

TIBORSZÁLLÁS: THE DEVELOPMENT OF A LOCALITY AFTER THE DRAINAGE OF ECSED MARSHLAND

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Abstract. Tiborszállás: the development of a locality after the drainage of Ecsed marshland. The village in the eastern side of the former Ecsed marshland, near to the Hungarian – Romanian state border, Tiborszállás is a typical locality, the setting and the evolution of which is strongly tied to the natural environment (i.e. the resources of the marsh before and after the drainage works). Another component of the development and the prosperity of the locality was the modern farming practised by count Gyula Károlyi, contributing to the advance of the entire region. Thus, the locality formed from a few little settlements begun to develop after 1895-1899, the period, when Ecsed Marshes were drained together with the extension of Károlyi's estate. Now, Tiborszállás is a modern, flourishing locality, the role of which will increase after the European integration of both states.

Key words: Ecsed marshland, Tiborszállás, drainage works, model farming, animal husbandry, population statistics.

The Ecsed Marsh, the most extended wetland in the ciscarpathian lowlands was drained beginning of the first years of 18th century, but mainly during 1895-1899. This area was populated step by step, initially on the margins of the former wetland, and finally the favourable sites, i.e. the elevated banks of the drained marsh have been occupied with the farms. One of these settlements has been Tiborszállás, situated on the eastern part of Ecsed, near the Romanian-Hungarian state border.

1. THE ECSED MARSH: GEOLOGY AND NATURAL HISTORY

The Ecsed Marshland (Fig. 1) was formed on fluvial, Upper Pleistocene basement in the early part of Holocene, 10,000 years ago. The sinking of the area occurred between the actual Szamos (Someş), Kraszna (Crasna) and Tisza (Tisa) rivers along the NW-SE oriented deep fracture lines, attaining maximum rate of subsidence between 5500–2500 years B.C., which corresponds to the beach-tree phase (Karácsonyi, 2003). The extension of the wet area varied in correlation with the geological (vertical) movements and the climatic factors (precipitations, temperature), and with the water supply from the Someş and Crasna rivers, as well.

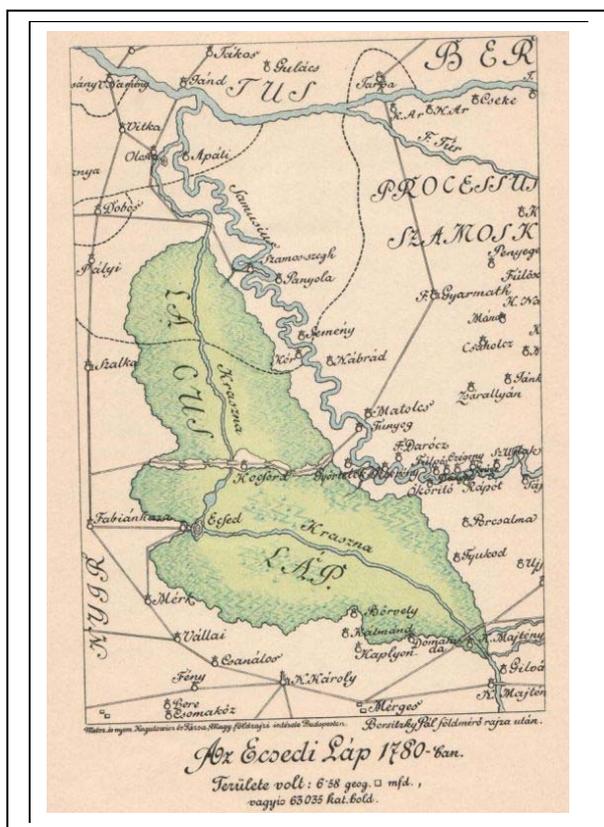


Fig. 1. Map of Ecsed marsh from 1780. The area of the dark coloured surface (the marshland) on the left side of Szamos (Someș) river was 638 sq. miles.

The area of the marsh was measured on several occasions. Thus, professor Géza Czirbusz from grammar school of Nagykároly (Carei) estimated the drained surface to only 130-140 acres before 1899, and the rest of the wetland to 755-805 sqkm (from which 380-400 sqkm represent the surface of the pond). The geographical elevation varies from E to W: at Domahida (Doba) 120 m, at Nagyecsed 97 m. Thus, Ecsed was represented the most extended wetland in the continental Europe, a veritable paradise of the various aquatic flora and fauna (Dankó I., 1994).

The wetland, which was flourishing during ten thousand years, had vanished only in five years, and was populated and cultivated thereafter with all environmental and social consequences. Note, that one third of the former Ecsed marsh is situated in Romania and two thirds on the territory of Hungary (Karácsonyi & Ardelean, 2003).

2. THE KÁROLYIS' AND THE LAND DEVELOPMENT

The Károlyis' is one of the oldest aristocratic families in Hungary. They originated from the Kaplony tribe, which was obtained their properties during the Arpadians' conqueror (9th century A.D.) Now, two of the localities: Nagykároly (Carei) and Kaplony (Cămin) bear the name of these fore-elders.

After the fall of the Rákóczi's freedom fight (1708), the Imperial Treasury confiscated half of Ecsed latifundium. It was repurchased in 1748 by count Ferenc

Károlyi. The other part of this property was sold by Antal Károlyi, the son of Ferenc from the sister of the Prince (Berey, 1988).

The Károlyi family had begun the drainage works in the early 18th century. Some channels were dugged in the 19th century, finalizing the works between 1895-1899. The „Ecsed and Szamos Left Riverside Flood and Inland Water Regulation Society” was led by count Tibor Károlyi, as president and László Péchi, as director-engineer-in-chief (Czirbusz, 1899).

After drainage, a range of farms and little settlements were formed in the eastern part of the wetland: Tibor, Halmos, Péchi, Uray, Zsíros. After some time, the roads between Carei–Mérk–Tiborszállás and Carei–Börvény (Berven)-Ura–Csenger were built.



Fig. 2. The old residence of Károlyis' in Vadaskert, Tiborszállás

3. TIBORSZÁLLÁS: THE RESIDENCE OF COUNT TIBOR KÁROLYI

Tiborszállás is the last of the settlements formed after the drainage of the Ecsed marsh. In present days, the area of the village measures 2556 ha, with 1116 inhabitants. The name of the locality derives from Latin *Tiberius* (Tibor in Hungarian) and „szállás” (lodgings, quarters), see Kálnási (1989). The actual village was formed by joining Halmos, Vadaskert and the central Tiborszállás farms.

Count Tibor Károlyi (1843–1904), his name was owned by the locality, has moved his residence (fig. 2) in Tiborszállás in an unknown date, but according to the reports of the Communal Council, he wrote in April 23, 1864 as follows: „The stone walls of the church of the former village Szent Márton broke down in a few years; now only the crushed stone pile marks their one-time existence” (Entz, 1896).

The development of the localities begun in these years, but it attained his pinnacle during the life of count Gyula Károlyi, prime minister of Hungary between august 21, 1932 and September 21, 1932.

Count Gyula Károlyi established a model farm on his property. In Vadaskert, the centre of silviculture and deer-forest were set up. The count built then his castle and also the horse, cattle and swine husbandries there. In Halmos-tanya and Tiborszállás other animal husbandries and agricultural settlements were formed. The centre of

economic activities was placed at Tiborszállás, with granary, mill, stabling and the house of the farm manager. On both sides of the access road, the farm labourer's dwelling houses were built.



Fig. 3. Tiborszállás: the railway station

After some time, Gyula Károlyi has contributed to the technical development of the entire region with the development of his property. Using his political and economic power, he has promoted the construction of the railway line (fig. 3) between Carei and Csap (Чоп, Ukraine).

The electric power centre of Nagyecséd functioned beginning 1920. (Éri, 1989); in 1924, the electric network was extended to Fábíánháza, Mérc, Váralj and to the castle of Vadaskert. In the central settlement, a steam-mill grinded mais and cereals. In Halmos-tanya, the land was tilled with steam plough, a revolutionary method in the agriculture of that time. The swine breeding was the main productive activity of the Károlyi-farms; there were a stock of 800-900 pigs in three settlements (Fábíán, 1939)

The works of the farm complex were accomplished by 170 families of farm-labourers, directed by three stewards and by the farm manager (Éble G., 1898). They received the medical assistance and the education in the school of the locality free of charge. The personnel of the castle received cloths, full boarding and salary, too. For the new engaged labourer family a dwelling, the firewood, a cow and a swine were given. At weekends, all families received, together with their salary, bread, fat bacon and one bottle of wine. At the beginning of the school program, the pupils were supplied with coat and top-boots (Interweaved persons, 2006).

The Karolyis' has owned the Tiborszállás latifundum until 1945.

4. TIBORSZÁLLÁS: THE END OF POPULATION OF ECSED WETLAND

The Crasna area was populated from ancient time (Dankó 1994), but, there were only isolated settlements, no extended localities. Along the Crasna river, „the

settlements were sparse, with a small number of population, however the territory was populated continuously”, Szirmay wrote (1810).

At the beginning, the settlements have occupied the islands or the backs of the marsh. The oldest human presence is dated between 6,000-8,000 B.P. In the Neolithic period, Ottomány-type culture was recognized at Sárvár, near Nagyecséd town. The written history mentioned the people of Menumoruth there, who were subdued by Hungarian conquerors. In the 12th century, the Cumans of Gutkeled *kenéz* (*cneaz*, leader) were set there. The fortress of Ecséd was built in 1335 on the Sárvár hill. The amount of the population fluctuated because of the natural conditions (the water level, which determines the extension of the cultivable land), the diseases and the armed uprisings. Thus, after Rákóczi’s freedom fight, the census find only twelve men in Ecséd and eight one in Váralj. In 1773, Swabian settlers were colonised in Cămin, Csanálos (Urziceni) and Váralj (Fábián, 1939).

Tiborszállás, as independent locality was mentioned in the census of 1870 with 166 people. According to the official data (Table I), a substantial increase in population begun after the drainage works (1895-1900), when the extension of the Károlyi farms demanded more and more workers.

The fertile land of the desiccated marsh permitted a profitable agriculture feeding the increased population (KSH, 1992). Tiborszállás is an example, in which the well organised farming and the expansion of the cultivable surfaces contributed to the development of the locality and the social condition of the inhabitants, too.

Table I

Year	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910
Population	166	154	177	222	651
Year	1920	1930	1941	1949	1960
Population	659	796	945	1104	1407
Year	1970	1980	1990	2000	2006
Population	1306	1207	1223	1073	1116

After KSH [Central Statistic Office] data, 1992.

Threefold increase in the population in ten years after drainage and continuous increment in number and enrichment of people in Tiborszállás until 1945 was resulted from the enlargement of the Károlyi’s farming complex. The manager employed labourers with large family, mainly from the neighbourhood of Carei and farther from Mezőkövesd and Tiszadada.

A new increase was registered after 1955, when Tiborszállás became an independently administered village. The peak number of inhabitants was reached in 1960. The collectivisation of agriculture, the merging of the Agricultural Cooperative of Tiborszállás and Mérk — and the decrease in the fertility of the soil, the alkalisation and the drying of the climate was followed by a slow, but standing depopulation (Fig. 2). In present days, the high natural growth compensates the mortality and the migration especially of the young people.

The role of this locality will increase in the future through cross-border cooperation after the European integration of both countries.

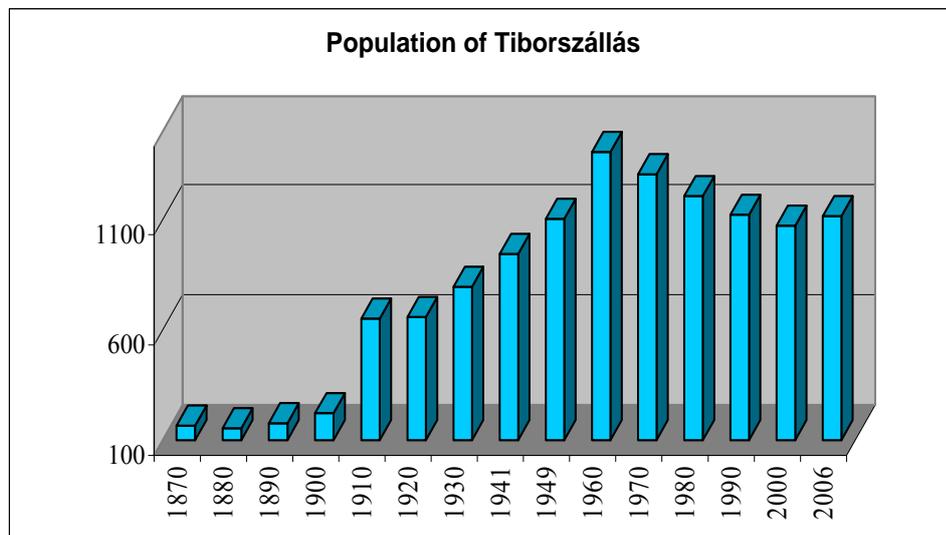


Fig. 4. Evolution of the population of Tiborszállás between 1870-2006, after data of KSH (1992) and of the Mayor Office of Tiborszállás

5. CONCLUSIONS

Tiborszállás is one of the localities, the history of which is strongly tied to the evolution of Ecsed wetland. Its development and the increase in number of inhabitants were determined by the favourable natural condition, the foundation of the Károlyi's estate and the drainage of the marshland. The political and economical power of Count Gyula Károlyi was beneficial to the operation of the model farm, in which the inhabitants of the neighbouring localities were attracted by the profitable working place and safe existence. The technical and infrastructural investments and the humane behaviour of the Count have brought a flourishing locality into existence, which prosper up to the present day.

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- * * * 2007: *Interwieved persons*: Erzsébet Danka (79); István Fügedi (84); Miklós Lippai (80 year old)

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