

## CERNĂTEȘTI – DOLJ FORTIFIED HOUSE

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**Abstract.** *The fortified houses of old landowners are truly unique for the Romanian and foreign architecture. Of the approximately 40 fortified houses existing in Oltenia, about 12 still exist today. Out of these fortified houses a central role was played by the fortified house of Cernătești – Dolj County, which was built between 1570-1580 and belonged to the boyar family Cernătescu. Cernătești Village was attested in 1500. During the past centuries this large family, economically numerous and akin to other great boyar families gave the country, magistrates, doctors, teachers, soldiers, artists, etc. One of the personalities of the family was General Doctor Jean Cernatecu, participant in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871. In 1972 this fortified house became the Municipal Museum of Cernătești.*

**Keywords:** *Mircea the Old, Michael the Brave, Carol I, cula, King Carol I.*

Fortified houses and noblemen's mansions or villas were home types of feudal lords and landlords, gradually marking also some Eastern influences (16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries) and Western influences (starting with the 18<sup>th</sup> century)<sup>1</sup>.

“Fortified houses” (Koyla-turn), ancient noblemen's homes, are truly unique in the Romanian and European architecture. They can still be seen today in many villages, representing the most ancient and characteristic form of rural housing<sup>2</sup>.

Fortified houses should be analysed within the context of large geographical spaces. The qala (Kala) is the type of Iranian fortified house. The term is used more often in Turkish, Iranian and throughout the near and Middle East. In fact, the term “kule” from the Turkish language is closest to the term “cule” in Romanian. It is widespread in the toponymy of Turkmenia, Tajikistan, the Caucasus and Crimea up to the surroundings of Tehran. All the old and new Persian dictionaries state the term meaning as fortress, citadel or castle, which is assigned an Arabic origin<sup>3</sup>.

In today's Persian dictionaries the term has also the meaning of village fortified with walls of clay; this sense is found frequently in modern literature and Persian folklore. The corners have round towers, and in one of the walls there is a huge wooden door with a tower above the Karaul (guard)<sup>4</sup>.

Settlements in Afghanistan are equipped with high walls and heavy gates supported by large rocks at night. In the Afghan language all the villages are called cal-a (kelai)<sup>5</sup>.

The cities of Turkmen khanates were surrounded by three fathom wide and 6-8 fathom high walls; they had several gates mounted on stone pillars and a defence tower (kunga) which remind of the appearance of small fortresses (kala)<sup>6</sup>.

In the context of historical circumstances known to the entire Balkan region (from Turkish Asia to Albania, the Dalmatian coast), this type of fortified house with walls barely punched out by very narrow openings was spread in the Oltenia region, here being different in comparison to the Albanian, Serbian, Bulgarian, Macedonian etc. fortified houses<sup>7</sup>.

Fortified houses in Oltenia are a free site citadel, standing on a ridge or a prominent place to ensure surveillance of roads, fields and forests. Looking more similarly to the Mediterranean fortified house, “the Romanian fortified constructions got rid of the grim threatening appearance”, Nicolae Iorga stated<sup>8</sup>.

The Romanian fortified houses are buildings that can be found mainly between the Danube, the Carpathians and right side of the Olt river. On the left bank of Olt, in Muntenia, they gradually disappear. They have great historic and architectural value and play an important social role. The fortified house (Romanian “cula”) is a type of fortified dwelling widespread especially in Oltenia in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, having 3-4 tiers linked by an interior staircase. It is built on square or rectangular shape, and the ground floor, occupied by warehouses, generally has few or no windows.

Fortified houses have several levels and were built on high places. It was intended that, from a small area, the visual field could perceive the surrounding obstacles, providing remote visibility and freedom and at the same time, creating a space that could be used in case of refuge emergency. During researches, there have not been found any fortified houses with more than four levels. Their inner structure was created directly related to the functions that had to be met: permanent or temporary residence and refuge.

The status of fortified building, as a measure of defence against invading hordes and against potential popular revolts cannot be disputed: “All the fortified houses are provided with battlements (some large openings inwards and barely perceptible outside the walls), where guns were shooting towards any part of the yard. In the cellar there was the

<sup>1</sup> Gh. Focșa, Ioan Godea, *Arhitectura Gorjului*, Editura de Vest, Timișoara, 2002, p. 157.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 158.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 159.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 161.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*.

fountain so that in case of attack the owner should not be forced to surrender due to lack of water. The doors, which are preserved with most of the fortified houses, are of heavy oak, bound with iron bars and are heavily moving.”<sup>9</sup>

In Oltenia, there existed approximately 40 fortified houses out of which 28 were destroyed due to harsh weather, foreign invasions or the owners who gave up on them for financial reasons, so that these fortified houses left behind were ruined until the foundation was the only thing left of them. At present there are about 12 fortified houses in a state of good or less good preservation, being registered by the Historical Monuments Commission and requiring special attention and protection.

Of the many Oltenian fortified houses that existed between 14<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and which have been largely lost, we think the fortified house of Cernătești -Dolj County deserves a special mention.

When visiting Cernătești village today one cannot miss such a building which contrasts with the others, both in form and appearance, especially since it is located right in the middle of the village on the hillside Obedeanu (Calu), near the school, at about 60 m away from Craiova – Grecești road. The building today is known as the Municipal Museum of Cernătești<sup>10</sup>.

The village which was once called Cernătești, has been mentioned in documents since the year 1500. Its existence is certified by historical maps representing the administrative form of the villages between the years 1500-1600. It is located 35 km away from Craiova, along the old road that connected Craiova with Cernețiu, passing through Breasta, Cernătești, the Corz valley, Bâcleș Izvorălu highlands, Plopi, Erghevița, Cerneți. It is said that this road dates probably since the time of Mircea the Elder and used to link the two towns with Craiova.<sup>11</sup>

If we follow this road, we find that it is the shortest, straightest and safest. With the building of the Turnu Severin - Craiova – Bucharest railroad it was also drawn the road used today, passing through Strehaia, Filiași, Craiova, and the old road was abandoned.<sup>12</sup>

Being a small borough, Cernătești allowed merchants who lived there to trade with countries across the mountains. For this, they collected the goods from the villages situated on the old road. Settlements around the Cernătești village were the most prominent as merchants came here to buy cattle, furs, honey, wax and other products that they transported across mountains, passing through Orșova (paying customs fees) or by Strehaia, Broșteni, Cloșani, Motru or Bistra Mărului Valley, towards Caransebes or Lugoj. In order to facilitate the collection of goods, these itinerant buyers built their settlements closer to producers. One such merchant, known by the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century under the name of Demetrius – and because he came to Cerneți he was named Demetrius Cernat (after the Cerneți borough) – and built a house in Trestenic village (today’s Cernătești).<sup>13</sup>

Historical sources state that during the reign of Michael the Brave (1593 - 1601) there were fierce battles with the Turks at the Horse Hill and Iancu’s Glade, whose boundary also included the village Trestenicul (today Cernătești), which was burned down and whose inhabitants were pillaged and murdered. Tradition says that Demetrius Cernat would flee. Still he seems to have confided his little suckling child to a maid who managed to save him, raising it as a real mother until the parents came back. Caressing the child, the maid named him "Micu” (the little one). Upon coming back, the merchant Cernat and his son built a two levelled fortified house on the hillside Obedeanu, to defend themselves against the repeated Turkish attacks. By the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, a descendant of Demetrius Cernat overelevated the building with another level, strengthening it as a veritable fortress that could withstand external attacks.<sup>14</sup>

This is proved by the materials used, which differ greatly from the old masonry. By legacy the house was included in the Cernăteștilor family heritage, which brought some changes. The retired teacher Nicolae Parvulescu recalled in 1972 that his great-grandmother who lived more than 90 years, told him about the Cernătești fortified house that it was reinforced by a massive masonry buttress in the late 1800 by her grandfather, who was a mason. This buttress, which can still be seen today, is located at the southeast corner and supports the two adjacent walls. Over its upper end there was built a wooden balcony on beams encased in masonry. It was still then when the roof was restored and spread over the balcony.<sup>15</sup>

The construction dominates the whole Raznic valley, eastward to Predești and westward to Tiu. It used to be part of a whole household: the mansion, outbuildings, sheds, warehouses, stables, etc., surrounded by high fences like a fiefdom. With the passing years these have been demolished to the foundation, remaining only the fortified house as a testimony to the turbulent history of these places. By antiquity, architecture, reliability and location, the Cernătești fortified house is one of the most interesting of its type.<sup>16</sup>

It consists of ground floor and two upper floors. The ground floor has a basement, three steps down from the outside, with a ceiling made of double crossed solid oak beams. The entrance is directly from outside the fortified house, through a heavy oak double door (two levels), which is locked up with two wooden poles. The cellar can also be

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 157.

<sup>10</sup> Iancu Anastasescu, Valeriu Grama, *Culele din Oltenia*, Editura „Scrisul Românesc”, Craiova, 1974, p. 77.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 77-78.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 78.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 78-79.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 79.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 80.

accessed from the inside. The fortified entrance is made directly on the same facade as the cellar entrance. From the staircase there can be accessed the upper levels. The scale is made of massive oak logs, embedded in the walls once with the building of the fortified house.<sup>17</sup>

On the first floor there was initially only a small hall and a square room and, with oak beamed ceilings, apparently worked. When the multi-layering was made, the little hall was been transformed into stairwell to access the second floor porch. The porch is made in wood, the pillars are carved with the axle, with no decorations, and the hand rail (parapet) is made of pine boards.<sup>18</sup>

The balcony is placed on the east front side of the fortified house and extends through a narrower gallery surrounding the building in the north and west; here is also made the access to the sanitary outbuildings. On the top floor there are two rooms, probably one for housing and another for a kitchen, taking into account the cooking stove that was found on the occasion of the restoration. The top floor has apparent beam ceiling, plugged with oak boards that were later on replaced with pine boards, the windows are very small, almost square. At the upper end of the scale there used to be a trap latched with a timber fastener.<sup>19</sup>

The house is made of narrow brick and lime mortar. The interior walls do not overlap, each of them is built separately on the lower level embrasure, supported by oak beams, which in time got worn out and gave rise to their release and collapse. The roof is high. With multi-layering there was built only one chimney for two fireplaces, in the kitchen and living room. Deserted, the fortified house of Cernătești had reached a state of ruin.<sup>20</sup>

The decorative architectural frame of the interior is completed by pieces of carved furniture, wooden and wrought iron house utensils, original ceramics, with varied and perfect shapes, discreet and harmonious polychromy, elegant and subtly stylized ornaments, showing the remarkable skill of the potters in the region; they are supplemented by fabrics and garments made of hemp, cotton, wool and raw silk, which are simple and often combined in a great variety of models with rich polychrome decorations that are vivid, clear and lovely.<sup>21</sup> There are also exhibited a raw silk towing machine, a cradle, a loom realized on the occasion of winter holidays.

This fortified house belonged to the Cernătescu family and the last family member, Jeana, came back to Romania in 1990 after an absence of 30 years and tried to fill an important part of the family tree that had its origins in Craiova, in 1943, together with her cousin Ionel Herescu, based on certifying documentation and clues found in the archives of some family members. She also put together a photo album of her family members born before 1900, which she donated to the museum in the fortified house of Cernătești.

The Cernătescu family was documentary attested for the first time around 1700 by Mihai Balica, a sword bearer who was married to Dumitrana and had a son named Ion. From his marriage there were born 7 children: Nicolae, Uta (had three husbands - Pleșoianu, Stolojan and Constantin), Anica (had two husbands - D. Poenaru, Burileanu), baker Ion Micu (1789-1859) married to Balasa Isvoreanu (1789-1869), Dumitrana married to Zaman, had two children - Haralamb and Costache, Mariuta married to Mitulescu and Stancuta married to Paraianu Mitica from Gorj.<sup>22</sup>

Baker Ion Micu Cernătescu's marriage with Balasa Isvoreanu resulted in 11 children: Ionita (1815-1883), Anastase married to Catherine Iota, Iorgu married to Elena Iovitz, Nae (1818-1894), Petrache (1824-1892) married to Susanna Căprianu, Elena (1821-1911) married Săulescu, Grigore (1827-1908), Dimitrie (Tache), George (1829-1876) died in Austria, Costică (1831-1893) and Mariuta married Țenovici. Anastase's marriage to Catherine resulted in four children: Alexandrina married to Ramniceanu with whom had a daughter, Titica, married to General Scărișoreanu with who had two children - Ticu and Fanica. Elena married Săulescu had 6 children: Constantine, Nae, Nuta, Mili, Veta married Papazolescu and Elena (three husbands - Păunescu, Geblescu, Mihăescu). Elena's marriage to Geblescu resulted in two children. Nuta married first to Vicol and had a daughter Angela, married to Col. Anastasiu and had three children: Astrela and two sons. Elena married a second time to Staicovici and had a daughter Vicenta who married Sigmireanu and had two children: Gheorghe and Ionel (1890-1950) who married Ecaterina Manolescu.<sup>23</sup>

Ioniță Cernătescu (1815-1883) married Elena Maldarescu (1826-1900) and adopted a daughter named Elena (1865-1922), who was Anastase C.'s daughter, married to Dr. Grigore Georgescu Dima (1845-1936), with whom she had two daughters: Aurora and Angela. Aurora married G. Manolescu, deputy and prefect in Dolj county, resulting two children: Tudor (1907-1987) who had two marriages – this first wife called H. Floreșteanu and the second wife was V. Radian, with whom he had two children: Aurora (married to Sergiu Georgescu and had one son, Calin) and Nicolae, who at first married Adr. Hurezeanu and a second time married Doina Pop. Nicolae and Doina had a daughter named Miruna. Alexandrina (Dindina) (1900-1967) was married to General Aurel Aldea, King Michael's adjutant, who died in Aiud. Angela (1882-1967) married T. Maldarescu (deceased in 1968), resulting in four children: Michael (1906-1976), Florica (1907-1987), Ileana (n.1908) married to Col. C. Zamfirescu (1900 - 1952) with whom she had a daughter,

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 81.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 81.

<sup>21</sup> Gh. Focșa și Ioan Godea, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. „Genealogiei familiei Cernătescu” in Jana Cernătescu, *Autoportret cu pisică*, Editura Victor Frunză, București, 2004.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*.

Angela (1941) who married Netotea, they divorced in 1980; they had two sons: Razvan (1970) and Tudor, unmarried, died in 1982.<sup>24</sup>

Nae Cernătescu (1818-1894) was married the first time to Elena Pestișu (1826-1855) and had a son Ion Micu (Jean) Cernătescu (1849-1943) married to Elena Gane (1856-1944). Nae got married a second time to Tudorita Malciu (1833-1919) and had five children: Maria, Petre, Eugenia, Eufemia and Nicolae. Maria (1864-1944) got married to I. Budurescu (1857-1901), attorney general at the Court of Appeal of Craiova. Peter (1871-1948) got married to E. Prejbeanu and had three children: Gabriela, Petrica and Olga. Gabriela's first husband (1891-1967) was G. Matei and her second husband was Col. Georgescu. Gabriela and Matei had two children: Gabi and Geta. Gabi (1913 - 1967) got married to Radu Pop at first and the second time with Găvănescu, with whom she had a son - Mihai (1937) who married Magdalena Macris (1942), their marriage resulting in two sons: Radu (1972) and Florin (1968). Geta (1913-1962) got married twice, the first time to Orman and the second time to Duran. Olga (1894-1984) had two husbands - M. Graur and F. Bălțeanu (with him she had a son named Zefir (1924-1967)). Eufemia (1856-1931) was married to Branețu, resulting two daughters – Aretie and Angela. Aretie (1882-1911) got married to Captain Melinescu and had a son named Gigi, who died at the age of five. Angela (1891-1980) married to Dr. Becherescu and had two children, Lidia – married at first to Doctor and Negrețu and the second time to T. N. Ionescu; Mircea (1922) had two wives - Julieta and Gica. Nicolae (Nae) (1868-1947) got married to Christine Lion (1885-1958) and had a daughter Maria-Ioana (1925) who married N. Pop (1924).<sup>25</sup>

General Doctor Ion Micu Cernătescu (1849-1943) married Elena Gane (1856) and had five children: Victoria, Lucia, Sila (Bebe), Lelia and Eugen. Victoria (Rica) (1883-1975) married Șuculescu (1875-1917) and had five children: Gabriela, Titu (1905), Mandi, Elena and Gicu. Gabriela (1903-1993) married Ovidiu Plesoianu (1871-1971) and had two twin infants who died one in 1937, the other in 1938 and a daughter Gabriela (1942) who married Popescu, who in turn had a daughter named Manina (1970). Mandi (1907-1987) married I. Negoescu (1901-1979), they had a son Alexandru (1944), and the latter had a son Matei (1977). Elena (Lilica) (1906) married Artular, had a child Mariki (1942), who got married to Stroe. Gicu (1908-1994) married Zina and then J. Ghica Deleni (1910-1999). Lucia (1886-1981) married Stăncescu had four children: Geta, Dan, Adriana and Marilena. Geta (1914-1971) married Soare (1905-1992) had two children: Ioana and Stefan. Ioana (1940) married Claudiu Mott (1932) and had two children: Paul (1970) and Claudiu (1974). Stefan (1942) married Virginia and had two children: Vlad (1977) and Ioana (1979). Adriana (1919) married Stanculescu and had 2 children: Anca and Irinel. Anca married Banciu and had a daughter Cristina (1976), and Irinel married Bucurescu and had a daughter Iuliana (1975). Lelia got married to Dinu Negrea and had three children: Costinel (1907-1986), Radu and Lica Elena (1913-1998). Eugen (1898-1991) got married to Nadejda Voronof (1922).<sup>26</sup>

In Craiova, in the nineteenth century, the Cernătești neighbourhood included Calea Severin, Domnitei Street, Sineasca and Amaradiiei. Originally from Cernătești – Dolj County, where they owned a large estate and an Oltenian fortified house in the eighteenth century, formed a true family neighbourhood around the Saint Mina, St. John Sebastian and St. Nicholas Belivacă churches in Craiova. Being a large family, economically numerous and akin to other great boyar families, during the past two centuries they gave the country several magistrates, doctors, secondary and university professors – Petre and Radu Cernătescu, generals Aurel Aldea, Costica Scărișoreanu, Colonel Grigore Cernătescu, politicians - G. Manolescu deputy and prefect of Dolj county, Aura Maria Cernina – lyrical artist and painter Jeana Cernătescu.

Of these famous individuals who are part of the Cernătești family we ought to mention Dr. General Ion Micu (Jean) Cernătescu, who participated in the Franco-Prussian war, escaped the guillotine and returned to the country.

Ioan Micu (Jean) Cernătescu was born in Craiova in 1849. He studied at the Obedeau primary school in Craiova, St. Sava high school in Bucharest and the Faculty of Medicine in Paris.<sup>27</sup>

On the 19th of July 1870 the Franco-Prussian war broke out, when he obtained his diploma and attended the Paris Commune. Francophile and Bonapartist like most Romanians at that time, he voluntarily joined the garrison in Paris, as ambulance physician in the Health Service. There followed the capitulation of Sedan on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September 1870, then on the 4<sup>th</sup> of September the Republic was proclaimed and the government of national defence was formed, led by Jules Favre, Thiers, Gambetta. Events rushed up. Over two weeks two German armies initiated the siege of Paris. The National Guard battalions were formed and the Parisians tried several times to take power from the reactionary government of national defence. These were futile attempts. In February 1871, chief executive Thiers and foreign minister Jules Favres signed a preliminary document until the peace treaty of Versailles with Bismarck. France lost Alsace and Lorraine and paid 5 billion francs for reparations and maintenance costs of the German occupation troops. On March 1, Prussian troops reached Paris. Streets were deserted; shops were closed as a sign of national mourning. France mourners waved flags on houses. After about 60 hours Prussians withdrew from Paris. Popular unrest began in the town. On the 28<sup>th</sup> of March 1871 there has been proclaimed the Paris Commune. Meanwhile, Jean Cernătescu remained faithful to the French imperial army. Barricaded in the Grand Hotel from Place 1 – Opera, he and his comrades faced the Communards' investment until they consumed all the hotel supplies. Hungered, they raised the

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>27</sup> Paul Rezeanu, *Craiova. Amintirile orașului*, Editura Alma, Craiova, 2006, p. 159-163.

white flag and fraternized with them. Furthermore, they sang “La Carmagnole” and signed the First International Manifest.<sup>28</sup>

For nearly two months, Jean Cernătescu was a communard. Being a doctor, at first, he was appointed chief nurse of the Lascars, and then adjutant of the fleet commander on the Seine, who was a shoemaker. The fighting with Thiers’ Versailles people was unequal and desperate. Barricades had fallen one after another. In the last decade of May, the resistance army was defeated by the Versailles. One Tuesday, May 23, the communard Jean Cernătescu was taken prisoner and thrown into prison.<sup>29</sup>

Since almost a year before, when he had voluntarily enrolled the French imperial army, he had made an oath of allegiance, he was judged as a traitor and as one who fraternized with the enemy. The Court-Martial sentenced him to death by firing. A few days later a French priest gave him “l’extreme onction”. Together with other convicts in prison he was waiting to be “called out” and for their “departure” to execution in the Pere Lachaire cemetery. Daily, the “geolier” in the doorway was calling out those who were to leave towards execution. In about two weeks he shouted from the threshold a single name, “Cernătescu Jean!”. After embracing and saying goodbye to his comrades, he followed the jailer. However who was waiting for him beyond the door was ... a German patrol. He was handed to a German Feldwebel who threw a cap on his head, clothed him with a Prussian coat reaching down to earth, he put a rifle on his shoulder and taking up with the patrol got out the gate of the prison. In the street outside he was expected by a German unit armed to the teeth, commanded by a colonel who welcomed him with great friendship.<sup>30</sup>

Finding out the trouble Jean Cernătescu got into, the family got worried. How could they rescue him? Eventually the solution was found. His father's brother, Petrache Cernătescu (1824 - 1892) was then a world history teacher at the Faculty of Letters in Bucharest and Romanian language teacher and Romanian history teacher for Prince Carol I. He told the Prince his nephew was in trouble and asked him to help him if possible. And he did help him. Thus, Carol remembered that at that time Field Marshal Count Edwin von Manteufel was the German military commander in France, and hence of Paris as well. Taking into account they had met at the Military Academy in Potsdam and had excellent relationships, he turned to him. Then, Field Marshal von Manteufel gave an order that the so-called German Jean Cernătescu be sought and set free because he had been abusively imprisoned by the French army that had eliminated the Paris Commune. The order, as well as the name of the so-called German, was known only by the Feldwebel in charge. He looked through the prisons of Paris and forced the jailers to tell him the names of detainees. When he found Jean Cernătescu, he proceeded as previously shown under the pressure of weapons. Over two days, the communard sentenced to death got on a German train and was sent “package-like” to Strasbourg. From there, free as a German subject, he travelled back to Romania.<sup>31</sup>

Returning to his home country, Jean Micu Cernătescu settled in Craiova and became military doctor. Married to Elena Gane, he had five living children. During our war of independence he was commissioned by General Doctor Carol Davila with the organization and management of hospitals in Craiova, receiving the wounded from the company. He, then, owned the rank of Major. Subsequently he reached a higher rank, up to General. He retired in 1910, became a member of the Conservative Party and continued to live in Craiova, in the house on Calea Severin No. 36, no longer practicing medicine. He had a beautiful estate in the county of Romanati, Câmpeni village – Bals, to which he gave a special attention. Gen. Doctor Ioan Micu Cernătescu died in Craiova in 1943, at the age of 94, and is buried in Sineasca city cemetery.<sup>32</sup>

During the communist regime the whole household of the Cernătescu boyar family was destroyed by a fire, when all the family documents that were there burned out, the fortified house was the only thing that remained unaffected and the family members left abroad. At present there are few documents preserved from other family members living in other towns and these are kept at the State Archives in Craiova or in the collection of documents owned by the Oltenia Museum in Craiova, coming from Vera Crasnaru’s donation. From the first document dated 14<sup>th</sup> of August 1832 we find that the priest Nicolae and others finally got reconciled with Ioan Cernătescu. The second document of the 29<sup>th</sup> of August 1845 refers to the fact that the Chita from Carloam sold plum trees to Ion Cernătescu. Two other documents dated 10<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> of February 1875 inform us that Ion Cernătescu sold hay. Another document on the 30<sup>th</sup> of January 1875 states the moment when Ion Cernătescu purchased straws.

In 1967 – 1969, thanks to the City Hall, the old fortified house was restored and given back its initial appearance, and in 1972 was intended for gathering evidence of the past events in these places, the house itself being one of the most important proofs, becoming the Cernătești Museum.

The fortified house was also repaired by the Military Construction Sector No. 5 in June 1999, with cash contributions of Mrs. Jeana Ghica Cernătescu Șuculescu, honorary citizen of the village of Cernătești, thanks to the perseverance of Mayor Alexandru Marcu and Division General Engineer Nicolae Dumitru Alexandru, son of the village.

The last member of the family, Jeana, has lived in Paris, studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Brussels, she married his N. Popp’s son and died childless in 2009; she thus concluded the Cernătescu genealogical tree.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*. p. 159-160.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*. p. 161.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*. p. 162.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*. p. 163.



Cernătești-fortified house