



Kražiai

anno 1253

www.kraziai.lt

Kražiai is a small town in Lithuania, Samogitia, first mentioned in 1253 as *Crase* in Mindaugas' document. From the earliest times Kražiai cultural and natural heritage had a special significance for the whole Lithuania's cultural and spiritual life.

In 2023, Kražiai is celebrating 770th anniversary, so we kindly invite You to explore this town and it's history!



The Jesuit College founded in 1616 by the Jesuit Order, was the most important center of educational and religious life in Samogitia in 17-18th centuries. Nowadays the cultural center of Motiejus Kazimieras Sarbėvijaus is established here.



The St Virgin Mary Immaculate Conception Church. In 1757-1763 a stone church of the late Baroque style was built by the Benedictine Convent nuns. The church is known in Lithuania and Europe as the Catholic Defense symbol (Kražiai Massacre).



St Rokas Chapel. Built in the first half of the 19th century. From the 18th century the St Rokas feast has become the biggest festival of the parish and nowadays it brings crowds of people to annual celebrations.



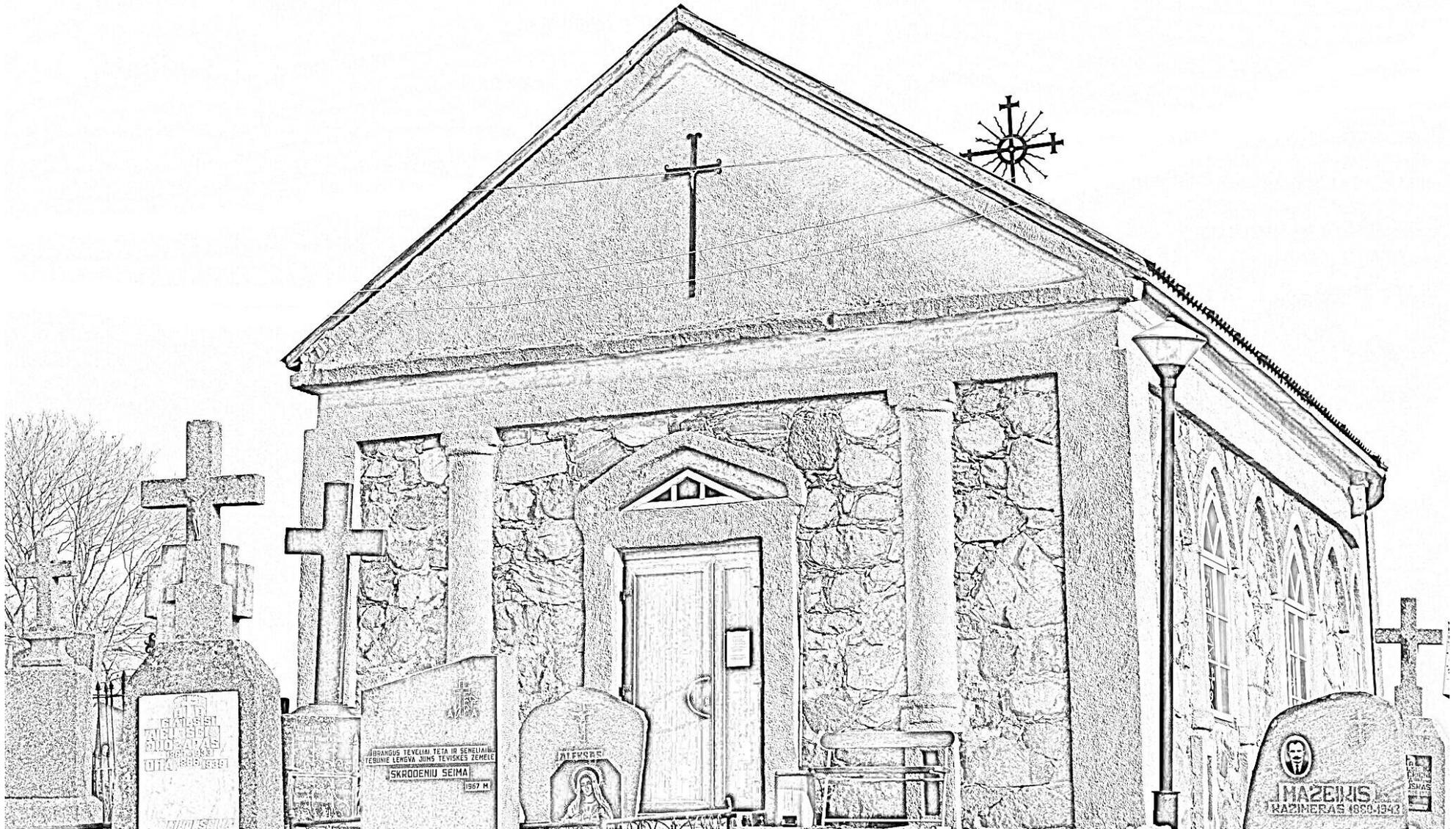
The Hill of Vytautas. The Great Duke Vytautas ordered to build one of the first Christian temples in Samogitia. In 1416, on the hill the Parochial Church of St Arkangel Michael in Kražiai was built. Today a brick belfry built around 1852 still stands here.



Medžiokalnis. Botanical resort with beautiful landscape. A lot of legends, stories have reached our days about Medžiokalnis. Dukes Kęsgailos, Radvilos, Chodkevičiai hunted and rested here...



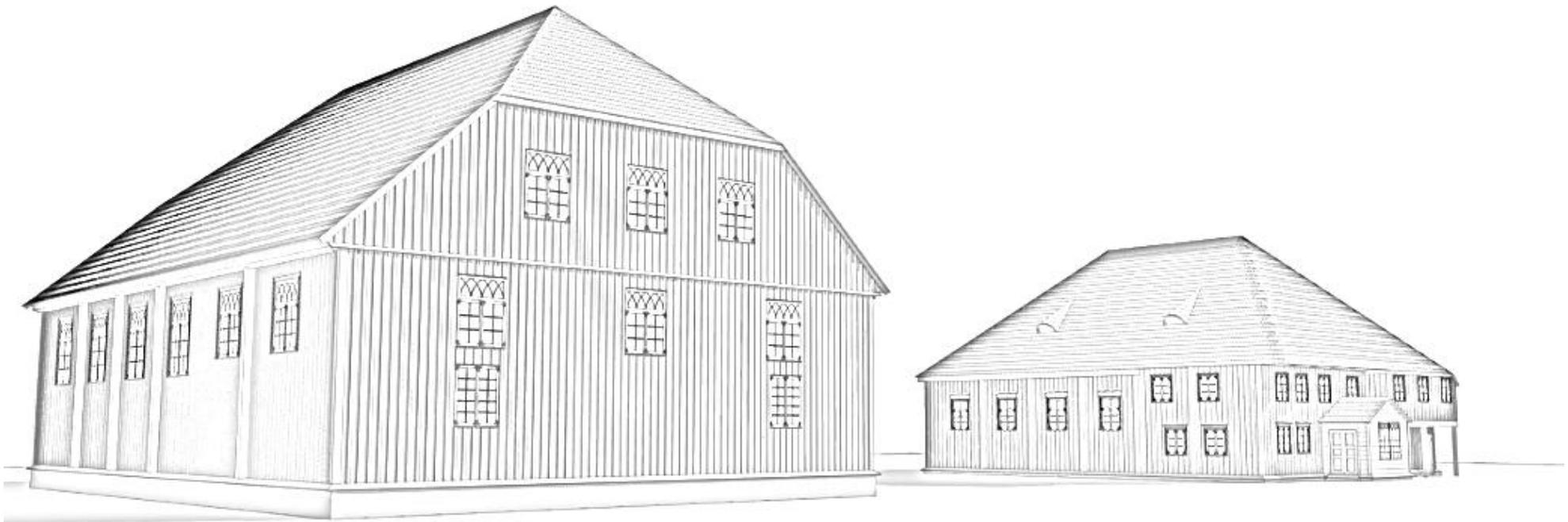
Mindaugas Square. Until 2003 in the middle of the town Kražiai cultural house was standing. Now there is beautiful green territory with symbolical monuments for the Kražiai 750th, 760th and 765th anniversaries.



The Chapel of Kražiai Cemetery. Built in 1857 by the dean V. Butavičius. It was a mausoleum of the landlords Šiukštos and Pšeciševskiai families.



The Jewish Execution Site. The massacre of Kražiai Jews took place in 1941, in July-August. Here, near Medžiokalnis, 71 Jew of the Kražiai Jewish community were killed and buried.



The Synagogues. Until the 20th century, the large Jewish community lived in Kražiai. They had two synagogues here. In 1941, on June 22nd, with the outbreak of the German-Soviet war, the Nazi army reached Kražiai and occupied the town on June 25th. Then the Soviet artillery began firing on the town and set it on fire. The 90 percent of the town's buildings burned including a wooden church on the Vytautas Hill, a school, a power-station, a mill, a bridge and both synagogues. This is a reconstruction of Jewish synagogues in Kražiai.