



The statue of Saint Anthony of Padua



A basket of roses carved of stone

also used for building bridges, carved as road posts and walls of wells and used for making cover stones, stairs, grave crosses and columns. In 1943 it was still known to be suitable for sculptures. In the end of the 1940s the mine was closed due to transport difficulties of the stone.

Nowadays there are working mines in the village again, as well as a closed one. The Nagyeresztvényi rhyolite tuff mine is on the outskirts of Demjén, 400m southeast of the village. It was created by merging the archbishop's Nagyeresztvényi Mine and the so-called "peasant mine". Its area is 4,3 ha. After decades of interruption it was registered in 2002 under the name "Demjén II. – rhyolite tuff" at the Miskolc District Mines Inspectorate. Nowadays the usage of the stone mined here is limited – as a result of market circumstances. In bigger amounts it was and is used at the construction works of the Korona Winehouse and the Demjén Spa.



Stonemason at work



Grave stone

## Stonemasonry

Stonemasonry has been a craft bound to qualification for centuries, stonemasons often formed guilds together with bricklayers. Originally stonemasons were called under the same name as bricklayers. Since the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the word has been used for tradesmen building walls and plastering, when division of labour started within the trade. Most craftsmen only got a journeyman's certificate, did not pass a master's examination. Stone cutters and stonemasons used the same tools, but the latter did a finer work, so there was a difference in quality between their jobs.

Thanks to its quality, stone from Demjén was transported to many places. István Telekessy, the bishop of Eger, signed a contract on 20. March and later on 8. December, 1713 about mining stone at Deménd for the construction works of the baroque cathedral of Eger. In 1730 András Déri and Ferenc Holló hauliers carried 47 carts of stone from the mine of Deménd for the construction of the brewhouse at Kápolna. In 1744 Sámuel Haller's bailiff paid 16 forints for carved stones, door and window frames, that were used at the landowner's construction sites in Gyöngyös. In the 1730s there was another mine under Szőlő Hill, rented and run by János Steyer, a stone miner from Eger. In 1787 stone from this mine was used for building the cellar under the pub in Kerecsend.

Several families carved stone in Demjén, the most well-known being Antal Nagy and his father, Sándor Nagy. Surviving works of Antal Nagy can still be seen, for example the statues of a Hungarian common soldier or a lion.



PREPARED BY TOGETHER FOR DEMJÉN FOUNDATION  
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[WWW.DEMJENKOZSEG.HU](http://WWW.DEMJENKOZSEG.HU)

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## THE TRADITIONS OF STONEMASONRY IN DEMJÉN



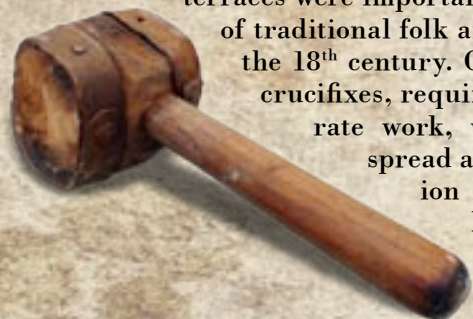
The village is a member of Bukkalja „Rock Path”





Stonemason at work

Volcanic rocks from the Miocene Epoch have played an important role in the geologic formation of the Bükkalja region. These rocks also served as basis for the “stone culture” of the region. The good quality material located on or very close to the surface meant special challenge for the local people – tuff has proved to be very good building material, since it is easy to carve and work. For stonemasonry whity, crumbly rhyolite tuff and reddish brown dacite tuff were important materials. According to 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century sources people of almost every village in the region mined stone and raw and carved stone was also transported to other closer and further settlements. Peasants skilled in stonemasonry also played a role in the architecture of cities. Demjén, Sirok, Eger, Szomolya, Noszvaj and Bogács were the local centres of stone mining as well as stone carving. The transport of volcanic tuff was the most significant; it was used for building purposes. Several different artefacts, including roughly worked-out building stones, stones for plinths, quoins, as well as stone troughs and road signposts were produced for sale. Window-frames and the columns of the long covered terraces were important in the forming



of traditional folk architecture from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Grave stones and crucifixes, requiring more elaborate work, were also widespread and even set fashion in nearby areas.

Demjén became a centre for stone mining



Nagyeresztvényi mine

and carving, where work has been carried on since the 18<sup>th</sup> century and where 100% of the houses are built of stone. In the past mainly window-frames, chimney pots and columns for the long covered terraces of mansions were carved from stone and transported even as far as the Tisza River.

### Stone mining

Usually stone mining and carving were not two different jobs but two stages of one work. Stone carving brought higher income than mining, so nobody liked to do mining only. However, the two jobs were thoroughly interwoven: “*Nobody could be a good stonemason without being a skilled miner, but nobody could be a good miner without knowing what was in the rock. A stonemason had to know the stone when it was in the rock, when he looked at it, he had to know what it could become.*” (Sándor Víg – Szomolya)

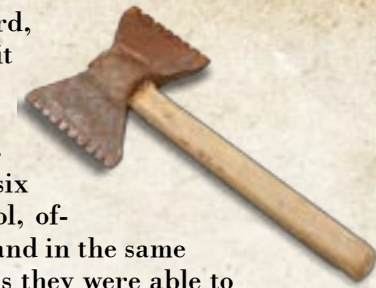


Old grave stones



A statue of Saint Mary with a cross

Stone cutting is hard, challenging work, but it was not bound to qualification. It often passed from father to son. 12-13 years old boys, after six classes of primary school, often helped their fathers and in the same time learnt the skill, thus they were able to reach an output at a young age that could not be performed by strong, but unskilled adults, either.



In the first decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the bishop-landowner began the mining of rhyolite tuff - useful at construction sites of the estate - under Szőlő Hill, in Demjén. The stone mine was first mentioned in 1701, when János Pezti, a stone carver from Demjén delivered 48 window heads for the reconstruction works of the Saint Michael church in Eger. Besides the outstanding quality of the stone, suitable for different purposes, the lucky transport-geographic position of the mines, situated by the old road, the post road towards Eger-Kerecsend-Pest, also contributed to the development of a stone mining centre. The “lower” stone mine was the same as the so-called Eresztvényi Mine, while the “upper” one was known as Pünkösöd Hill Mine. In 1859 József Szabó geologist visited and examined the area and according to his description the most important quarry of rhyolite was the Pünkösöd Hill Mine in Demjén where stone was mined for road construction works (the same rock can be found in Hideg Valley). He found the stone of the Eresztvényi Mine very good for carving and resistant against fire, water and frost. Besides road construction, the stone mined here was



Chisels and wedges