

# Lost Shtetl







Litvak culture is based on shtetl life, predominantly traditions, crafts, relationships, and language. "Lost Shtetl" is a unique Lithuanian Jewish Culture and Heritage project carried out by the NGO, Šeduva Jewish Memorial Fund since 2012. The key elements of the project are:

- The restoration of the Old Jewish Cemetery in Šeduva
- The dedication of three monuments at the town's mass murder sites
- A monument in the center for the Jews of Šeduva
- The "Lost Shtetl" Šeduva Jewish Museum
- A historical monograph of Šeduva Jews
- The documentary by Saulius Beržinis, "Petrified Time"

The project is unique on a European scale and is already included in the prestigious list of European memorial sites compiled by the Berlin Holocaust Memorial Information Center.

Dr. Samuel Gruber, art and architectural historian, Director of the Jewish Heritage Research Center, USA –

"The restoration of the Jewish Cemetery in Šeduva is one of the best such projects I've ever seen. The restoration is part of an expansive effort by the privately funded Šeduva Jewish Memorial Fund that also includes the protection and proper presentation of three mass killing sites. There are plans for a small museum on a plot of land across from the cemetery."

Dr. Jon Seligman, third-generation Sheduvian. Director of the Excavations, Surveys and Research Department for the Israel Antiquities Authority, Israel – "These sites will form a permanent and fitting memorial for the lost Jewish community of Shadovans, the remains of which are now spread to the four corners of the world. I am sure that the lost Jews of Shadova would '*kleib naches*' [take pride] in the fact that respect has been returned to the community cemetery, so if not in life, then surely in memory, their lives and contribution to the town is perpetuated. It is my earnest hope that similar pride in what was an essential part of the history of Šeduva is shared by the other residents of the town for what were their fellow Lithuanian citizens."



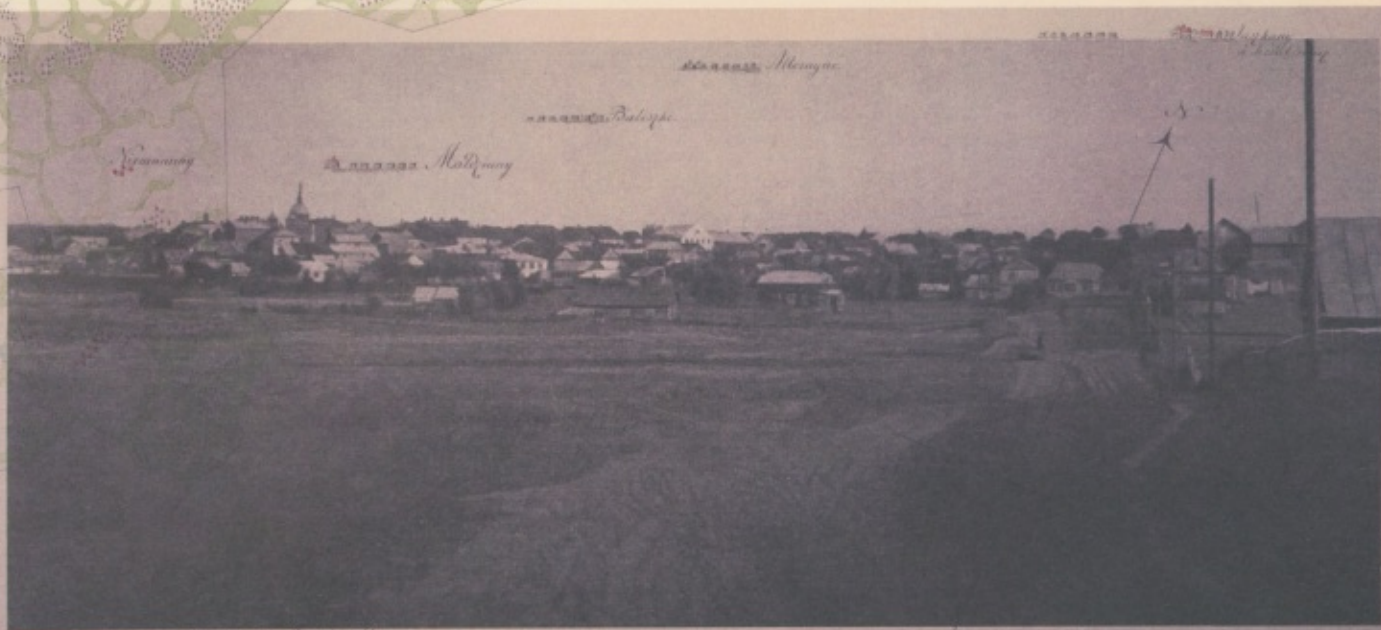






Seduva, in the Jewish World better known as Shadeve, a town situated in the geographical center of Lithuania, was first mentioned in written documents in the fifteenth century. According to some sources, the first Jewish families established themselves in the town around the same time. The Jewish population in Shadeve started to increase during the eighteenth century after the town acquired

the status of a county administrative center and became a commercial town with Magdeburg Rights of self-rule. By 1880, the Jewish population had increased to 2,386 out of a total population of 3,783. Jews worked in small trades, crafts and agriculture, while communal life centered around the synagogue, religious leaders of the community, and the Yeshiva established by Rabbi Joseph Leib Blokh.







At the outbreak of World War I, Shadeve was almost completely burnt down, the number of Jewish inhabitants in town considerably decreased, and the rest had to re-establish their businesses and social life.

During the interwar period, Shadeve Jews made their living in trade, crafts, light industry and agriculture. Young people were engaged in a wide range of numerous religious, educational, cultural, and sports organizations. The town's cultural life was enriched by touring theater troupes and movie screenings.

The interwar economic crisis in Lithuania forced a large scale emigration from the country's provinces, and many Shadeve Jews emigrated to the USA, South Africa, and Eretz Israel in the 1930s. The standard of living dropped gradually after Lithuania was annexed by the Soviet Union in the summer of 1940. Under new regulations, Jewish youth organizations were disbanded, the Hebrew school was closed and the factories and shops owned by Jews were nationalized.

The invading German army captured Shadeve on June 25, 1941. By the beginning of July, Jews were forcibly moved into a guarded ghetto made up of houses surrounded by a barbed wire fence in the nearby village of Pavartyčiai. On August 25, 1941, Shadeve's Jewish history, which had lasted for centuries, was brutally ended when the Nazis and their local collaborators murdered 664 Shadeve Jews in the Liaudiškiai forest.



## Šeduva Jewish Cemetery

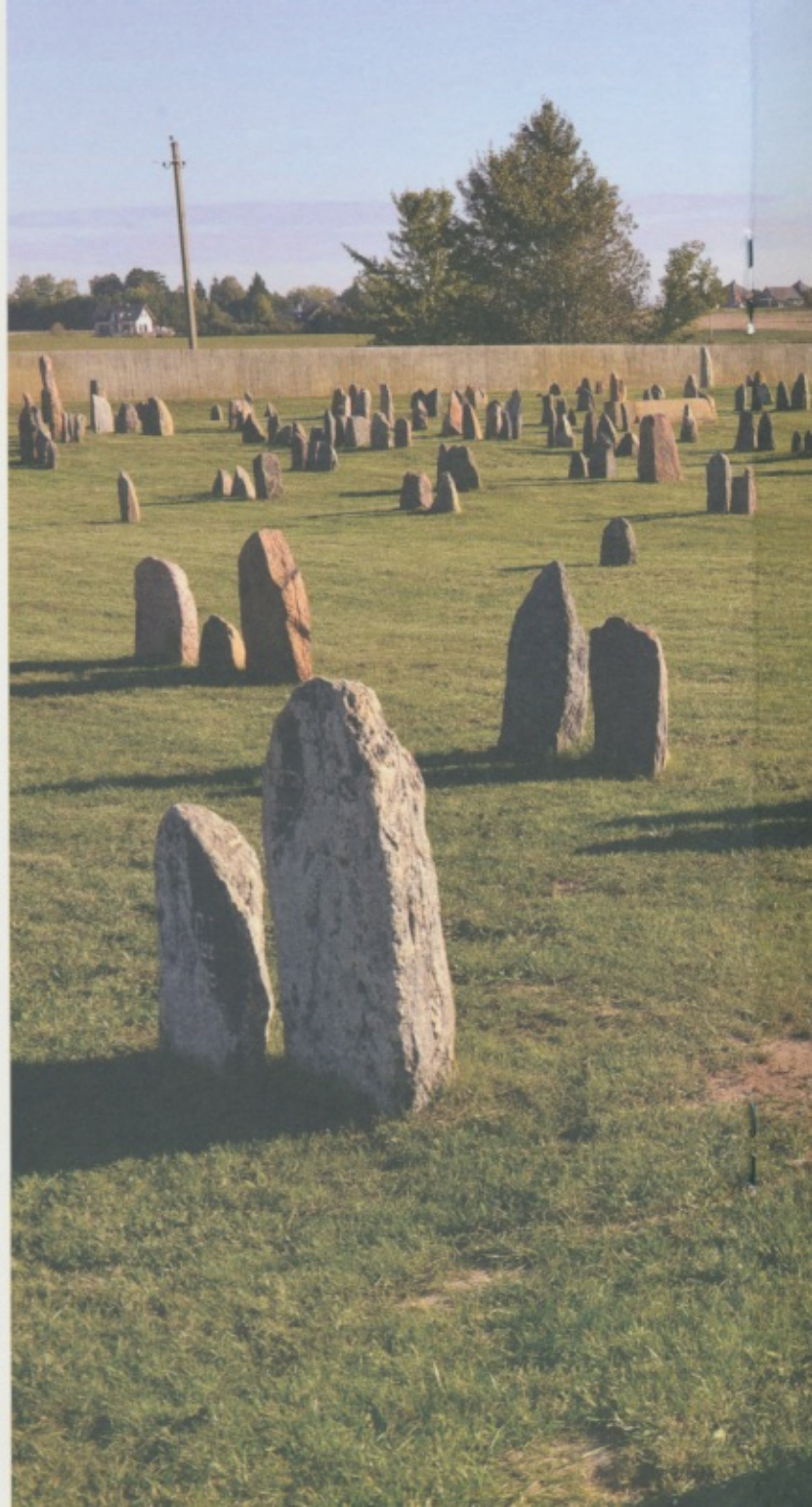
During 2013–2014 the Šeduva Jewish Memorial Fund invested €3 million in the restoration of the Šeduva Old Jewish Cemetery on Žveju Street, occupying 1.3 hectares of land, under the auspices of the project, “Lost Shtetl”.

For decades before work on the cemetery began, it was overgrown with thistles, and the moss-covered gravestones were falling apart. We cleared the brush and rebuilt the original stone fence as well as restored its remaining fragments.

The Jews of Šeduva were buried in this cemetery until the Second World War. Within the territory, we found 1,300 gravestones in various states of repair. After the restoration of 800 gravestones, we were able to identify 400, the oldest of which was erected in 1812 and the most recent in 1936.

Unrecognizable fragments of gravestones were put into a sculptural composition—lapidarium in the shape of the Star of David.

The cemetery restoration project was prepared by the studio of the architect, Algimantas Kančas.







בשנת  
ה'תשנ"ב  
ר"ח חשוון  
שקד וכל  
אנשי הקהל





## Mass murder sites

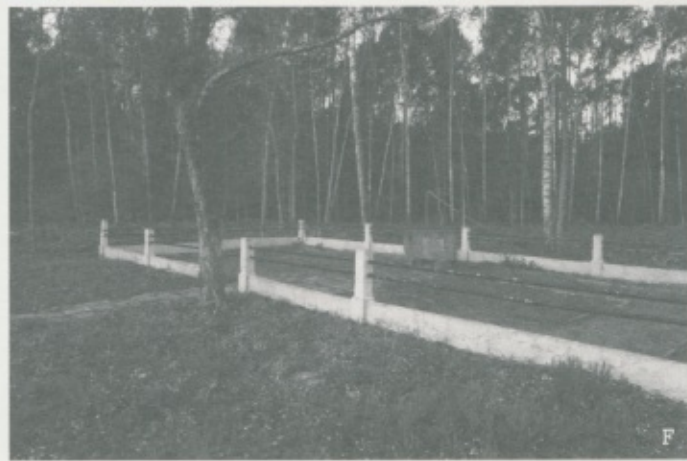
Three sites of the mass murder of Jews have been identified in the forests of Pakuteniai and Liaudiškiai. In August, 1941, the entire Šeduva Jewish community of almost 700 people were killed there.

During 2014–2015, after a closed tender, the territory of the three mass killings sites was cleared and three monuments by sculptor Romas Kvintas, *Abode of the Light Star*, *The Door*, and *Sunray–Star*, were erected.

Mass murder sites before  
2015 and now:

- A, B – Pakuteniai
- C, D – Liaudiškiai (first site)
- E, F – Liaudiškiai (second site)

Marlene Saul Englander, daughter of Hinda Zarkey who lived in Šeduva 1935–1937, USA – “We cannot bring back Nochum, Malka, Hadassah, Elke, or anyone else, but they are collectively being remembered and honored through beautiful monuments and statues. I thank everyone who made this day possible and everyone who continues to honor the memory of the many Jews who once lived in Šeduva as they visit these sites and pay their respects.”





On October 9, 2015 a monument by sculptor Romas Kvintas for all Šeduva Jews was unveiled in the center of the town.

Marlene Saul Englander -

"It is a *mitzvah* [charitable obligation] that the community is collectively honoring those who once called Šeduva home, people who had contributed to what serves as the backbone of what Šeduva is today."

Samuel Gruber -

"A statue of a young girl stands before a large plinth upon which is a tri-lingual inscription „For Šeduva Jews.“ The statue of the girl has been quickly embraced by the town. She gives a human face to the abstract number of local dead."





ŠEDLVA ŽYDAMS  
FOR SEDLVA JEWS  
פאר אלע שאדלאווער אידן

KULTŪROS CENTRAS





## Lost Shtetl – Šeduva Jewish Museum.

The museum, soon to be established next to the newly restored Šeduva Jewish Cemetery, will be dedicated to the former life of Šeduva Jews and the community's diversity. Šeduva, one of the many shtetls of pre-war Lithuania, will present the history of all the Lithuanian shtetl Jewry. This aspect is the little known and missing link in the history of Lithuania, when the country was culturally considerably more diverse than it is today.

The museum will focus on the following aspects of the Lithuanian Jewish history: Jewish family life and traditions, the importance of education and its pursuit, cultural, social and political movements, businesses and activities, religion, all of which were interrelated and informed the town's community. These topics will be revealed through the life stories of some of the people who were born in Šeduva and lived during the interwar period in Lithuania.

Three Holocaust sites a few kilometers from Šeduva attest to the end of Šeduva's Jewish population during World War II. Visitors to the museum will inevitably have to touch this tragic part of Lithuanian history.

To help build bridges between different nations and generations, the museum will also feature the various thoughts on the "lost shtetl" by some of the descendents of former Šeduva residents, people who are now scattered all over the world.

The museum project has been launched and we are now collecting material for the exhibition. The museum is planned to open in 2017–2018.





**Cemetery:**

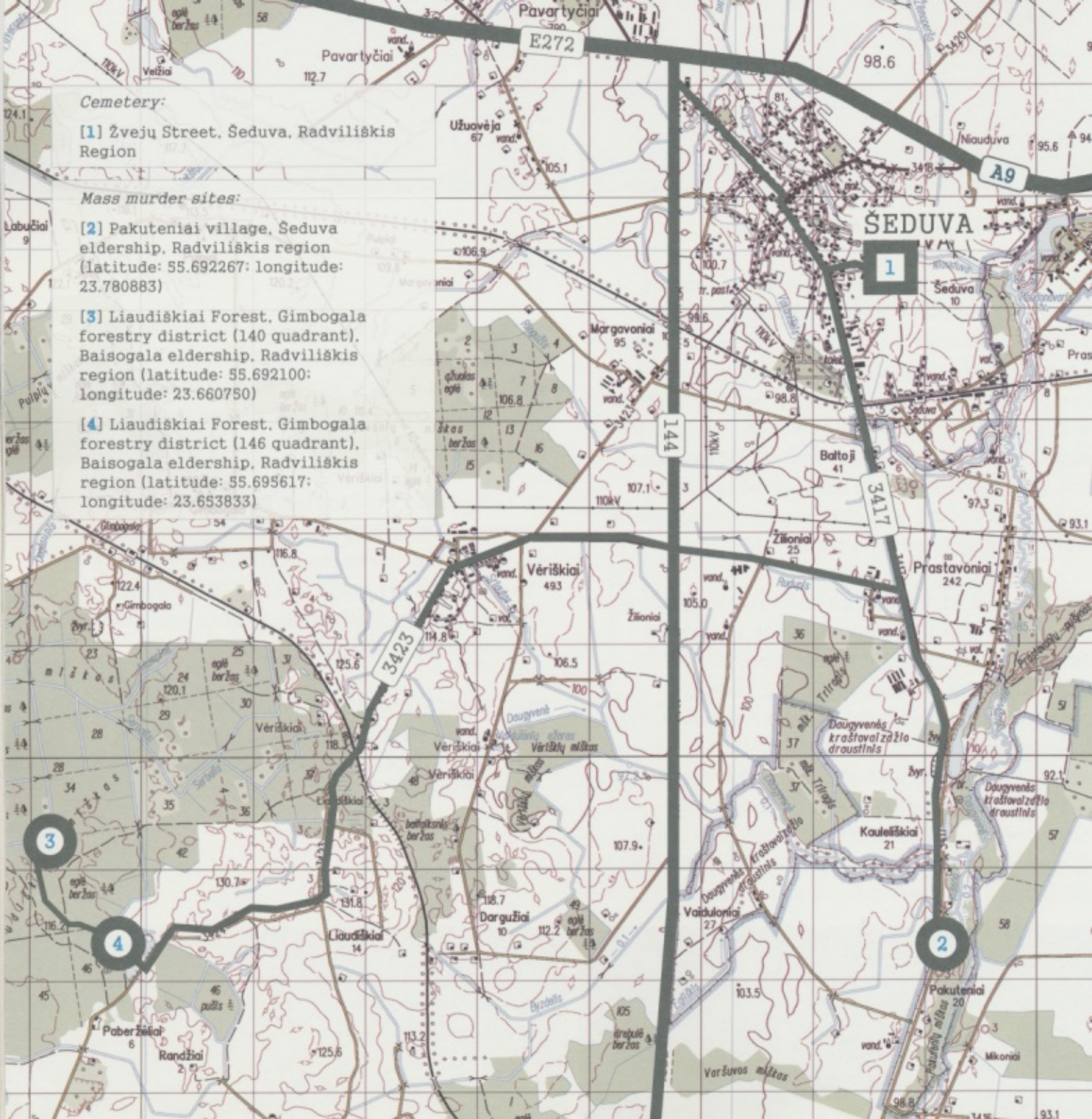
[1] Žveju Street, Seduva, Radviliškis Region

**Mass murder sites:**

[2] Pakuteniai village, Seduva eldership, Radviliškis region (latitude: 55.692267; longitude: 23.780883)

[3] Liaudiškiai Forest, Gimbogala forestry district (140 quadrant), Baisogala eldership, Radviliškis region (latitude: 55.692100; longitude: 23.660750)

[4] Liaudiškiai Forest, Gimbogala forestry district (146 quadrant), Baisogala eldership, Radviliškis region (latitude: 55.695617; longitude: 23.653833)





**ŠėDUVOS ŽYDŲ MEMORIALINIS FONDAS**  
Šėduva Jewish Memorial Fund

Domininkonų 5, LT-01131 Vilnius  
[info@loststetl.com](mailto:info@loststetl.com)  
[www.loststetl.com](http://www.loststetl.com)