

History of northern Burgenland

Prehistory and Roman Age

~6000 BC: A number of settlements dated back to the late neolithic age has been found in northern Burgenland, indicating a “dense” population 8000 years ago.

2200 BC - 1800 BC: Significant archeological findings derive from the *Badener Kultur* and *Glockenbecherkultur*.

1300 BC - 1200 BC: The *illyric culture* leaves behind numerous artifacts.

650 BC: Wine-growing has become common in northern Burgenland.

400 BC: The celtic tribe of the *Boier* settles the region. Romans later call them the *Pannonians*.

15 BC: The Roman Empire pushes its borders to the river Danube. The province of *Pannonia* is established.

Between the year 0 and 50 AD, Romans found the cities of *Vindobona* (Vienna), *Scarabantia* (Sopron), *Savaria* (Szombathely) and *Carnuntum* (destroyed). emperor Trajan (98-117 AD) later divides the province and makes Carnuntum the capital of *Pannonia Superior*. Marcomanni tribes invade Pannonia in 166 AD, emperor *Marcus Aurelius* chooses Carnuntum to be his base for coordinating the counteroffensive, he lives there for several years and he dies there in 180 AD. With a population of more than 50.000, Carnuntum is the largest and most important roman city north of the alps by the year 350 AD, when the downfall starts with an earthquake. The city can't recover due to ongoing attacks from *Quadi*, *Marcomanni* and *Sarmantians*, when finally the *Huns* invade central Europe in 375 AD. In 433 AD, Rome has to surrender Pannonia to *Attila the Hun*.

During 450 years of roman government, the rural areas were inhabited by a mixed population of celtic, germanic and roman origin, producing corn, livestock and wine for the cities and military bases. When Pannonia was handed over to Attila, the romans literally left the country, leaving behind uninhabited land and abandoned cities. Only the two cities of *Scarabantia/Sopron* and *Savaria/Szombathely* maintained a small population in the middle of nowhere during the following 600 years of the *great migrations*.



The roman Province of Pannonia

The Great Migrations

The *great migration* is fully in progress, when the Empire of Attila breaks apart soon after his death in 453.

Burgenland is temporarily settled by *Langobards* between 526 and 586; their migration will end in northern Italy.

After the *Huns*, the *Avars* start the second great invasion from central Asia at the end of the 6th century. They unite with the Huns, whose nomadic culture is familiar to theirs.

Like the Huns, the Avars establish the center of their power in present-day Hungary, they discontinue their nomadic life and found a Kingdom that lasts for more than 200 years.

Under Avaric kingship, *Slavic* people settle parts of former Pannonia.

In 791 *Charlemagne* conquers the Avar Kingdom. The *Carolingian empire* sends *bavarian* and *frankish* settlers to its new province of upper Pannonia. The dioceses of *Passau* and *Salzburg* build up clerical organizations.

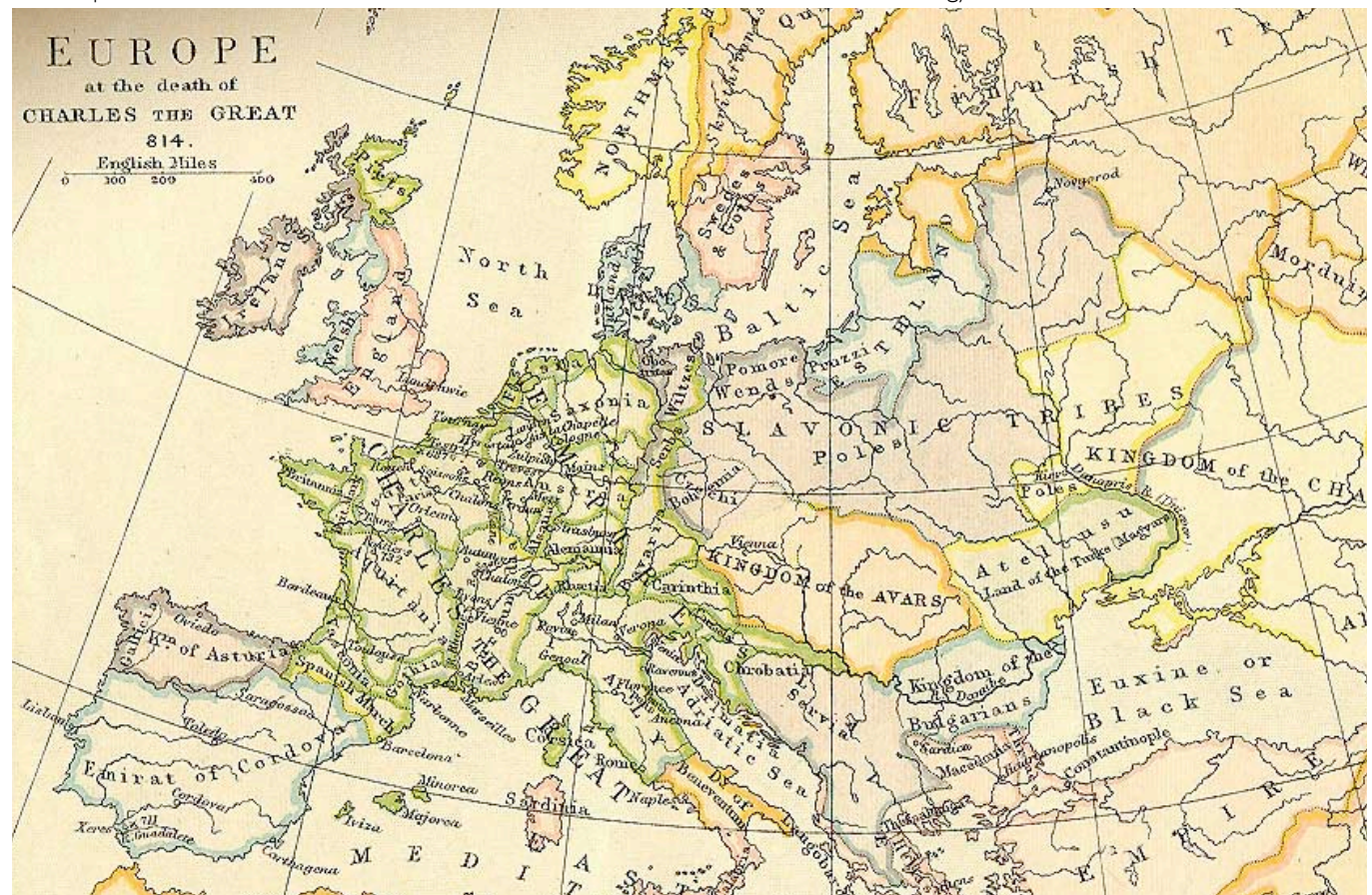
The third great invasion of central asian nomads hits central Europe in 895. The *Magyars*, who fought all their way through eastern Europe from the Ural mountains, destroy the remains of the Avar Kingdom and conquer the carolingian province of upper Pannonia, expelling the bavarian and frankish settlers. Like the preceding Huns and Avars, they take control over Hungary and wage pillaging campaigns all over Europe. The central Magyar territory is surrounded by hundreds of kilometers of no man's land, including Burgenland.



The empire of Attila the Hun



The invasion of the Magyars



The Avar Kingdom and the empire of Charlemagne

The rise of Hungary and the Foundation of Eisenstadt

In december 1000, Pope Sylvester II crowns King Stephen the first of Hungary. He was born in 975, converted to Christianity at the age of 10 and managed to unite all the magyar clans in 997. Stephen discontinues the use of the old magyar runic alphabet and establishes latin as official Language.

In 1050, following the death of King Stephen and austrian campaigns to western Hungary, the border between the Margraviate of Austria and the Hungarian Kingdom is set along the rivers Leitha and Lafnitz, the actual western border of Burgenland to Lower Austria and Styria.

In 1118, Eisenstadt is first mentioned as **Castrum Ferrum**, an “Iron Fortress” to protect Hungary from Austrian attacks.

In 1192, the Austrian Duke Leopold V quarreled with Richard I of England on their crusade in Palestine. Leopold captured Richard on his homeward journey in Vienna and handed him over to the german emperor Henry V. - a ransom of 6000 pailful of Silver was payed. This Ransom was used to build Wv. Neustadt, a heavily fortified town to protect Austria form hungarian attacks.

About 1200 the still mostly uninhabited region of Burgenland is colonized by german settlers from Austria and Styria who accept hungarian authority. They quickly outnumber and assimilate the few hungarian frontier guards who were based there.

In 1241, Mongols of the “Golden Horde” under their Leader Batu, son of Genghis Khan, raid Europe. Due to superior warfare, the Mongols quickly gain control over Russia, Poland and Hungary, when they surprisingly abort their siege of Vienna and leave Europe.



The death of Great Khan Ogedei, ruler of China and brother of Batu, was the reason for the sudden and long time mysterious disappearance of the Mongols.

However, in less than one year of presence, they leave behind great devastation and millions of dead people in eastern and central Europe.

Minor Mortin, a translation of Kismarton, the hungarian Name of Eisenstadt appears first in 1267.

In 1373 Eisenstadt becomes property of the Kanizsay Family. The new owners enforce the city walls, build a new castle with moat and provide town privileges to Eisenstadt. The Kanizsays also found a franciscan monastery and settle jewish families in Eisenstadt.

The Habsburg Emperors and the Ottoman Empire reach out for Hungary.

When the hungarian King *Ludwig I* dies in 1382 without legitimate successor, the *Habsburg* Emperors of Austria begin their struggle to come in possession of the hungarian crown. For the next 500 years, Polish and Bohemian Kings and, most of all, hungarian Princes lead campaigns and revolutions to expel the Habsburgs from Hungary.

The most successful hungarian counter king is *Matthias Corvinus*, who occupies Styria in 1477 and is welcome by the population of Vienna in 1485 as new Emperor of Austria. The very unpopular Aus-

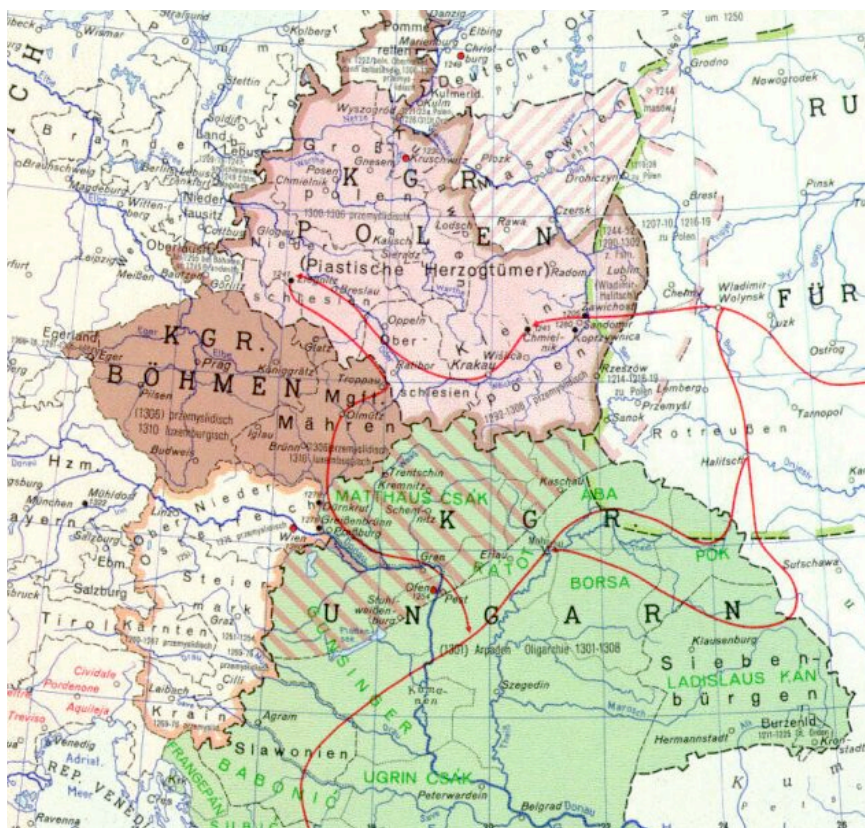
trian *Emperor Frederick III* (the arch sleepy head) flees to Innsbruck and only comes back to power because of the sudden death of *Matthias Corvinus*.

However, *Frederick III* manages to capture most of northern Burgenland in 1445. Eisenstadt remains Habsburg property for more than 200 years.

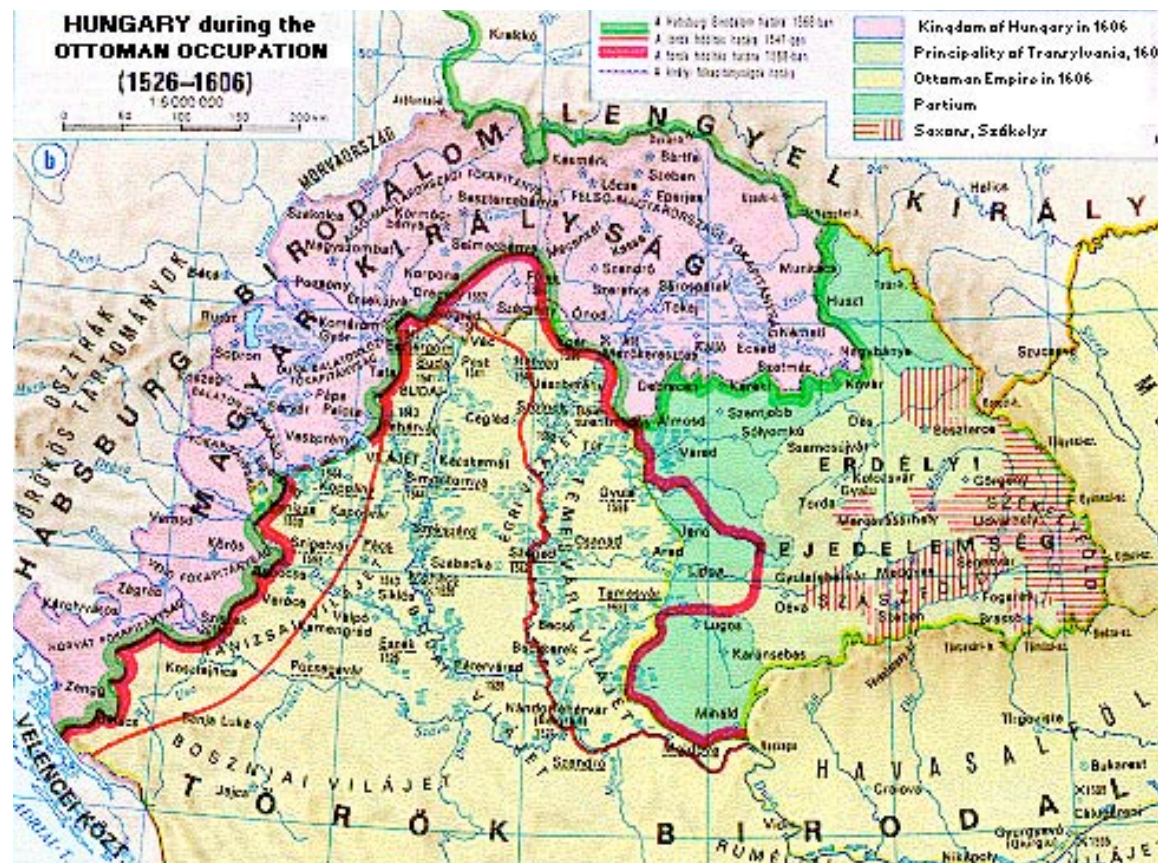
At the beginning of the 16th century, the Ottoman Empire occupies large parts of Hungary, including Budapest. Western Hungary with Burgenland and

upper Hungary (present-day Slovakia) are ruled by the Habsburgs, most of the time.

In 1529 and in 1532 Eisenstadt is devastated by turkish troops moving to Vienna. The turkish campaigns leave a wide passage of destroyed villages in Burgenland. Hungarian Landholders settle croatian refugees who fled from the Turks in Burgenland. From the croatian population around Eisenstadt, the town receives it's third name, *Željezno*, which means iron (adjective).



Hungary and Austria before the conquests of Matthias Corvinus (Matthäus-Csák)



The rise of the Esterházy Princes

The outburst of the *Thirty Years' War* in 1618 brought a new very successful rebellion of the hungarian *Prince Gabor Bethlen* against Habsburg kingship in Hungary.

For the loyalty of *Nicolas Esterházy* to the Emperor in defeating the rebellion, he receives the domain (in pledge) of both Eisenstadt and the county of Forchtenstein-Mattersburg in 1622.

In 1626 Nicolas Esterházy is made Count by the Emperor and the county of Forchtenstein-Mattersburg is assigned to his inheritable property.

In the following years the loyal Count receives a number of counties and domains along the austrian Border.

The Esterházy's also continue to support the jewish community in Eisenstadt, which has been and will be a relatively safe place in times when the cities of Vienna, Budapest, Bratislava or Sopron expel their jewish residents.

After 1622, the *Thirty Years' War* paradoxically brings a time of prosperity and great wealth to Eisenstadt and the whole region of north Burgenland. Tremendous amounts of *Ödenburger* wine are exported to Poland, Sweden and Russia, after all ways to the classic wine-producing countries Italy and France are cut off by the war.

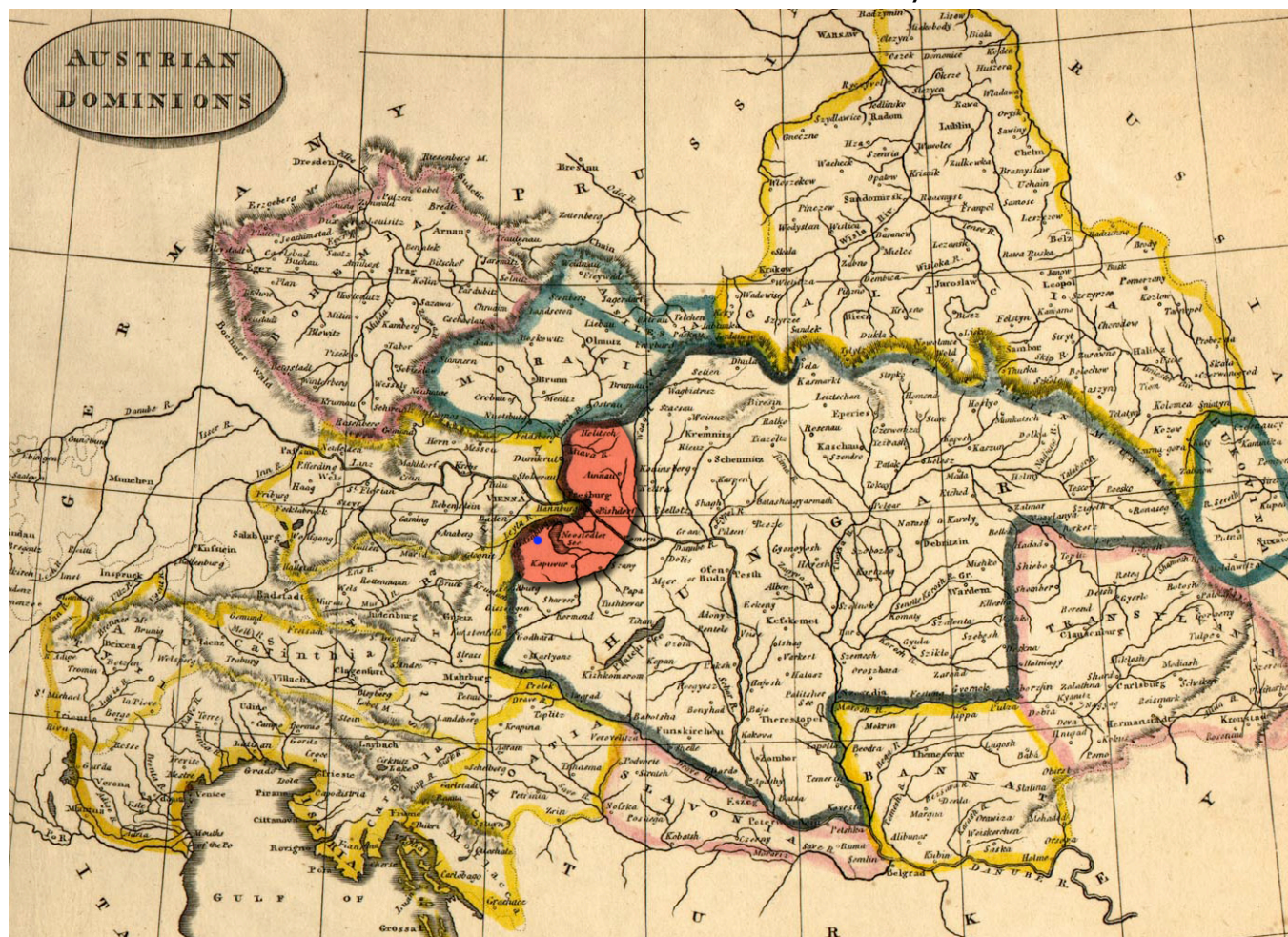
In 1648 the residents of Eisenstadt pay 16.000 Gulden and 3.000 pailful of wine (ca. 180.000 liters) to Emperor Ferdinand III for the elevation to the rank of "*königliche Freistadt*" with seat and voting rights in the hungarian House of Representatives. Thereby the town prevents itself from becoming property of *Count Paul Esterházy*. Nevertheless, Paul Esterházy makes Eisenstadt his residential town and employs Artists and Architects from Italy to rebuild the Palace.

In 1683, during the second turkish siege of Vienna, Eisenstadt is devastated again.

The loyalty of Paul Esterházy to the Emperor in the siege of Vienna awards him the title of a (ruling) Prince and even more land in Hungary. He accumulates fabulous wealth and establishes the Esterházy Family among the high european aristocracy.

From their residence in Eisenstadt, the several Princes of Esterházy temporarily rule over Hungary as Palatines (vice king).

The Esterházy Principality never becomes a cohesive region, their properties are spread all over Hungary. However, there is a very high density of Esterházy properties along the borders of Lower Austria in the 17th and 18th century.



The Austrian Dominions and the Esterházy properties in the 18th century

The hungarian struggle for Independence

After the turkish Army has been defeated in Vienna in 1683, the austrian *Emperor Leopold I* conquers all of Hungary and ends the Ottoman occupation.

The complete annexation of Hungary by the austrian Emperor raised resistance within the hungarian Nobility. From 1703 to 1711 an alliance of hungarian Princes fights the Emperor. Prince Paul Esterházy is again loyal, many of his properties are severely hit by the insurgents.

In 1761 *Prince Nicolas I Esterházy* employs *Joseph Haydn* as "Vizekapellmeister", five years later he becomes conductor of the princes' orchestra. Haydn buys a house in Eisenstadt and spends a lot of time in town.

In 1809 *Napoleon* occupies Austria. He offers *Prince Nicolas II Esterházy* to become King of an independent Hungary. Nicolas rejects the offer, organizes a regiment of volunteers instead and assists *Emperor Franz I* in defeating Napoleon in Aspern.

Prince Nicolas II later proves not to be a good businessman, he manages to lose the fabulous wealth of the Esterházy Family in the economical crisis following the Napoleonic Wars.

He has to discontinue his royal household in the Palaces of Eisenstadt and Esterházy and furtheron lives in the family palais in Vienna.

In 1844 the use of Latin as official language ends, the the process of the awakening self-awareness of the different nationalities within the austro-hungarian Empire is fully in progress.

In 1848 and 1849, the Revolution in Hungary eliminates serfdom and secures civil rights. Attempts to extend the

revolution to liberate Hungary from the Habsburg Emperor are beaten down with the help of Russian troops.

In 1865 lake Neusiedl dries up completely. The new land is already divided into lots and in crop, when the water returns six years later.

In 1867, when the Austrian *Emperor Franz Joseph II* is weakened by the wars against Prussia, France and Italy, Hungary finally manages to become an autonomous part of the austro-hungarian Empire. After 480 years of struggle against its Habsburg rulers, Hungary is now only connected to Austria by its common army.

In 1890 the vine pest destroys almost all of the vineyards in Burgenland, many are not renewed.

In 1897 the Railway Sopron - Eisenstadt - Bratislava is opened.

By the end of the century, the hungarian autonomy is becoming very nationalistic. Soon after establishing hungarian as official language, writing in other languages is widely prohibited.

Millions of Slovak, Croatian and German people who lived in hungarian territory for centuries are "magyarized", voluntarily or by force.



The Constitution of Burgenland

In 1906, nationalist austrian groups raise claims to take four western hungarian counties adjacent to Austria. The demanded counties are:

- Pressburg (hung. Pozsony, slovak. Bratislava)
- Wieselburg (hung. Moson)
- Ödenburg (hung. Sopron)
- Eisenburg (hung. Vas)

The new region is called *Vierburgenland* according to the german names of the counties. Later it is shortened to Burgenland.

None of the four castles, that gave their name to the hungarian counties and to Burgenland is actually in Burgenland.



In 1918, after the austro-hungarian Empire and Germany have been defeated in World War I, 100 german communities in western Hungary found a political platform to join Austria.

In 1919 Austria signs the *Treaty of St. Germain*, It contains a passage that announces to assign the german communities of western Hungary, unofficially called Burgenland, to Austria as soon as Hungary signs its treaty.

In 1920 Hungary signs the *Treaty of Trianon*, in which the allied forces determine the conditions of hungarian reparation payments and the cession of Hungary, including the surrender of Burgenland.

In August 1921, at the day of handing over, paramilitary squads supported by the hungarian government occupy Burgenland and fight against incoming austrian Police who back out.

After italian procurement, Hungary commits to withdraw the paramilitary squads from most parts of Burgenland except the designated capital Sopron, where the residents should decide in an election between Austria and Hungary.

The poll in December brings a clear vote for Hungary. Austrian complaints about irregularities at the election continued for decades.

After Burgenland joined Austria stripped of any major urban center, the administration provisorily moves into several mansions at the swanky health resort of *Bad Sauerbrunn* and the to the former Military Academy in Eisenstadt.

In 1925 the local parliament of Burgenland elects Eisenstadt as the new seat for the government. In a turbulent election campaign, the main rival *Mattersburg* withdrew its candidacy just days before the poll to conduct a double-candidacy together with neighboring Bad Sauerbrunn.

In the 1920ies, emigration to the United States reaches its maximum. South Burgenland loses almost a quarter of its population due to emigration between 1890 and 1940.

In 1929 the administration and the local Parliament moves into the freshly opened *Landhaus* in Eisenstadt.

In 1938 Austria joins the *Third Reich* and Burgenland is suspended. The north becomes a part of Lower Austria, which is renamed to *Niederdonau*, south Bgld. becomes a part of Styria.

Only months after the *Anschluss*, all jewish residents of Eisenstadt had to flee or were carried off to concentration camps.

In 1944, the *US Airforce* bombs Eisenstadt, causing wide devastation and many dead.

In april 1945 soviet troops occupy eastern Austria. Burgenland is reconstituted in october from cession to Lower Austria and Styria on request of the soviet occupation forces, since they have to withdraw from Styria, which has been assigned as British territory.

In 1948 construction of the “B50”, the central Road that crosses Burgenland all the way from north to south, starts.

In 1955 Austria and the Occupation Forces sign the *Staatsvertrag*, thus marking the end of soviet occupation in Burgenland.

The rise and fall of the Iron Curtain

In 1957 construction of the *Antifascist Barrier*, later called the *Iron Curtain* starts. Thousands of kilometers of barbed wire, watchtowers and minefields separate eastern Europe from western Europe for the next decades. Burgenland comes to rest at a dead end, its rural areas cut off the regional centers in western Hungary.

After accidents with washed away mines far away from the minefields, Hungary removes the ticking bombs along the austrian border between 1965 and 1971.

In 1971 Environmentalist protests against the construction of a road crossing Lake Neusiedl mark the beginning of a green movement in Austria.

In 1989 the Iron Curtain finally falls. Hungary removes the barbed wire and dismantles the watchtowers, while Austria starts to station troops at the other side of the border.

In 1995 Austria joins the European Union. Burgenland is granted the Status *Ziel I Gebiet*, allowing it to request for special EU-funds for infrastructural and economical improvement.

In 1999 the foundation of *EUREGIO West/Nyugat Pannonia* provides a new platform for cooperations of Burgenland and the hungarian counties Győr-Moson-Sopron, Vas and Zala.

In 2004 Hungary joins the EU. Discontinued customs declaration at the hungarian border allow for almost *free movement of goods*.

Free movement of people is still prevented by employment regulations and the *Schengen Protocol*.

When Hungary joins the Schengen-States in 2006 or 2007 all checkpoints at the border will be removed. The lapse of uncertain holding times at the checkpoints will cause an increase of regional traffic between austrian villages and hungarian cities along the border.

Hungary wants to join the *Monetary Union* in 2008. Again, local population along the border will benefit most.

In 2011 the reciprocal barriers in labour market between Austria and Hungary will cease. This removes the last great bureaucratic hurdle in everyday life for people at both sides of the former "dead end".

