

THE HISTORY OF THE BEREZCZ FAMILY

by Endre Németh

In the southeastern part of Transylvania, the Bereczki mountain range stretches in a north-south direction. The snowy peaks are called the Berecz's. In the Haromszék basin in these mountains is the town of Bereczk. [Ed: now Bretcu, Romania]

The Bereczki mountains are full of castle ruins. In the early days, one of these castles was probably the home of the Berecz family. It is from here that this noble, honorable, and heroic family descended. Beneath the snow-covered peaks of the Bereczki range, the Putna river originates. This river does not flow toward Transylvania, but rather toward Moldavia, cutting through a mountain pass.

St. Stephen, who reigned as king after the year 1000, raised three branches of the Berecz family to noble rank, and their properties mentioned above were enlarged. St. László, the king from 1040-1095, raised the rest of the Berecz's to the noble rank and presented them with new lands for outstanding heroism in the battle of Torda.

In 1598, Michael Pálffy drove the Turks out of Győr. There we find the names of three Berecz brothers in the history of the city of Győr. They answered Pálffy's call, and came from Transylvania to help free Győr. The Archduke Maximilian in Vienna wanted to raise the three brothers to noble rank as a reward for their heroic deeds. But, with an old writ, they were able to show that they were already among the nobility. These three young southern Berecz heroes were convinced by trans-Danubian girls not to return to Transylvania. These girls became their wives, and as a result of these marriages, they became large landowners - one beside the Rába river, one beside the Marcal river, and one by the Zala river.

Maria Teresa (1740-80) organized on her Viennese palace grounds a patrol of Hungarian Noble Guards. From this time on, a Berecz was always on duty with this guard detachment. The last time a call was made for such a guard was in the last century when Ferenc Joseph I called to his personal service the son of a Mérges evangelical minister. This last Berecz to be a member of the Hungarian Noble Guard was Imre Berecz. His son, Dr. Antal Berecz, was a diplomat in Vienna. This Doctor of Diplomatic Law spoke and wrote all of the European languages in use at that time - he even knew Turkish perfectly. In this area, no one except me remembers these two men, for they are long since dead.

Editor's note: this brief quasi-legendary history was written by the late Endre Németh in Magyar in 1985. It was translated to English by his cousin (my late father) Victor Berecz.