

## The Sight of the Cemetery Shocked the Guests



The guests were shocked by what they saw at the old Jewish cemetery.  
Photo by K. Sarkait•.

The sight of the old Jewish cemetery in the village of Serapiniškes [on the western edge of Rokiskis] embittered the Jewish guests' stay in our town on the last day of their visit. The grass has not been cut there for a considerably long time and it appeared more like a fallowed pasture. The officials from the Rokiskis town municipality offered various excuses, such as weather conditions that have been very favorable for the growth of vegetation and a shortage of available workers.

### **The cemetery looked like an overgrown pasture**

„Gimtasis Rokiškis“ wrote about this week's visit in our town by the brothers Philip S. Shapiro and David B. Shapiro from the U. S. A. and their sister Judy M. Auerbach from

Israel. They have a strong sentimental tie to this area due to the fact that their family roots are here.

As this was the second visit by the Shapiro brothers to their ancestors' land, they expressed their delight about the reconstruction and modernization that they witnessed in the Rokiškis area and the whole Lithuania and were full of nice compliments. When they paid a visit to the editor's office on Tuesday, even when the journalists asked them to express any impressions that might not be positive, the guests only emphasized what had impressed them most favorably.

Unfortunately, on Wednesday everything changed for the worse

Since the guests are interested in their family roots, they decided to visit the old Jewish cemetery. They were shocked by what they saw there. „We never expected a sight as bad as this one. We are simply shocked, overwhelmed by such a disrespect to the past,“ David couldn't hide his displeasure and indignation. „The ramshackle and fallen monuments are only half of the problem... The perimeter fence is in very poor condition. The grass on the grounds are quite overgrown -- it reaches up to your waist -- it's just a jungle...“

According to David B. Shapiro, such disrespect to the dead and the past was quite shocking. David, who happens to visit many parts of the world, claimed that even countries that are quite poor in comparison to Lithuania nonetheless find some means for taking care of cemeteries. „We are not talking about money, but about respect to our ancestors. It doesn't matter what religion or nationality they are,“ he added.

[Translation By Aldona Sudeikien•]