23-year search ends with 2 families' reunion

After 23 years of searching, Betty Hester has found her adopted family

again.

This is not the typical searching-forroots story, as Hester's "adopted" clan
is a family of refugees she sponsored
after the 1986 Hungarian Revolution.

After Hester oriented Tibor and Maria Matyas and their young daughter

Adrianna to the American way of life.

Adrianna to the American way of life, a job transfer and subsequent moves separated the Hester and Matyas families for more than two decades. It was only two weeks ago that the Redford Township woman finally was reunited with the Matyas after finding libor's residence listed in a suburban telephone directory. "Can you believe that?" a jubilant Hester asked. "Here we are living in Redford. and they live in Northville." "Now I believe in miracles," Tibor Matyas added.

THE STORY STARTED in December 1956 in Harvey Brown Presbyterian Church in Louisville, Ky.
"The minister talked about the revolution, and he made such a good story, it brought tears to my eyes," Hester recalled.

called.

The registered nurse and mother of five children decided then that she would adopt one of the four families the church was sponsoring. Only two weeks later, the travel-weary Hungari-

weeks later, the travel-weary samponans arrived.
"It was 6 a.m. when I went to the Brown Hotel in Louisville to pick up my new family," she recalled. "We just looked at each other, then I brought

them home for something to eat."

Language was a barrier, and a small an," she said.

Hungarian/English dictionary became the first order of business.

For every English word they miles from Budapest — became inevi-



Betty Hester shares a laugh with Tibor and Maria Matyas. The two families were reunited recently after 23 years of separation.

munist uprisings, the stimulus for the October 1956 revolution that was quelled by Soviet troops. Nearly 200,000 Hungarians fled the country. The Matyas packed an overnight bay folding little more than diapers and a change of clothes for their 17-month old daughter and rode a freight train 150 miles west to the Austrian border to make their escape.

They made their way to Vienna, where they registered with the American Embassy.

"Coming to America was always a

"——" registered with the American Embassy.
"Coming to America was always a dream for me," said Matyas, who works as a design engineer.
Betty Hester recalls that they "arrived on Thursday and Tibor started working the following Monday." Meanwhile, Mrs. Matyas recalled, "Betty taught us everything about America."

She remembers her first visit to the supermarket.

"It was so new to me," she said. "The fresh vegetables in the middle of win-ter were so amazing." Both women laughed remembering how Mrs. Matyas loaded the grocery cart with green peppers.

For an hour Thursday, the three exchanged anecdotes: Hester teaching Mayas how for drive, he deting a fender, the birth of, or drive, he deting a fender, the birth of, or drive, he deting a fender of the birth of, or drive, he deting a fender of the birth of, or drive, he deting a fender of the birth of, or drive, and the sender of the betroit area. Later, she moved to the Detroit area. Later, she moved to Petoskey for a decade before returing to Redford in 1978. Likewise, the Maryas family, which grew with the addition of two sons, moved to Plymouth. Hen Chicago, then Northville in 1978.

"I put ads in the personal columns of newspapers, I called the company that Tibor worked for when he left Louisville, I even called all the Maryas in the phone books in Michigan, 'Hester said. Likewise, Thor Malyas tried to reach Betty Hester, but to no avail.' They finally hit the jackpot two weeks ago. I have a specific the season of the property of the cook up a Hungarian feast for the occasion. 'This party is going to be our thanks to Betty and her family, "We're going to have a good time,' Hester said.

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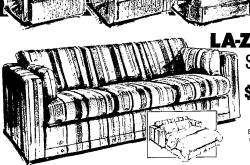
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