



KÜLFÖLDI MAGYAR CSERKÉSZSZÖVETSÉG

HUNGARIAN SCOUT ASSOCIATION IN EXTERIS • FÉDÉRATION SCOUTE HONGROISE Á L'EXTÉRIEUR
UNGARISCHER AUSLANDSPFADFINDERBUND • ASOCIACIÓN SCOUT HÚNGARA EN EL EXTERIOR

III. KERÜLET/REGION • CLEVELAND KÖRZET/DISTRICT

The History of Hungarian Scouting Worldwide

In Hungary

The **Hungarian Scout Association** is established in Hungary in 1912, two years after the first troops are formed in 1910. Hungary, in 1922, is a founding member of the World Scout Bureau now known as the **World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM)**. It also is a founding member of the **World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGS)**, established in Pará, Hungary, in 1928.

In 1924, at the II. World Scout Jamboree in Copenhagen, Denmark, **Hungarian Scouts attend their first jamboree** and come in third in the competition of the nations, behind American and British Scouts. They are especially good at water sports, astounding many as Hungary is a landlocked country. The **first Hungarian National Jamboree** in 1926 has 10,000 participants.

The **IV. World Scout Jamboree** is held in Gödöllő, Hungary in 1933 and is attended by more than 26,000 scouts from 54 countries. The first, and only, **Girl Guide/Girl Scout World Camp, Pax Ting**, is held in Hungary in 1939.

By World War II there are **60,000 scouts in Hungary**. The communist regime in Hungary makes scouting very difficult in the country and permanently bans the movement in 1948.

In Exile

In 1945-46, young Hungarian scout leaders who have fled the country after WWII, form the first troops outside of Hungary in the refugee camps of Austria and Germany. The **Hungarian Scout Association in Exile** is established in 1947. Troops are formed in other western European countries and, as scout leaders emigrate overseas, troops begin to form in South America, the United States, Canada and Australia. The organization's headquarters is based in New Jersey. All leaders and executives are volunteers except for one modestly paid executive secretary who handles the day to day administrative duties of the organization. At its peak, in the late 1960's and early 1970's, there are about **6,000 Hungarian scouts worldwide in about 90 troops in 15 countries**.

In Cleveland

The first Hungarian scout troop in the U.S. is formed in Cleveland, Ohio in the spring of 1951. By the fall of that year there are two boys' troops, one on the east side of the city in the Buckeye Road neighborhood and one on the west side in the Ohio City area. They also are registered troops with the **Boy Scouts of America**. A girls' troop forms in 1952 and splits into two troops in 1957 in the same neighborhoods. The troops, traditionally named after famous Hungarians, are:

Arthur Görgey Hungarian Boy Scout **Troop #14**, BSA Pack, Troop, Post #414

György Bessenyei Hungarian Boy Scout **Troop #22**, BSA Pack, Troop, Post #114

Erzsébet Szilágyi Hungarian Girl Scout **Troop #33**

Ilona Zrinyi Hungarian Girl Scout **Troop #34**

The Hungarian scouts learn all the traditional skills of scouting but also are familiarized with the history, customs and traditions of Hungary. It is a prerequisite for all members to speak Hungarian. Most also read and write in Hungarian. All meetings (on Friday nights), outings and camps are held with only the Hungarian language being spoken. Scouts 14 years old and older can join the **Hungarian Scout Folk Ensemble**. These scouts meet every Tuesday night and specialize in learning the dances and songs of Hungary among other crafts and skills. To help with language skills, and to learn the geography, ethnography and history of Hungary, the **Hungarian School** has classes on Monday nights. Most scouts attend classes for up to 10 to 12 years.

The Cleveland troops are supported by the **American Hungarian Friends of Scouting**. They hold three large fundraising events a year: an awards banquet in February, a debutante benefit ball in May and a Hungarian Scout Festival on Sunday of Labor Day weekend. They also own the 130 acre **Teleki Scout Park** named after **Pál Teleki, Prime Minister of Hungary 1920-21 and 1939-41** and the first **Chief Scout of Hungary**. Located in Ashtabula County in Northeast Ohio, the park has a small lake and is ideal for primitive camping.

The AHFS also maintains the 4,200 sq. ft. **Hungarian Scout Center** located on the property of St. Emeric Hungarian Roman Catholic Church near the West Side Market in downtown Cleveland. The building is used for scout meetings, Hungarian Scout Folk Ensemble practices and classrooms for the Hungarian School.

The scout patrols in Cleveland participate in a **camporee patrol competition** every Memorial Day weekend to test their scout skills against other Hungarian scout troops from cities of the eastern U.S. and Canada. The camporee is held at the 100+ acre **Sándor Sík Scout Park** owned by the Hungarian Scout Association near the town of Fillmore in western New York State. A ten day **leadership training camp** is held there every August for patrol leaders, assistant scoutmasters and scoutmasters. This campsite has also become the home of **Hungarian scout jamborees**, held every five years. On these occasions, 500 to 1,000 Hungarian boy and girl scouts from around the world gather in fellowship to share in their heritage. A two week **Hungarian School and Camp** also is held there every July.

In Exteris

In 1988, a year before the fall of the communist regime in Hungary, scouting is re-established in the mother country. The Hungarian Scout Association name is returned to the newly formed organization and the worldwide organization takes on the name **Hungarian Scout Association in Exteris** (latin for outside of).

With a 40-year lapse of any official scouting activity, the worldwide organization played a major role in helping the rebirth of scouting in Hungary. Many books, training manuals and leadership training camps held by leaders from the West help scouting take a new foothold in the mother country. **Today, there are about 10,000-12,000 scouts in Hungary.** In addition, Hungarian scout associations have formed in the **Carpathian Basin** in countries surrounding Hungary that have large Hungarian minority populations: **Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Ukraine.**

Today, the Hungarian Scout Association in Exteris has about **4,000 scouts in 70 troops in 11 countries.** In Cleveland, there are about **250 active scouts and leaders** in two traditional boy and girl troops and two Explorer/Venture type troops.

*This history of Hungarian Scouting was compiled by Mike Horvath,
Cleveland District Commissioner of the Hungarian Scout Association in Exteris.*

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