

"The New World is An Other World": Hungarian Transatlantic Emigrants' Handbooks and Guidebooks, 1903-1939¹

István Kornél Vida

Abstract: The process of migration includes the movement between relatively distant geographical locations as well as often facing considerable cultural differences between the sending and receiving countries. At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century, millions of emigrants from East Central Europe and Southern Europe sought their personal dreams in America, but had painfully little information at their disposal about the country, and were consequently in for a considerable "culture shock." This paper examines the possible sources of information for soon-to-become transatlantic migrants from Europe in general, and from Hungary in particular. It analyzes the various types of "booster literature," along with the people who had an interest in its publication, and offers a case study of handbooks and guidebooks written specifically for Hungarian emigrants to America during the first two decades of the twentieth century.

Keywords: *migration history, Hungarian emigration to the United States, information literature*

Biography: István Kornél Vida is an assistant professor at the North American Department, Institute of English and American Studies, University of Debrecen, Hungary. He earned his Ph.D. in History in 2008 at the University of Debrecen. His research interests include nineteenth-century history of the United States, with particular focus on the Civil War era and migration history, as well as Hungarian-American history. He has published two monographs on the Hungarian Forty-Eighters' involvement in the American Civil War, including *Hungarian Émigrés in the American Civil War: A History and Biographical Dictionary* (2011). He is co-founder (2012) and Secretary of the Center for International Migration Studies in Debrecen. He is currently working on a new monograph on the historical memory of the *Great Transatlantic Emigration from Hungary*.

The word "travel" most likely originates from the Old French word *travail* which has an ancient root: a Roman instrument of torture called the *tripalium*. This clearly referred to the extreme difficulties a traveler was to face in ancient times, and even today the process of travel does include many hardships, inconveniences, and sometimes even risks. This is particularly true

¹ This research was realized in the frames of TÁMOP 4.2.4. A/2-11-1-2012-0001 "National Excellence Program – Elaborating and operating an inland student and researcher personal support system" The project was subsidized by the European Union and co-financed by the European Social Fund. An early version of this paper was presented at the international conference Central Europe and the English-Speaking World (Debrecen, Hungary) in July 2013.



New articles in this journal are licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.



This journal is published by the University Library System of the University of Pittsburgh as part of its D-Scribe Digital Publishing Program and is cosponsored by the University of Pittsburgh Press

to one of the perhaps most special types of travel: migration. It includes all the factors of a simple voyage—the movement between relatively distant geographical locations, the often considerable cultural differences between the sending and receiving countries, not to mention the linguistic differences, and the element of unknown—but generally lacks its characteristics of including relatively short stays and occasionally means a one-way journey only. (The farther we go back in time, this was more likely to be the case, due to, for instance, the very high costs of the transatlantic sea fare.)

It is a commonplace statement that the United States is a nation of immigrants, and that the country has historically served as one of the top destinations for masses of people desperate for a new start. One of the massive influxes of immigrants in the country's history could be observed at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century. As part of the so-called New Immigration, 25.8 million people landed on the coasts of the United States between 1880 and 1924 (Daniels 2002, 122, 124). This was by no means the first major wave of immigrants, but it had very distinct characteristics. Between 1900 and 1920, 44 percent of those arriving were born in Southeastern Europe, a twofold rise as compared to the antebellum era, which clearly shows how "Old Immigrants" of the previous decades coming primarily from Northwestern Europe gave way to people originating in Southern and East Central Europe.

The first years of the twentieth century saw Hungarian emigration to the United States reaching its zenith, too. Hungarian transatlantic migrants left their homeland behind in order to achieve their own personal American Dreams. The overwhelming majority of them were smallholders or landless agricultural laborers who had no intention to settle in America: they wanted to save enough money to be able to return to their home country and purchase a house and a small portion of land, or simply pay back their debts. Therefore, in a sense, they were planning to achieve their Hungarian Dream, but in America. Many of the newly-arrived could be considered transatlantic guest workers whose length of stay depended heavily on the personal goals they sought to reach, the job opportunities that were open to them, as well as the general economic conditions.

Due to the large distance and the cultural differences between East Central Europe and the United States, it could be taken for granted that the newcomers would have to cope with the considerable "culture shock" inherent in the process of migration. Although today these tendencies are significantly alleviated by advanced communication and the abundance of information available on the Internet, a century ago those deciding to leave their villages behind and try their luck overseas had painfully little information about the United States at their disposal.

What follows is a brief introduction to the possible sources of information available to soon-to-become transatlantic migrants from Europe, as well as an analysis of various types of "booster literature," with an added focus on those who had interest in their publication. This is to be followed by a case study of handbooks and guidebooks written specifically for Hungarian emigrants to America during the first two decades of the twentieth century.

"Booster Literature": Immigration Promotion in the United States and Europe

Besides such biased and somewhat controversial sources as emigrants' personal letters to their family members, there were several other sources offering information about the United States, in general, and the country's smaller regions, in particular, which specifically targeted people contemplating emigration. These works were tailored specifically to their needs: immigrant (or from the sending countries' point of view, emigrant) handbooks and guidebooks,

information brochures, language books and trainers (see Glant 2012, 629-641; and Venkovits 2010, 104-112, for Hungarian travel writing on the United States). What these books and brochures had in common was that they intended to provide immigrants with more organized information than what they could acquire mostly by mere chance. As publishing such works was quite costly, most of the time they promoted certain ideas of America abroad with the hope of luring immigrants, thus securing revenue for certain groups standing behind their publication, which had well identifiable financial interest in attracting settlers.

Among them the government of the United States had become particularly active in immigration promotion as early as the Civil War. In order to alleviate the labor shortage caused by the wartime industrial production and the large number of enlisted males, Secretary of State William Henry Seward instructed the consular and diplomatic officers to promote emigration to the United States and "to make ... truths [about employment opportunities] known in any quarter and in any way which may lead to the migration of such persons to the United States" (Seward 1861, 172). Following the Civil War, the role the government took in boosting immigration became more restricted: it was practically limited to providing occasional information which might interest prospective foreign emigrants. Just to mention one such work, Edward Young's *Special Report on Immigration: Accompanying Information for Immigrants Relative to the Prices and Rentals of Land* (1872) informed the readers about such things as available lands, labor opportunities, and the geographical characteristics of the country and its regions (Young 1872).

The second half of the 1870s, however, put an end to active governmental participation in immigration boosting activities. The primary reason for this was that the beginning of mass immigration from East Central Europe and Southern Europe raised many concerns regarding immigration restriction and the upcoming decades saw the government slowly but surely closing the gates of America in front of the unwanted newly-arrived. The earlier-applied immigration promotion activities were no longer found acceptable.

Besides the federal government, individual states often jumped on the bandwagon of immigration promotion. Such activities usually started as early as the 1840s (in 1845 in Michigan, and in 1852 in Wisconsin) and, although with less and less intensity, remained on the agenda until the First World War. The Midwestern and the Southern states (Hansen 1921, 159-195; Appel and Blegen 1923, 167-203; Loewenberg 1934, 363-85) were the most actively involved, but some of the Eastern states also encouraged immigration. Maine, for example, was trying to attract Swedish immigrants (Sprague 1920, 39-41). Usually the states involved set up a special Board of Immigration and/or created an office of the Commissioner of Immigration which supervised all promotion activities. These usually included the compilation and publication of booster literature: books, pamphlets, articles, and advertisements, many of which appeared in foreign countries' newspapers, translated to the native tongue of prospective immigrants. Furthermore, states often hired immigration agents and sent them to countries from which most immigrants were expected. They were responsible for the favorable publicity in the local press of emigration in general, and that of their state in particular, and it was them who responded to letters requesting information or assistance. Other agents were employed by states at major ports of entry in the United States where they "hunted for" the recently-arrived who were still hesitant about where to settle.

Also participating in promoting migration to the United States and any of its regions or states were commercial and industrial groups, typically railroad and land companies, which were the natural allies of the states on the territories of which their activities were concentrated. These

companies were also interested in attracting settlers to the United States and to their estates in particular, as their principal objective was populating and selling their own lands. The railroad companies' immigration promotion activities peaked in the two decades prior to the Civil War: among the first ones were the Illinois Central in 1854, soon followed by the Santa Fe, Burlington, and the Northern Pacific (see, Gates 1934; Overton 1941; Hedges 1926). The methods applied by these companies were very similar to those of the states: they published pamphlets and brochures in English as well as in foreign languages (typically German, Swedish and Polish) with information about the geographical location of the lands owned and offered for sale by the company, the climate, statistics on crop yield, as well as the available credit terms for prospective settlers (Overton 1941, 158-161). This information material was then distributed in the East Coast ports of entry as well as in Europe through their own agents and sometimes through those of the states (Peterson 1932, 25-44). Railroad companies were followed by land grant companies, which also tried to attract agricultural settlers to their lands.

Immigration promotion activities, however, reflected major changes following the Civil War. With the rise of industrial revolution, there was a tangible shift from agricultural to industrial immigration and the importation of an industrial labor force became top priority in immigration promotion. Along with this, East Central Europe and Southern Europe became the primary target of the companies' hunt for labor power (Erickson 1957).

It was not only the receiving countries and states as well as the companies requiring a foreign labor force that played an active role in the promotion of migration. The transportation of the hundreds of thousands of emigrants seeking the American Dream was a multi-million-dollar business of which, of course, all steamship companies offering transatlantic services wanted their share. They were not directly involved in promotion in Europe, but usually employed the services of agencies. These made their living on the commissions they received from selling steamship tickets to prospective emigrants, so it was in their best interest to talk as many of them as possible into leaving their homeland behind. No wonder that they used every available method in their promotional activities. Many contemporaries interested in the question claimed that Europe was literally flooded with emigration propaganda. The agents distributed material which presented the United States in the most favorable light: brochures targeting the agricultural population, for example, included manipulated pictures depicting giant vegetables grown in America (see Dániel-Orosz 1988, 34-36 for such photographs). Contemporary accounts mentioned agents distributing cards with verses praising America at Italian church doors (Curti and Birr 1950, 210). Some of the agencies offered their services "in package," not only selling steamship tickets, but also organizing the trip to the ports, and even providing escort and guidance for the emigrants throughout the voyage (Pálvölgyi 2010, 28).

Emigration Promotion in Hungary

All the private companies that took part one way or another in immigration promotion, either directly or through their agents, had one thing in mind when promoting immigration: realizing the highest profit possible. It is no wonder that, in the countries hit most hard by emigration, these agencies soon found themselves in the crossfire of attacks: their activities were held responsible for the fact that masses of people were leaving their homelands. In no region was this more apparent than in East Central Europe and Southern Europe where it would have been especially painful for the governments to face the underlying causes of emigration in their full complexity, not to mention initiating the necessary radical social and economic changes. Instead, they worked out legislation restricting the activities of emigration agents. The Hungarian

government, for instance, forbade the activities of emigration agents, but, interestingly enough, did not even attempt to control or limit emigration itself, arguing that "according to the ideas of the present age, it is impossible to prohibit emigration, for we know that the right to emigrate is guaranteed in the constitution of certain states [...]" [A kivándorlást egyáltalán betiltani a mai kor fogalmai szerint nem lehet, hiszen tudjuk, hogy a kivándorlási jog egyes államok alkotmányában biztosított jogot képez](Puskás 1982, 132). Nevertheless, the bill passed in 1881 (Article XXXVIII) declared it an offence to promote emigration unless the agent possessed the permission of the Secretary of the Interior, punishable with a 300-forint fine or two-month imprisonment. For such permission, however, only Hungarian citizens could apply and Hungarian emigration agents were forbidden to co-operate with any foreign agency or shipping company, or even contact them.

The bill not only reflected the government's aim to monitor and possibly control the outflow of emigrants, it also intended to provide protection for those leaving Hungary for the United States. Besides protecting them from frauds trying to trick them out of their money, the authorities wanted to provide emigrants with reliable information. During the peak years of transatlantic emigration from Hungary (starting around the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century and lasting to more or less the outbreak of the First World War), the government sponsored the publication of emigrant handbooks and guidebooks written in Hungarian specifically for Hungarian emigrants. These seemingly served the best interest of those contemplating emigration to the United States; however, the government had other reasons to pay careful attention to the fate of those leaving the country.

Prime Minister Kálmán Széll indicated his true intentions with signing the Cunard contract:

My main purpose in regulating emigration was to channel the migratory process, which today is flowing toward German harbors, into our harbor, Fiume... I declare that indeed I always did plan that the emigrants who until now have enriched the German seaports were no longer to do so but were to go instead to Fiume and to travel from our own harbor, on our own means of transportation, so that all that was jeopardized or had been lost to us economically and even nationally, should now benefit our harbor [A koncepciónál, amely engem a kivándorlási ügy rendezésénél vezetett, az volt az alap, hogy a kivándorlási folyamat, amely ma Németország kikötői felé halad, a mi kikötőnk, Fiume felé tereltessek... Kijelentem, hogy igenis, mindig úgy kontempláltam a dolgot, hogy azok a kivándorlók, akik eddig a német kikötőket gazdagították, ne oda menjenek, hanem a Fiumében, a magunk kikötőjében berendezendő szállítási eszközökkel keressék a kivándorlás útjait, hogy minden, ami e téren gazdaságilag, sőt nemzeti tekintetben veszélyeztetve volt és veszendőbe ment a magunk számára, a mi kikötőnk számára megmaradjon](Puskás 1982, 135).

Indeed, when the Hungarian government signed the highly controversial contract with the British Cunard Shipping Company, in its original version it had agreed to guarantee the company 30,000 adult, third-class passengers annually. However, it soon found itself in the crossfire of criticism from inside Hungary for serving as an emigration agent, as well as from abroad where it was accused of artificially restricting competition (Hanuska-Parádi 2005, 179). Despite the government's alleged goals, the immigrants themselves did not find the newly-adopted rules beneficial at all: the Atlantic crossing with the departure from Fiume was not only considerably

longer than from elsewhere (the trip often took 19-23 days, whereas from Hamburg, for example, crossing the Atlantic took only 14-17 days, depending on the ship) but more expensive as well (see Egan 1903, 548-557). In accordance with the goals PM Széll had advocated, the Hungarian authorities tried to channel Hungarian emigrants to Fiume with various tools, from administrative methods (issuing passports only for those bound for Fiume) through requiring them to purchase the tickets from their agencies, to even confiscating pre-paid tickets sent by the prospective emigrants' relatives in America.

It was not easy at all for anyone considering migrating to America to see clearly in this situation. The typical emigrant had barely any knowledge about the United States (or any other European country as a matter of fact), did not speak foreign languages, and most of them had never been farther than the city in the vicinity of their village. They desperately needed reliable information about America and the opportunities available overseas, but these were hard to come by. Among the rather limited range of such sources, perhaps the most influential ones were the so-called "Amerikás levelek" (America letters), which were sent back home to Hungary by friends and relatives already living and working in the United States. These letters were deemed trustworthy, as they had been written by people who they knew and trusted, and they contained exactly those useful bits and pieces of information they wished to acquire: the availability of jobs, the salaries, the descriptions of the geographical regions the senders were familiar with, and quite often even banknotes, as a contribution to the soon-to-be emigrants' shipfare. However, due to the fact that the Hungarian diaspora in the United States was rather dispersed, they were very limited in their scope. They most often summarized the experience of the sender's immediate acquaintances only, and reflected pull-factors which seemed most likely to be relevant to the readers. They were, therefore, of less help for the wider public, as they were highly subjective and sometimes contained exaggerations, since the writers' aim was either to show their family members how successful they were or to lure them to follow their example and emigrate. Consequently, despite the significant role they played in providing information for prospective emigrants, the America letters were limited in terms of their scope as well as in terms of the readership they could address (see Szili 2001 for a collection of "America letters").

Besides talking to emigrants who had been living and working in the United States for some time, those seriously considering leaving for America had rather limited options with respect to the sources they could collect information from. The first phase of the "Great Emigration" brought hardly any publications which aimed at providing aid and guidance for prospective emigrants or the newly-arrived in the United States. The typical works in this period were dictionaries and language handbooks which were to help emigrants master the English language on the necessary level. Such sources included Ferenc Bizonfy's classic 2-volume *English-Hungarian Dictionary* from 1886 (its second edition came out in 1902), and Béla Gunya's *Angol nyelv* [The English Language] published in 1888 (this also saw several editions: the last one, published in 1917, came out at a time when new immigrants, especially enemy aliens, had become targets of nativist sentiment for their unwillingness to learn English and assimilate) (Bizonfy 1886 and Gunya 1888). The emigration process posed other obstacles as well, so it is no wonder that in the first two decades of the twentieth century several emigrant handbooks were published in Hungary as well as in the United States offering practical advice. These were published by various participants in the migration process (such as the Hungarian government, shipping companies, and individuals), which had different motivations that are well-reflected in the differing focus of these works. What follows is a brief analysis of the major emigrant handbooks and guidebooks published during the peak years of the Great Emigration.

Hungarian Emigrant Handbooks and Guidebooks

As mentioned above, the Hungarian government got directly involved in transatlantic emigration with two very specific goals in mind: 1) it wanted to prevent mass emigration as much as possible (at least the outflow of ethnic Hungarians as opposed to other ethnic groups leaving the country, which was encouraged) while also providing protection for the emigrants; 2) at the same time, it attempted to channel the bulk of migrants towards Fiume and the ships of the Cunard line. In order to achieve both of these goals, the government sponsored the publication of handbooks for the émigrés. *Tudnivalók Amerikába kivándorlók számára* [Guidebook for Emigrants to the United States], published around 1910, was actually co-sponsored by the Hungarian government and the "Cunard" Hungarian-American Line. It was available only for those who had already made the decision to emigrate and were requesting information, as the government claimed that it would not participate in the promotion of emigration. They were distributed exclusively in the Central Ticket Office of the Adria Hungarian Royal Shipping Company [*Adria Magyar Királyi Tengerhajózási Rt.*] The reader is warned already in the introduction that "everybody should think twice before leaving their homeland, relatives, friends and acquaintances behind." [*Jól gondolja meg mindenki, mielőtt hazáját, rokonait, barátait és ismerőseit elhagyja*] The book also quotes Mihály Vörösmarty's poem "Szózat" [Appeal]: "No other spot in all the world/can touch your heart as home;/let fortune bless or fortune curse,/from hence you shall not roam" [*Áldjon vagy verjen sors keze, itt élned halnod kell!*](*Tudnivalók* 1910, 3). The book also points out that the designated route for emigrants from Hungary, as required by law, is the one via Fiume which is not only shorter, but also, due to the lack of frequent changes and customs controls, considerably less stressful. It emphasizes that this is the only way emigrants could "avoid the impostors and solicitors ... waiting for them in each city's port to trick them out of their money with selected lies" [*Elkerüljék azt a sok csalót és csábítót, akik... a külföldi városok kikötőiben a kivándorlókra leselkednek és őket mindenféle hamissággal kifosztogatják*](*Tudnivalók* 1910, 4). The readers are warned not to make any deal with foreign agents, as the law requires that all tickets, letters and brochures purchased from such persons be confiscated (*Tudnivalók* 1910, 10).

An entire chapter is devoted to immigration rules in the United States. The book lists the infamous trachoma as the number one health problem due to which immigrants are most frequently rejected at Ellis Island and get automatically deported. This is not by chance: according to the U.S. immigration laws it was the shipping company which had to cover the costs of the return trip for all those deported. To avoid this, Cunard, similar to most transatlantic steamship companies, employed doctors to examine emigrants right at the port of departure and turn them back immediately if some serious health risk was revealed. A list of the most frequent reasons for rejection is included: mental diseases, contagious diseases, polygamy, pregnancy, being a contract laborer, traveling with illegitimate children, and being likely to become public charge (*Tudnivalók* 1910, 13-14).

Tudnivalók Amerikába kivándorlók számára gives a detailed description of the conditions that emigrants could expect onboard the ships. According to it, the authorities take care that the passengers are treated well and are provided with excellent board. It even includes a sample menu for a day. Comparing this with contemporary accounts by emigrants full of complaints regarding the food onboard the ship, one can imagine the bitter surprise of everyone who had read this volume before setting off (*Tudnivalók* 1910, 20). The Hungarian sociologist, Sándor Tonelli, who disguised himself as an emigrant photographer in order to be able to study

the conditions in the steerage and summarized in a book what he had experienced onboard the Cunard steamship *Ultonia* (see Vida 2013, 141-156 on Tonelli's voyage), wrote the following about the conditions:

What I found most unpleasant was that between each shift the canteens and plates were not washed up, but the waiters brought the large dixies again and poured the fresh dish with their drainer right on top of the scran left there by the previous group. I have to tell you, these dishes tasted different from the ones that MPs and high-ranking state officials investigating emigration were made to taste [*Ami pedig még kellemetlenebb volt, az egyes turnusok után nem mosták ki a csajkákat meg tányérokat, hanem a pincérek újra hozták a nagfy kondérokát és az első csoport által meghagyott maradékba csapkodták be nagy meritőkanalakkal a friss ételt. Mondhatom, ez az étel egészen másként ízlett, mint az, amelyet a kivándorlást tanulmányozó országgyűlési képviselőkkel és magas állású állami tisztviselőkkel a konyhán megkóstoltattak.*](Tonelli 1929, 64-65).

The author of *Tudnivalók Amerikába kivándorlók számára* warns the emigrants that it is exclusively in the Cunard's offices where they can be sure that they are not tricked out of their money. It is also pointed out that the Hungarian government provides protection for the emigrants all the way to Fiume, during the transatlantic voyage and even in the United States: the Hungarian institutions founded overseas will provide them with the necessary assistance. In case they take a foreign company's ship leaving from a port other than Fiume, "Hungarian authorities will be unable to protect the Hungarian emigrant" [*A magyar hatóságoknak nincs módjukban a magyar kivándorlót védelmezni*](*Tudnivalók* 1910, 22).

Interestingly enough, the book ends with the warning that it can occur that there are more passengers than the maximum capacity of the Cunard steamships leaving every two weeks, therefore, the authorities allow passengers, who have valid passports and Cunard tickets, to leave from other ports. This might be the result of the numerous complaints regarding the level of service onboard the very often overcrowded Cunard ships. Occasionally, the company had no other option but leave passengers in Fiume, as its ships ran at full capacity resulting in the poor emigrants' being unable to finance their stay in the city for two additional weeks and spending all their money. This was particularly problematic, as they were required to present 10 dollars to the immigration authorities when they arrived in the United States and failing to do so resulted in their been rejected and deported as persons likely to become public charge (see Vida 2012, 2:605-620 on U.S. immigration legislation changes).

It was not only the Hungarian government that published guidebooks for prospective emigrants. One of the most prominent publishing houses in Hungary, owned by Károly and Tivadar Légrády, also printed a booklet entitled *A kivándorló zsebkönyve* [The Emigrant's Pocket Guide] which saw several editions during the first decade of the 20th century. The book's author remained anonymous and was referred to only as "An Emigrant"—an obvious attempt to prove and elevate the authenticity of the work. In the introduction to the book, the author sets out as his major goal "protecting the emigrants from bitter disappointment and the unavoidable consequences of perfect ignorance" as well as "presenting them with a handbook to be their companion all the way from home to the New World" [*A keserű csalódástól, a tökéletes tájékozatlanság szükségszerű következményeitől óvja meg a kivándorlót, amely hazuról elkíséri egészen az újvilágba*](*Kivándorló* n.d., 4). He sums up why there is a need for such a book: "In America everything is different from what it is like at home. It would be more proper to call it

‘An Other World’ instead of ‘New World’” [*Amerikában minden, de minden más, mint odahaza. Nem is újvilágnak, hanem más világnak kellene nevezni*](*Kivándorló* n.d., 4).

The booklet offers wide range of practical advice for the emigrant in a chronological order, from how to apply for a passport to how to find employment in America—all stages of the emigration process are covered. The volume had several subsequent editions with only slight modifications and updates and we have every reason to believe that it was indeed popular among emigrants. When the above-mentioned Sándor Tonelli recorded the books and printed material Hungarian steerage passengers were reading onboard the Cunard liner *Ultonia*, he found, besides newspapers and magazines, some novels, slush literature, school-books, Bibles, prayer-books, and several copies of *A kivándorló zsebkönyve*. He noted that one emigrant practically knew the booklet verbatim: “He knew it by heart and was familiar with everything in theory regarding the voyage, the documents, changing money, medical examinations and other checks. In practice, however, he proved to be most helpless” [*Betéve tudta és mindent tudott elméletileg, ami az utra, okmányokra, pénzbeváltásra, orvosi vizsgálatra és egyéb ellenőrzésre vonatkozott. Gyakorlatilag ellenben a legteljesebb gyámoltalanságot árulta el*](Tonelli 1929, 42).

Relying on the first-hand experience he obviously possessed, the “emigrant” author of *A kivándorló zsebkönyve* warns his readers that migrating to the United States is way more than “simply changing one’s place of residence” and it requires “considerable strength of will to overcome the greatest obstacles and live a rather joyless and hard-working life” [*A kivándorlás pedig sokkal többet jelent, mint a lakóhelynek egyszerű megváltoztatását... csak olyan ember szánja rá magát, aki komoly akarattal bír a legnagyobb nehézségek leküzdésére és a meglehetősen örömtelen, de annál munkásabb életre.*] (*Kivándorló* n.d., 7). Furthermore, he makes it clear that it is definitely easier to make a living overseas than in Hungary, yet gives a detailed analysis of the American work ethic. Everyone is forewarned that “in America one must work wholeheartedly, with intense strength and with one’s best knowledge, as work will definitely bear fruit in the New World, but without work and through humbugging making a living is not difficult, but totally impossible” [*Amerikában testtel-lélekkel, megfeszített erővel és legjobb tudással kell dolgozni, mert a munka tagadhatatlanul megtermi a gyümölcsét az újvilágban, de munka nélkül és szélhámoskodással ott megélni annyira bajos, hogy csaknem lehetetlen*] (*Kivándorló* n.d., 11).

Similarly to *Tudnivalók Amerikába kivándorlók számára*, this volume provides the soon-to-be emigrant with detailed information about legislation controlling migration. A separate chapter is devoted to the explanation of the Hungarian Emigration Law of 1903 and it lists those who are NOT allowed to emigrate: a) those indicted or who have not served their prison term; b) those who do not possess enough money to cover the trip and the entrance to the receiving country (in the U.S. 200 Kronas); c) those who are transported by any foreign state free of charge; and d) parents leaving behind their children under 15 without proper care (*Kivándorló* n.d., 16-17).

When discussing the transatlantic voyage, the volume (referring to the government’s Cunard contract) remarks that “to a certain extent the emigration law directs the emigrant anyway” [*A kivándorlási törvény bizonyos tekintetben és mértékben úgyis irányítja már a kivándorlót*]; nevertheless, it lists all the shipping companies offering transatlantic services: Cunard, Norddeutscher Lloyd, Hamburg-Amerika Linien, Campagne General Transatlantique, White Star, Red Star, Holland America Line and the American Linie (*Kivándorló* n.d., 21). In contrast to the previously-mentioned volume, which clearly served the interests of the Hungarian government as well as one particular shipping company, *A kivándorló zsebkönyve* assures the

readers that all of these companies are "reliable and excellent" [*megbízható, elsőrendű*], nevertheless calls their attention to their agents' sometimes fraudulent activities (*Kivándorló* n.d., 21).

Emigrants most likely appreciated the pieces of practical advice on how to prepare for the voyage, what belongings they should take with them, and, for example, what to do in case seasickness brings them down. (Not much, actually, as "it is very unpleasant, but it is not dangerous at all and it lasts only for a day or two") [*kellemetlen ugyan, de egyáltalán nem veszedelmes és rendszeren csak egy-két napig tart*] (*Kivándorló* n.d., 25-26). Of course, most emigrants were interested in what awaited them on the infamous Ellis Island, so it is not surprising that an entire chapter is devoted to its description. The book lists all the causes due to which the recently-arrived could expect rejection, and underlines that the most frequent ones are trachoma, poverty, and being a contract laborer. For the unfortunate ones, the process of deportation is described (*Kivándorló* n.d., 34-37).

The author also points out that the overwhelming majority has nothing to worry about as they gain entrance into the country. For them, the next chapters provide an introduction to American customs and tradition, to everyday life by focusing on the differences between the United States and Europe in general, and Hungary in particular. Among these, the equality before the law (the police easily arrests even the most elegantly dressed gentleman) and the special respect and protection women and children enjoy are mentioned (*Kivándorló* n.d., 43-44).

Similarly to other handbooks, *A kivándorló zsebkönyve* agreed that the hardest nut to crack was to learn the English language, although it was absolutely essential. The volume points out that in New York, for example, somebody can more or less manage with the German language, as there are many Germans in the city. It nevertheless warns that "one of the emigrants' first tasks must be learning English" [*A kivándorlónak első dolgai közé tartozzék az angol nyelv tanulása*] (*Kivándorló* n.d., 49). According to him, the quickest way to acquire some basic English was to attend free language courses at evening schools. He also remarks, however, that "there is an unusually large number of Hungarians who do not even make an attempt to learn the English language" [*Rendkívül nagy azoknak a magyaroknak a száma, akik meg sem kísértik az angol nyelv megtanulását*] (*Kivándorló* n.d., 49). The volume also offers a brief list of useful words and expressions which includes ice cream soda (*Kivándorló* n.d., 51-52; *Angol Nyelvemester* 1908, Róth 1903 and Green 1912; see Tezla 1993, 190-191 and Venkovits-Vida 2013 for studies on English language books for Hungarian emigrants).

A kivándorló zsebkönyve introduces the Hungarian Quarter [Magyar Fertály] in New York and also provides a list of services which are run by Hungarians or where Hungarian is spoken. It also includes the addresses of consulates in the United States (*Kivándorló* n.d., 86-94).

The last handbook written specifically for prospective Hungarian emigrants to the United States before the outbreak of the First World War, which actually put an end to the so-called New Emigration, was published in 1913. Entitled *Kivándorlók tanácsadója: Az északamerikai Egyesült-Államokba vagy Canadába kivándorlók részére* [Emigrants' Advisor: For Emigrants to the United States of America or Canada], it was published in Budapest and its author also remained anonymous. It basically follows the same structure as the two previously-discussed handbooks, but shows similarities with *A kivándorló zsebkönyve* in particular.

In the introduction the author warns prospective emigrants that they should think twice about leaving their homeland behind, as on the other side of the Atlantic they are to encounter a different culture, and a strange language. What is more, it can easily occur that, after having given up everything back in Hungary, they are rejected entry into the country and get deported

(*Kivándorlók* 1913, 4-5). Like its predecessors, the volume provides detailed information on who are not welcome in the United States, and urges the emigrants to have themselves examined by a doctor even before departing so that they can save the time and money if they suffer from any of the illnesses that can result in rejection (*Kivándorlók* 1913, 15). *Kivándorlók tanácsadója* offers something new, however, in the sense that it provides information on the immigration rules of not only the United States, but Canada as well. This clearly shows the changes in transatlantic emigration, although the handbook points out that the rules are more or less equally strict in the two countries (*Kivándorlók* 1913, 15).

A similar list of the steamship companies is offered by the book as in *A kivándorló zsebkönyve*, in which Cunard is not given any privileged status (the only advantage mentioned is that passengers can depart from Fiume, in Hungarian territory) (*Kivándorlók* 1913, 28-29). Such practical information as the addresses of the Budapest offices of each major shipping company certainly came in handy for the readers. The author warns those contemplating emigration to contact these offices directly and to never order their tickets through agents who are interested in one thing: their own commissions (*Kivándorlók* 1913, 23).

This volume also provides the necessary bits and pieces of information in connection with all stages of the migration process: the passport application, the voyage, Ellis Island, and so on. Special emphasis is laid on providing protection to the recently-arrived: through the Magyar Menház [Hungarian Shelter], a charity institution sponsored by the New York Hungarian community as well as by the Hungarian government, and the Hungarian consulates all over the country (*Kivándorlók* 1913, 48-53). The book secured space for the advertisements of the Transatlantic Trust Company, the successor of the Hungarian-American Bank, which offered its services, for example, in transferring money to Hungary.

The outbreak of the First World War brought an end to the so-called New Immigration in the United States, as it never recovered following the end of the war. The devastation caused by war in Europe made many in the United States fear that millions of refugees would seek refuge in America, and this gave further momentum to the strengthening nativist movement. This resulted in the introduction of the national origins system and national quotas, which peaked in the Immigration Act of 1924. This extreme restrictionist piece of legislation allowed the immigration of 2% of the number of the foreign-born from each country which had been listed in the census of 1890. The goal of this was obvious: before the 1890s the number of immigrants from East Central Europe and Southern Europe had been much lower, so these regions became clearly discriminated against. The Western Hemisphere, on the other hand, remained outside the newly-introduced quota system.

These drastic changes of immigration legislation in the United States resulted in a major shift in the destinations of Hungarian emigrants: more and more people left Hungary for Canada, South-America and Australia. This is clearly reflected in the handbooks written for prospective emigrants: hardly any new volumes were published in the United States, as they would not have been marketable with the national quota being so low. When Elemér Lukáts published his *Kivándorlók tájékoztatója : útlevél, vízum, beutazási engedély : amit a kivándorlás lehetőségeiről és fontosabb körülményeiről a kivándorolni szándékozóknak tudnia kell az 1939. évi IV. t. c. 22. par.-a alapján* [Emigrants' guide: passport, visa, travel authorization: what all considering emigrating must know about the possibilities and circumstances of emigration based on Article IV, Paragraph 22 (1939)], the United States was only presented as one of the many possible destinations, and not a very desirable one at that (Lukáts 1939).

Conclusion

The decades of mass emigration from Hungary to the United States created a clearly-identifiable market for handbooks offering reliable information on America. They offered similar types of information, yet they reflected their publishers' interest in the migration process. It is not easy to take a measure of how widespread these volumes were and whether or not prospective emigrants used them as a source of information. However, the fact that most of them saw several updated editions, or were even translated into German, indicates their relative success. Besides "America letters" from their relatives and friends, they probably offered the only source of information tailored specifically to their needs and often served as a useful travel companion for those seeking their personal American Dreams.

Works Cited

- Appel, Livia and Blegen, Theodore C. 1923. "Official Encouragement of Immigration to Minnesota During the Territorial Period." *Minnesota History Bulletin* (St. Paul), Vol. 5, August, 167-203.
- Bizonfy, Ferencz. 1886. *English-Hungarian Dictionary*. 2 vols. Budapest: Franklin Társulat.
- Curti, Merle and Birr, Kendall "The Immigrant and the American Image in Europe, 1860 1914." *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol. 37, No. 2. 203-230.
- Dániel, Ferenc - Orosz, István. 1988. *Ah, Amerika! Dokumentumok a kivándorlásról, 1896 1914* [Ah, America! Documents About Emigration, 1896-1914]. Budapest: Gondolat kiadó.
- Daniels, Roger. 2002. *Coming to America. A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life*. New York: Harper Perennial.
- Egan, Ede. 1903. "A kivándorlás üzeme és a fiume-newyorki vonal jelentősége" [The Emigration Industry and the Significance of the Fiume-New York Line]. *A Magyar Mérnök- és Építészegylet Közlönye*. vol. 37, No. 12. 548-557.
- Erickson, Charlotte. 1957. *American Industry and the European Immigrant, 1860-1885*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Gates, Paul W. 1934. *The Illinois Central Railroad and Its Colonization Work*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Glant, Tibor. 2012. "Magyar nyelvű amerikai utazási irodalom a XIX. század második felében: bibliográfiai áttekintés" [Hungarian Travelogues on the United States in the Second Half of the 19th Century: A Bibliographical Overview]. *A szavak szépsége, avagy a bibliográfus igazsága. Tisztelgés Vadon Lehel 70. születésnapján* eds. Zoltán Abádi Nagy, Judit Ágnes Kádár and András Tarnóc. Eger: Amerikanisztika Tanszék, EKF. 629-41.
- Green, Béla. 1919. *American Language Master*. New York: Amerikai magyar újság.
- Gunya, Béla. 1888. *Angol nyelv; 60 leckében a helyes amerikai kiejtés pontos megjelölésével* [The English Language in 60 Lessons with Indication of the Correct American Pronunciation]. Jersey City, NJ: Phonetic Language Institute.
- Hansen, Marcus L. 1921. "Official Encouragement of Immigration to Iowa." *Iowa Journal of History and Politics* (Iowa City), Vol. 19, No. 4, 159-195.
- Hanuska, Miklós - Parádi, József. 2005. "A polgári magyar állam határőrizete törvényi

- szabályozásának kezdete és tapasztalatai, 1867-1919" [The Beginnings and Experience of the Legal Regulations of the Hungarian State, 1867-1919]. *Pécsi Határőr Tudományos Közlemények*. 2005. 167-187.
- Hedges, James B. 1926. "The Colonization Work of the Northern Pacific Railroad." *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol. 13, December. 311-342.
- "Indoklás a kivándorlási ügynökségekről" szóló törvényjavaslathoz [Argumentation to the Bill About Emigration Agents]. No. 1074. OKI, XXIV, 242-245.
- Kivándorlók tanácsadója: Az északamerikai Egyesült-Államokba vagy Canadába kivándorlók részére* [Emigrants' Guide: For Emigrants to the United States and Canada]. Budapest: Schmidl Sándor Könyvnyomdája, 1913.
- Loewenberg, Bert J. 1934. "Efforts of the South to Encourage Immigration, 1865-1900." *South Atlantic Quarterly* (Durham), Vol. 33, October. 363-385.
- Lukáts, Elemér. 1939. *Kivándorlók tájékoztatója : útlevél, vízum, beutazási engedély : amit a kivándorlás lehetőségeiről és fontosabb körülményeiről a kivándorolni szándékozónak tudnia kell az 1939. évi IV. t. c. 22. par.-a alapján* [Emigrants' Guide: Passport, Visa, Travel Permit: What those Contemplating Emigrating Must Know about the Possibilities and Circumstances of Emigration based on 1939. évi IV. t. c. 22. par.]. Budapest: Uránia.
- Overton, Richard C. 1941. *Burlington West; a Colonization History of the Burlington Railroad*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Pálvölgyi, Balázs. 2010. "A magyar kivándorlási politika kezdetei (1881-1903) – Kivándorlási törvények és az amerikai kivándorlás" [The Beginnings of Hungarian Emigration Policy, 1881-1903: Emigration Laws and Emigration to America]. *Jogtörténeti Szemle* No. 4. 27-34.
- Peterson, Harold F. 1932. "Early Minnesota Railroads and the Quest for Settlers." *Minnesota History*, Vol. 13, No. 1. 25-44.
- Puskás, Julianna. 1982. *Kivándorló magyarok az Egyesült Államokban, 1880-1940*. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó.
- Róth, Ignác. 1903. *Magyar-amerikai zsebtolmács és utmutató* [Hungarian-America Pocket Interpreter and Guide]. Cleveland, OH: Frank Apathy.
- Seward, William H. 1862. "Circular from to diplomatic and consular officers." (August 8, 1862) *Foreign Relations of the United States*. Washington, D.C.: n.p.
- Sprague, John F. 1920. "Maine as a District and as a State Has Had Two Successful Immigration Enterprises," *Sprague's Journal of Maine History*, vol. 8, June. 39-41.
- Szili, Ferenc ed. 2001. *Vidd el a levelem szép magyar hazámba! Somogyi kivándorlók "amerikás" levelei, 1900-1950* [Take my Letter to Beautiful Hungary: America Letters of Emigrants from Somogy County, 1900-1950]. Pomáz: Kráter Műhely Egyesület.
- Tezla, Albert. 1993. *The Hazardous Quest. Hungarian Immigrants in the United States, 1895-1920*. Budapest: Corvina.
- Tonelli, Sándor. 1929. *Ultonia: Egy kivándorló hajó története* [Ultonia: The Story of an Emigrant Vessel]. Budapest: Királyi Magyar Egyetemi Nyomda.
- Tudnivalók Amerikába kivándorlók számára. Cunard magyar-amerikai vonal. Fiume New York* [Guidebook for Emigrants to America: Cunard Hungarian-American Line]. Budapest: Adria m. k. tengerhajózási rt., [ca 1910].
- Venkovits, Balázs. 2010. "Writing with Devotion, Drawing with Light: Images of the

- Americas in Nineteenth Century Hungarian Travelogues." *Metamorphoses of Travel Writing: Across Theories, Genres, Centuries and Literary Traditions*. eds. Grzegorz Moroz and Jolenta Sztachelska. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. 104-112.
- Vida, István Kornél. 2013. "'An Immigrant in Disguise': Sándor Tonelli's *Ultonia* – A Written Photograph." In *East Central Europe in Exile. Volume I: Transatlantic Migrations*. ed. Anna Mazurkiewicz. Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. 141-156.
- _____. 2012. "'The Golden Door' Slamming Shut: Immigration Restriction Legislation in the United States (1819-1924)." *A szavak szépsége, avagy a bibliográfus igazsága. Tisztelgés Vadon Lehel 70. születésnapján*. eds. Abádi, Nagy Zoltán, Kádár, Judit Ágnes, Tarnóc, András). 2 vols. Eger: Eszterházy Károly Főiskola, Amerikanisztika Tanszék. 2: 605-620.
- Vida, István Kornél and Venkovits, Balázs. 2013. "Strange New Wor(l)ds: English Language Books for Hungarian New Immigrants – With Two Case Studies" (typescript)
- Young, Edward. 1872. *Special Report on Immigration: Accompanying Information for Immigrants Relative to the Prices and Rentals of Land*. Washington: US Government Printing Office.