

Ilona Kovács

The importance of a cultural mediator at the cultural crossroads: Augusta Markowitz¹

Introduction

In 1950 the Golden Jubilee Album of the *American Hungarian People's Voice*—the Hungarian daily *Amerikai Magyar Népszava*—lists Augusta Markowitz among the well-known cultural personalities of the New York Hungarian community.²

On November 20, 1952, the prominent immigrant Hungarian writer Anna Lesznai wrote from New York to the world-famous Hungarian art historian Charles Tolnay in Princeton, that Augusta Markowitz would send the list of the available Hungarian books at his address.³

Who was Augusta Markowitz?⁴

Augusta Markowitz was a librarian, a devoted disseminator of cultural and especially Hungarian cultural information in New York from the beginning of the twentieth century till her death in 1963. Her activity is hardly known for the present generation Hungarians, although she had an important role in serving the cultural needs of the New York Hungarians and to a certain extent the American Hungarian readers in general for about 5 decades. Her service in the library began in the peak of Hungarian immigration. This time became evident for the public library system that they faced a

¹ This is an edited version of the paper given at the AHEA Annual Conference on Zoom, held between 24–26 June 2021. The manuscript was unfinished due to Ilona's declining health. Typos and spelling errors have been corrected, and minor changes in grammar have been applied. The manuscript was prepared for publication by Nóra Deák and Zoltán Fejős who would like to thank Ilona's family for sharing all the relevant sources with us.

² *Az Amerikai Magyar Népszava aranyjubileumi albuma = Golden jubilee album*. New York, Amerikai Magyar Népszava, 1950. p. 71.

³ Published by Lapok a "Mindenek könyv"-ből. Tolnay Károly levelezéséből és naplófeljegyzéseiből (II). Közreadja Lenkei Júlia. *Holmi*, 13. 2003. 2. pp. 196–215. (p. 207.).

⁴ Who is who in Library Science. Edited by C.C. Williamson and Alice L. Jewett. New York: The Wilson, 1933. p. 200.; about the life and professional career of Augusta Markowitz see also Kovács, Ilona: Az amerikai közkönyvtárak magyar gyűjteményeinek szerepe az asszimiláció és az identitás megőrzésének kettős folyamatában 1890–1940. Budapest, Országos Széchényi Könyvtár, 1997. p. 77., footnote 60: "Augusta Markowitz kitűnően képzett szakember volt, a Columbia Egyetemen szerezte könyvtárosi képesítését. Évtizedeken át a magyar olvasókat szolgáló kölcsönkönyvtárakban dolgozott, először a Hamilton Fish, majd a Tompkins Square, s végül a Woodstock fiókkönyvtárban, igen sokat tett a magyar olvasók érdekében."

new task of the library service for immigrants and after long debate libraries launched the new program called *Foreign language library collections* for the immigrants in public libraries.⁵ That needed expertise. Augusta Markowitz recognized this important professional task and was driven by her deep interest in Hungarian culture and with her Hungarian background she became the specialist of Hungarian collection development and information service in the New York Public Library (NYPL) system. As it was said she was noted for building up the Hungarian collections at New York Public Library.⁶ Her role was even bigger because it is known that she provided help for librarians in Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Chicago, Detroit, San Francisco, Philadelphia, Passaic, Trenton, Toledo and other cities. 25 years later she herself summarizes this as an officially registered task in her 1938 Annual Report as “The Woodstock librarian has been responsible for keeping the Hungarian book collections up to date not only in the New York Public Library, but also in other libraries of the country where there are Hungarian books.”⁷ The same year when she visited the Hungarian Feminist Association in Budapest, Augusta Markowitz met Hungarian and English guests including George Lansbury M.P. from England, Mrs Augusztá Peter—widow of Ágoston Péter, born Augusztá Buzárovits—and Professor Joseph Balassa. The note written in pencil on the back of the photo mentions also the two photos of Vilma Glücklich and Rosika Schwimmer on the wall. (Fig. 1.).



Fig. 1. Hungarian and English guests at the Hungarian Feminist Association, Budapest, 1938.⁸

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Bob Sink: Augusta Markowitz (1881–1963). NYPL Librarian, blog, July 28, 2011, <http://nypl-librarians.blogspot.com/search/label/Markowitz%20Augusta>.

⁷ NYPL MS, Annual Report 1938. p. 1.

⁸ American and English guests at the Hungarian Feminist Association, Budapest, 1938: Augusta Markowitz, librarian USA, George Lansbury M.P. England and other English gentleman guests at the Hungarian Feminist Ass., Budapest. Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library. (1939). *American and English guests at the*

Early years: Tompkins Square—Hamilton Fish

Augusta Markowitz was one of the many immigrants who was taken from Hungary to the USA as a child at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. That time the structure of the economy in Hungary went through great changes. The rigid guild system was closed by law in 1872, and the next generation of craftsmen who earlier were organized into guilds, got more freedom, but needed more effort to establish themselves. They had to look for new forms of industry and business either in Hungary or abroad. Many of them left for America.⁹ Augusta Markowitz's father Josef Markowitz (born on June 30, 1843, in Hungary) was a tailor. He went to America in 1886 probably to look around. In 1888 his family also arrived in New York.¹⁰ Augusta Markowitz was 8 years old (born on July 28, 1881/1884).¹¹ The family naturalized on October 13, 1891. They showed up in documents in Yorkville, New York. Josef Markowitz was registered locally first in 1900 under the address 329 East 82nd Street between the 1st and 2nd Avenues in a typical Hungarian and East-European immigrant neighborhood.¹² Augusta already as a child had a devotion for books and libraries as a reader, a supporter, and a volunteer.

A blog entry by Bob Sink,¹³ a distinguished NYPL librarian and researcher says: “Augusta Markowitz started library work in 1897 as a substitute in the Aguilar Free Library Society (AFLS) and became an NYPL staff member in 1903 when the AFLS merged with NYPL. At NYPL she served as First Assistant at Avenue C branch.”¹⁴

Augusta Markowitz joined the profession at the dawn of the public library system of New York. That was the time when the New York Public Library program was launched due to the growth of the New York population. It was merged and formed under this name in the new millennium from

Hungarian Feminist Association, Budapest, 1938 Retrieved from <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e2-7811-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>

⁹ See Zoltán Fejős: Tárgyak nemzeti műtárában. “Magyar specialitások” és háziipar Amerikában az első világháború előtt. *Ethnographia*, 130. 2019. 3. pp. 361–417., esp. p. 361.

¹⁰ United States Passport Applications, 1795–1925, *FamilySearch*

(<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QV5Y-FK52> : Wed Nov 01 01:51:18 UTC 2023), Entry for Augusta Markowitz, 1923. Miss Augusta Markowitz (saját tudósítónktól.) A New York Public Library könyvtárosnője Budapest. *Pesti Napló*, 112. 1930., p. 4.

¹¹ Ibid. The source of both dates of birth is Augusta Markowitz. The accepted year is 1881, based on comparing later biographical data on the one hand, and her contemporary Bob Sink's potential personal experience.

¹² US Census 1900, New York City, Enumeration District (ED) 768, sheet 2A, family 25. (familysearch.org)

¹³ See note 6.

¹⁴ History of the New York Public Library <https://www.nypl.org/help/about-nypl/history>

(Major milestones: 19th Century Astor 1849, Lenox Tilden Foundation 1892, Bigelow plan 1895, John Shaw Billings dir. 1902 corner stone /1st Branch Yorkville/, 1906 roof, May 23 1911 Center opening/Tompkins 1904, Hamilton Fish 1909/ Woodstock 1914).

several earlier institutes and donations based on a foundation (Astor and Lenox Tilden).¹⁵ For the new institute a new building was designed, which was considered an architectural masterpiece. At the same time, they started to build a series of new buildings for the branch libraries with the support of the Carnegie donation.¹⁶

Augusta Markowitz started to work very young as a volunteer and finally became a well-educated, well known and widely accepted expert of the profession, especially for the Hungarian material and information. From the beginning of her career Augusta served in these newly opened buildings one after the other. In 1904 her workplace in the Avenue C building was replaced with its new Carnegie building under a new name, which was Tompkins Square Branch, a few lots further down the street.

Bob Sink reveals further details about the stages of her career spent at the various Carnegie branches: “Markowitz was promoted to Branch Librarian in 1908 and headed the Hamilton Fish Park Branch (1908–1913) and the Woodstock Branch (1913–1944). The latter served a Hungarian community during most of Markowitz’s tenure.” The Hamilton Fish new Carnegie building was opened in 1909 and the Woodstock Carnegie building in February of 1914. These developing conditions must have been an encouraging and inspiring environment for an ambitious intellectual, who loved her profession.



Fig. 2. Carnegie buildings: Hamilton Fish, Tompkins Square, Woodstock

¹⁵ <https://www.nypl.org/help/about-nypl/history> Phyllis Dain and Michael Harris. NYPL Aguilar Free Library Society. <https://www.villagepreservation.org/2020/10/01/beyond-the-village-and-back-the-aguilar-free-circulating-library/> S.J. Tilden, J.J. Astor, J.Lenox library.

¹⁶ New York Public Library, Tompkins Square Branch, 331 East 10th Street, Manhattan. Landmarks Preservation Commission, May 18, 1999, Designation List 304 LP-1998, <http://s-media.nyc.gov/agencies/lpc/lp/1998.pdf>.

In her early years in the Tompkins and later in the Hamilton Fish Branches we have interesting contemporary sources, namely the press in Hungary. Hungarian librarians and other Hungarian intellectuals who were on a study tour in New York in the 1910s met the young Augusta Markowitz and they wrote about their impressions and published the interviews she gave them. In some cases, they mention her by name, in other cases she is referred to as the Hungarian librarian. Reading her enthusiastic review, you can tell it must have been her personal experience she really lived through these events. She was about 20 these years. Even through the Hungarian press you can tell how devoted she represented the American Hungarian readers. According to her confession she had an important role in initiating the Hungarian collection from the beginning in the New York Public Branch Libraries. As she described this fact to Hungarian visitors, she turned to the director of the NYPL requesting Hungarian books, and what was important she could tell him where to find them in New York. Surprisingly a Hungarian Bank maintained a little lending library and was willing to sell the books to the New York Public Library. That is how the first 120 books got to her library.

At the beginning it was difficult to convince Hungarian workers, the people of the neighborhood to come and use the library. The invitation was vain, but the librarians were persistent and clever enough, and used the opportunities. For example, when rainfall started—according to the story told by Augusta Markowitz—they opened the Tompkins Square Library and invited the Hungarians from the square where they regularly gathered and waited for work.¹⁷ That is how the books, and the Hungarian newspapers were discovered by the Hungarian readers and were used eagerly in the following years.

Years later in Budapest she told the story to the *Magyar Hirlap*, a Hungarian daily, that in the early years she wrote a letter even to Albert Apponyi, the Hungarian Cultural Minister, asking for Hungarian books.¹⁸ It is a fact that there are applications to and correspondence with the Hungarian government on behalf of the NYPL from these years in our National Archives, signed by the directors of the library or the Hungarian consul or other representatives of the matter, etc. I guess it is true that Augusta Markowitz must have been involved in the background as usual, that there are expert's contributions to the solution to prepare official documents. She probably tried to take advantage of Hungarian government's effort to provide cultural support to Hungarians who had emigrated to America in the first decades of the 20th century. For this purpose, the Hungarian

¹⁷ Fraknói Vilmos: Egy amerikai közkönyvtár. *Múzeumi és Könyvtári Értesítő*, 6. 1912. p. 104.; A. S. Glenn: Vissza az óhazába. *Magyar Figyelő* 3. 1913. pp. 301–302.; Székely Dávid: Magyar könyvek Amerikában. *Pesti Hirlap*, 1914. május 17. (116. sz.) p. 69.

¹⁸ Budapestre érkezett a newyorki városi könyvtár magyar származású igazgatónöje. Beszélgetés Augusta Markowitz-cal, aki azért jött haza, hogy magyar könyveket vásároljon. *Magyar Hirlap*, 1930. május 18. (112. sz.) p. 4.

Government launched the program called American Action¹⁹ (books and libraries were offered to Hungarian societies, institutions and schools, according to archival sources, even to American public libraries and the NYPL). This program ran in Hungary from 1903 till the First World War. In the same years the *Foreign books to immigrants collection development issue* was developed in the US. These were two different programs with two motivations, but with a common result. On the Hungarian side the goal was to maintain the Hungarian identity of the immigrants, and on the American side the purpose was to help integrate the immigrant by serving his needs by the American libraries. Two different motivations, but together they both helped develop Hungarian library collections in American libraries and it seems Augusta Markowitz was aware of both advantages and as a professional tried to utilize them for the sake of her readers.

Woodstock Branch

In October 1913 she was transferred to the Woodstock Branch library at her own request.²⁰ The Woodstock years provided for her a new field to deepen and widen her professional program as cultural moderator. The New Carnegie Woodstock building was put into operation soon after her arrival in February 1914. By this time New York Hungarian demography changed: partly grew and partly moved. In the early nineteen hundreds the Hungarians first settled in the Lower East Side in the Tompkins Square and Huston Street area between the 10th and 14th streets, where she started her career, which that time was called Gulyás avenue,²¹ because of the growing Hungarian population, and as a result, more and more Hungarian restaurants and Hungarian social life. Meanwhile a slow and constant change/moving was on towards the Yorkville area: a little bit more workplaces and rather more middle-class type region with its tenement houses and German population between the 60th–90th streets where a new Carnegie Library, the Yorkville Branch was also built. About the middle of the 1910s the Park Avenue exclusive housing construction work pushed out parts of this Hungarian population from Manhattan to the more modest but still middle-class style Woodstock (and to Brooklyn and Queens). According to the 1910 census Woodstock already had 6256²² persons who lived here, still born in Hungary. By 1920 the Hungarian population was

¹⁹ Kovács, *op. cit.*

²⁰ Changes in the staff. Branches. Augusta Markowitz branch librarian transferred from Hamilton Fish Park branch October 1. *The New York Public Library Staff News*, 3. (25 September 1913) no. 38. p. 138. Gelly: Negyvenezér magyar könyv Newyorkban. Beszélgetés Miss Markovitssal, a newyorki Carnegie-könyvtár magyar származású igazgatójával az amerikai magyarokról és arról, hogy milyen könyveket olvasnak. *Budapesti Hírlap*, 1930. május 25. (115. sz.) pp. 13–14.

²¹ Fejős Zoltán: Városi helyek és a kommunikatív emlékezet. Mozaikok a Magyar Amerika-alumból. In: Jakab Albert Zsolt—Vajda András (szerk.): *Aranyhíd. Tanulmányok Keszeg Vilmos tiszteletére*. Kolozsvár, BBTE Magyar Néprajz és Antropológia Intézet—Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület—Krizsa János Néprajzi Társaság, 2017. pp. 371–388. (pp. 376–381).

²² Kovács, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

already 13190, 7220 of them were still born in Hungary.²³ Soon the Woodstock Branch became a Hungarian Center as a result of Augusta Markowitz's activity. The saying spread that time: Woodstock is the Mecca of Hungarians. This saying survived in memories until the 1980s when I visited the editorial office of Hungarian paper *Magyar Szó* in 14th Street. Zoltán Deák, the editor, remembered Augusta Markowitz and the Hungarian life in the Woodstock Branch, and he still recalled this phrase.

Augusta Markowitz was aware of the needs for library service to this Hungarian community. She built up a friendly relationship with the local Hungarians, served their interest and standard and she helped them solve their personal problems listening to them as they arrived with baskets from the market.²⁴ The other growing part of Hungarian visitors of her library were the Hungarian intellectuals from all over New York in great numbers, especially those who newly arrived from Europe following 1920 at the end of the First WW.²⁵ In her annual report she drew the attention to this new phenomenon in the circle of library users: artists, writers, musicians and other well educated readers arrived.

They were attracted by the lively social and cultural Hungarian life Augusta Markowitz organized for them. The number of Hungarian social and cultural events even grew between the two World Wars.²⁶ Among the programs there were lectures, concerts, coffee afternoons and coffee evenings.²⁷ They also were interested in the artistic exhibitions, where she gave chance to the American Hungarian artists like the well-known Willy Pogány and his famous children's book illustrations. Following 1920 she gave details about these events in her Annual Reports available in the Manuscript Collection of the Public Library until her retirement in 1944.



Fig. 3. Colum, Padraic: *The King of Ireland's Son* with Illustrations and Decorations by Willy Pogány. New York, H. Holt and Company, 1916

²³ Kovács, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

²⁴ Zilahy Lajos: A "regényös ember". *Pesti Napló*, 118. 1930. p. 9.

²⁵ "During the last half of the year there has been a marked increase of newly arrived immigrants, which has put new spirit into the work. A special enlarged collection of easy English books has been placed on the stacks adjoining the foreign collections with signs in the various languages calling attention to it." *Annual Report* 1920. p. 7.

²⁶ Miss Augusta Markowitz (saját tudósítónktól.) A New York Public Library könyvtárosnője Budapesten. *Pesti Napló*, 112. 1930. p. 4.

²⁷ Annual Reports

However, the main attraction was the excellent Hungarian book collection built up by Augusta Markowitz beginning in 1915 after her arrival to Woodstock. As branch librarian she put emphasis on collection development.²⁸ In 1913 when she got there, there were no Hungarian books yet in the Woodstock library. In 1915 there were already about 300 (292), and in 1940 already close to 3000 (2,700 to be more precise). She emphasized the use of the books as well, the importance of circulation. To serve the Hungarians' reading interest she utilized the NYPL rule that allowed for the Hungarian readers to use the whole Hungarian collection of the entire NYPL and branch system. Probably that is the explanation of the high Hungarian circulation during her years.²⁹ In 1915 she achieved a circulation of 3,517 Hungarian volumes which constantly grew. The highest circulation was 24,540 in 1932, but the 1925 report already gave very high statistical numbers.

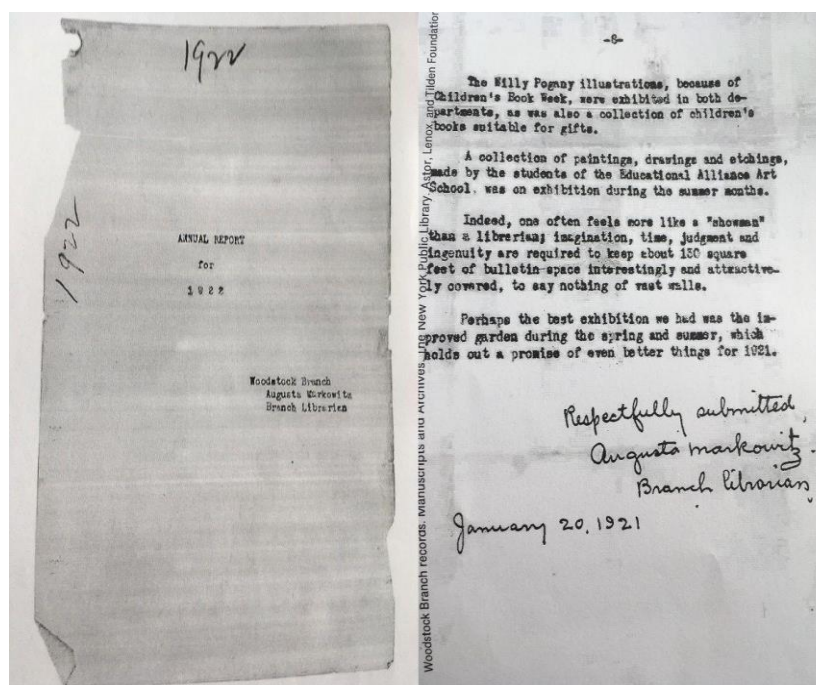


Fig. 4. Annual Report for 1922 with Augusta Markowitz's signature

As a real professional—of course with the help of other colleagues—she took care of other larger nationalities like German, Yiddish and Russian in her libraries' neighborhood, and in general a growing worker population also in the Woodstock district.

²⁸ Acquisition contact with the readers, see note 24.; on her book purchase tour in Budapest: Annual Report, etc.

²⁹ Gelly: Negyven ezer magyar könyv Newyorkban. Beszélgetés Miss Markovitssal, a newyorki Carnegie-könyvtár magyar származású igazgatójával az amerikai magyarokról és arról, hogy milyen könyveket olvasnak. *Budapesti Hírlap*, 115. 1930. pp. 13–14.

What was her program?

Augusta Markowitz wanted to build up the Hungarian library collections in America. To fulfill her plan, she tried to do as much as she could. She finished her studies, the basic library science education in the Carnegie supported NYPL Library School, a yearlong high standard course program³⁰ and additional courses at Columbia University.³¹

She also invested much as a professional in the everyday work of the Woodstock Branch as branch librarian. She carried the responsibility for its complete program for the collection management and for the service for the readers, and as a community center. She had a large but never enough staff. In her annual reports, and her interviews to the press she often mentioned the overwhelming quantity of the daily work.³² Her additional but main interest and duty was the management of Hungarian material in the whole NYPL library and public libraries in the country, as we cited earlier from the 1938 Annual Report.

She was deeply interested in Hungarian culture and literature, the traditional and the modern Hungarian values, too. Although she spent all her possible time on the Hungarian collection and service, she never felt the time enough she could afford. Through self-education by reading and by participation in Hungarian life, she invested much to get to know Hungarian culture, to become an expert to know the past and present of Hungary. In fact, she dedicated all her life to Hungarian matters. Although during her career she dealt with all kinds of Hungarian issues her activity was concentrated around two main tasks. The first question was how to get new Hungarian books in New York? How to reach the book trade in Hungary and provide the best quality and best selection? The immigrant sources in New York helped at the beginning, but she realized that she had to reach the commercial sources in Hungary, to have direct contact with the Hungarian book market, and to rely on authentic information. It had to be done partly because of the professional and complete set of information and partly to avoid the extra expenses of the international book market/trade. This attempt met the actual professional American library policy and was encouraged by the NYPL and fit into its program initiated by the *Foreign books to the immigrants in public libraries* program for public libraries. They supported those librarians who were ready to go on a

³⁰ NYPL Manuscript Collections, Kurzus program; Manuscript Collection Woodstock Branch, library school.

³¹ See note 6.

³² "Collection management this meant the constant development the acquisition, the control, the weeding, or restoration of the collection. In the service area her attempt was to satisfy the users and to provide access to Hungarian related information based on the collection concerned Hungary, Hungarians and Hungarian culture. Much more time is needed than it is possible at present to give careful evaluation and ordering of Hungarian books." Annual Report 1927.

study and business tour to Europe in different countries to build up personal contacts with foreign book publishers and learn the foreign literature, the country and culture of immigrants on site.

In 1922 Augusta Markowitz started to plan an extended trip to Europe with an emphasis on Hungary. She had some correspondence with one of her Hungarian library users Rosika Schwimmer, the well-known Hungarian journalist, activist, feminist, politician, who was also known for being a well oriented person with many contacts in Europe.³³ Augusta Markowitz asked for advice and letters of recommendations for her trip. She applied for a passport in the US. This application still exists in the National Archives.

She planned to leave for the trip on the ship "Mongolia" in July 1923. According to the documents she started this trip on June 22, 1923.

The image shows a handwritten US passport application form for Augusta Markowitz, dated June 29, 1923. The form is filled with her personal details, including her birth in Hungary, her father's name, and her intended travel to Europe. It includes a section for 'Description of Applicant' with physical characteristics and a 'Declaration of Allegiance' section. The form is signed by the applicant and a consular official, with a date stamp from the Department of State.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
JUN 29 1923
WASHINGTON

STATE OF NY
COUNTY OF NY
City of New York
I, Augusta Markowitz, hereby apply to the Department of State, at Washington, for a passport.

I solemnly swear that I was born at 28 day of July, 1884,
that I have resided in the United States, uninterruptedly, from 1885 to 1923,
that my father, Josef Markowitz, was born in Hungary
on 20 June 1843, that he emigrated to the United States on or about Oct. 1884,
that he resided 36 years, uninterruptedly, in the United States, from 1884 to 1922,
at New York City, that he was naturalized as a citizen of
the United States before the Court of New York
at New York City, on Oct 18, 1921,
as shown by the accompanying Certificate of Naturalization, that I am the daughter of the person
described in said Certificate, that since my father's naturalization, I have resided outside the
United States at the following places for the following periods:
France, Italy, Study and recreation
Hungary, Germany
Hungary, Austria
I intend to leave the United States from the port of New York
sailing on board the Mongolia on July 12, 1923.

Further, I do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States
against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that
I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion. So help me God.

Seems to believe me Augusta Markowitz
JUN 29 1923
JUN 29 1923
JUN 29 1923

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICANT.
Age: 38 years Month: Medians
Stature: 5 feet 6 inches, Eng. Color: Round
Forehead: Medians Hair: Black and grey
Eyes: Dark brown Complexion: Medians
Nose: Retracted Face: Round
Distinguishing marks: Almond shaped eyes

DECLARATION.
I, Augusta Markowitz, solemnly swear that I am a native born citizen
of the United States; that I reside at 79 St. Nicholas Place, New York City,
the above-named Augusta Markowitz, personally known to me for 27 years,
know her in her as the person referred to in the within-described certificate of naturalization
and that the facts stated in her affidavit are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

No bribe or other promise will be
accepted in return for a passport.
The applicant must be a person of
good character and of good moral
standing, and must be a citizen of
the United States, or a person
entitled to citizenship.

Seems to believe me Augusta Markowitz
JUN 29 1923
JUN 29 1923
JUN 29 1923

Applicant desires passport to be sent to the following address:
79 St. Nicholas Place
New York City
NY

A duplicate of this photograph to be attached hereto
must be sent to the Department with the application,
to be affixed to the passport with an impression of a
Department's seal.

Fig. 5. Application for US Passport

We know she had further trips in the following years about three or four times until 1930, the last time in 1928. Since then, she started to operate her noncommercial Hungarian Book Service which officially lasted till 1948, but till her death she was willing to help in her whole life those who needed.

³³ See Rosika Schwimmer papers, 1890–1983, Overview, <https://archives.nypl.org/mss/6398#overview>.

In 1930 her trip had a great echo in the Hungarian press in Budapest. Many articles and interviews were published during her stay with many interesting details about her life and career, the main features of American public libraries and public library policy, the main trends of service and the condition of library service to Hungarians and other details. She was mentioned in several publications. Among them were the following newspapers and journals: *Pesti Napló*, (May, June), *Magyar Hírlap* (May), *Budapesti Hírlap*, *Corvina*, *Literatura*, *Századunk*.³⁴ We know about her further visits to Budapest in 1934 and in 1938. It seems however that the one in 1930 was the most fruitful and helped her widen and deepen the successful contacts with Hungary.

She visited and looked for contacts with Hungarian publishers, libraries, museums, writers and the National Association of Hungarian Publishers and Book Trade (Magyar Könyvkiadók és Könyvkereskedők Országos Egyesülete), other Hungarian cultural and social associations. It was a three-week long official trip as she mentioned in one of her interviews. She arrived with long book

lists to select and order books for the NYPL and for other cities' libraries, as well.



Fig. 6. Newspaper article about forty thousand Hungarian books in New York in Budapesti Hírlap, 1930

There are facts that she tried to build up contacts already in the twenties and provide access to Hungarian literature and books in Hungary for Hungarian library collections in America. She announced already in her 1925 annual report that every year she purchased 500 Hungarian books for the NYPL to distribute among those branches in New York which had a Hungarian collection (Tompkins, Hamilton Fish, Yorkville, Woodstock). These books were selected from the Hungarian commercial book list published by Corvina, the paper of the Association of Hungarian Publishers

and Book Trade mentioned above.³⁵ By 1930 this contact had deepened as a result of her efforts to make the relation lively at both sides, this met her second goal.

³⁴ See notes: 10, 17, 25, and further among others: *Literatura*, 6. 1931. 204.; *Corvina*, 60. 1937. (14) p. 48., (34) p. 101.

³⁵ In the Annual Reports of the 1920s she already mentioned the book list selections from the Hungarian book publications based on the Corvina, the information sources of Hungarian book trade, meant 500 works per month going

The second main question in her Hungarian program was the distribution of Hungarian information and making the results of the cooperation of her acquisition work and contacts publicly available.

She tried to reach all strata of the American Hungarian society. From the highly educated intellectuals through the middle class and general audience to the constantly growing working class.³⁶ Of course the basic means and sources were the Hungarian collection for its users in the library. But from a distance for a wider audience the information was presented and transmitted by professional publications—Hungarian bibliographies released in publications of the NYPL and by the press (the most common media of her time being the American Hungarian press). Augusta Markowitz created these tools for information, she prepared annotated lists (bibliographies) on the new books added to Hungarian collection under the title *Recent Additions to Hungarian Collection*, which were published in the *Bulletin of the NYPL Branch Library Book News*. She regularly published them through the 1930s. There were 8 volumes identified by Bob Sink: 1930, 1931, 1932, 1934, 1935, 1939, *Hungarian Additions 1941*. There were two early forerunners: the *Books in the Hungarian language in NYPL Monthly list of Additions* from 1905; and the *Books in the Hungarian language, New York Public Library, Circulation Department Hungarian Book List—A New Yorki Nyilvános Könyvtár Kölcson Osztálya Magyar könyveinek jegyzéke* from 1910. The author is not mentioned in the two early publications, but her authorship is suspected. Further research is suggested to make the information complete.

She sent these book lists, called *Recent Additions*, to many Hungarian papers in Hungary and in the US as well. These book lists were very valuable, they served as a literary compass for American Hungarians and the book trade and libraries as well in the States. These lists were annotated lists with an introduction. These introductions were short but brilliant overviews of Hungarian culture and literature. The 2–3-line long annotations about the individual books told something important about the work's content, type and standard. She signed their place in her short cultural frescoes from Jókai Mór, to Krúdy Gyula, Babits Mihály through Móricz Zsigmond, Erdős René, etc. Augusta Markowitz felt very important the effect of these lists in America and commented in her

to be distributed among the NYPL branches, the lists also were sent to Hungarian newspapers. Further see Annual Reports 1926, 1927, etc.

³⁶ Annual Report 1926, 1927, 1938. See for instance A Népszava könyvei egy nagy amerikai könyvtárban. *Népszava*, 14. 1931. Figyelő melléklet, p. 3. "Hozzánk jutott a The New York Public Library nevű nagy közkönyvtár havi értesítője, amely beszámol legújabb szerzeményeiről. A magyar könyvek során örömmel láttuk Barta Lajos, Kassák Lajos, Szuchich Mária és Révész Béla neveit. A Népszava-kiadványok közül ott vannak a nagy könyvtár polcain Renn: 'Háború', Gorkij: 'Emberek között' és a 'Besúgó', Coster: 'Nászutazás' Melville: 'Dráma a tengeren'. Upton Sinclair: 'Petróleum' és '100%', Swinnerton: 'Estétől-reggelig', Barbusse: 'Jézus', Beer: 'A szocializmus és a társadalmi harcok története' és Mehring: 'Marx Károly élete'. A jegyzékben fölvet, magyar könyvek szakszerű és nagy hozzáértéssel készülő összeállítása Miss Markowitz érdeme, aki magyarországi származású és alapos ismerője a magyar irodalomnak."

1927 Annual Report that “The two Hungarian lists in the Branch Library News, which were reprinted in a number of newspapers, were a great source of the public. They have brought many intelligent readers to the library and created a very marked and articulate desire for a continuous supply of new titles from time to time.” The Budapest press was also delighted with her Hungarian book lists, with the quality of the selection and its style, and with the professionalism of Augusta Markowitz. From the book lists and from the contemporary newspaper interviews we get a clear overview of the character of the content of the Hungarian book collection selected for the American Hungarian collections of the NYPL. [A detailed survey of books purchased by Augusta Markowitz should be the next chapter of the present overview.]³⁷

³⁷ The manuscript ends here with a new chapter title (“What did she purchase”), what follows is only notes, quotations and thought fragments.