

#### 4. Concluding Remarks

Having been able to spend six months in the United States was indeed the (Ful)bright side of life for a me as a researcher. The subject of my doctoral dissertation by its nature requires investigations a considerable proportion of which cannot be carried out elsewhere, but in archives and libraries in the United States. Therefore, I have to emphasize my appreciation to the William J. Fulbright Commission for making this possible for me. Their generous support enabled me to gather enough (actually, being in the phase of writing my dissertation, I feel that more than enough) material to give an objective analysis of the Hungarians' involvement in the War Between the States, which is so much missing from the otherwise vast literature of the American Civil War. However, there is another – in my judgement – equally important aspect of the grant. Although being a university instructor teaching courses on American culture and institutions and various issues in 19<sup>th</sup>-century U.S. history, I had never had the opportunity to visit America. The importance of first-hand information about a particular culture does not need to be emphasized, and I was lucky enough to get acquainted with a lot of people, both from in- and outside the academic sphere who helped my work in many ways. Let me, therefore, acknowledge my debt to at least some of them.

I would like to acknowledge the generous

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*Romance of the Civil War.* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1903). The same article has been just recently re-published in *Skedaddle*, Vol. 1, Issue 2 (March 3, 2004), pp.1-3.

support of the Hungarian Bureau of the William J. Fulbright Commission, whose staff members provided me with all possible help throughout the whole period, which enabled me to concentrate entirely on my work. I am indebted to Prof. Leslie Rowland from the Department of History at the University of Maryland for her academic supervision. I am particularly grateful to Irene and Mickey Schubert for their kind hospitality, to Steve Beszedits for his valuable pieces of advice. Of course, I would not have been able to achieve my goals without the expertise of the librarians and archivists of the institutions which I had the opportunity to do research at, my thanks, therefore, go to them as well: The National Archives and The Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., The McKeldin Library of the University of Maryland, the various libraries of Indiana University in Bloomington, IN and the Chicago Historical Society in Chicago, IL.

Since my returning to Hungary, it has always been a special occasion for me to meet fellow Fulbrighters (luckily enough, there are a number of colleagues of mine among them including the supervisor of my dissertation), and it fills me with pride to be a member of the 'Fulbright family' – as Director Huba Brückner refers to us quite affectionately. I sincerely hope that one day I will have the opportunity to return to the United States as a Fulbright visiting researcher or perhaps a lecturer.

## Half year as Fulbright grantee at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

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*As Fulbright grantee I was the last guest researcher in doctor Wetzel's team, working together with the giant of aquatic science. Unfortunately he became very ill in this period and we lost him in April 2005. He helped my life and work with frankly friendship which I never forget.*

#### *Recollection*

Robert George Wetzel was born on 16 August 1936 in Ann Arbor (Michigan). His parents immigrated to the United States from Germany and as a small child he learned German before he learned English. He graduated in 1959 in Ann Arbor and got Ph.D. degree at Davis University of California. From 1965 to 1990 he taught as Associate Professor and Professor at Department of Botany and Zoology of Michigan State University.

From 1990 to 2001 he was Professor of University of Alabama and from 2001 Professor of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

For 36 years he served as secretary of International Society of Limnology and from 1994 was elected as member of American Academy of Arts and Science.

“His thoughts, and the brilliant synthesis of all aspects of lakes and streams in his writings – 23 books and 400+ publications,

including *the* definitive book of this field-completely changed scientific understanding of how freshwater ecosystems work.” (JoAnn Burkholder).

He called attention to protection of water supply at every forum.

At the end of eighties he was invited to Hungary and visited the Hungarian Limnological Institute Tihany. He appreciated the Hungarian limnologists as Olga Sebestyén or Béla Entz, as young scientist had worked with them in International Society of Limnology. Talking about this visit, he liked very much the special atmosphere of the Lake Balaton.

He was artist, loved to create paintings of the lakes and streams he studied.

Hungarian Professors appreciated his scientific work and he was elected as Honorary Member of Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 2004.

His humble manner, great education and endless humanity affected all people.

### *First appointment with Dr. Robert Wetzels in the United States*

08.03.04. Raleigh

Late afternoon on August 3<sup>rd</sup> our plane landed at Raleigh Airport. After the long period of official administrative work, we were looking forward to the meeting. Getting off the escalator I immediately recognized the Professor who was standing quietly near the window and reading a newspaper but paying attention to the arriving passengers. Fortunately I remembered vividly his face because three years ago I was introduced to him in Australia

at SIL conference. I discovered a smile on his face when I stepped toward him, and we greeted each other with friendly warmth. While my husband and son were waiting for our luggage, we started talking. Although the sunlight was shining hard through the enormous window of the waiting hall, the temperature was pleasant inside because of the air-conditioning. I was tired but enthusiastic after the long journey from Europe to the New World. Waiting at the luggage desk, Professor Wetzels pointed out the golf clubs and added “In the United States lots of people are fond of golf.”

– “Do you play golf too?” – I asked back.

– “No, I do not, my favorite hobby is the painting,” he replied smiling.

This was very interesting for me because one of my presents for Professor Wetzels – Bob - was a painting by my artist friend. Our luggage arrived safely so we could start toward Bob’s car, which was near in the parking garage. After leaving the waiting hall, we were touched with humid, tropical pressed warm air; it was hard to breathe.

“For some days we have got this warm weather, said Bob.

Meantime we put our luggage into the boot of the car and started toward Chapel Hill. We were driving on wide, multi-lined highways. The never-ending forest was all around. The traffic did not go fast, everything was peaceful and calm. Bob told us that he sometimes drove with higher speed, so he had to pay attention to the velocity. Before coming here at home I had read at home about the agriculture

and industry of North Carolina, so I was looking for the famous tobacco fields. Bob told me that productivity of tobacco industry had decreased because of the health campaigns, so the large tobacco fields have disappeared.

At twilight time we reached the boundary of Chapel Hill. Looking at the mobile houses along Airport Road. Bob explained us that though Chapel Hill’s citizens were rich there were poor people, too, who live in these houses, without electricity or water or health insurance--mainly Mexican families, and Afro-Americans.

Bob took us on a sightseeing tour before delivering us to our apartment. In the downtown we could glance at the historic district with university buildings from the car. The first state university was established in Chapel Hill more than two hundred years ago. The old well that supplied students with water is now the symbol of the University. Nearby, there is the famous Wilson Library, which has the richest manuscript collection in the southern states. In Kenan Stadium a soccer match was going on; though it was only early August, lots of students had arrived back in their university city. In the main street Bob pointed out a restaurant.

“This is ‘Top of the Hill,’ the favorite meeting point of the students.”

During our tour we reached the new wing of the Public Health School building; Bob was very proud of it

“The next year we will move into this building,” he told us with a hopeful voice.

It was dark when we arrived at our apartment in Northampton Plaza. Bob

led the way, because he had got the key a day before. After taking our luggage from the car, treasures came out, which Bob gave us. He and his wife, Carol offered us everything, from bed cloths to towels. Our astonishment became bigger and bigger in the apartment. The refrigerator was full of food, with apples, bread, milk, sausage, jelly. Their welcome was so kind and friendly, we will never forget it.

Opening my suitcase I immediately gave him the painting. He held it in his hands, and we looked at it together, discovering together the leaves of the water plants and the movement of the yellowish-green water. He told me that he loved impressionist pictures. I was very happy that I had chosen the best present for Bob. It seems the spirit has such tiny vibrations which do not know borders, oceans, seas and many miles.

As he left, he wished us good night.

### *Last appointment with Dr. Robert Wetzels in the United States*

01.25.05 Chapel Hill

On that January afternoon there was bright sunshine and I started forward Bob’s house. I wrapped the Hungarian present for him and collected my results on six month work. During twenty-minute walking lots of reflections run through in my mind. We met two months ago in November –“In what kind of condition I will find him? Will he be interesting in my results?”

I arrived at 1 o' clock pm to the entrance of his house's door. After some seconds of the ring Bob stood in front of me. I was pleased that his condition was not so bad on this day. We entered to the study and he offered me a seat, near the painting stand. The walls were decorated with his nice, favorite pictures. Music was sounded, such soft, body and spirit tranquil classical Vienna music in the room. Before I arrived he had been working on his manuscript, it seemed a good signal. When I asked about his health condition he answered pessimistically, his voice was full of quiet sadness. He lost a lot weight and his hair began to fall because of chemotherapy treatment. He told me that he was very ill and would not be able to work in new university building very ill. He absolutely knew all on his condition so I could hardly tell him that there always was chance. Glancing at the painting stand I asked whether he

painted. He nodded, but added that his arms were very weak and had to stop it quickly. I tried to encourage him that after the chemotherapy treatment he would get more and more powder. I was not really frank, but I wanted to be optimistic. I realized a deep sadness in his eyes.

When I gave him the report on my results he suddenly began to read it and asked me. Explaining him the figures he coughed more times. I suggested that I brought a little water but he indicated, did not need.

During our talking he remembered his Hungarian visit and Lake Balaton whose climate and atmosphere impressed on him very much at the end of nineties.

After half hour being here I felt that he became tired. I was very sad to say goodbye, but I hoped the miracle.

# Contemporary Hungarian Literature

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*My Fulbright research grant allowed me to have a very productive five-month stay at the University of California, San Diego. It was a rare privilege not to have any other academic responsibilities but research and writing; I could really focus on my theoretical project on the performative and performance aspects of identity construction in American literature. Having worked at UCSD on several occasions earlier (in 1981-82 I was there on an IREX grant, later, in 1986, 1987, and 2002 on short research visits), UCSD was familiar territory for me, with many friends and professional contacts. Everything and everyone on campus contributed to an optimal work environment: the library had the best resources, books, journals, and electronic services; my sponsor, Professor Donald Wesling, has devoted a lot of time to working with me; the faculty were friendly and accessible; the campus was beautiful, the days were long, the weather was perfect. Also, visiting classes, having consultations with several faculty members, and attending the department's various events, especially public lectures and readings, my attention was drawn to some critical and theoretical issues that I had not been familiar with, or had not considered, previously. Among the benefits I should also list my being able to buy books (I spent over \$2,500 on books) and bring them home so that they could be used in research and teaching. (Given the poor library facilities in my home university, in some cases I had to buy multiple copies for students back home.)*