

# Matyóland 2003/2004

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### Ethnographic and Literary Annual

Dear Reader,

☒ This book is one of the most beautiful and most precious treasure of the intellectual property of the Hungaraian people. We, the 'Matyós' cherish traditions, values, and we create new values, our activities are linked to the past. We cherish wonderful traditions for the delight of modern man. We are doing the very same with re-publishing this beautiful and traditional periodical.

Our town can be justly proud of the respectable persons who have enthusiastically collected and processed the town's past and present. I would like to thank the authors of the book for their two years of valuable work, the fruit is this intellectual and wonderful issue, for the delight of the citizens and guests of Mezőkövesd.

Several members and editors of 'Matyófold' Periodical can no longer be among us – which is why we remember them in the first part of the book, saying thanks and setting a literary memory for their work. Studies, sociographies, poetry, pictures of local artists and Mezőkövesd-born artists make this publication invaluable for all of us.

I highly recommend this unique book to our citizens, guests and all readers. I sincerely hope that in this world of contradictions, this charming book offers literary entertainment and new information for all of us.

1st December, 2004, Mezőkövesd

The book is available in Hungarian!

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# **Mrs Kóró, founding chairman of Matyo House**

**József Kiss:**

## **Mrs Kóró, founding chairman of Matyo House**

✘ The book by teacher József Kiss – due to his personal respect and love for the past of the matyos – is an emotional and subjective piece of work. He is much more than a professional historian or ethnographer. Being a teacher and a local patriot his work is far from being objective and dull but he is showing a deep understanding for local traditions and an open-hearted love for their history. The book is about the voice of those who remembered , the author's personal feelings, his warning thoughts to appreciate the past.

The book is valued as piece of ethnographical and local history work and by picturing a piece of Hungarian history , is also treasured from a general cultural point of view. The first chapter's autobiographical narrative by Mrs Kóró is an outstanding piece of writing in the field of ethnography. By allowing the main character to speak in the first-person narrative before the factual presentation shows the writer's excellent editorial skill. This brings Mrs Kóró's character, her dramatic life and the cathartic power of her tragical

fate, close to the reader. The book makes enjoyable picturing of the contrast between the poverty of seasonal peasant workers and the matyo people's flashy lifestyle through their fancy folk art, which provided the background as well as fostering soil for many talented people, including the self-taught folk artists of Matyóház in the 20th century.

Viewed in the context of local history and Hungarian cultural history, the way of presenting the foundation and the first 15 years of the of the 'Matyo Folk Art and the Homecraft Cooperation' is so valuable that it sets an example for similar endeavours. The characteristics of modern history writing are 'micro history' and the memoir-based 'oral history'. These are the genres that help the readers to picture the late period of matyo folk art. You can have an idea of the history of the institution through the lives of the staff, their personal roles, their everyday life recalled by their memories.

In the 1950s and 1960s, besides the state-run, professionally managed folk art of mass production, individual artists were being active same time. Part 3. deals with biographies and ouvres of outstanding artists awarded with the title 'Master of Folk Art'. Along with these merits, the key message of the book is the very same issue as that of the writer's latest books, that is with talent, faith, commitment, and hard work even people from the simplest background managed to create something lasting and world-famous in Mezőkövesd. In order for this work of revealing and preserving cultural heritage to be continued, may God bless you, and give you the energy and good health. This is what I wish also on behalf of my colleagues.

Arnold Tóth  
ethnographer Department of Ethnography  
Herman Ottó Museum, Miskolc

The book is available in Hungarian!

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# The Voice and Life of Margit Gari

## The Voice and Life of Margit Gari

by József Kiss

☒ Memories guarantee immortality. The more people recall a person's figure, deeds and words, the more likely that the person has conquered death itself. Although this is the privilege of the few.

Margit Takács Gari is among those very few who had a great effect on the people around her thus she is living in the memories of both her family and the matyó people. Just like many of her contemporaries she had a hard life. Despite the poverty and hardship she managed to find beauty in life and share this treasure of hers with others making them blessed.

The book written by József Kiss is to commemorate her life and bringing an era closer to the reader. To show the values and virtues of a forgotten world that is getting more and more distant from our agile world. Instead of forgetting about them, these values should be treasured. History is not only about glorious battles and heroes and excellent rulers, but also about the everyday life of common people.

This book can teach us or it can just simply energize the reader. By all means we should all be proud of knowing him as one of us and should also be thankful to him for presenting the life of the matyó people worldwide.

András Tállai – Mayor of Mezőkövesd

The book is available in Hungarian!

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# Matyó Folk Songs

## Matyó Folk Songs

by József Kiss

**Collected by József Kiss in Mezőkövesd and Tard**

☒ The collection of folk songs of Mezőkövesd and Tard gives a good overview of the folk tradition of Matyóföld and the values they still cherish.

Not only the new stlye of the endless variety opens up ( since it was the style of the 20th century, a thriving music langugage, the 7-800 bands of the ' Peacock' movement has not expened this song culture. ) – but there are the older styles of songs, too, which much more deserve to be published and survive.

József Kiss deserves the credit for the systematic exploration he has been doing in Matyóföld, who not only has enriched the wealth of the matyó folk music with better and newer versions, but also with new genres such as toasts, children games, local ballads.

So once again, it is worth to offer a selection of folk songs ( an abundant goldmine) to the friends of folk music .

Imre Olsvai – folk music researcher

The book is available in Hungarian!

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# Life and Work of Lajos Zsóry

## Life and Work of Lajos Zsóry

by Sándor Szlovák

- ✘ Not only dates but also characters make up the milestones of history. Characters can change the world we live in.

The life and work of Lajos Zsóry is to testify what significance can such a great explorer have in the life of such a little town as Mezőkövesd. His story is a great example of how the magistrate of a minor community, and later MP, can help and care for the post-war poverty stricken people and restore their hope in life. During and after World War I. he repeatedly organized communal work and charities, which were financed by the regional local government for the poor. In the 20s he felt his mission to help to provide the penniless with land, and to care for the homeless. He worked as a chief magistrate until 1931 when he was elected MP. The book is the outcome of a hard work of collecting documents and is the very first summary of Zsóry's life-work. The book pictures a man whose ambition and commitment launched the civil rights movement not only in his town but in the whole region. He founded the Zsóry spa in the outskirts of Mezőkövesd. The thermal water was discovered in 1939 on the land of the local gentry called Lajos Zsóry, that is where the name comes from. People were searching for oil, but the result was one of the most effective healing water of Hungary.( instead hot water spring out of the earth which was declared as curative water)

The thermal water contains – among others –calcium, magnesium and sulphide, and cures rheumatic and vascular diseases. Regarding to this curative power Zsóry belongs to the most valuable baths in Hungary.

Lajos Zsóry also supported the Matyó embroidery and was a great fan of the local folk art. With the opening of the Zsóry Spa in 1940, the 'Town of Hopes' was born. This book is a tribute to Lajos Zsóry.

The book is available in Hungarian!

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## **Boarding Schools 1971-2002**

### **Boarding Schools 1971-2002**

**by Sándor Szlovák**

✘ It has never been easy to create new educational institutions in a small town, to preserve knowledge, integrity, loyalty and faith – the pillars of education – even in the time war. It has not become easier, still outstanding figures, teachers and students of the past make us to believe that it does worth it.

This boarding school has always been a special institution of education releasing many great minds to the nation of Hungary.

Through the years this boarding school had many enthusiastic local patriots whose sacrafice and enthusiasm helped to accomplish 'genus loci'. The protective spirit of the place has been charged among these walls thanks to such wonderful town people.

Imre Bognár Szabó – Deputy Head, county consultant

The book is available in Hungarian!

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# **Parliamentary Election and MPs...**

## **Parliamentary Election and MPs in the Region of Mezőkövesd 1848-2001**

**by Iván Kápolnai and Sándor Szlovák**

☒ Authors Iván Kápolnai and Sándor Szlovák executed a wanting job when they completed the history of the parliamentary election in the region of Mezőkövesd. Their work deals with both the parliamentary election and the election in the County of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén, and it also contains the biographies of the MPs of Mezőkövesd. The changing locations of the constituencies, the electoral right and the proportion of the total population were also studied. The details of the election in all municipalities were analyzed, the different nature of the electoral activity and the regions' political behaviour are also illustrated.

In the biographies of MPs their place of birth, social background, qualification, political views and the occasional change in their constituencies as well as their other activities are presented.

What is arresting about the book is that it is the first regional one in Hungary surveying the legal-, demographic,

social and political issues of the parliamentary election of the past 150 years. The book is rich in documentaries, present and past political descriptions, and also the biographies of the MPs makes this almanac a significant and relevant work.

Judit Villám, curator of the Parliamentary Library

The book is available in Hungarian!

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# **In The Wake of the Matyó Traditions by József Bán**

## **In The Wake of the Matyó Traditions by József Bán**

✘ Tracking our ancestors

Remembering and preserving our past and traditions help to understand our present. The Mezőkövesd Library Trust is aimed to develop the database of our local history collection and also to patronize publishing. This collection of manuscripts by József Bán, is the fruit of a preserving work done by the local patriot for many years. This rich ethnographical material is a tribute to the author and a gift to the reader.

” Folk customs have its unwritten moral rules and laws, manners and common courtesies are bound to events, and in them poetry, myth and magic are also present” – says the author. Besides the written documents of the time and the relics on display in museums, oral traditions also tell us about the life of a community, and the names of long-forgotten people

greet the reader on the pages of this book, wearing their nicknames like an ID card. The book also recalls the notorious event that took place in the town between the two world wars: the era of 'let your tummy rumble, but your outfit must sparkle' ended with putting all the expensive and glittering folk costumes on bonfire.

Collecting the list of beliefs of special calendar days, weather forecasting and traditional weather observation feature the thinking of the people. Observing nature, they tried to reduce the risks of farming and turn to profit. They believed that 'time rules', since work on the fields depends on the calendar, thus man depends on the calendar. Our ancestors were intimately and vitally connected with nature, but we are not any more. (Our future might depend on whether we can manage to find our way back to nature.) The ploughman was devotedly and vitally connected to nature. His life depended on it thus he kept praying and observing nature.

This book is a very special one. For posterity it is a curiosity, for ethnographers is a gold-mine of scripts, that have been collected for years by the enthusiastic author with the aim of preserving this knowledge and present it as a moral lesson to the readers. It is a must to read by every local patriot, all local historians, our grandchildren, who might want to carry on the good work. Hopefully they will. This great work is to certify how our ancestors are honoured.

Many thanks for all those who helped in publishing. Thanks for the author for his enthusiasm, for the sponsors for their help making publishing possible.

Editor Mária Pintér

The book is available in Hungarian!

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# Miners, explosive experts and

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## Miners, explosive experts and national patriots in World War II. and in the years followed

by János Ráfis Hajdu

✘ This book has not particularly a local reference, since the work of the bomb disposal squad is a very special field. There is one thing though, namely that the writer himself used to be a squad member in the army. The writer together with his fellow writers recall the difficulties and experiences of their work. The book contains not only memoirs but it has a real treat for those who are intrigued by bombs : sketches of János Ráfis Hajdu gives the reader a detailed image and description of the bombs, ammunition, cartridges and grenades of the 20th. century. This authentic piece of work is illustrated with period photos picturing the everyday life of soldiers. This book is a must to those interested in wartime engineering and the life of soldiers.

The book is available in Hungarian!

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# Monographies on Mezőkövesd 1973-1998

## Monographies on Mezőkövesd 1973-1998

**Iván Kápolnai and Sándor Szlovák –  
editors**

✘ When lecturer Dr. Daniel Kováts presented the ‘Monographies on Mezőkövesd’ in the Town Library, he talked about the national and local monographies, and he also stressed the values of this present monography collection. Since this collection is to continue the previously published Mezőkövesd Monography, it is dealt with events happened between 1973 and 1998 in the town and in the environs. The collection contains ab. a hundred monographies by some 38 writers. In this present monography collection those fields are in the focus which have not really been dealt with in the previous one. It also tells about the events before the year 1973, such as the story of the pharmacies, which was not mentioned before the mid 19th. century.

### **Some topics :**

The book starts with population analysis. The economical analysis deals with both the mass production and small-scale production. Industry deals with factory development, unprofessional handicrafts, transport, town development. As for the health service, medical attendance, hospitals, ambulance, nurseries, primary and secondary schools are introduced to the reader. Under the title ‘education’ you can read stories about the Community House, the Town Library, folk art, folk songs, and folk architecture. The event calendar of

the book lists the events chronologically from 1974 to 1998. The book contains a summary both in German and English. It is illustrated with 11 colour and several black and white photos.

The book is available in Hungarian!