, books to read, movies to see. They had to study hard. The girls went to the school of the Notre Dame nuns, the boys to the Cistercian Brothers. This was an age-old Hungarian order. One of the twins, Steven, was never seen studying. He still always got "A"s.

While the girls attended the high school, the Mother Superior passed away. The nuns were looking for donations for a big marble headstone. "I'll not give any money for a stone", said Mr. Sziebert - "If they plan to buy a summer place for all the young nuns, so that they can get some fresh air, I'll donate for that cause." The good nuns retaliated; Mali failed Latin, her favorite subject. Mr. Sziebert pulled his daughters out of the school. However, both girls did graduate. After graduation they spent a delightful vacation in Germany and France. After graduation and the lovely vacation both girls attended Peter Pazmany University, majoring in French and German. People began to talk about the Sziebert girls; their father was so strict, no man could walk through the front door. Any man needed a parachute! No dates were allowed, but the girls were always allowed to visit their cousins, the Liebers. During the summer there was always a lively crowd in the Lieber Grapeyard. This house was sprawling, friendly with a big porch on the second floor. In the front, under huge chestnut trees there was a good-sized table. Nearby there was a grape-arbor, apricot and peach trees. There was always a breeze. One hot, lazy afternoon an unexpected guest arrived. He was Vilmos Schmidt. He claimed he had to deliver a letter - a "very important letter" to Theresa Lieber. (The sender was Anna Szieberth from Mohach.) While the young people had a lively conversation, Theresa quickly opened up the envelope. On the white paper there was only one sentence: "This is the man."

Vili Schmidt
May 7, 1904 - August 30, 1950

Vili Schmidt was born on the 7th of May 1904 (later he would say: "All the good-looking and smart ones are born in May.") His father, Vilmos, Sr., was a schoolteacher. He was handsome with a moustache and blue eyes. He traveled all the way to Darda (now part of Yugoslavia) where he courted and later married Anna Stajevich. She was short, round with dark eyes and hair. She had a great smile. Anna was deeply religious.

Her new husband lovingly called her: Annushka. One of her jealous sisters-in-law was Malvina. When one looks at her in old photos; Malvina was just average; always wore a big bustle. She was married to Joseph Schmidt (Pepso). Joseph was a hat maker. Malvia always influenced the family. She told Vilmos, the new husband: "She is just a Nanchi, like the rest of them!" Vilmos never addressed his wife by her name anymore. Anna was delighted when her little son was born. He had her big brown eyes and brown hair. She would call him "my beloved son".

The Schmidt family lived in a house in Siklos, next to the school. The front room windows looked out at the big old castle of Siklos. Vilmos became the principal of the local school. Anna perfected her cooking and baking. The story goes...years later, when her beloved son got married, she invited her daughter-in-law, Mali, for cooking lessons. One demonstration has to be mentioned: "How to cook stuffed cabbage". Anna chopped the meat, cooked the rice, got the sauerkraut from her pantry - where it was kept in a huge barrel. They rolled up the cabbage leaves - it was cooked for hours. Then Anna gave the young Mali her last advice: "Mali, my dear, just close your eyes now and dip your spoon into the lard. You see this will make your gravy rich." The house was always spotless. Hand-crocheted doilies were all over the house, starched curtains hung in the windows. Anna did embroideries and also showed her son how to do embroidery. He made a wall hanging as a child. It was on white linen with red floss:

"Ki az urat Szereti Jo ebedet foz neki"
(Who loves her husband, cooks a good meal)

Anna Stajevich Schmidt had a great garden with lilac bushes, a grape arbor, a couple of lazy cats stretching under the table. Anna kept chickens and an old turkey in the back yard. Anna had lots of lady friends. She had them over for tea or a glass of snaps. She had a small silver tray with six liquor glasses. You can find them now with her great-granddaughter, Nonna Matancsi.

Anna was very active in her church; she made many pilgrimages to Mariagyud. The grownups would fall to their knees, and creep around the big, white, marble altar signing, praying and carrying candles. The children also enjoyed Mariagyud. There was cotton candy, ice cream and rosary beads made out of cookie dough.

Anna would also go the Harkany. The sulfur baths were world famous. Although the water smelled like rotten eggs, and was hot, people believed it helped to cure arthritis.

Vilmos Schmidt, Sr. loved to paint in his spare time. His paintings were mostly still life or scenes around Siklos. He was really talented. Too bad most of the paintings were lost during World War II.

Vilmos loved loose women and good wine. He, his brother, Pepsa, and friends would gather in the local grape yards. There was a special friend, Mr. Goloncher. He manufactured and hand painted jugs and plates. It was a known fact after an especially rowdy outing with the Schmidt boys, he would go home and hand-paint a plate for Anna Stajevich Schmidt, begging her forgiveness. For Anna, Mr. Goloncher would always paint a different bird on the plates. Anna had quite a collection of them.

The grapeyard outings included at times, some loose women. Malvina got wind of the events. She gathered all her friends, but not Anna. They marched to the grapeyard while life was getting interesting in the wine cellar. The wives snuck in there and beat all the loose women with their parasols. When Vilmos had a few drinks, he was asked to sign a note for his brother (IOU). Of course, the brother would never pay, so Anna had to save, scrimp and pay. World War I was in progress. Vilmos was called up for duty on September 1, 1914. He was ordered to serve in Serbia (now part of Yugoslavia). He was there for one year in Sarajevo and Perles. The war years were brutal. Anna's only sibling: Alex, was killed on January 26, 1915 in the Carpathian Mountains (by Uzsok).

Her father-in-law also died in 1915 (21st of April). Her husband was ordered to go back to Yugoslavia, then to Albania. Vilmos became ill in Zagreb. He came home in such a condition - his son did not recognize him. But still this was not the end of the family's suffering: he was in a sanatorium for one year - 1918 Vilmos was ordered back to serve in the war. At this time, he went to Italy. Finally, in November 1918, he arrived back home. He walked from Italy to Hungary - finally the war was over!

Son Vili was growing - he entered the Jesuit high school in Pecs. He studied hard, also tutoring students to earn money. Food was scarce after the war. At times Vili was so hungry he was hunting for food, even crumbs. In high school he earned lots of honors. Anna always referred to him as "My only beloved son." In 1923 he finished high school with high honors - Anna traveled to Pecs, she was so happy and proud. A loveless marriage, hard times, always saving: Vili was the only shining star in her life. He was accepted to "Peter Pazmany" University. During the summer months he was again tutoring students in northern Hungary (with the children of Prince Peachevich.) This job was nerve wracking, and Vili ended up with ulcers.

In 1924-25 Vili went to Belgium - to study. He enjoyed the new experiences. Anna Stajevich Schmidt was afraid her son was still hungry so she sent him some cookies and also sent good Hungarian doughnuts, which were the traditional food for fat Tuesday. She carefully wrapped them (no airmail in those days) when the package finally arrived the doughnuts were like rocks. Vili never had the heart to tell his mother about the rock-like gift. Just as an interesting story about the times. Vili and friends had no money. They made some extra spending money by bidding farewell to passengers at the railroad station who had no friends or relatives. For a moderate amount of money the boys would wave their handkerchief, for more money they would also cry until the train disappeared.

After years of drudgery Vili graduated from law school. His mother sat in the front row proudly, "My beloved son, the lawyer" she whispered. He still had two years of practicum. He was working in different law offices (Budapest, Pecs, Mohach). He also worked in Drezden, Germany for a lawyer who represented the Krupp metallurgy operation.

When Vili Schmidt started to work in Mohach, heads started to turn when he was first spotted. He was handsome as a movie star. He was tall, dark and unattached. Older ladies invited him for dinner; the younger ones were crazy about him. As the story goes, there were three young ladies who were smitten by him. Vili did not want to offend any of them, so he sent three bouquets of flowers: One for each of them. Vili was also noticed by Anna Szieberth. She was the one who sent the fateful letter with him to Pecs.

Vili met Mali at the Lieber grapeyard; soon there was love in the air. How do you confess this to your father, especially when your father is Karoly

Sziebert? His idea was "I have enough money, I don't need a man to support my daughters!" He referred to young men as "Fremden Betyar (*foreign rascals*). No man was welcome unless they carried a diploma.

Mali met Vili daily at the bus stop in Boly: exactly at twelve noon. Vili took the bus from Mohacs to Boly, and then took the 1pm bus back home. The romance was growing at the bus stop. Soon Karoly Sziebert became aware of Mali's noontime disappearance. Lacko, the youngest child was given a spy assignment. He followed Mali to the bus stop. When Vili got off the bus (he was smart) - he went over to the youngster, shook he hand: "I am Schmidt!" - "I am Sziebert", answered the stunned boy. Papa Sziebert knew about the romance by now. He was rumbling, growling. He was furious; "My Lord! My Lord!" Well-bred young ladies did not meet men anywhere, especially not at bus stops. It was just not done.

Tancho, the favorite aunt from Mohach, was asked to help. Tancho was smart, shrewd, and attacked Karoly's weak heart: "Our mother, Kathleen Trischler Sziebert had brown hair, she would have loved this dark haired fellow. He has good intentions (marriage in mind)". It is not known, was it Tancho's lecture or Vili's charm, but a visit with the Schmidts was finally arranged. The day of the visit Karoly became angry. No one knows the reason. He was repeating his much quoted words "My Lord, My Lord!". He said, "The Schmidt family may come, but there will be no fancy dinner. They may have bean soup, and cabbage noodles. He locked away the silver and good china. He told Katica, "You may start the laundry". Mali was not easily intimidated. She called Tancho on the phone. "Please help", she pleaded. Ida Sziebert did not argue with her husband. Through the years she learned that silence is golden. In the meantime the Schmidts arrived: distinguished father, the mother all smiles. She would never understand that someone did not want her son. She hugged Karoly and kissed him on both cheeks. Anna had to get on her tiptoes because Papa Karoly was so tall. For a moment he closed his eyes. There was something new happening in his household. This strange little woman just kissed him on both cheeks! Vili had a delightful smile on his face. Ida just stood there, pale and stiff. Karoly said at this moment: "Call the maid; it is time to serve dinner." Then a miracle: Tancho arrived in a big black cab. Tancho, the redeemer! The door opened, out rolled silver, crystal, china, even table linens. Tancho and her cook, Mrs. Frank, were cooking for hours, and also ordered food from the "Golden Bull" a famous restaurant in Mohach.

By the time the families clinked the glasses Karoly Sziebert asked himself "What was all the fuss about?"

The wedding was planned for November. Ida and Mali went shopping. It was such fun getting bed linen, towels etc.. Ida selected only the best. When Karoly got wind of the spending spree he made them take every piece back. Ida was so hurt she did not speak to her husband for the next two

months.

The next task was furniture. Who needs it? Karoly Sziebert got together with his future son-in-law. "Vili, he proclaimed, I'll give you and Mali Sari-pusta. It is a great farm. You'll also get horses, cows, machinery, but to buy furniture this is foolish. I have a cabinetmaker in Boly, he will make you a bed, table, chairs from pine. He can paint it sky blue. I have enough blue paint. Every ladder, carriage, cart, windowsill, door is this color on my farm. Do you want blue furniture?" Vili just sat there in amazement. Finally he answered yes he would take the blue furniture... and the farm.

Mali was frantic. The young couple planned to move into Papa Sziebert's apartment house. This apartment house was one block long and wide. Could you imagine the super's face as the blue furniture was being delivered? Could you imagine the people peeping out as the landlord's daughter moves in with farm-made furniture?

Finally Papa Karoly backed down and did buy furniture. There was a local furniture maker, whose daughter died just before her wedding. Now he was selling all this beautiful furniture: Walnut sitting room, mahogany dining room set. The bedroom set also was walnut, with a large mirror and a couple of wardrobes. Everything was fine until Karoly took a look at the bed. "One bed? No one will sleep with my daughter. This is the swamp of immorality; the bed has to be cut in half!" and it was done.

Life with Vili and Mali

The wedding took place in the large cathedral in Pecs, in the chapel of Corpus Christi. This is the same chapel where Ida and Karoly Sziebert got married. The date was November 5, 1932. Mali wore an elegant white gown and carried white mums. The priest, Msg. Istvan Komocsy, lost most of his notes for the homily. It seemed like he spoke forever. After each one of his wise remarks the refrain was: "Maria and Vilmos; do you feel, do you understand, do you know, do you acknowledge..." No one ever found out what the young couple should have known. At the end the priest presented the young couple with a silver cross. You can read in Anna Stajevich Schmidt's diary: "This day was the happiest day in my life. Anna Schmidt, born Stajevich." After the ceremony there was a dinner in the Sziebert home in Pecs.

Mali and Vili were both headstrong, had definite ideas - and still had a loving marriage. This first child arrived on August 15, 1933. Vili had hoped for a boy, even had a name for the baby ("We'll call him Peter"), but a girl was born and named Maria, but called Malili. She was delivered at home, as was customary to do in those days. Grandma Schmidt arrived early for the big event. Ida missed her bus, packed hastily. Ida was a modest woman, so you can imagine to her horror when she discovered that she had forgotten to pack her robe. She had to walk around in her white night gown.

Grandma Schmidt decided her grandchild would grow up with a pacifier (of course, she had one ready in her handbag). Well, granddaughter Malili had different ideas and spat it out.

The weather was very hot on Malili's christening day. The swathing clothes had to be opened up, and the baby fanned. Anna Stajevich Schmidt presented her first grandchild with a pair of golden earrings. They had tiny blue stones. Rebecca Claire Horvath owns them now.

When Malili was one year old, the family gathered for a big celebration.

Anna Stajevich Schmidt came all dressed up still, she knelt down in front of her grand daughter, little Malili, hugging her: "Happy birthday, my little queen!" Malili was a little over a year old, when Mali visited her parents in Boly. The family just finished making tasty Hungarian Kolbasz. They were all hanging on several rods in the pantry. Malili snuck into the pantry and took a bite out of almost all the Kolbasz.

Helen, or Loyci as she was called, was born 28th of September 1934. She was a big baby with big brown eyes.

The Schmidts continued to live in Papa Sziebert's block-long apartment house. It had four entrances on four different streets, next to a school and a park. Vili Schmidt had his law office there.

Mali loved to decorate her home. She was an excellent housewife who cooked, baked and entertained. Her parties were famous, her recipes in demand. She entertained family, friends and business acquaintances. The Schmidts had a big, beautiful silver samovar. Mali used it often. She made the best tea in it. This samovar had a bittersweet story and it needs to be told....

Vilmos Schmidt, Sr., had a cousin, Rosa Chrappal. Rosa was young, beautiful and became a ballet dancer. As a young girl she was invited to dance in Saint Petersburg, in the Old Russian Capitol. She became quite successful, dancing for the Czar and his family. A few years later Rosa married a Russian army officer.

Tante Rosa, as she was called in the family circles - loved to visit Hungary, and her many cousins. She would always arrive with big hats, fancy clothes and expensive presents. She would be surrounded by the family while she unpacked the suitcases. The children were oohing and aahing. It was always a fun time for all. Rosa gave the silver samovar with one glass lined silver cup as a gift to the Schmidts. Later on Vili ordered eleven more cups from the local silversmith. (Nonna Matancsi owns the set now).

Tante Rosa became a widow; her only son was in the Russian Navy. During the Bolshevik revolution her son was captured with the rest of the officers. They were sewn into large sacks and tossed into the Neva River. During the revolution poor Tante Rosa was unable to escape. She became old, sick and destitute and died all-alone in the new Soviet Union.

Her gift, the samovar was cherished by Mali and Vili. People were fascinated by it. The red-hot charcoal in the middle was warming up the tea water. Mali served the tea with rum. At one of the parties cousin Lajos Kadar held his teaspoon upside down while pouring the rum into his tea. Needless to say, he was feeling no pain that night.

Besides the parties, Mali enjoyed lovely clothes and hats. She had a seamstress: Miss Memeth who designed clothes for her. One of her favorites was a dark blue silk dress with big pink orchids. The ruins of this dress lived long afterwards as a blouse and then scarves. Mali also loved hats, no matter what was the fashion; they all suited her.

The young couple lived a full life. They hired Miss Simon to help with the girls - also to teach them German. Miss Simon was a tall, skinny woman, who always wore a black dress and hat. She had a huge goiter. But most of all she was very brave to undertake the taming of the Schmidt girls. One fall afternoon Karoly Sziebert saw two wild children running around, while a skinny lady in black tried to hold on to them. Papa Sziebert was about to enter his favorite coffee house. He stopped for a moment to view this sight. To his horror he discovered: those holy terrors were his own two grandchildren! After the Schmidt girls outgrew Miss Simon; Eszter Frigyer, one of the Lieber grandchildren inherited her.

Christmas was spent alternatively between the grandparents. The days preceding the holy day were spent in suspense, dreaming about the tree, the gifts. Usually by Christmas, there was snow on the ground, as the weather turned cold. Anna Stajevich Schmidt would dress her granddaughters in snowshoes and winter garb. Just before Christmas they would go to the convent for a very important event. All the children from the village were there, fussing, jumping up and down, laughing. All of a sudden the curtains opened: silence fell in the makeshift theater. Santa Claus sat on the stage. Next to him, the devil was rattling his chains. Santa was asking each child if they were good enough to deserve a present. The children sat there, heart pounding, and the devil still making noises. Finally Santa came to Malili Schmidt: "And you, my child, why do you sneak into your parents bed during the night?" The devil shook his chains again...

Christmas dinner was always hot, spicy, wine; soup; baked carp and poppy seed cake. Finally the "angels were ringing the bells" - and everyone was allowed into the living room. The children and grown-ups were expected to recite the Lord's Prayer in front of the scintillating Christmas tree. Who could keep up with the prayers - seeing all the presents? "Our Father...There's my bicycle! Who art in Heaven...There's my new red bike!" cried out Loyci. Another Christmas the girls received a huge stuffed teddy bear. He had dreamy eyes, silky hair, and a big grin. Somehow the girls found a razor and shaved him.

There was also a doll called Vera. The girls overheard that this doll had real red hair. Real hair, then it will grow! So the day after Christmas Vera got a haircut. Of course, the doll's hair never grew.

In Siklos it was customary for children to walk around town on December 24th in shepherd outfits. They came caroling and carrying a manger. As they were entering the homes, singing, one of the shepherds dumped a big bunch of straw on the floor. They threw themselves down on the straw, still singing. Ann Stajevich Schmidt gave them some money for their performance. Life in Siklos was always full of fun. Grandma had a sitting room: a settee, two chairs, all in red velvet. The grandchildren loved to run on the top of the furniture. Some of the local ladies were horrified at that. Anna Schmidt just laughed: "Let them ruin it, let them have their fun." She would escort her granddaughters to parties. She used real curling irons to make them feel grown up. Grandma Schmidt felt Malili was too skinny. She designed a diet for her: duck and chicken fat sandwiches.

Summertime was also pool time. Siklos had a small, but nice place to swim. Swimming was segregated, very little co-ed. Swimming was allowed 6am - priests and 7am nuns - the naughty grandchildren wanted to swim at these early hours. Anna Stajevich Schmidt took them to the "lady's hour" where the girls learned to swim even in deep water. After the gentlemen hours

- in the later afternoon- were co-ed hours; no respectable female would be seen there even then.

Siklos had culture and style. There were plays, musicals and dances. Malili was selected to play a young Jesus in one of those events. A photograph verifies this (if you doubt the fact she was selected for the part) Malili clutching the sacred heart on her chest.

In her spare time Anna was crocheting green Tyrolean style skirts for her grandchildren. She embroidered white edelweiss flowers all around the skirt. The girls loved the outfits and they were worn forever. Anna Stajevich Schmidt loved pretty things. She loved to wear a gold pin on her dress. The pin is a treasured memento in Mary Horvath's jewelry box.

Anna would often talk about her teenage years. She spoke about her brother Alex and sister Pauline. Pauline died when she was 22 years old. We never found out what she died of... Alex lived in Darda, where he owned a store. He married a Serb girl who was not too friendly toward her husband's family. Alex and his wife had three children: Pajo, Lilo and Vgor. Alex died in WWI on January 25, 1915. He had been fatally shot in the Carpathian Mountains (Uzsok - pass). Anna grew up in Darda. The home was loving but "proper". Young ladies in those days did not wear lipstick. "We just puckered up our wet lips and pressed it against the wallpaper". In those days wallpaper had big red roses. The red color from the roses transferred to their lips, hence a nice reddish glow.

Malili and Loyci loved to watch Grandpa Schmidt painting. They would stand behind him as he was painting the local sights, still life. The girls were amazed with how a tree or an apple was born from the strokes of a paintbrush.

One of his paintings is treasured by Chuck and Elizabeth Horvath. As we said Vilmos Schmidt, Sr. was not only a talented artist, he also played the organ in the local church. He had an excellent voice. Some of the malicious people would say: "Old man Schmidt sings real well after he had a few drinks."

As the story goes, Vilmos, Sr. had a sure cure for a cold. He would go to bed, placing a black hat at the foot of the bed. He would drink hot, spiced wine. When I see two black hats - I will be cured. As it was customary he and his wife slept in twin beds. "How was Vili, Jr. conceived?" "Well, I used my trusty black hat again. I would spin the hat a bit on my finger, then throw it to my wife. She would bring it back or at times I would retrieve it myself." Who knows, was this the truth or a tale? Anyway it's a good story.

The grandchildren loved this old man. They would accompany him to the grapeyard for walks. He would help the girls climb into a big old wooden barrel filled with water. This was called the "private" pool. Of course, there was no room for swimming, only for sitting.

In the afternoon Anna Stajevich Schmidt would make Turkish Coffee in her copper dish (Ann Guy Horvath has the Turkish Coffee Maker) and drink the

coffee from a small flowered cup. (Mary Horvath has it.) The proud grandparents would sip coffee and enjoy the girls.

About five kilometers from Siklos was Sari-puszta. This 300-hectare farm was given to Mali and Vili as a wedding present by the Sziebert parents. The soil was black, rich and fertile. The air was full of the scent of the white acacia flowers. Acacia trees grew everywhere. The main building was a long, one story house with a porch. The front of the house looked out on trees, big, beautiful pines. Mali created a rose garden at the end of the house. She would jokingly say, "I want to be buried here!" She had rows and rows of roses, all color and types. There was also a statue of the Sacred Heart (a white sculpture of Jesus: in honor of Vili's alma mater the Jesuit High School). Mali was very happy there.

There would be guests invited for the summer. The Gebeby and Takian families spent many summers in Sari-puszta. The children had an old gray donkey called Laci. He was stubborn. When he was told to go; he would just stay. If asked to stop, he would gallop away. But who cared? On lazy summer afternoons the kids would lie in the tall grass. Just gabbing, looking at the clouds as the wind blew the clouds around. They tried to imagine they were looking at a movie. "Do you see the horse?" "Do you see the prince on it?" Chewing on a tender blade of grass, it tasted so sweet.

After sundown, when it became dark - only the stars would scintillate. As the children watched here and there as a spark, then another! The fireflies were dancing in the darkness. It was great fun trying to catch them. Oh Yes, those moments are unforgettable.

At Sari-puszta the girls were introduced to animals. Cows had long eyelashes but rough tongues. It was such fun watching the cows being milked. Occasionally the milk stream was directed towards the girls. They quickly opened their mouths. Oh, the milk was so fresh, still warm. There were countless Daddy-Long-legs and spiders around the house and in the damp hostas. After all Sari-puszta was a vacation spot. Vili Schmidt would ride his favorite horse, Eva; the children were also instructed on how to ride the tame old mare.

After dark, Vili would show the children how to make shadows form on the wall. Ducks, rabbits, elephants appeared as shadows on the white wall. Going to bed was a must. The parents believed in "Early to bed...early to rise..." The pillows were always heavily embroidered. The next morning every little face would show the pattern of flowers, butterflies from the pillow. There was always a hassle in the morning, because Sari-pusta had only one bathroom "Give me a ticket, or hurry," they would plead while standing on line.

Loyci was always a great cook. She would steal some food from the grown-ups. The children found an abandoned ice pit to build a fire in. There Loyci would cook, and the rest would enjoy her delicacies. Good thing they

never burned the thatched roof on the old ice pit.

George Gereby, one of the friends, was intrigued by Indians. His favorite book was "The Two Little Beavers". He kept this book under his armpit all summer long reading it and re-reading it. George decided he wanted to be like one of the characters in the book, so he buried his wristwatch; but by the time he came back to dig it up it had become all rusty. There were also sandlots, swings, bikes and nannies to tease and annoy. This became an art form for all the children to practice. There was Foli. She was a Jew, escaping from the Nazis. She knew nothing about children, so the kids called her Folie Foker. Madame Pisal! She was an elderly French lady, who got tired of them.

She tried to snooze on a bench during the afternoon, she would kick off her shoes, her stockings were ripped, the children found a long bough, hid behind a bush and started to tickle Madame Pisal's toes. Poor Madame always had lots of gas...then she would jump up! By this time the kids were long gone. The boys would catch frogs and place them in her bed, under the covers. At night, after hearing the Madame's blood curling screams, all the children were satisfied.

As the children were getting older, they started playing cards. This became such a passion, even after dark, cards would be dealt. Of course, they had to be in bed early. Cards were played in bed, by flickering oil lamps. How the blankets never caught fire, one never knows.

The children were able to earn money during the summer vacation. They were helping on the farm leading horses, cleaning up, etc. Vili Schmidt believed in work ethic. In later years the girls would fondly remember their father: "He taught us how to work." The children got paid with the rest of the farm hands. They held onto their money tightly. They knew one has to earn money. At the end of summer there was the reaping of the crops. Lots of extra farm hands arrived. The harvesting in those days was done by hand. The men cut the wheat; the women gathered it and stacked it in such a way: the bundle of wheat created a cross. (The farmers wanted to give thanks).

When all the wheat was harvested: an old, black and noisy threshing machine was brought forward and the fun began. The wheat was gathered into sacks and the straw piled up in stacks. Noise, dust for days! At the end of the harvest there was always a festival: music, food, dancing. The workers made big wreaths from twisted straw and presented to the landowners. The beautiful wreaths were hung up in the house and kept till next summer. The wheat, rye was kept in a huge granary. The grains were turned and turned again to keep them dry. The girls would sneak in the granary and kick off their shoes. They walked through the grain in their bare feet. "You don't walk in the wheat!" They were told. "This is God's gift. Do you see the indentation on the grain? God marked each and every one with his likeness." If walking in the grain was not allowed, it was twice as much fun to walk in the mud with

bare feet. The mud coming up between ones toes was a great feeling.

Vili and Mali loved Sari-puszta, the life there, the atmosphere, the flowers, and butterflies. They commissioned an artist to hand paint a dining room set with all the cornflowers, poppies, and daisies. This set was their pride and joy. It represented their love for the land and each other. The beloved dining room set became Loya's.

Sari-puszta was out in the country, there was no radio. TV was not invented yet. So, how did people get the news? Of course, there were newspapers, but not everybody bought newspapers. When there was anything newsworthy a messenger was pedaling his bike through the countryside. He would quickly jump off his bike as soon as he reached his destination and begin beating his drum feverishly. Crowds gathered. The messenger pulled out a hand written wrinkled paper from his pocket and announced "Hear Ye, Hear Ye," and would start to tell the news...

As we said, Malili and Loyci spent time in Boly also. They just loved to play with their Aunt Dia's toys. There was a gray cabinet at the end of the hall, filled with dolls, and furniture. The toys were small - they just fit into small hands. But oh! There was a large doll - made out of cotton, with a painted face. The doll was stuffed but was flat, Loyci called her "Flatsy."

Corncobs were plentiful, while grown ups used them to keep the fire going, the children used them as building blocks, they would build houses and fences out of corn cobs. Talking about corncobs: Mohach was a town next to the Danube River. As the story goes: On the beach there was an outhouse, with a corncob hanging from a string. People used it instead of toilet paper. The Schmidt girls never experienced this though.

The Sziebert house in Boly had a large yard with lots of chickens. The girls wanted to help Grandpa to feed the chickens. The three dogs (a Puli and two Fox Terriers) ran around chasing the chickens. There were feathers flying and the birds cackling. Life in Boly was stricter, more structured. Everyone had chores to do: peeling apples or potatoes, getting bread from the baker, or fresh water from the well. It was fun to accompany grandma to the market.

Exactly at twelve noon the church bells would toll. All work stopped for noon prayers. The Szieberts never believed in mirrors. Katica always said; "The devil will look back at you if you look into a mirror." Boly had no indoor plumbing, the outhouse was at the end of a long yard. The children were given chamber pots to use as needed. "Who wants that?" -- the children would question each other. They would just sneak out in the back yard under huge pine trees. "Who is out there?" came a strong inquiry, Katica's voice. The children just looked at each other, finally Malili answered: "Only the rain!"

Christmas was memorable, with a real big tree in the dining room. The tree had real candles, and real sparklers. Under the tree was the beloved Christ child, with a built-in music box. At times some of the candles would drip

on the little Jesus. Some of the younger children's teeth marks are still visible on his arm. The original Christ child is in Budapest with Idu Schmidt Gyimothy, a later version is owned by Elizabeth Horvath.

Easter time was always memorable in Boly. On Holy Saturday a procession proceeded through the village. There was an Uhmpa band, flags galore. The priests in richly embroidered vestments, altar boys in starched white outfits, nuns reciting the rosary, people singing full blast. This was a joyous affair. At dawn on Easter Sunday, Katica Sziebert woke up all the children. Armed with pussy willows and bottles of holy water, they walked to the cemetery. It was still dark there, but the cemetery was swarming with people. Prayers were recited at the loved one's grave, splashing holy water, remembering them.

By daybreak the children got to the hillside where the Stations of the Cross stood. It was windy - always - (they called it "Lenten wind") but there was spring in the air. Crocuses were in full bloom. Here and there a lonely blossoming apple tree and the wheat just starting to break through. One could hear a lark singing, or see a red robin dash by. No one used the horses; it was such a big holy day.

If Easter was a big day in Boly, it was even grander in Pecs. There was a big procession with the Bishop leading it, followed by the chorus of nuns, priests and school children. All the Cathedral bells were tolling through out the ceremonies. The family always met "under the clock". This was a tradition.

The Easter ham was cooked on Good Friday; no one was allowed to eat meat that day. As the aroma of the ham crept around the house Vili Schmidt would become annoyed because he couldn't taste it. "It is too dry" or "It is too soft" or "It needs more cooking", he would argue, but on Saturday night, after the traditional procession, when the ham was served, Vili was happy and contented.

In Hungary, the children gathered fresh grass late on Saturday and formed "nests" for the Easter bunny. The next morning they would find beautifully decorated Easter eggs in the nests. On the morning after Easter young men visited the girls. It was customary to splash the young ladies with perfume. In return the boys were given a small, token gift, and maybe a kiss. The older men gathered in the grapeyard on the same day for a few drinks. They claimed they went to Emmaus, just like the apostles, wondering about the risen Lord.

The Schmidt girls were very friendly with their cousin: Eszter Frigyer (a Lieber grandchild). They would often visit the family's grapeyard. On a memorable spring Sunday all of them wore their Sunday best; patent leather shoes, white socks and a nice dress. As they were roaming among the grapeyard, they came to a swimming pool. There were lots of dry leaves floating in the pool so they decided to clean it, using a long-handled fishing net. The girls were holding onto each other as they reached for the leaves. Finally,

they lost their balance and ended up in the pool. There was crying, kicking, struggling. Finally, out they climbed, all wet and shivering. While their clothes and shoes were drying, Uncle Tibor read them a book about the three little pigs. And after so many years, this book remained the favorite of theirs.

Malili was a curious child. Soon she found out who was Santa Claus. She could hardly wait to tell Loyci about it. Of course, Loyci was disappointed, and complained to her father. "Why - tell me why, did you tell her?" Vili Schmidt was asking. "I was afraid she'd grow up still believing. If she meets and marries another believer, what will happen on Christmas Eve?" Vili just waved his hand...

Another time Malili was interested in how babies are born. One of the schoolmates' mothers was a midwife. All the classmates presumed she knew, but the girl who was supposed to know, demanded money. All the girls came up with the change. Finally the wisdom came from her lips: "From the belly button!" In later years, Malili was furious; she had to pay for the wrong information. Of course, none of this information could be shared in Boly. People never discussed sex there.

As Time Goes By...

In Boly there were books with gentle text, bibles, articles about horses, cows, farm machinery, or the most modern ways to grow wheat and corn, but no books about sex. Karoly Sziebert was a deeply religious man. One would never see him with rosary beads, "I don't like it, it's too monotonous." He often said "I feel nearest to my God when I'm in my barn, where I can talk to him." The local priest was his good friend. He visited often in the Sziebert home. They exchanged stories and experiences. One story so typical of the times was when Monsignor Bock was hearing confessions, his face buried in his hands when the door opened and a parishioner knelt down. He started confession: "Father, I slept with a woman." The priest looked through the grate of the confessional but there was no one there. His eyes gazed downward and he saw a little boy, he was horrified. "What did you do?" He repeated his confession, "I slept with a woman, my grandmother." (Of course, this was the innocent practice during the winter. That is how people kept warm!) Karoly Sziebert would always claim that he loved simple things. Yes indeed, he loved the Zsolnay china. He would buy them; collect them either in sets or odd pieces. He purchased a set of china with a light blue pattern. The Zsolnay factory only made three sets; one for the King of Belgium; a set for the Zsolnay museum and the last, and the most important set went to the Szieberts. This beloved heirloom is in Washington now, in Imre Sziebert's house.

Karoly Sziebert was not the only one who loved this china manufactured in Pecs. Every generation of the family valued the lovely pieces. Some of them collected the Zsolnay, some locked it behind glass, some used them, some broke them, but every family member had a small part of their heart dedicated to Zsolnay. (Sanyi Lajtos a great-grandson-in-law has a very extensive collection. So you see, one can be addicted even by marriage!)

Grandpa Sziebert's other vice was the Lippizaner horses: beautiful, graceful, silver gray horses. He loved them so much he would get out of his cart and walk next to them, on a hilly terrain.

Karoly Sziebert was very proud of his three sons. He named them: Istvan, Imre, Laslo. He loved his Hungarian heritage. Istvan was the first Hungarian King (about 1000 years ago). He brought in priests to teach the pagan Hungarians about Christianity. His mummified right hand can still be seen in Budapest; in a basilica named after him. Saint Imre was his son, who died at a young age. Saint Laszlo was also a Hungarian King.

Karoly Sziebert not only loved his sons, but he reigned over them. He decided early on: his twin sons, Stephen and Imre, would become doctors. "But Papa" - they lamented, "we want to be farmers!" "Both of you will become doctors, because you can practice medicine, even on the moon!" "But Papa, what will happen if we faint while we do a postmortem?" "I'll stand in the door

with a bucket of cold water. I'll throw it over you if you faint." The twins did become doctors. Laszlo, or Lacko, the youngest one was allowed to study agriculture. While still in high school the boys wanted to take ballroom dancing lessons. "Swamp of immorality" Papa would exclaim. As the boys were almost finished with medical school Papa decided it was time for social graces. He bought a gramophone and a few records and hired a private dance instructor. "I'll be the lady," the teacher declared. "Knock on the door, introduce yourself. Make believe you kiss my hand." At this point Imre began to laugh. The music was on, the teacher was tireless: swirling, dipping, bowing. Finally, the boys graduated, or in other words, they stepped on each other's feet only occasionally. Papa took all three of them to Mr. Schenk, a famous tailor. All of them, even Papa, got spanking new tails.

In Pecs, the most famous dances were held in the Casino. Papa invited Vili Schmidt and Joseph Szieberth (a cousin) also. He made reservations for the best table. He made his grand entrance, Imre said, "Like papa bear, with the three bear cubs." The young ladies at the dance came from the best families. They were all pretty, all young.

Karoly Sziebert has his own criteria: none of the girls his sons would dance with would have red hair, or have army officers as fathers. Papa would select the girls, then turn to Vili or Joseph: "Ask her for a dance." If he was satisfied with what he saw, he would instruct the boys: "Dance Stephen...dance Imre." And so on. Occasionally Papa was not satisfied. The married Vili and Joseph got stuck with the young ladies. They never complained. Karoly Sziebert was very careful about the girls; possible future wife or mother of a Sziebert crown prince. Papa had an imaginary "sifter." Most of the girls had faults, or came from families with red hair, or army officers. They would fall through the sifter.

The last question was: "If I would ask for a glass of water, would she ask; why?" Not too many applicants arrived to this last question.

Papa loved his son-in-law and Vili respected him. They would have coffee in the Casino; discuss politics, the farms, and markets. Papa would send Vili with his sons to Belgium to inquire about farm equipment. Vili loved to tell jokes. On the train ride from Brussels he was cracking jokes. They laughed so hard: a man on the train yelled out: "Tell jokes in my language so I can laugh with you... or shut up."

Vili Schmidt had to travel a lot because he was a corporate lawyer. On his frequent visits to Budapest, he truly enjoyed the nightclubs. He shared those nights with his nephew Miki Racz and young, innocent, brother-in-law, Lacko. The air was heavy with cigar and cigarette smoke, the lights colorful, chorus girls scantily dressed, and the songs! Oh, the songs were heart wrenching. Vili would just sit there, puffing on his cigar, enjoying the two young boys' astonishment.

The good life took a toll on Vili, he started to gain some weight. His friend and doctor, Laszlo Frigyer, told him: "Diet during the week, and eat all you want on the weekend." Both of them died young.

Vili was not only a JD - he was a just man! During a visit to his favorite Casino there was a disturbance: a young man was being escorted out, people were whispering: "He doesn't belong in here, not in this exclusive club! His father was a coachman!" Vili intervened, the young man stayed on. He hired a Jewish nanny when it was not allowed. He let Jesuit priests hide on his property, when this was dangerous. He supplied the hungry with bacon and flour. He donated firewood in the dead of winter. He employed his wife's uncle, when ex-army officers were undesirable.

He never ate breakfast and hated boiled milk. He would take catnaps, and claimed he was revived by it. Loved his good cigars. A faint smell of cigar in the air... even today brings back memories of him. Vili was very ambitious. He bought another 300 hectare of land from Count Benyovski. His law office was booming, and his wife Mali was expecting another baby. Life was good.

Years of Sorrow

This good life changed rapidly. Anna Stajevich Schmidt, Vili's mother became ill. The diagnosis was deadly, colon cancer. Mali nursed her mother-in-law in the last months of illness. Finally this gentle lady died on September 10, 1938, a Saturday night (9:15pm). She would have been 55 years old on October 12th.

After returning from Siklos: Mali did not feel well. She knew she was pregnant, but this was different. She felt a lump in her abdomen. It just did not feel right. She visited her cousin, Doctor Jancsi Sziebert. He examined her, took a blood sample and calmed her down: "You seem to be doing all right. I'll get the blood analyzed." Well, the blood was never sent to the lab as Jancsi was absent-minded. A few weeks later came the death sentence: Mali had leukemia. She, and her family, was shocked. Where did she pick it up, or what caused this illness? People knew very little about leukemia back then. Friends offered prayers. Her siblings Terus and Stephen gave blood. In the midst of it all, little Sari was born. She was the most beautiful infant. Mali couldn't enjoy her last little girl because she was too sick, weak and miserable. Vili approached his father-in-law, "I need help with little Sari" - but Papa hesitated. Finally Vili hired a cab, and went to Boly with his five-week-old daughter. "Here she is, he told the family, you have to take care of her. I have to look after my sick wife and the two older girls." You have to understand: in 1939 there were no formulas, disposable bottles, diapers. Boly had no gas lines, so for each bottle a fire had to be made in the old stove. Dia or Terus rocked Sari while the twins, Stephen and Imre, got together their knowledge to create a formula in order to keep the little girl alive. What a task! The boys were calculating, measuring, mixing and cooking. Baby Sari had a tough time digesting the formula. She was cranky, vomiting and developed rashes and would not sleep. The aunts and uncles were up half the night, trying to comfort this little unhappy passenger. All of a sudden there was a small light at the end of the hall, shuffling with heavy breathing. As the light got nearer it became bigger and brighter. A familiar face - Papa's - appeared in the night. "How is the little one?" He would ask. To raise Sari became a family affair. Even the family's three dogs got into the act; they stood guard at the crib. It was said that Bodri, the Hungarian black Puli, would growl if strangers appeared. Katica hand-washed, separately, all the baby's clothes and diapers with fine soap, with the hope that it would prevent rashes.

As the little one grew Mali became sicker. She was taken to a famous hospital in Budapest in the hopes that the illness would not progress any further. Mali couldn't eat; vomiting was a daily occurrence. When she was feeling better she worked on a linen tablecloth with counted cross-stitches. She never finished this project. Later on Ida Heckinger Sziebert paid a

professional to complete the tablecloth. This legacy of love can be found today with Mary Schmidt Horvath. As Mali's illness progressed, she was transported to the hospital in Mohach. As leukemia ravaged her body, her thoughts and love were with her family. Undated, on a light gray paper she wrote down her last wishes:

To all of you dear to me:

I loved you all. I'll still love you! My beloved four children, my wishes are: Vili should remarry within a year! He should marry one of my younger sisters. I hope I did not ask for too much of a sacrifice. I know this will be difficult with the four children (Vili, Malili, Loyci and Sari).

Please try to make them a wonderful Christmas, I will observe all of you from Heaven. All the Christmas decorations are in the dining room table's hidden cabinet. I have some dresses there for Sari. There are winter clothes in the big chest. In the dining room hutch is the musical wax Jesus.

I want to be buried in my black, velvet dress, take off the pin, this belonged to Grandma Schmidt. Take off my rings also.

If there will be a crypt in Sari-pusztá, take me there, I want to rest among my beloved roses.

Vili, I love you so much now and always, be a good son to my parents. They love you and will never abandon you.

With love, Mali

I also love my parents, sisters, brothers and Katica..."

Then Mali sealed the gray envelope with the instruction, "To Vili, to be opened after my death..." Her short life ended at 1:30pm on September 22, 1940, while the ambulance rushed her from the hospital towards Boly.

Her coffin was laid out in the Sziebert living room. This was the same living room where her ancestors were laid out. For her children, it was a shock to see this once lively and loving woman so pale and so still. Mali Sziebert Schmidt was just 29 years old. The pin and rings were taken off, as she requested. Her plain gold wedding band, along with Vili Schmidt's was given to Malili some years later, and the same plain pair of wedding rings were given to Chuck and Ann Guy Horvath in 1990.

Teri and Vili, War Years

Vilmos Schmidt did marry Theresa Sziebert on February 20, 1941, following his first wife's wishes.

Teri and Vili were two very different people, with different dreams and ambitions. Their only bond was mutual respect and honor. But they made the best of it. Teri Sziebert was dressed in a black dress, wore a platinum and diamond pendant (now you can find it with her daughter: Ida Schmidt Gyimothy). Everything was very somber. After the wedding the family moved to larger quarters: to an elegant, spacious apartment in Maria Street; in the heart of Pecs. It was near to the Sziebert house and just a few houses away from the Casino. Teri became a dutiful wife, loving mother to the girls. Little Sari was reunited with the family.

Life, all of a sudden, changed with the outbreak of WWII (Sept 1, 1939). There were airplanes flying overhead. People were only whispering now. Hungarians with different political views avoided each other. There were soldiers with heavy boots all around. The Hungarian army marched to Yugoslavia. They claimed this part of the land belonged to Hungary. The Serb population was angered, hateful, and spiteful. Young girls in native costumes and wide smiles would greet the soldiers. They carried bouquets of flowers. As the Hungarian soldiers came nearer, the girls, who had pistols hidden in the flower arrangements, shot the soldiers point blank.

Cun-puszta was Teri's wedding present from her father. This 500 hectare land was a real beauty; next to the River Drava. Lots of good land for growing grain, grazing meadows for cattle and grand old trees. The family visited here often. While the grown-ups tended to business, the girls went to the shore of the River Drava. They found pebbles and started to throw them into the river. Who could throw them the farthest? Who could make the biggest splash? Then, all of a sudden, all the joy was gone. The horrified girls became speechless. Pointing to the river--bodies, dead bodies, maybe 50 or 60 of them - shot, bloated, floating down the river. The Serbs and Croats were killing each other!

In all of this madness the 27-year-old Imre Sziebert was inducted in the army and ordered to Yugoslavia. He was a doctor, he was expected to save lives, but on the 22nd of April 1941, he lost his life near Zombor. He was on his way to save some wounded soldiers. His car was clearly marked with the sign of the Red Cross. Some Serbs shot his tire; the car lost control, and ran into a tree. Imre died instantly. His flag draped coffin was returned to Boly. This fun-loving son was silenced forever. No more jokes, no more teasing, or funny faces. His black medical bag was never opened again! (He was known for his kindness, as he would cure the poorest farm hands free of charge. They would flock to his office. There was never an empty seat in his waiting

room.) His beloved bike stood there motionless forever. His loyal dogs had no more master! Ida and Karoly Sziebert were devastated.

Then Steve, the other twin, was called up for military duty. He had to go to the Russian front. The winter was horrible, snow blowing, creating snow banks all around the troops. Rivers were frozen. Cold! Cold! Bitter, bone chilling cold! Gray clouds, never sunshine. The Hungarian army was ill-equipped and trained. They were stationed at the bend of the River Don. The Russian army surrounded the Hungarian soldiers. Stephen Sziebert was their doctor. There was no food or medicine left. The soldiers tried to keep each other warm and alive. It seemed like an eternity, but finally they were rescued.

The German troops were marched into Hungary and occupied the land. Nazi flags replaced the Hungarian "Red, White and Green". The German army took over mines, factories and offices. People spoke in whispers only; doors, windows were kept tightly closed. The allied forces were bombing Hungary. There were constant air raids. People slept in shelters for days. Food was scarce. Vili Schmidt would give flour, lard, and bacon to people in need. Clothing became non-existent. As the girls were growing, one dress was created from two smaller ones. Colors, designers, stripes were all combined.

In all that misery, a ray of sunshine appeared. Theresa Sziebert Schmidt had a little boy on the 10th of January 1942. He had the Sziebert's golden hair and blue eyes. The parents named him: Vilike. Grandpa Schmidt stood in front of the church in Siklos and announced to everybody: "Vilmos Schmidt, III, was born." As he grew he became a brave little boy: loved to walk into the barn to visit the horses. In Sari-puszta he rode with the older children on the cart pulled by the donkey called Laci.

On October 22, 1943 Vili and Teri Schmidt went to the movies to see the movie "The Count of Munchausen". Tragedy struck. The maid poured hot water into the tub and left the room to bring in the cold water. Somehow Vilike fell into the hot water. He suffered burns on a large part of his body. The medical science then did not really know how to treat serious burns. There were no IV drips in those days, only a little cup of water to try and replace the fluid loss. By the next morning this golden haired angel, the joy of the family, the hope to carry the family name, was dead. He was buried in Boly. Teri Sziebert Schmidt's tears were flowing. As time passed she cried not only for her son, but also for her motherland, friends who died during the bombing raids, or were missing in action. Everyone suffered because of the cruel war. These were dark and sad times for all, but love was just around the corner to warm things up.

Doctor Stephen Sziebert was tall, blond, handsome and very smart. His family would testify; he never studied, yet still finished medical school at the top of his class. He was also charming, rich and single. He was the

“Crown Prince.”

One day, as the story goes, Stephen went to the hardware store in Pecs to inquire about some items. There was a young, 18 year old girl, a cousin of the owner, who was visiting. Stephen fell in love instantly. He, who was always self-assured, became so embarrassed could not find his pen. The young girl offered her pen. He, enamored by her, finally asked her name. “Nora” she answered in a clear voice. He walked her home and the romance began. She was twelve years his junior, a city girl. Karoly Sziebert got wind of the affair. He tried to apply his famous sieve method... Did Nora fail any of the tests? We will never know. Nora and Stephen got married on June 5, 1944 in Pecs. The wedding was held in a church on the Mecsek Mountains. This wedding was the last social event before the sky fell in. The bride was beautiful, the groom handsome. There were bridesmaids, junior bridesmaids, horse driven coaches, and ladies in long gowns, men wearing tails and top hats. The whole city was excited as they watched the couple and all the attendants. Later on there was music and dinner at the Casino - for the elite. This was the wedding of the year, the last bright day in the war torn land. Things went from bad to worse in Hungary.

Every able-bodied man had to join the army. People died, or were maimed in the fighting. Gypsies, Jews, handicaps, even priests, were taken from their homes, piled into cattle cars and sent toward the West (Austria and Germany). One of Vili's childhood friends and his wife was arrested, taken away, and they never returned. Feri Szieberth, one of the cousins, was telling about a horrible event. He came upon a cattle car, filled with hungry and thirsty Jews. They were begging for water. Feri was able to reach into the car through the cracks with some cool water. His kindness was only rewarded by the barrel of a rifle.

The German soldiers were all over Hungary. Some of the army consisted of young boys as young as 14 years old. They were SS soldiers. Teri Schmidt would say, “The German Army is systematic, there is no escape.”

The army stole everything from the farm; wheat, livestock, even Papa Sziebert's brand new BMW. Those were only things the Nazi army took from the Szieberts. But at last, they almost destroyed the family, when Lacko's life was taken.

Laszlo (Lacko) Sziebert was only 24 years old when he was called up in 1945 to serve in the army. He had just completed college. It did not make any difference to the ruling Nazis that one of the boys had already been killed, and that Stephen was serving on the Russian front. Lacko, the youngest, was the apple of the family's eye, and now, he too was asked to serve. It was a brutal winter; everyone knew the Germans were doomed. Lacko and his unit were ordered to retreat toward Austria and Germany. Lacko and two friends decided not to go. When the train left, they stayed behind. To try to escape was a real

task. One of the soldiers decided to brave the elements and cross the frozen Lake Balaton alone. The other two decided to stay together. They knocked on doors, but people were afraid to hide both of them. Finally, a priest, an old friend of the family decided to provide them with a safe place. Lacko and the friend were given civilian clothes, chores. They felt safe. Soon an enemy of the priest got a glimpse of the two strangers and reported it to the police. They were arrested, tried and sentenced to death by firing squad.

There were no newspapers, no radio, no one knew in Boly what had happened to Lacko. The family hoped and prayed for his safety. Vili Schmidt was able to shed some light on this tragedy. He got in touch with a priest, Stephan Mester, who in 1945 was an army chaplain in the city of Papa. He wrote to Vili. Yes, indeed he met the young soldiers after the death sentences were read. (There were three unfortunate young soldiers). The priest was given two hours to prepare them for execution. The priest claimed: Lacko was brave and had a clear heart and conscience as he stepped in front of the executioners. He refused to wear a customary black eye shield. He stood strong with his rosary beads in his hand. This all took place in the year 1945, the 17th of February in the city of Papa, on a Saturday, in the courtyard of the cavalry.

He and his comrades were buried in the local cemetery. There is a section reserved for soldiers. That is where Lacko was put to rest. There were no coffins to be found so the soldiers were buried only on Mondays in a common grave, without a coffin.

It was just like a miracle, or a vision: On the 17th of February 1945, Karoly Sziebert got up from the dinner table and declared "Lacko is no more!" His name was never mentioned again. Ida Heckinger Sziebert was never seen smiling after that day; the light went out of their life!

Life Under Communist Rules

There was not too much time to cry or mourn. As the Nazis moved toward Austria, the Russian Red army pushed right behind; there was fear in everyone's eyes. As the soldiers arrived in late '44 and early '45 they were different. They spoke a strange language. Some were white, some came from Mongolia. They all yelled so loud, wore muddy boots, dirty clothes, and were unshaven and uneducated. The Russians wore a big red star on their furry hats. Women and men fought side by side. They all carried machine guns. The Russians were always hungry and ate up everything in sight. Wristwatches fascinated them: "Davaj Chas" - they commanded, as they took the watch, they laughed loudly, pulled up their shirt sleeve and on their arms were a dozen other stolen watches. The troops were afraid of alarm clocks and toilets. After the alarm would ring, or the toilet would flush, they became panicky, and shot the clocks or toilets.

Couches and chairs were skinned, hoping to find something valuable under the furniture cover. Women were raped, no matter what age they were. The Russian army was poorly equipped. Three soldiers would sleep under one dirty blanket. They were used to hard times. In the villages, if the Germans left something, the Russians took it. Misery ruled the land.

Finally, the first train left Pecs for Budapest. Vili Schmidt decided to take the trip and try to reach the capitol city. This trip was a two-day affair. When Vili and the others reached Budapest, he cried like a baby. Budapest was called the "Pearl of the Danube"; now all the bridges were blown up, buildings bombed out, remains of tanks, trolleys strewn about. The people were frightened, cold and hungry. During the cover of darkness people would sneak out and take slices off dead horse carcasses. They were so hungry they would eat anything.

The first Christmas was bleak, but the family tried to make the best of it. Vili as usual gave generously-- food and wood for the poor and the cold. He received hand knitted woolen neckties from his daughters. Of course they looked and felt more like mufflers rather than ties. Vili was a good sport. He wore the ties all day long, and never again. The girls learned from him that giving and sharing is so very important.

In the meantime, the Russians were coming. Later on it became a phrase "...as many as the Russians." Money became worthless. People were exchanging valuables for food and necessities. The Schmidt family was evicted from their beautiful apartment twice. First cousin Joseph gave them a room. This was the place where the family learned a new baby was on the way. The Russian army took all the furniture. The chairs and sofas were all skinned as they looked for valuables. Finding none, the furniture was dumped all over the city. Finally, after some of the furniture was found, the family

moved into Janos Utca 13.

Just before the Russian invasion, Vili and Teri Schmidt piled all their valuables behind a makeshift wall next to the bathroom. At one point the family had to return to retrieve the valuables. The apartment was swarming with soldiers. Vili entertained them with drinks and songs, while a young cousin broke through the wall, and pulled out the valuables. When the task was done, everything was whisked away.

No one needed a lawyer, Vili was bored stiff. One day he decided to fix an alarm clock. He took it apart, cleaned it and finding no fault, he reassembled it, but had one piece left over, with nowhere to put it. Needless to say the clock never worked again. In his boredom he would whip up dumplings. They were huge, and heavy like rocks. There was no milk. For breakfast split pea soup was prepared early in the morning. By the time the children woke up, there was a thick skim on the top of the soup. None of the girls liked split pea soup as adults.

Everything was rationed. It was a real holiday to receive extra sweets. Meat was also a scarcity. In order to get meat people got up at 4am to stand in line in front of the butcher's shop. It was dawn, on a dark, cloudy morning when a lady arrived with a bundle in her arms. "Please, let me get to the front of the line, I am with a baby." After a short discussion she was let go to the front of the line. A few minutes later the butcher shop opened, there was a big ruckus, the bundle moved violently and a big fat cat jumped out. Of course, the lady ran off.

People who owned land became enemies. Big parts of the properties were taken away. Apartment houses were nationalized. "Enemies of the State" were arrested, tried, hanged and buried all in one day.

We have to mention now Judge Erno Tarkany. He lived next door to the Schmidts. His wife was a teacher and his sister-in-law kept house for them. The judge would dole out death sentences all day long. He never moved a muscle while signing the documents. Everyone called him "Hangman" or "The Executioner". Upon returning home he drank himself into oblivion daily. Finally, after years of bloodshed, Judge Tarkany poisoned his wife and sister-in-law and took his own life. You see, after a while not even the alcohol could dim the death sentences, wash away the tears of the innocents, and lessen the families' pain. The judge got away easy. If it was suspected someone owned gold they were beaten until they confessed. At times it was suspected the poor victim swallowed gold rings. Enemas were given until the person collapsed.

Istvan Eory owned a pharmacy in Boly. His wife Heidi was the daughter of Robert Szieberth, the famous teacher and school builder. Istvan was arrested on trumped-up charges. He had a heart condition. Somehow Heidi was able to secure a paper to pardon him. Heidi traveled to Pecs carrying a small suitcase with his clothes and medicines. When she got there the jailer

told her Istvan was transferred to Budapest. Heidi's further inquiries fell on deaf ears. No one heard of him, no one ever met him in Budapest. Heidi was frantic. Finally, she realized he had either been killed or had died. In desperation she went to a big cemetery in Budapest, the Rakos Kereszturi Cemetery. She was wandering about by parcel 301, which was the place where political prisoners were buried. She was looking high and low, trying to find a cross, a marker, anything with the name "Eory" on it. There were rows and rows of graves, some unmarked, some marked. All of a sudden, Heidi came across a mounted policeman. You see parcel #301 had the remains of all the political prisoners. The state was afraid someone might steal a coffin, and this would start a riot.

The policeman stopped, got off his horse and asked her what she was doing there. "Stop looking and go home," he told her "Or you and your kids will end up here, too." Poor Heidi rushed out of the cemetery and never looked back...

Another sad, but not rare and unfamiliar story to follow: Laci Fulop's dad was a young fellow - in 1941 he was called for army duty. He was a private, assigned to the army hospital. He had to dole out pills, change dressings, give shots. In January 1943, he and his unit were ordered to the Russian front. He was a newly-wed, and his wife couldn't understand why there were no letters since August 1943. She tried to find out what happened, is he alive? His wife gave birth to his only son, Laci, whom he never met. Through word of mouth Mrs. Fulop was able to get some news. Tid-bits, stories making no sense, most of them were disturbing news. As she understood, his unit was captured and shipped to Siberia around 1943. In 1945, the Russians returned a lot of POWs. Mr. Fulop was in this group. But then the Soviets had a change of heart. The train was turned around and they were shipped to the west Ural Mountains. They were forced to mine, never paid. They were unable to write home, or live free. Finally, in December 1951, after a treacherous train trip, the unit was returned to Budapest. Home! Freedom! - They all hoped for this, but not so fast! The Hungarian secret police, the feared, bloodthirsty AVO kept them in a detention building near Budapest's Eastern railroad station. Two AVO officers took the young Fulop away. No one ever heard from him again. The family was dumb-founded; he was a young man, a working family's son, with neither special duties nor rank. What happened to him? The mystery of his disappearance still haunts the family.

The secret police (AVO) was given full reign. They had an office in each town, city, and even each village. Their main office/prison was in Budapest -- Andrassy Street # 60. If they took a suspect there he or she was more or less a goner. People were tortured, beaten, even killed. When people walked on Andrassy Street, they would cross the street before they got to

number 60. No one was sure what was going on in this building. Long after, actually after the Hungarian Revolution, in 1956 when the jail was opened up; people were aghast by the findings - medieval torture chambers, and more! Those who had been taken there ranged from the famous Hungarian Cardinal Mindszenty, writers, deposed political leaders, artists, so called spies, or enemies of the communist regime. From people who were somebody in society to those who were nameless. The name of the game was to torture and to punish.

Young people were still called up to serve the army. The only difference was if one was from a family who was considered an enemy, they were not given weapons. The young soldiers were handed a pickaxe and herded down the coalmines. They lived under terrible conditions for two years. They had to pay for their father's "sins" dearly. Nora Berecz Sziebert's brother, Charles served in such a unit.

Some people just couldn't stand living under the Communists and tried to escape, but the borders were guarded with dogs, barbed wire all around, soldiers shooting without questioning. Lots of people lost their lives by the Austrian boarder. Then again, some people were creative. Young students took to the skies and after snow storms tried to escape. There were stories of pilots who stole airplanes. Some made it and some paid dearly with their lives.

To have relatives, friends in Western countries, was a mortal sin. People would denounce their friends and ancestors in order to escape jail. While Hungary lay in ruins, crops or industrial products were shipped to the Soviet Union. This hurt the economy of the land - people were unhappy. Then they found out about the "Blood trains" - the residents were forced to donate blood and all of it was shipped to the east to the Soviets.

Vili Schmidt was interrogated numerous times by the secret police. They would call on him at night and take him away for questioning. His office was ransacked for "evidence." At times they would tell him he had to return in the morning, of course, no one would be able to sleep that night. When Vili arrived the next morning to AVO headquarters, the officer at the desk said, "no-one wanted you, you made a mistake." His paralegal was taken away, "conspiracy" and the household was under house arrest for days.

Malili was accused of burning the red flag. There was no burning, no flag; still she was expelled from all the schools in Hungary. With such a judgment there was no chance for schooling, job, or future. Vili had some Jesuit friends, who tutored the girl in secret.

The cousins in the USA felt sorry for all the poor relations. Packages after packages arrived filled with coats, shoes, vitamins and Jell-O. Oh, the shoes! The girls never had such shoes! They had high heels, cork wedges; they were colorful. Loyci became so excited; she tried a pair on. She could only walk when she was supported on both sides. When the first coffee beans

arrived, the aroma of coffee filled the air.

In all this craziness, sadness, all of a sudden there was joy: Nora and Stephen Sziebert had their first child, Maria. Teri and Vili Schmidt became parents to Idu. It was hard to raise children in 1945 - 1946; milk was scarce. Idu suffered vitamin deficiency. Little Maria's nose turned yellow from all the carrots she had to eat. But they were both tough little children and they made it. Her older sisters pampered Idu. Malili loved to take her out in the baby carriage. Walking on her tippy-toes she said, "People will think I am her mother, wearing high heels."

Whenever Vili went on a business trip, he brought a small gift for Idu. She loved to open the suitcase and investigate the contents. There was a day Vili forgot the little token gift. Idu was an unspoiled, innocent little girl. She searched and searched some more. Finally, she found an old worn toothbrush in the suitcase. Happy, running to her father she declared; "Thanks! You are the best Dad!"

On August 8, 1947 Teri Sziebert Schmidt's second son was born. Unlike the first son, he had light brown hair. He was also named Vilmos like his father and grandfather. The family was elated. Finally a little boy! He was sweet and smart and the older girls loved to play with him. But the Heavens did not allow all this happiness. On June 21, 1949, while Teri was shelling peas in the grapeyard, she all of a sudden looked up and asked, "Where's little Vili?" She and the housekeeper were searching inside and outside the house. They called his name repeatedly, with no response. Finally, in a half filled blue vitriol barrel (used for spraying the grapes) they found the lifeless body of the little angel. There was no answer to this cruelty of fate! How Teri survived this second tragedy no one knows. Slowly she was able to pick up life, even to smile. As time went by: she was able to enjoy her life again. But as her grandchildren arrived, years later, she was accused: "Grandma Poo favors the boys!"

Dia and Vili

Ida Sziebert was the youngest daughter of Ida and Karoly Sziebert. As a youngster she went to school to be trained as a teacher. At the end she was not allowed to work. Papa Sziebert had the same excuse, "I have enough money to support my daughter." Of course, the same went for suitors. Ida was and still is lovingly called Dia. She was trained, as Katica was years ago, to take care of her brother's children.

Nora and Stephen Sziebert had four children by now: Maria, Imre, Elizabeth and Istvan. Dia's help was needed and welcomed. Everything went smoothly as planned till one day Vili Manninger appeared at the scene. Who was this brave soldier? His father, Adolph was the director of operation for Prince Montenuovo. He and his family lived in Boly since 1919. Parents and children were friends with the Sziebert's for decades. Vili served with the Hungarian army in 1946 after the war was over, he and his mother went to Boly to collect some furniture. While in Boly, mother and son were visiting with the Szieberts. Papa Sziebert discussed with them how hard it was to manage Ida-pusztá. He made an offer to Vili to run the pusztá if he couldn't find a job. Vili's job offers fell through and soon he was the overseer for Mr. Sziebert. This was a great challenge. The land was not cultivated for years. The buildings were in disrepair. The mud was so deep that Vili's bike got stuck in it. Vili was given a cow, two horses and a carriage.

Vili worked like a dog and finally his efforts paid off; there was a harvest at last. He did visit with Szieberts often in Boly, to give report to Papa on the development of the farm, and to secretly court Dia. A newly carved box, a necklace, some notes, a bouquet of flowers, were some of the gifts he gave her. Nora Berecz Sziebert was a great matchmaker and helped the romance along.

Helena Manninger, Vili's mother, traveled to Boly a number of times to ask for Dia's hand, but Papa was in a bad mood, so the subject was never brought up. Finally, in 1947 on St. Valentine's Day, Vili asked Papa for Dia's hand. There was a grave problem; Vili was Lutheran. Papa consulted a few priests, and it seems they eased his mind. Finally he said yes and the wedding was set for June 13, 1947. It took place in the side chapel, as Vili was not Roman Catholic. Dinner was at Janos Utca 13 - in Theresa Lieber's great old dining room. The young couple went on a three-day honeymoon and then back to reality. In other words, Ida-pusztá. The place was very primitive; no electricity, no running water. The well was at the bottom of the hill. Oil lamps illuminated the place. One of Dia's old oil lamps with little blue flowers belongs to Betsy Horvath now. The beds were painted blue (some years ago the same beds had been offered to Vili and Mali, if you remember). Mattresses filled with straw, but the young couple did not care, they were happy. Dia was running

the house, Vili the farm. He did marvels with his crops, the cow gave enough milk, and the two horses did their job. Of course the mud was still there: Vili wore the same wooden clogs as the villagers. Life was difficult, but filled with love. Little things made them happy: spring's first flowering tree, a new bunny, a new-born calf, the song of the first returning bird, or the summer winds, the rich crop, fresh fruits from the garden or an ice cold beer, cooled at the bottom of the well. Seeing the leaves turn golden yellow, saying goodbye to the migrating bird. Cool nights under the trees. The winter's first snowflakes, a hot cup of tea or bowl of soup. Oiling all the tools for next year, or carving a gift for Dia.

This happy state only lasted for two years. The Communists took away the rest of the land. Vili had to leave everything behind - everything he worked so hard for. The young couple decided to return to Boly, where the Szieberts still owned some acreage of land. And, of course, there was still the family home. So the young couple closed the windows, packed the last boxes. Dia turned to Vili: "Let's kneel down and give thanks to God for the two happy years we had here." Vili was amazed at Dia's strong, unshakable faith.

Karoly Sziebert died on the 25th of September 1948. He was 63 years old. That September morning he went to Mass, and then they (his son and grand daughter, Maria) drove the buggy to the puszta. This was the last few acres, the ruins of his former wealth. But this was his, with its rich, black soil! He and Stephen talked about the family and the future. Papa walked around, checked his cows, horses. "Let's go home!" he said. They climbed up the step into the buggy. There he collapsed and died in his son's arms. He suffered a fatal heart attack. This colorful person was gone, so suddenly. There was no one now to hold the reins of the family. No one to advise the grown-ups or to growl at the noisy children. The house became so silent all of a sudden: just like the world had stopped.

Looking back on his life, he and his wife had eight children. Six reached adulthood. He lost three children tragically in adulthood. He loved God, his motherland, his family and nature. He often said proudly, "You'll never find people like us." He loved nature. As we said, he was responsible for planting thousands of fir and acacia trees. He inherited fifty acres of land and slowly he bought his siblings 250 acres. As time passed on, he bought 1550 more hectares of land. Maybe we didn't agree with him always, but he truly was a personality.

Some time after Karoly Sziebert was buried, Vili Manninger was offered a job in Budapest. After thinking about the possibilities, he decided to take the job. It had possibilities to finish his education (he became an engineer). Budapest at that time was a closed city. You might ask, what is this? One needed a special permit to live there. The person needed a job and had to be a desirable by Communist standards. Vili received the permit, but Dia did not.

She was allowed to stay for two weeks in Budapest. She had to leave for two weeks and then was allowed back again. She visited her mother, while she was not in Budapest. Dia had to travel between six and eight hours on a noisy old train with wooden seats. The train was full of people: they traveled to the market with fruits, eggs, and live chickens. What trips they were every other week! There were no apartments for rent. They lived for a while with Vili's brother. Later, the young couple was able to rent a room from Dia's aunt, Vali Heckinger Dillman, on Gomb Street. Vili and Dia were happy, even though she had to travel every two weeks. They had only one room. The tiny kitchen was shared with Aunt Vali and her longtime housekeeper, Gizella. This old lady was like a family member, but she was bored. She would sit in the kitchen like a big, fat spider. She watched and criticized everything Dia cooked.

When the Manningers had company, the old ladies reprimanded them because they laughed too loudly, one had to be a saint to survive this. The Manningers were not rich, but whatever they had, they shared with everyone in need. Every penny spent was discussed one thousand times. Just some of the recipients; Vili's mother, sisters, Dia's mother and Katica.

One of the nieces, Nonna, had polio. She had come to Budapest for treatments. Where did the little girl sleep? In the Manninger's bathtub. Nonna called it "tubbed." Youngsters in college always stopped there for cookies and jellied quince. They pampered Teri Sziebert Schmidt every time she visited. The Manningers also had inflatable mattresses; so countless people were able to sleep in Gomb Street. No one knows how they managed, but God bless them for all they did.

The Terrible Fifties!

And then came 1950, if you think life was hard so far, just wait.

Vili Schmidt died on August 30, 1950. He was on a business trip when he suffered a fatal stroke. He was only 46 years old. He left his 39-year-old wife and four young children. After the funeral Teri asked; "What are we going to do now?" Teri took a job first as a cashier in a beauty shop, then as a bookkeeper, but in a few weeks she was always fired due to her "past". Malili took all kinds of odd jobs to help out. The younger ones went to school. Finally Teri was able to work in a hotel as a cleaning lady. There were no vacuum cleaners, she had to drag the rugs to the hotel's backyard, hang them up on hooks and beat the rugs until all the dust was out. The floor had to be scrubbed with large brushes while she was on her knees. Then she was expected to polish it by hand. She worked so hard for peanuts, but at least she had a job! At home she just collapsed. Even in this terrible state, she had her little radio on, enjoyed the music or read a good book. There was no money to spare. Her motto was "you can always enjoy beautiful things: just look - and you don't need money for that." In her later years she was given a position as a forelady. Mr. Kennedy, her boss, always respected her.

Life for all went from bad to worse. The Communist party was in full command. In Boly, one night the Sziebert family was feeding the children (ages 2 - 5). Katica, Ida Heckinger Sziebert, Doctor Sziebert and his wife were each tending to a child. There was a knock on the door, the hated secret police stood in the doorway. The family was fearful, silent. One of the policemen asked, "Where is Karoly Sziebert?" Katica answered sarcastically "He is dead!" The police stood there for a few moments, seeing the children was too much even for them. Then they began searching the house and found two kilograms of Red Hungarian Paprika. The leading officer finally said "Doctor Sziebert, you are under arrest for hoarding paprika." He kissed his wife, mother and aunt. He grabbed and hugged his children. Quickly he rushed into the bedroom for one more glance around the family photos, his loved ones. He was put in handcuffs and taken away. The family was told to vacate the house within twenty-four hours. The children were put to bed, to sleep, and the rest of the household began packing. Lots of valuable family heirlooms were handed over the fences to a neighbor. They worked all night. The next morning more things were packed onto a truck, and shipped to Pecs. Ida and Katica just stood there with tears streaming down their cheeks. They had to say goodbye to their life, their home, and their friends - as another chapter of their lives came to an end.

Nora and her children moved into her parental grandparent's home. Ida and Katica's new living quarters were with the Schmidts in 13 Janos Utca.

They occupied one small room. In a couple of weeks Nora was ousted again from her new home. She tried to find accommodations, but no one gave her a home. Then she came to her sister-in-law, Teri Sziebert Schmidt, who opened her heart and her house. There was a family living in each room. There was no money; only Teri and Malili had jobs, if one could call them jobs!

Nora discovered an old Pfaff sewing machine. It was so old, one had to push a pedal - instead of electricity. She was working on it day and night. She was making aprons and ladies' bags for sale. Kathe, her faithful housekeeper, went every morning to clean homes for the "new rich" - at night Kathe came home tired, but she shared her wages with Nora and the children. Nora was only 25 years old. Some people were whispering, gossiping about her appearance "Why is she so pretty? Her husband is in jail and she is wearing a red skirt!" Teri was her bodyguard, always defending Nora against the old crows. Finally Nora was able to visit her husband in jail. She had to travel to Hortobagy, which is a part of the Hungarian Great Plains. When they met, Nora hardly recognized her husband. He was unshaven, his hair had grown long, the sun faded it to a light blond, but it was good to visit for both of them.

Back to Pecs, to the full house. None of the families living there had any money, so no one felt poor. Katica marinated, massaged, braised, stewed or steamed an ordinary tough piece of beef. At the end it turned into a feast. There were all kinds of noodles, with browned farina, cabbage, potatoes or pot cheese. From yeast a spread was created. From zucchini a dish was made and called "Fried Fish." The nightly questions were "Are we having tea with a mug - or a mug with tea?" Nora's younger brother Karoly Berecz spent many nights in the company of the Szieberts and the Schmidts. He always had the biggest mug of tea. The tea bag was used over and over again - someone asked, "Did you boil your socks, or the teabag?"

There was a time when the family was able to get inexpensive Sunday meals from the local university. One of the family members picked up the food. It was always goose backs and buckwheat - lots of buckwheat. When the food arrived, Teri remarked "Let's have lunch in bed, just like the aristocrats." She put on some good music, used her best china, and filled her crystals with water. Who needed any more?

The house was always cold, no real coal available. The girls mixed water and coal powder in a bucket and formed into balls. This was fed to the fire. And those cold showers! It certainly woke everyone up! They were poor, but not gloomy. There were friends, music, get-togethers, even trips to the movies. Who knows how Teri and Nora did it? They were able to create laughter, fun; they created a loving home.

After two years spent in jail, Doctor Sziebert was released. He was able to secure a job as a doctor in Kaposszekcso. They were given a house.

The hidden furniture was retrieved from their neighbors' backrooms. New pictures were hung. Nora made curtains. The whole family was invited to visit in Kaposzkekcsó. The doctor was respected and well liked.

Soon another child was born: Les, and now there were five little Szieberts. Kathe, the faithful housekeeper, was also there. She took care of all the children, but loved Les as her own. Life was somewhat improving not only in Kaposzkekcsó, but in Pecs also. The older Schmidt girls were all grown up. Malili, or Mary, as she was called now, had a job as a laboratory assistant. Loya worked in an office. She wanted to go to college, but was not allowed because of the family's past. They both worked in Komlo. This was a coal-mining town the Communist government decided to create, a "boom town." Job opportunities -- the coalmines. They built large apartment complexes, stores, and movie houses. A hospital was designed and built. Komlo was an artificial town with no past. The communist government often created towns like that. Next to the Danube was Stalin City. No sidewalk, just muddy roads. But people moved there, as there were apartments available. Today both cities are dead.

A New Generation

Mary and Loya worked in Komlo, but lived at home. Each day they took the bus there. The bus ride was long and bumpy. Buses were few and far between and the wait for a ride was sometimes an hour long. On one of those trips, Mary met a young man, Charles Horvath. He was kind, nice and well dressed, especially his shirts, which were so well ironed. Soon he asked her to accompany him to a play. This was in the local theater. Charles bought her a bag of chocolates. Chocolate was a rare and expensive gift. She kept the bag in her hands as she tried to save this goody for her young sister, Idu. By the time the play was over, the chocolate had melted in the bag into a brown mess. Charles often visited 13 Janos Street. While visiting there, Katica and Ida Heckinger Sziebert slipped him some delicacies, they both remembered well the old saying: "Keep the beast well fed." He was amazed, thinking Mary was a good cook, much later, after the two were married he realized she was not a cook! Charles was courting Mary, but he also loved little Idu. At times he would bend down and kiss her hand. The child felt really grown up. Soon Charles and Mary decided to get married. As it was customary, he planned to ask for her hand. Teri Schmidt was sitting in the living room, and Charles was talking for a long time, about nothing. Mary was listening in from the next room. After a while she lost her patience and marched into the room. Firmly she directed Charles, "Get on with it, and get it over with". He complied, fell to his knees, and asked for her hand.

The Horvath family came to visit. Mama and Papa Horvath wanted to inspect Mary. She was well behaved that day. Actually, she was frightened because as she had been bringing food into the room, she overheard the older Horvath's discussing her "I wonder if this girl is always so loud?"

The young couple married on September 4th, 1954. Teri Schmidt sold her last existing cow to cover the expenses. Teri's girlfriend created a lovely bridal gown (from material found in Grandma's chest), veil and gloves. The night before the big day while Mary was packing her suitcase for the honeymoon, Teri whispered, "I know I should talk to you, but I don't know what to say." That was all the sex education she got.

Nora Sziebert and her children arrived. The plan was that Doctor Sziebert would take the bus the next morning; his task was he had to bring the fresh meat (no ice boxes). He was called out during the night to deliver a baby. After returning home, he fell asleep, and overslept. Doctor Sziebert and the chickens almost missed the wedding. The bridegroom borrowed tails and a top hat from one of the Sziebert boys. All the younger children got dressed up in pretty white outfits. Grandma Ida wore her Sunday black dress, and a small black hat. Katica's dress was adorned by her beautiful zsabot. Mothers and sisters all looked festive. Dia whispered some blessing in Mary's ear. At

this moment the family realized there was no cab. How could the bride be expected to walk through the streets in her wedding gown? Vili Manninger must have paid someone off, because soon a black cab arrived. The young people's ceremony was held in the old Cathedral, in the Chapel of Corpus Christi, the same Chapel that Ida Heckinger and Karoly Sziebert as well as Mali Sziebert and Vili Schmidt married many years before.

The young couple moved in with Teri, as there were no apartments available. Again, there was a family in each room. There was a mad dash to the bathroom each morning. The bills were divided by three. Everyone had household duties; one chopped firewood, one mopped the long hallway, and one did the laundry. Teri and Mary's duties included weekly trips to the farmer's market. The market was outside. During the winter it was so very cold. They always bought a slice of roasted butternut squash. Holding the squash kept the hands cozily warm.

Soon there was romance in the air again. Loya met a young man, Nandor Matancsi. When he came to court her, Loya decided she'd cook--she was a good cook. She decided to buy two chicken legs. The legs were gigantic. She fried them in lard; probably used a pound of it, but the chicken legs had excellent results because Nandi proposed soon after. Loya and Nandi never took a honeymoon. After the wedding they just returned to their little rented rooms. His mother worried a lot. The next morning she knocked on the door, "Son...are you all right?" The two of them renovated an apartment. They worked really hard; finally, it was done. The walls were freshly painted and furniture was in place. Loya always loved starched lace curtains, doilies, and shiny silver platters. She loved to cook and bake. Soon came the announcement, a baby was on the way. Nonna was born on the 5th of October 1956. She was the first great-grandchild of Ida Heckinger Sziebert, what joy! She had big brown eyes, and a big smile!

The '56 Revolution And the Years Following It

The ever-unsteady political atmosphere in Eastern Europe dampened the happy times. While the older people struggled to keep alive, the younger generation was unhappy, flexing their muscles against the big Red Star. The news was disturbing, there was unrest in East Germany, the Czechs tried to break their shackles. The East Germans looked across the boarder and realized how much better life was in West Germany. Between the two Germanys, the East erected a barbed wire fence, filled with electric power and devoted border guards with savage dogs. Young men and women trying to escape were shot, and left to die under the barbed wire. In Czechoslovakia poets and authors wrote patriotic articles to arouse the population. The situation was similar in Hungary. Youngsters, college students, gathered and recited the famous Hungarian poet Petofi's words:

*"Rise up Hungarians,
The motherland is calling
The time has arrived
Now, or never!"*

In Budapest, poets and artists met, crowds gathered first in secret, then on the main square. They were singing, chanting "Free Hungary." This behavior was unacceptable. Police units were ordered to disperse the crowds. The revolutionary ideas filled the hearts, minds, the streets and the countryside.

On the main square was a huge statue of Stalin. Crowds gathered around this hated statue. All of a sudden, the crowd attacked it with hammers, sticks, and stones. The crowd yelled, "Get rid of the red devil!" As the crowd pushed and pushed they finally toppled the statue. Imre Bajzak who had taken part in this attack told the story. The army was ordered to put down the revolution, and they came in great numbers. Tanks rolled into and around Budapest, some people went hiding. The flame of revolution inspired the young people, and they stood in front of the tanks. Looking right into the eyes of the soldiers, and begged them "You can't shoot us brother, come with us brother!" Many of the soldiers went over to the side of the revolution. They took their tanks and weapons with them. People gathered in the square carrying lighted candles. With tears streaming down many faces, they sang. There had been no singing in the square for years because of all the pain, but this time they were singing because they had hope. Finally, after a few hours people left and the square quieted down. The wind was blowing dried, autumn leaves around the fallen, desecrated statue.

All this happened on the 26th of October 1956. This night did not go unnoticed, Radio Free Europe, BBC, Voice of America all reported the events. People all over Hungary listened to the latest news. First the communist

government tried to quiet things down, but the fire of freedom and hope had taken over this ravaged country called Hungary.

Many soldiers deserted the Red Army. Mine workers, farmers, factory workers, students all joined in. The tanks still roamed the streets. There were shots fired from both sides, people injured and killed. Still, plans for a new government were made. The secret police members were arrested some killed. Political prisoners were freed, the torture cells exposed to the world. Young Charles Horvath and fellow workers in the main office were organizing. People ripped off the hated red flags. Red, white and green was hoisted. There was hope. There was hope! The victorious Hungarians could not believe the news; the Russian army was leaving Hungary, but the joy was not long lived. Imre Nagy, the Prime Minister, and General Maleter were captured and executed by a communist fraction. The Soviet Army returned, and with them pain, cruelty, darkness and barbarism. The date was the 4th of November 1956; the communists took back schools, factories, mines, bridges and buildings. The radio towers were the last to fall into Red hands. One could hear the announcer beg for help from the West. One could hear the crackle of the machine guns, then silence...

The square in Budapest became a killing field. Tanks ran over protesters, killing them. People were shot on sight. Heavy machinery was brought in; graves dug in the streets, lots of young revolutionaries were buried right under the asphalt. Jails were quickly filled again; trials were quick, punishment brutal. Youngsters as young as 14 - 15 were condemned to die. But due to international laws, the death sentences could not be carried out until their 18th birthday. The day after their birthday, these children were executed.

Fear filled everyone's life and heart. Doctor Sziebert was shocked and fearful. He was afraid to be jailed again, so he packed up his family and fled Hungary as countless others did. The Szieberts fled with only one bag of clothes. They were holding onto the children and carried little Les as they crossed the border.

No one knows why, but Doctor Sziebert never said goodbye to his mother and Katica. Maybe he was afraid of the emotional impact; maybe time was running out for him. Vili Manninger was asked to tell Ida Heckinger Sziebert the news. She and Katica just sat there stunned, saddened, but probably not surprised. The family remembers as she sat there, her osteoporosis-ravaged body, her gray hair pulled back into a bun, her wistful face reminding everyone of the Mona Lisa, her sad eyes gazing far away. Her thoughts and pain were never shared with anyone. Probably she was thinking about her life, her love, children, and tragic losses. The beloved home to which she was not allowed to return. Then at the dusk of her life, more pain, loss of Stephen and his family to political circumstances. Ida never complained. With Doctor Sziebert's departure, Ida and Katica became

penniless; their only monetary supporter had left. Vili Manninger stepped in and mailed checks to the two old ladies. This was the beginning, family and friends started to call him "Good Manninger..." and this attribute never ceased.

After the New Year, there were whispers; the police did not like Charles Horvath's involvement in the revolutionary matters. As the noose became tighter around his neck, he decided in January 1957, to flee Hungary. Mary was young and attached to her family. "I don't want to leave!" she cried. Dia Manninger was a gentle person, with few words, who never interfered. She pulled Mary aside "You married this man for better or worse. Your place is with him."

The young Horvath's packed a small bag. They purchased a round trip ticket to Mohach (this was only a ploy). Once in Mohach they visited Zdenko Schmidt and begged him to show them the road to the border. Zdenko was old, frail and frightened, but he took the young couple to a friend of his who lived on the border. Under the cover of the night, the Horvaths started to walk across the Yugoslav border. The night was so still, so cold. Only the stars were scintillating. Hand in hand they walked, listening to their hearts pounding and the crunch of every step in the frozen snow. It seemed such a long walk, an eternity.

Finally, the Yugoslav border guard approached them and took them to a local police station. There about twenty or twenty-five people were sitting on benches, some cried, some smoked cigarettes, some were restless. Finally the group was taken to Osiek to an old school called "Macka Mamma" (CAT Mother). The newly arrived refugees were piled into a gym where beds were three high. It was the middle of the night but the place was alive; children crying, coughing; adults smoking and complaining. What a terrible sight of humanity. There were hundreds of people in this gym. Finally Mary asked someone "Is Dr. Sziebert here?" "Oh yes, he is the camp doctor". The Horvaths were taken to the Sziebert's residence. There was laughter and a happy reunion. The Horvaths were given a place to sleep; there were two beds where the five Sziebert children and they slept.

While the Doctor was the camp physician, his wife, Nora was the chief chef. There was always some kind of gulyas for dinner (cabbage, potatoes, sometimes meat). After the dinner was dished out and eaten, Nora came to the podium with a large pot and a long handled serving fork. Next to her was a basket full of bread. She dipped the slices in gulyas gravy, and handed it one by one to the refugees. Getting and eating these greasy slices of bread was the highlight of the day. Letters were written, and as a miracle they were delivered. Ida Heckinger Sziebert saved most of the letters. She liked one in particular: "The little Szieberts are so nice. Maria is like a little mother; she can wash, clean the room. Imre gives out the vitamins. Cuki cried when I gave her candy from Grandma. Isti wanted to return home. Laszlo is so cute; he wants

to go to the bathroom only with his father. As soon as his father comes in, he wants to go.”

After a few months the Sziebert family was taken to Austria, due to the help of Prince Montenuovo’s family. From Austria they flew to Los Angeles.

Mary and Charles were transported to a couple of other refugee camps. In the winter there was an old hotel in Fiume. The hotel was on the shore of the Adriatic Sea. They encountered dolphins, ate their first spaghetti, but most important was their meeting with the Bajzaks, who became life-long friends. In the spring, the refugees were taken to an old castle. There were fourteen people in one room, young, old, men and women. People slept on straw-filled mattresses. The first weeks they were so thick but as the weeks and months passed, the straw disintegrated. One felt like they were sleeping on a wooden floor. In the morning the refugees washed up in a room where you could find a long, long sink. People washed thirty to forty at a time. Toilets were holes in the cement floor. No privacy at all! Everything was rationed here, even the toilet paper. People fiercely defended their tissues against poachers. Charles became a mailman in this camp, unpaid, of course. Getting letters was the highlight of the day.

Winter turned into spring, then summer. Mary cut off her jogging pants; first into pedal-pushers, then into shorts. Edith Bajak, or her mother, guarded her woolen hat even during the summer heat. But why? Finally, Edith whispered, “We have dollars hidden in the hat.”

Then there was a day of commotion again, the refugees had to move to a real primitive place, next to the Danube River. The camp was on the top of a hill with a beautiful view; trees and mountains. There was also a row of outhouses, with no back walls. One did not have to wonder long, why the villagers stood around in amazement at the bottom of the hill.

The refugees lived on the top of the hill, but did their laundry in the River Danube. Instant water-- the tub was a big rock, the Danube rinsed the clothes. As Mary was doing laundry one time, a big wave came along and washed away her only bar of soap.

Finally, there were doctors and important people swarming around. They looked into one’s ears and nose. They gave inoculations against nonexistent illnesses. They were asking important questions and finally they stamped new passports. For hours on a bus, finally the group arrived in Belgrade. There an old airplane was waiting for the refugees. The flight was long, it seemed it lasted forever. There were many stop-overs. The most remarkable was in Iceland where fresh pineapple juice was waiting for them. What a treat! People were all excited, talking about their plans, their relatives. Everybody’s uncle was a factory owner. Mary just looked at Charles: “I think our uncle is a tailor.”

Finally the plane landed in New York. It was a clear, autumn night, a

million lights lit up the darkness on the ground and all the stars in the sky. The day was 20th of September 1957.

Magdalena Schmidt and her friend, George, picked up the young couple. At home George mixed a pitcher full of manhattans. There were plump cherries in each glass. The drink was so smooth; it hit the spot. "Have another!" George encouraged them. Well, that night the young arrivals almost had to climb upstairs on all fours.

America, the Promised Land

Life was very different in the U.S.A., even though Mary was able to mutter a few words, she couldn't put a sentence together. Out came a dictionary, still no results. On the very first Sunday Mary locked herself in the bathroom. The lock was broken, so George had to climb up the porch, through the window and rescue her. Julius Schimdt took them on a ride and offered them "hot dogs". "Oh no!" they protested. In front of their eyes they imagined a dancing "warm canine." Customs were also quite different here. In Europe a lady never addressed a man. For a while their neighbor, Guy Pagliaroli, felt Mary was unfriendly.

Charles and Mary got jobs - insignificant, but they were jobs. There was enough to live on - even to send some coffee and tea back home to Hungary. Mary had a rotating shift, while on the late shift she had to pass a factory with floodlights. Her heart would sink as she passed the building because it reminded her of the AVO floodlight in Pecs, which was just as bright.

Mari Schmidt enrolled them into night school. It was really hard. One had to be really brave to speak up. All of the students were immigrants, so most of them were speechless.

While Mary and Charles had a tough beginning, Doctor Sziebert and his family had an even harder beginning. On the trip across Europe and the Ocean they made many stops at different airports. Some of the children became ill, Dr. Sziebert was searching for a bathroom (it is called a water closet in Hungary). He always ended up in the porter closet. Upon arrival to the US they settled in Los Angeles. Nora got a job sewing, and then later on as a bookkeeper. Maria, the oldest daughter, ran the household and her siblings, just like Mali Sziebert so many years ago.

Dr. Sziebert had to study for the English language test, after passing it he began a medical residency. What a change from their earlier life. Money was non-existent, working hours were hard and long. Then Nora became ill with thrombosis.

Gizella Manninger, an aunt of Vili Manninger, became their friend and benefactor. At times even the simplest things became difficult. Doctor Sziebert was on night duty in the hospital when one of the nurses called him because a patient needed attention. The nurse mumbled the floor number so Dr. Sziebert ran to each floor: "Hi, is everything all right?" Finally, he found the floor where the nurse needed him.

The struggle for survival went on for years in this new, strange land. They never talked about the hard times, but they yearned for the old family home, the precious heirlooms left behind, the memories; but most of all they missed their family.

Finally, after years of studies at night and working days, Dr. Sziebert became a full-fledged American doctor. He began to work with a group of physicians. A couple of years later he moved his family to San Jose, California. The children were growing up, all in school. He worked very hard; his patients loved his kindness, respected his knowledge. He established not only a great medical practice; but also his rose garden, begonias and orchids were famous. Nora enjoyed her home and continued her favorite pastimes, sewing, knitting, painting and cooking.

While the family in the USA tried to make a better life for themselves, the family in Hungary had a really hard time. Loya Schmidt Matancsi's little daughter, Nonna, became very ill. Neither tears nor prayers helped, she had contacted polio. This little round-faced angel was kept in isolation in the local hospital, while her mother looked on helplessly. As tears rolled down Nonna's face, Loya cried in the hallway. Finally when the fever left her little body, the polio had left her left leg shorter. Although kids were rotten and imitated her, she never gave up. Nonna was an inspiration for all. Her strength, her will power and her spirit was remarkable. She visited often in Janos Utca, where her great-grandmother, Ida and Aunt Katica pampered her.

As Ida was getting older, she became a bit unsteady. One day she tripped over a scatter rug and broke her hip. This fragile little lady ended up in a long leg cast (fashionable treatment at that time). Dia Manninger rushed to Pecs to spend time with her mother. Teri and Dia tried to keep Ida's spirits up, visiting her daily, feeding her, reading the mail, especially the letters from her son, Stephen, and granddaughter Mary Horvath. Telling her all kinds of insignificant news about friends and family. Finally Ida Heckinger Sziebert developed pneumonia; her body was hot with fever. Her lips dry, her face flushed. Her breathing was labored and difficult. Teri tried to hum a happy tune: Grandma's favorite was "The Return of the Jolly Farmer" or the song about the "Bunnies." Dia was stroking her forehead gently, and prayers were being said. Finally, Ida Heckinger Sziebert's tired heart stopped on November 19, 1959.

Even after Ida's death, the Manningers helped Katica with monthly checks. The Manningers were very frugal, no luxuries allowed. Vili was a famous fixer-upper (for broken lamps, porcelain and everything else which needed repair.) Dia loved birthday celebrations. She was baking cookies for weeks. She brought out hidden bottles of drinks from her pantry (like green walnut liqueur.) Everybody was welcome. People young and old enjoyed the visits to Gomb Utca.

Life was going on; family members were married. Children were born (Vili Matancsi, Bea and Sandra Biro, later on Szilvi and Gabor Gyimothy.) Some marriages survived, some broke up. Katica turned her attention to Teri Sziebert Schmidt. The hotel work was hard. When Teri returned home, Katica

always had a special dinner for her, with a good strong cup of coffee. One spring day, while preparing the meal, a telegram arrived. "A telegram from America", the messenger said. Katica put on her glasses and gingerly opened up the sealed message. "What could it be?" she muttered. "I hope no more bad news." After carefully reading the contents she smile broadly, "Oh no! Oh no!" Then she placed the telegram on the table next to Teri's plate. She fixed a nice meal, even served a glass of wine. Katica urged her niece to open the telegram. Teri said, "I am afraid of bad news." Katica smiled, "It can be good news also!" Finally Teri read the telegram aloud: "We had a little boy. Mother and son are doing well - Charles." The day was 26th of April 1960. There was disbelief, laughter. No one in Hungary was aware that Mary and Charles Horvath were expecting a baby. He was named Charles John. He inherited the Sziebert's blue eyes and golden hair. He was a sweet little boy, who grew up on his mother's shoulders (she carried him all the time). He loved to be outdoors, loved books, pots and pans. He adored his father; walked outside with him and imitated him, using his plastic shaving kit and shaved with dad every morning. On the third of June 1961, Elizabeth Horvath was born. She was promptly nicknamed Betsy. She had the cutest smile and she looked like a Horvath. Of course, she and her father formed a pact. She always claimed her father was her favorite parent.

Mary took the children back to Hungary while there were very young. It was a good visit. Katica got to know the newest members of her family. By 1967 Katica was not feeling well. One day she cleaned up her little room, arranged her closet, put all her papers in order. She even got a haircut. A few days later, in the early morning hours, she told Idu Schimdt that she wasn't feeling well, and she died in her arms on the 11th of February 1967.

With lots of the original players gone, Teri Sziebert Schmidt was sixty years old. She went to visit the "American" family. The first trip was tiresome as buses took the passengers from Budapest to Germany. In Frankfurt they all boarded a plane and headed to America. All the passengers were given five dollars as spending money. Teri folded the bill carefully and hid it in her pocketbook. As the flight attendant passed by with the beverage cart, she ordered a few drinks, then finally when she was given a bill, she said in Hungarian, German and French: "I have no money." The flight attendant just waved her hand, I am sure this was not the first incident of unpaid liquor bills.

Tired, but happy, she arrived in New York. Chuck and Betsy were anxious to meet their grandmother. Both of them hid under the bed covers, just peeking out. Teri had a small, black dictionary and was flipping the pages trying to communicate with the children. They promptly, and lovingly renamed her "Poo". Poor Poo, her little beat up suitcase was filled with gifts, borrowed clothes, and nightgowns. All her relatives outfitted her with proper attire for "America." She literally overdosed on coffee and ice cream. "You have ice

cream in the middle of winter!" She loved TV, especially the soaps. "I learned a new word," she said, "Pregnant." There were trips to New York, to the Circle Line, Opera, Statue of Liberty and more. There were walking trips to the Bronxville ice-cream parlor with the grandchildren. Her most favorite book: "Gone with the Wind", the movie version was playing in the local movie theater. She practically knew the text by heart. So when Mary took her to see the movie, her lack of English did not prevent her from enjoying the story.

Poo had dentures; they were soaking in a cup. Chuck was curious. He became fascinated with them. He tried to stuff them into his mouth just like Grandma, but of course the dentures did not fit.

Poo wanted to bake cookies, but the ungrateful grandchildren asked for "Oreo" cookies. There were trips to Florida, to California. She loved her sister-in-law Nora, and brother Stephen. Going to Nora was always a really good vacation, filled with side trips, lunches in San Francisco, visiting with the Coyle children, or just curling up on the couch, with a glass of cranberry juice and rum (cranberry to clear the kidney, the rum, who knows?) The two sister-in-laws talked for hours.

Teri was anxious to get home after the visits were over. There were presents for all. Packing everything was tricky. At one time Teri traveled with Clara Berecz (Nora's mother). They were both elderly enough; at the airport Mary placed them in wheelchairs. Both ladies had the allowed two suitcases, two hand luggage bags, but they also had in their laps; a winter pocket book, a summer pocketbook, a gym bag with a gallon of rum and also a pint size bottle of the same good stuff, for the road.

The plane took them to Vienna. They had to stop there for an overnight stay. As the story goes the two good ladies were afraid they would not have enough money for dinner so they kept tasting the rum in the hotel room until they felt no more pain. Arriving home, there were stories or letters, people wanted to listen to them over and over again. There were stories about the Horvaths and there were stories about the Szieberts -- Stephen's beautiful roses and orchids; Nora's talent in sewing and painting and the younger Szieberts. Maria, who married Roger Coyle, had three little girls and a son, Terry. She was a great housewife and a good cook. She baked for her father the famous Hungarian poppyseed crescents. Teri Sziebert Schmidt remarked how Maria reminded her of her own mother. Just like Ida, Maria loved to go to the market and she had her favorite fruit or pepper farmer. Her family was her life. She took her children on a Hungarian holiday, also.

Majo, as she was nicknamed, became ill, and died young of pancreatic cancer. Imre Sziebert and wife Joyce moved to San Jose. He loves photography and family history. Their sons are Carl and Paul. Elizabeth, or as she was called "Cuki" moved to Bremerton. She loves all her nephews and nieces. After her parents retired, she was their greatest help. Steve married

Marcia and they live in Yakima with their seven children. Les, the youngest, became a doctor. He specialized in psychiatric medicine.

Teri Sziebert Schmidt also kept up with the family happenings in Hungary. She wrote letters so vivid and interesting that one did not have to travel to Hungary, just reading her stories made one feel right in with the family.

Loya became a director of a huge childcare center in Pecs. She lived for the center and the kids. Her daughter, Nonna, married Steven Kalmusz. They both loved to travel. Loya's son and wife Agi live in Pecs. Their daughters Vivien and Kathy are students. Sari and her life partner, Laci Fulop love to cook and garden. Sari is very artistic and an excellent seamstress. She is a great help to all in the family. Her daughter Bea married Sanyi Lajtos and they have two children, Alex and Elena. Daughter, Sandra and her husband, Attila, have two children, Balas and Blanka.

Idu Schmidt became an electronic engineer. She married Kalman Gyimothy. Their daughter Szilvia lives in Denmark with her husband Anders. Their son, Gabor, is a handsome devil with brown, curly, hair. Life is always good to him. Idu jokingly said: "When he was born, he fell right into the Blessed Mother's apron."

Finally Mary, the oldest Schmidt girl worked all kinds of jobs since her arrival in the US. While her children were young, she babysat, cleaned houses, washed and ironed shirts, catered parties. Slowly, while her children were growing she began to feel more confident with her English. Finally she fulfilled her dream and started nursing school. The dream was always there, but it strengthened during a Sunday sermon. The priest was preaching about dreams; there was a boy whose dream was to catch a shiny but elusive golden ball in the desert. As he was running after the ball, he was not sure if it was real, or a vision. Finally, the ball was caught and the boy held it near to his heart. This sermon helped Mary through the hard years to come, as she was trying to catch her own golden ball. "Why did God make so many bones?" she would wonder while memorizing them all. At last Mary was clutching her "golden ball" as she became a nurse. Her husband and children were a great support in this project.

Her son, Chuck, finished at Villanova and Pace University. While working in an investment company, he spoke with a fellow investor, Ann Guy. The conversation went from money to other subjects. They fell in love and married December 1, 1990. One would say, "Ma Bell knows best." On the 7th of June 1996, their little girl, Rebecca Claire, was born, to the delight of all.

Elizabeth, or Betsy, Horvath graduated from Pace University where she had received a full scholarship. She moved to Frederick, Maryland. She is a real history buff and also writes newspaper articles. She is very artistic and opened a gift shop. Betsy is a real animal friend and people lover.

Post Script

In the next few years four of the family members succumbed to the fatal Sziebert Disease, a.k.a. heart attack.

Doctor Sziebert was taking out the trash one morning and fell dead in the back yard. A man with high ideas, straight as an arrow; a great father, devout husband, excellent doctor, was gone (December 11, 1989).

Teri Schmidt came to America to celebrate her favorite grandson's, Chuck Horvath's, wedding. So proudly she marched to the sound of the trumpets. How she enjoyed the celebrations. After the wedding she flew to Yakima to spend some time with her beloved sister-in-law, Nora. On that morning she was not feeling well. After a doctor's appointment she collapsed and died on January 13, 1991. She left this earth, the life that was most cruel to her. Teri was always thought to be frail, gentle, and almost weak. She left a legacy to all: One can be as strong as a diamond, even with the mentioned characteristics. One can sparkle, even if soft spoken. One can turn around life, even if weak. She showed all of the family: Love is a verb, not a pronoun. Her love triumphed over all!

Loya Schmidt also suffered a heart attack at the end, November 9, 1992. As a youngster in her dreams she wanted to be an atomic physicist. Of course, in the 1950s she was unable to attend college, due to her family's past. Although when asked, "Who was her father?" She answered, "I am an orphan." "How about your grandfather?" Loya answered, "He was a cavalry man!" Still she couldn't attend college. After her children's birth she completed an educational school and got a job as a nursery school teacher. Her love of children, her knowledge of how to reach children, her energy, her business ability landed her a job first as a teacher, then as a director and later on the director of all nursery schools in Pecs.

Generations of children grew up under her leadership. Knowing Loyci meant knowing the world! She was funny, loving, and loyal. She was a real character. Her untimely death left a void in her family's heart.

Gitta Lieber Kardos also succumbed to a heart attack on the 28th of February 1997. Although she was 87 years old, she was full of life until the end. She loved her family and was very interested in their history. I want to say a special "Thank you, Gitta!" She aroused in all of us an interest in our family's past and shared stories with all of us.

The family had to say goodbye to Charles Horvath, February 17, 1992. People best remember him as a gentle man, never raising his voice. A man who worked hard. He loved to swim, collected Hummels, and read. He smoked his favorite cigarettes. Rarely complained about his wife's cooking. He was a man of a few words. He loved his family, visiting Maryland often. At the end he said he would never change anything in his life.

With all the happenings in this large family, it was a common remark that “If Grandpa would hear this, he would turn over in his grave.” Nora Sziebert always remarked “Let him, it must be boring down there.”

Although there were family feuds, there were much more good memories, unforgettable events, tears, pain, love, joy and happy times. All this creates a family and love...

That is why when a young Tancho Sziebert Schmidt (the wife of pharmacist, Zdenko) visited Venice, she cried bitterly on a bench. When someone stopped and asked her why she was crying, she answered that she was homesick.

That is why Dr. Sziebert, in California, surrounded himself with mementos from Boly.

That is why Teresa Lieber sent her beloved hand- carved cross to America, to lessen Dr. Sziebert’s pain.

That is why Maria Sziebert Coyle took her four children “home” to Hungary.

And why Les Sziebert and his sister, Liz took the slow, noisy, rickety train to Kaposzecsó, to recapture childhood and family memories.

That is why Chuck Horvath goes back every chance he gets. Why he learned not only how to speak Hungarian, but also to read and write it. And why he feels really “At home” with his family in Hungary.

That is why Betsy Horvath surrounds herself with old family treasures, and claims, there is no Christmas without poppyseed cake.

That is why Szilvia Gyimothy loves Katica’s teacups with the little blue flowers. And that is why she would suffer the long train journey from Denmark to be “Home again.”

That is why Mary had to write down all the memories; crying through the sad times, laughing at the funny ones.

And finally, that is why we ask you all to read and cherish the life and adventures of our forefathers, and mothers. If someone questions a trait, or some of our family traditions, weaknesses, strengths, maybe you’ll find an answer to it. You may find the chips of a mosaic or the thread of our fabric. One may analyze us, or just take us as we are: Human. There were lots of pain, tears, losses and dark hours, but we pride ourselves in being able to overcome sadness, and triumph over tragedies and those dark hours. We can see the sun shining through it all. Belonging to our family is not only a challenge but also an honor.

According to Gitta Lieber Kardos “The world should be thankful because God created the Szieberts.” The later generation is more modest, still we can’t argue over such a wise woman’s statement. As you can see almost all of the original characters have left us. But just look, there is a rainbow; there is always one after a storm...

There is a new generation coming up: most of them with distinguished blue eyes, and golden hair. There is always new hope, new life and new characters, such as the little Szieberts in Yakima, the Matancsi girls, Balazs and Blanka Turbeki, Alex and Elena Lajtos; and of course, Rebecca Claire Horvath. You are the new generation -- be proud of your history.

As we are closing this book, just sit back for a few moments and reminisce about all the yesterdays, as yesterday is history. We may wonder about tomorrow, as tomorrow has always been a mystery. But today is the present, and oh yes, today is a present. Let's value, enjoy and appreciate each and every day. Let's keep the love of family and each other alive in our hearts.

*Family and Friends
From Past and Present*



Karoly Sziebert



Maria Sziebert and Karoly Schmidt (Tancho and Zdenko)



Istvan Heckinger



Ida Heckinger



Steffi Sziebert



Katalin Trischler Sziebert



Karoly Sziebert



Ida Heckinger and Karoly Sziebert Wedding



Terus, Stephen, Lonci, Imre and Mali Sziebert



*Back row (l-r) Pisti, Vilmos Schmidt Sr., Franci Schmidt, Karoly Sziebert, Zdenko Schmidt, Mali, Vili Schmidt, Terus, Imre
Front row (l-r) Katica Sziebert, Anna Schmidt, Anna Stajevich Schmidt, Laci (in front), Ida Heckinger Sziebert, Tancho Sziebert Schmidt, Dia*



Dr. Imre Sziebert MD and Dr. Stephen Sziebert MD



Dr. Laszlo Sziebert PhD



Maria (Mali) Sziebert and Vilmos Schmidt Wedding



Mali Schmidt with her daughters, her parents Ida and Karoly Sziebert, her sister Dia.



Stephen Sziebert and Nora Berecz Wedding



Ida (Dia) Sziebert and Vilmos Manninger Wedding



Vali Heckinger Dillman, Ida Heckinger Sziebert, Terchi Heckinger Tarlos, Marta Heckinger Tallian



Karoly Sziebert I



Elisabeth, Stevie, Majo, and Les Sziebert, Irene Fenci, Imre Sziebert, Juci Fenci

The Family Tree

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