



Eastern European Market-Town Museum in Lithuania:

Proposal for Addition to Open-Air Museum of Lithuania in Rumsiskes

December, 2022
Elliot Matz



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Eastern European Village Museum in Lithuania: Proposal for Addition to Open-Air Museum of Lithuania in Rumsiskes

Proposal

With the support and encouragement of the Lithuanian Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania; with the staff of the existing Open-Air Museum of Lithuania; with administrators of the County of Kaisiadorys and of the Kaunas Lagoon Park; with enthusiastic support of the town's Community of Rumsiskes organization; and with an array of Lithuanian and other advisors, designers and funders; our proposal is to add a nearby complementary exhibition/museum to the existing Rumsiskes museum infrastructure, in order to make Rumsiskes and its Open-Air Museum of Lithuania into the world-class, historically accurate and compelling destination which it is destined to be. Visitors will go to the existing museum to experience pre-War rural life in Lithuania, and will visit the new, nearby museum to experience pre-War market-town life in Eastern Europe. This will benefit both the nation of Lithuania – financially and image-wise – as well as the millions of people world-wide, including those who are descended from occupants of thousands of similar villages in Eastern Europe, who are attempting to understand their own histories and roots.

In addition, in collaboration with Vilnius University and Yeshiva University, we are establishing an academic research entity at the Museum that will engage students/researchers in study of the history of Eastern European market-towns; how the towns' inhabitants of different ethnic/religious/heritage backgrounds struggled and co-existed for centuries in market-towns; what might we learn from that history.

I. Summary and Background

Background

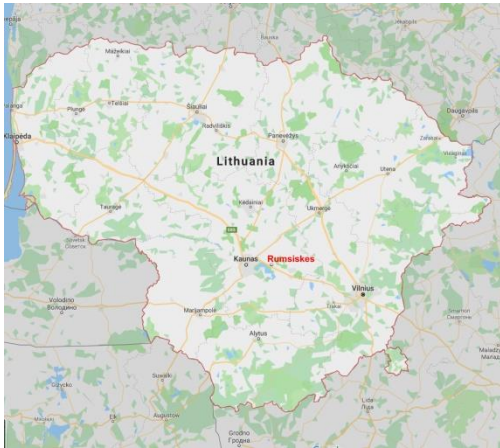
Millions of Jews today, as well as millions of Poles, Lithuanians, Russians, Ukrainians, and others, are descendants of emigrants from villages in the former "Pale of Settlement," an area in Eastern Europe in which Russian Czars forced Jews to live. The "Pale" encompassed much of present-day Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine, and parts of western Russia.

Most Jews of Eastern Europe (mainly Ashkenazi Jews) were forced to live in small towns – "shtetls" – of which there were, by some estimates, upwards of 1500. At its height, and until World War II, the population of Jews living in the Pale was approximately 5 million, notwithstanding the exodus of about 2 million in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, mainly to North America.

In addition, there was significant emigration of people of local ethnicities from these many towns during the past 150 years, and there are *millions* of descendants of all of those people, Christians *and* Jews, living in diaspora.

There are now many important and excellent resources and sites where an interested descendant or history buff can go to see how inhabitants of these towns *died*. Such venues are mainly Holocaust-related, and also describe genocide at the hands of the Soviets. And there are sites where one can be educated as to how citizens were persecuted under Soviet rule. **But there is nowhere in the world where one can see how these people *lived*** – where one can experience what day-to-day life of, and interaction among, *all* of these peoples must have been like in a nineteenth century (or earlier) Eastern European market town.

Existing Museum



Near the town of Rumsiskes, Lithuania, there is The Open-Air Museum of Lithuania - which endeavors to depict lives of pre-war Lithuanian farmers and peasants from the several “ethnographic” areas of present-day Lithuania – areas that had distinct histories, subcultures and traditions. The 490-acre museum contains numerous farm buildings and several village town square buildings that were moved from parts of Lithuania to Rumsiskes and meticulously reconstructed and outfitted. The museum is

staffed by helpful and knowledgeable in-character docents who interpret the displays for visitors. On traditional holidays, there are festivals and celebrations, with participants dressed in period dress who re-enact traditional ceremonies, dances, crafts and other cultural expressions.

The museum is within easy transport of both Kaunas and Vilnius (a 25-minute drive from Kaunas; a one-hour drive from Vilnius), and there is considerable tourist infrastructure nearby including parking, food availability and overnight accommodations.

While the Open-Air Museum of Lithuania is ostensibly an historical re-creation of pre-World War I Lithuanian folk life, it does not accurately portray the *totality* of an Eastern European village or town. Throughout Eastern Europe from the 15th through the early 20th century, there were upwards of 1500 towns that were populated by people of local ethnicities – Lithuanians, Poles, Ukrainians, etc. – as well as by one other substantial minority – Jews. Jews were a significant presence in almost all of these villages and towns, with the towns’ Jewish populations varying from 20% to upwards of 70% of the total. In towns where a large minority of the population was Jewish, the Jews’ primary language was not Lithuanian, Russian, Polish or the local tongue, but Yiddish. There were often Jewish neighborhoods, synagogues, schools, customs, and a distinct culture among the sizable Jewish minority of these towns’ citizens. Again, there is nowhere in the world where one can observe firsthand, and learn from, the interaction between the Jewish and local ethnic peoples, in all of its richness and fraught complexity.

When I visited the Rumsiskes Open-Air Museum of Lithuania in 1988 when Lithuania was still under Soviet control, there were only farm buildings – no attempt yet to re-create a market-town or a market square – and there was no mention of the significant Lithuanian minority – Jews. In 1988, with the absence of a re-creation of a market-town square, the absence of mention of Jews in the museum may indeed have been accurate since, for a long period, Jews had been prohibited from owning land and thus were typically not farmers, and they participated little in the daily life of farmers’ communities and hamlets.

Now, in 2022, there *have* been additions to the museum, including a re-creation of a market square with shops, a church (*not* the original Rumsiskes church, which stands in the actual “new” town of Rumsiskes), and other structures. There is one shop that is identified as a re-created Jewish-owned shop, there is one re-creation of a Jewish home, and there are plans for the addition to the museum of a relocated and restored wooden synagogue. In addition, there is a portion of the museum depicting the hardships and the horrors that Lithuanians suffered at the hands of the Soviets during and after World War II. (There are no plans to address the fate of Lithuania’s Jews at the hands of the Nazis and their collaborators, although there is now a monument at the actual site of the massacre of Rumsiskes’ Jews in 1941, which is on the grounds of the museum.)

For this to be an accurate portrayal of a Lithuanian town, or of *any* Eastern European town, it must acknowledge that for centuries a *significant* portion of its residents were Jews, that most of the shops on the market squares were Jewish-owned and run, and that the interactions between the Jewish and Lithuanian communities were rich, sometimes fraught, and historically significant. That existence and relationship cannot be ignored if this is to be an historically accurate portrayal. Although there are now suggestions that Jews were present in these market towns, the Open-Air Museum of Lithuania at Rumsiskes still does not fully portray the impact of the Jewish minority in Eastern European market towns.

(While the museum may have been designed as a re-creation of a “typical” Eastern European hamlet/village, and *not* as a recreation of the actual original village of Rumsiskes – now submerged under the Kaunas Lagoon - it is well documented that there *were* Jewish communities in most of the typical Eastern European market towns, *including* in the original Rumsiskes. Indeed my Jewish grandfather, along with several of his siblings, emigrated from Rumsiskes/Rumshishok in the 1890’s, and left significant family there with whom he communicated until their massacre in 1941.¹)

To this end, we propose a significant addition to the museum in Rumsiskes, with the establishment of a complementary new nearby reconstruction of a 19th century town based on the original Rumsiskes. This will include re-creations of both the Jewish and Lithuanian shops, trade buildings, schools, and houses of worship of the town. Re-enactors will portray life in such a village in an historically accurate way, with villagers interacting/doing business, squabbling as they often did, and celebrating occasions and religious holidays as they really did.

This additional village museum would function in conjunction with the existing rural re-creation museum so that, in total, the museum complex in Rumsiskes will present a

complete and accurate depiction of life in both rural areas *and* in towns and villages in Eastern Europe. Further, the new market-town museum will also highlight how daily life differed among 19th-century Rumsiskes and other market-towns

Archaeological Research

Professor Richard Freund (until recently the Director of the Maurice Greenberg Center for Judaic Studies at the University of Hartford in Connecticut, and now Bertram and Gladys Aaron Endowed Professorship in Jewish Studies at Christopher Newport University in Virginia) and a lead archaeologist for nine different projects in Lithuania (including the Panerai tunnel which he discovered in 2016², the Great Synagogue of Vilnius, HKP, Fort IX, and projects in summer 2019 in Rokiskis) brought his team of geo-scientists to Rumsiskes in summer 2019 for a project to add new information about Rumsiskes as it was before the building of the Kaunas Hydroelectric Plant dam in 1959 – before the town was submerged. Freund works with institutions in Lithuania, Canada, the United States and Israel to bring high-tech, non-invasive geo-science equipment to explore the sub-surface both on land and below the water. On land, he has used Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) and Electrical Resistivity Tomography (ERT), two non-invasive techniques for mapping what is below the surface. He combined those methods with other geo-science techniques (sub-surface side-scan sonar, magnetometers and other equipment) to identify and map the remains of the now-submerged original town of Rumsiskes, to show the complete picture of the old community. His report has been compiled. In addition, a documentary about the submerged town of Rumsiskes, partially filmed during the subsurface expedition and backed by the Rumsiskes Community Organization, was released in 2021 (“Stories From The Depths Of the Lagoon”).

Genealogical Research

There is a world-wide upsurge of interest in genealogy – in family roots.³ With the availability now of vast amounts of information via the Internet, with DNA analyses available to anyone and, indeed, with interest in the Holocaust and the lost Jewish communities of Europe surging, there is an increasing market of tourist expenditures to be tapped. I know from personal experience that descendants of residents of Eastern European towns, both Christians and Jews, are interested in learning how their ancestors *lived* – not only in how/why they emigrated, or how/why they *died*. Lithuania could better tap into, and benefit from, this increase in historical travel by creating and publicizing a historically accurate re-creation of a town like most of the towns from which *millions* of people in diaspora are descended – the only such historically accurate, live, open-air re-creation anywhere.

Proposal

We have therefore proposed, with support and encouragement of the Lithuanian Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania; with the staff of the existing Open-Air Museum of Lithuania; with administrators of the County of Kaisiadorys and of the Kaunas Lagoon Park; with enthusiastic support of the town’s Community of Rumsiskes organization; and with an array of Lithuanian and other advisors, designers and funders; to add a nearby complementary exhibition to the existing Rumsiskes museum infrastructure, in order to make Rumsiskes and its Open-Air Museum of Lithuania into the world-class, historically accurate and compelling destination which it is destined to

be. Visitors will go to the existing museum to experience pre-War *rural* life in Lithuania; and they will visit the new, nearby museum to experience pre-War market-town life in Eastern Europe. This will benefit both the nation of Lithuania – financially and image-wise – as well as the millions of people world-wide, including those who are descended from occupants of the thousands of arguably-similar towns in Eastern Europe, who are attempting to understand their own histories and roots.

In addition, we are establishing an academic research entity based at the Museum that will study many aspects of the day-to-day life of Christians and Jews in market-towns over the centuries; what can we learn from that history; and how might we apply lessons learned from this research to today's world. This Market-Town Research Center is a partnership between Vilnius University – Lithuania's premier institution of higher learning – and Yeshiva University in New York City, USA, where scholars study, and learn from, the history of this rich and complex co-existence in market-towns. Jurgita Verbickiene, Professor in the Department of Theory and History of Culture, Faculty of History at Vilnius University, is the representative from Vilnius University conducting coursework and research with students in collaboration with the Center. Shay Pilnik, Director of the Emil A. and Jenny Fish Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Yeshiva University, is the representative from Yeshiva University co-directing coursework and research. The first research efforts are underway as of December, 2022.

II. Missions

The missions of the expansion of the Rumsiskes Open-Air Museum are: to educate both Lithuanians and citizens of the world about life in the many Eastern European market towns prior to World War I; and to learn about, and from, the history of the co-existence and interaction between the cultures that inhabited these towns.

The curated exhibit will showcase the realistic daily lives of *all* inhabitants of historic Rumsiskes, and of such towns, including both the Lithuanian/Catholic majority and the Jewish minority; and the joys and difficulties of ethnic groups living together. And, most importantly, there will also be the educational and research component of the expanded museum that will endeavor to research and learn from the rich, complex, centuries-long history of two cultures co-existing in towns and villages.

III. History of the Rumsiskes Open-Air Museum

The Open-Air Museum of Lithuania was established in 1966, after the Soviet-controlled government of Lithuania constructed a hydro-electric dam on the Nemen River, completed in 1960. The dam formed a lake – the “Kaunas Reservoir” – which flooded 63.5 square kilometers (24.5 square miles). 721 farms and villages that had been near the Nemen River, including the old town of Rumsiskes, were relocated. The museum was to feature ethnographic exhibits, showcasing rural life and culture in various parts of pre-industrial Lithuania. It occupies 195 hectares (483 acres) outside the relocated town of Rumsiskes. The museum opened in 1974.



Elliot Matz at Rumsiskes Museum, 1988, with Lithuanian Intourist Guide

By law, the museum may only showcase structures that actually stood in various parts of Lithuania and were relocated to Rumsiskes. Therefore there are no new recreations of houses or structures in the museum – only genuine old structures that were moved to Rumsiskes.

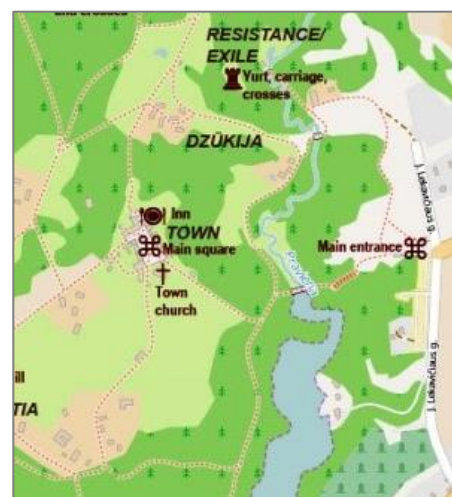
As of 1988, the Open-Air Museum of Lithuania was a collection of farm homes, out-buildings and other structures that one might have found on farmsteads in various parts of Lithuania. As groups, these formed tiny hamlets. There was no re-creation of a central “town” or a typical “market square.” There was no mention, in 1988, of a Jewish minority population in pre-World War I Lithuania. This may have been appropriate, because on the farms there were very few Jews.



Rumsiskes Museum Market Square, 2017



Rumsiskes Museum Entrance, 2018



Map Of Rumsiskes Open-Air Museum

But by 2018, the museum had grown and now includes 140 buildings. It does now include a market square and buildings surrounding it. There is a re-creation of a Jewish-owned

shop, and one Jewish residence. The museum administration is working on moving an old wooden synagogue structure from a town nearby into the museum. *But there is still no realistic portrayal of the Jewish minority in its size and influence on life in the town, including its influence on the economic organization of market-town life, and on the cultural richness and complexity in daily interactions.*

The museum contains tourist infrastructure, including an entry administration and office structure, parking facilities, food and gift vending, and there are some overnight accommodations nearby.

IV. History of Concept and This Project's Further Development of the Concept

Yaffa Eliach, a Holocaust survivor from the town of Eyshishok in then-Poland (and periodically in Lithuania), acquired extensive documentation of the lives of the inhabitants of her home town. She compiled the photos, information and memorabilia into a book, and she coordinated the assembling of the collection into a dramatic principal exhibition at the United States Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. after the museum opened in 1994. The Tower Of Memory is one of the most moving exhibitions in the museum. Later, she organized a foundation to re-create her beloved "shtetl," with its market square, synagogues, a yeshiva, private homes and businesses and more, in the town of Rishon LeZion, east of Tel Aviv in Israel. Eliach's hope was to counter what she witnessed as the Nazis' attempt to portray to the world an image of Jews as sub-human – emaciated, dirty, starving – based on photos from Europe just prior to the War. She wanted to demonstrate to the world that Jews – then and now – are people living everyday lives, just like all other peoples. Eliach envisioned the re-creation as a "Colonial Williamsburg" for Jews - representing everyday life of Jews not only in Eastern Europe, but also in the Sephardic diaspora³, with the setting being 1930's Eyshishok.

Eliach gathered financial and other support, including that of Elie Wiesel, the town of Rishon LeZion, the Israel Lottery, private donors and a sizable donation of her own money. There was a ground-breaking ceremony in 2003. However with Eliach's fading health, the project lost its most ardent supporter, and it was never completed. She passed away in 2016. The Eyshishok re-creation in Israel is not proceeding, and its exhaustive files, artifacts and information now reside at the Yad Vashem Holocaust Center in Jerusalem, Israel.

There *are* other worthy projects that exist or are in development – the Seduva Shtetl Museum in Lithuania; POLIN - The Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw; and others. The mission of these museums is to document and explain the vast and rich history of Jews and Jewish culture – specifically in Poland and Lithuania. However, there are two major differences between these amazing institutions and a town "re-creation" as envisioned by Yaffa Eliach and by this proposal. At the Rumsiskes Market-Town Museum:

- 1) Visitors may truly step into and experience the past, *in three dimensions*, with a dynamic live-interpretation staff, to learn about the vibrant way of life of everyday people of Eastern European market towns – in all its complex richness, with cooperation and struggle; and
- 2) The other museums focus mainly on the Jewish life of towns. The Rumsiskes Market Town Museum will portray the *whole* of Eastern European town life as it really existed for both Jewish and non-Jewish inhabitants of the ~1500 Eastern European towns and, most importantly, on the complex interactions among, and coexistence of, the Christian and Jewish cultures in these towns.

Eliach's model was the Colonial Williamsburg museums; and her target time period was the 1930's. This proposed museum's primary models are both Colonial Williamsburg and Strawberry Banke in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. In both, the interpreters are highly trained in history and ethnography, and can "become" someone of the depicted time period. And in both, the re-enactors handle the exploratory interaction between visitors and re-enactors in an engaging and sophisticated manner. The proposed institution's target re-enactment period, like the existing Rumsiskes museum, will be the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

As discussed, the Rumsiskes Market Town Museum will also host an academic research entity – a collaboration among Vilnius University and Yeshiva University – where research will be conducted into the evolving coexistence of the Christian and Jewish communities, and into lessons that can be learned from that coexistence that could be applied to today's world.

V. Feasibility and Implementation

A. Political

For decades after World War II, Lithuania suffered under Soviet control. Lithuanians were persecuted and deported. The Soviets brutally attempted to suppress Lithuanian language and culture in an attempt to integrate Lithuania into the Soviet Union. Soviet citizens were encouraged to move to/occupy Lithuania, and Lithuanians were encouraged to relocate to the Soviet Union. There was partisan resistance to the Soviet occupation for all of the occupation's existence.

On re-gaining independence in 1990 – 1992, Lithuania began again celebrating its own culture, language and traditions. However, only within the past ten to fifteen years has the Lithuanian government officially begun to have more open discussion about the country's prior Jewish history and culture. They have begun to discuss the complex relations among Lithuanians and Jews; perceptions of who sided with the Soviets and Communists from World War I through independence in 1992; and they have begun to discuss some local citizens' collaboration in the murder of Jews during the Nazi occupation. The discourse is still sensitive, but there is much more open discussion about these topics than there ever has been. Indeed the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania has established

grant programs through the Lithuania Council for Culture to help fund cultural not-for-profits that promote the arts and historic and cultural ventures.

For an addition to the Rumsiskes Open-Air Museum, this proposal has been cooperatively presented to, and has received encouragement from, the Lithuanian Ministry of Culture, the Director and staff at the Open-Air Museum of Lithuania at Rumsiskes, the county of Kaisiadorys in which the area sits, the local Community of Rumsiskes organization, and others, through one-on-one meetings in 2018 through the present, through correspondence, and at a large meeting in Rumsiskes on July 23rd, 2018. The proposed addition to the Rumsiskes museum complex could benefit all parties, and all parties seem to support, in principle, the concept.

The specifics of how to accomplish the changes and proposed additions are now becoming clearer. We are working closely with the administrative staff of the museum, with the Ministry of Culture, with the County and with the Community, but we are proposing building a complementary extension of the existing Museum, with private funds and on private land which is available nearby. This concept has been enthusiastically proposed and endorsed by the local Community and others.

B. Financial

Based on ballpark estimates, construction of the proposed complementary facility near the existing open-air museum would cost – conservatively - around \$15.5 million/€16.0 million (see Exhibit I – Capital Budget Projection). This estimate includes land cost, costs for research, concept development, design, construction, installation, staff training and other administrative requirements, and an endowment to help fund future annual operating-income shortfalls.

Because of the project's potential broad-based appeal to millions of tourists, descendants of Eastern Europeans of all creeds, and to historians, the financial benefits to Lithuania could be quite significant. If properly executed and promoted, an attraction such as this could bring significantly more tourist spending to Lithuania and, with its multiplier effect, could specifically benefit the tourist economies of Kaunas and Vilnius. Without having any current data, it is difficult to accurately project the amount of increase in revenues to the museum or to the local economy based on increased attendance at an expanded Rumsiskes museum. But I am confident that there would be significant increases in revenue.

Partly because of the economic potential of this project, philanthropic donors that have an interest in historic and cultural endeavors should be interested in funding a venture such as this. In addition, the venture may eventually secure some funding from the Lithuanian government and local institutions (Lithuanian Culture Council; Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania), and from other EU funding sources.

C. Organizational

A US not-for-profit entity (NGO) has been established that will act as fundraiser and advisor to the existing museum, and as developer of the new market-town exhibition. The

Board of Advisors of the new not-for-profit is composed of local and international historians and museum designers, Lithuanian government representatives, administrators of existing high-quality open-air museums, and local community representatives.

D. Physical (See Exhibit II – Project Time Line)

With consultation from the Board of Advisors and the Research Center, a team of world-class exhibition researchers and designers with expertise in open-air museums, and a master architect/planner should be hired and charged with the design of a museum and exhibit that would present a re-creation of the original village of Rumsiskes, as a proxy for the portrayal of any of the thousands of pre-war Eastern European market towns, with all of their significant populations included. The designers will be mindful that not all historic market-town were alike, and will also highlight differences among them in programs and presentations. Working closely with the Board of Advisors and the Research Center, the team of designers will lay out a master plan; a detailed design for operation of the exhibit, including programming; interpreter hiring; education and training proposals; incorporation of state-of-the-art technology as appropriate; and all other aspects of design of an open-air museum with academic integrity.

With close input from, and oversight by, the Board of Advisors, architects/designers with expertise in open-air museum design should be hired to prepare physical design and construction drawings, and to monitor construction. The design will include the overall layout of the village, re-creations of all structures and of the site's roads and squares, as well as exhibit re-enactments, interactions, research and administrative facilities, etc.

Finally, the board should hire a local or regional construction firm with experience in historic renovation/construction to execute the plans.

Exhibit I: Capital Budget Projection

Rumsiskes Open-Air Museum Capital Budget Projection

Overall Assumptions			
Euro/Dollar Exchange Rate	\$1.03	12/1/2022	
Square Feet Per Square Meter	10.76		
Square Feet Per Hectare	107,639		
Square Feet Per Acre	43,560		

Land Cost - Estimate	Hectares	Acres	Square Feet
Total Rumsiskes Open-Air Museum - Kapitoniskes Site	20	49	2,152,780
Land Acquisition	\$450,000		Based on Site 1 From County of Kaisiadorys Meeting 7/12/2019, EUR 5,000 per hectare, doubled.

Construction Costs Per Square Foot- Estimate	Euros Per Square Meter	Dollars Per Square Foot	Source
"Warehouse" New Construction	€ 605.00	\$58	EUR 570-640 per square meter - Inga Klimašauskienė colleagues at Glimstedt
"Residential" and "Houses of Worship" New Construction	€ 1,250.00	\$120	EUR 1000-1500 per square meter - Inga Klimašauskienė colleagues at Glimstedt
Administrative Structures	€ 1,250.00	\$120	EUR 1000-1500 per square meter - Inga Klimašauskienė colleagues at Glimstedt

Structures and Their Total Costs - Estimate	Proposed Number of New Structures	Size (sf)	Total Cost	Notes
Proposed Number of New Residential Structures	30	1,750	\$6,279,671	Residences and shops away from town square; residences/shops on town square.
Houses of Worship	2	2,500	\$598,064	Church, synagogue.
Warehouse-Type Structures	2	3,000	\$347,356	Schools, barns.
Administrative Structures	2	2,500	<u>\$598,064</u>	Additional administrative infrastructure - entrance facilities; presentation facilities; maintenance facilities.
Total Structure Construction Cost			\$7,823,154	

Other Costs - Estimate		
Infrastructure Construction	\$1,500,000	Additional Recreated Roads; Modern Requirements - Power; Plumbing; Fiber.
Design Fee Percentage	25%	Markup Percentage of Construction Costs For Design - https://museumplanner.org/how-much-do-exhibits-cost/
Furnishings Cost	\$1,000,000	
Other Administrative Up-Front Costs	\$1,500,000	Coordination Staff; Travel; Fundraising; Legal
Proposed Endowment	\$500,000	Supports ~\$20,000 per year of cash operating subsidy.

Total Capital Investment Calculations			
Land Cost	\$450,000		
Structure Construction Cost	\$7,823,154		Residential Renovation Cost per sf X New Structures X SF Per New Structure
Infrastructure Construction Cost	\$1,500,000		
Furnishings Cost	\$1,000,000		
Overall Exhibit Conception and Design	\$2,580,789		Structure Construction and Renovation Cost X Design Fee Percentage
Other Administrative Up-Front Costs	\$1,500,000		
Proposed Endowment	<u>\$500,000</u>		
Total Capital Investment	\$15,353,943	~ say \$15.5 million	

Exhibit II: Project Time Line

Calendar Quarter Ending:	Jan-23	Apr-23	Jul-23	Oct-23	Jan-24	Apr-24	Jul-24	Oct-24	Jan-25	Apr-25	Jul-25	Oct-25	Jan-26	Apr-26	Jul-26	Oct-26	Jan-27	Apr-27
Museum																		
Buy-in And Fundraising																		
Agreement With Governing Authorities/Assemble [Advisory] Board																		
Concept Development and Exhibit																		
Project Architectural Design																		
Construction																		
Staff Development and Training																		
Project Completion	X																	
Academic Research Program																		
Ongoing Research																		

Exhibit III: Advisors

Zilvinas Beliauskas

- Head of the *Vilnius Jewish Public Library*.

Merritt Chesley

- Foreign Service Officer, *U.S. Department of Agriculture*, retired.
- Docent, *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, Washington, D.C.

Glenn Dynner, Ph.D.

- Professor and Chair of Religion at *Sarah Lawrence College, Fairfield University*..
- Co-Editor-in-Chief of *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies*.
- Author of *Yankel's Tavern: Jews, Liquor, and Life in the Kingdom of Poland*.

Peter Inker, Ph.D.

- Theresa A. and Lawrence C. Salameno Director of Historical Research and Digital History at *Colonial Williamsburg*-the world's largest living history museum.
- PhD in Archaeology from the *University of Wales, UK*. Extensive field experience in Archaeology, University research, and material culture studies.
- Recent work has been in museum and heritage environments, specifically digital heritage through virtual and augmented reality. Board member of *EXARC* network of open-air museums, interpretation and experimental Archaeology.

David M. Kleinman

- Former consultant on US market to *Lithuania Travel*, the national tourism organization for Lithuania, at a time when the emerging destination for US travelers is ramping up its marketing efforts.
- Former Director of Travel Division of *Spring, O'Brien Company* where he directed award-winning destination marketing campaigns for the likes of New Zealand; Hong Kong. Morocco; the Yangtze River Valley, China; St.Vincent and the Grenadines; and ran or was part of campaigns for many of the world's leading airlines, hotels, cruise lines and tour operators. His public relations work has resulted in major broadcast and cable TV coverage for clients.
- Investigative journalist for *Ford Foundation's* criminal justice magazines and managing editor/columnist for labor union newspaper serving Brooklyn District Attorney detective investigators. Also reported for magazines covering management and marketing issues, travel and tourism, hotels and resorts, publishing, restaurant hospitality, food service and others.

- Co-created a “Trans-Atlantic” event for the *European Travel Commission* (ETC) in May 2013, which marked its re-entry into conference management arena for its 33-member countries.
- Consults for a range of projects including in entertainment and social media.

Shay Pilnik, Ph.D.

- Founding Director of the *Emil and Jenny A. Fish Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies* at *Yeshiva University*.
- Former Executive Director of the *Nathan and Esther Pelz Holocaust Education Resource Center*, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Amy Shapiro, Ph.D.

- Professor of Philosophy and Humanities, *Alverno College*, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Teaches philosophy, Holocaust studies and feminist theory.
- Former Director of the Holocaust Education Resource Center at the *Milwaukee Coalition for Jewish Learning*. Has led Holocaust travel courses to Eastern Europe.
- Co-editor with Myrna Goldenberg, *Different Horrors Same Hell: Gender and the Holocaust*.

Darius Suziedelis

- Member of the first Lithuanian delegation to the United Nations, New York.
- Former advisor to the President of the Lithuanian Supreme Council (Parliament).
- Former president, Lithuanian American Youth Association, and board member of the World Lithuanian Youth Association and the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc.
- Translator and English content advisor for cultural organizations in Lithuania, including the National Museum of Lithuania and MO Museum (Vilnius).

Jurgita Verbickiene, Ph.D.

- Associate Professor, Faculty of History; Research and Theory of Cultural History, *Vilnius University*, Vilnius, Lithuania.
- Specialist, researcher and author on Jewish history and culture in Lithuania.

Jill Vexler, Ph.D.

- Cultural anthropologist who curates exhibitions about cultural identity and social history.
- Graduate studies were at the *National School of Anthropology* in Mexico City and at the *University of California, Los Angeles*, from which she received her MA and Ph.D.
- Since 1997, her exhibitions have focused on pre-war Jewish life and Holocaust-related themes. She curated *Oświęcim, Oshpitzin, Auschwitz: Portrait of Memories*, the inaugural exhibition at the *Auschwitz Jewish Center*. For the *New York Public Library*, she organized *Letters to Sala – A Young Woman’s Life in Nazi Labor Camps*. She curated *Images of Resistance – The Photography of Partisan Faye Schulman* for the *Jewish Partisans Educational Foundation* and the *Holocaust Museum and Studies Center* at the *Bronx High School of Science*. In 2014, she served *Department of State* as a Visiting Specialist in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Exhibit IV: Elliot S. Matz - Bio

Professional Profile

Elliot Matz is a C-suite executive with extensive experience in managing large-scale complex enterprise responsibilities that encompass operations, finance, IT and real estate within not-for-profit and for-profit environments.

In his most recent role as the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of the *Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation*, Elliot for over 15 years oversaw property maintenance, construction, security and IT and transportation for the 4 million square foot industrial and commercial facility and economic development project on the Brooklyn waterfront. In addition, Elliot spearheaded the team that developed, and in 2011 opened, BLDG 92, a state-of-the-art exhibit/museum that reviews the rich and lengthy history of the Navy Yard, and explains its significant role in New York City's vibrant economy and cultural melting-pot. As a member of the senior leadership team, Elliot has contributed to developing this former naval facility into a not-for-profit engine of job growth and economic development for Brooklyn and the City of New York.

Prior to his career at the Navy Yard, Elliot was Managing Director of Corporate Real Estate for *CBS Corporation* where he managed acquisitions and dispositions and formulated and executed strategy for a real estate portfolio of up to 29 million square feet.

Elliot's other appointments include 11 years as Director of Corporate Commercial Properties in the Corporate Real Estate Department of *Chemical Bank*; and Project Manager at the *New York City Public Development Corporation*.

Elliot has authored several articles and chapters on corporate real estate strategy in periodicals and books. He earned a BA in Architecture from the *University of Pennsylvania*, and an MBA from *Harvard*.

Personal Interests

Elliot Matz currently serves on the boards of directors of: the *Baltic American Chamber of Commerce*, whose mission is to promote business and trade between the three Baltic State (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) and the United States, *Stockade Works*, a not-for-profit corporation that trains Hudson Valley residents in the television/video and film production film production crafts - a job generator for the Hudson Valley; and *UpRiver Studios*, a B-Corp., state-of-the-art television and film production facility in the Hudson Valley.

Elliot has an avid interest in music, and is an accomplished pianist specializing in the American Songbook.

He is also his family's genealogist and historian, and has researched and produced an extensive family tree and history of the Matz family, which traces its origin to Lithuania but, in diaspora, includes histories in Canada, England, Israel, Argentina and The Netherlands.

Email: info@rmtmuseum.org

Phone: 917-692-1909

Exhibit V: Endorsements



LIETUVOS RESPUBLIKOS GENERALINIS KONSULATAS NIUJORKE CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA IN NEW YORK

February 26, 2018

Elliot Matz
363 County Route 2
Accord, NY 12404

Dear Elliot Matz:

I was pleased to learn about your initiative to upgrade an Open-Air Museum of Lithuania in Rumšiškės as it is presented in the document "Eastern European Village Museum in Lithuania: Proposal for Enhancement of Open-Air Museum of Lithuania in Rumšiškės."

I sincerely believe that your proposal to enhance the Museum and to recreate a typical Eastern European Village of the beginning of the 20th century, and featuring both communities – Jews and ethnic Lithuanians, would highlight the significant and rich interactions between the two ethnic groups and would further reinforce the Museum as the center of cultural and historical attraction to present and future generations of Jews and non-Jews alike.

Let me express my strong support for your endeavor to reveal the life of Jewish people of Eastern European villages at the beginning of 20th century. I trust that this project could significantly contribute to similar the activities already implemented by the Government of Lithuania as well as private individuals to preserve the culture of Lithuanian Jewry, to commemorate the history of the Lithuanian Jewish community as an integral part of the history of Lithuania, and to promote the rich and world-renowned Jewish spiritual and intellectual heritage.

Looking forward to hearing from you about the progress of your project, and please do not hesitate to reach out if you need any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Julius Pranavičius
Consul General of the Republic of Lithuania in New York

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New York, NY 10018

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Zilvinas Beliauskas, Director, Vilnius Jewish Public Library

Getting back our cruelly stolen history is not easy work. It takes time, effort, and a lot of initiative and creativity. All of this I find in the fantastic vision of the proposed Old Rumshiskes museum reconstruction project. It has huge potential - historical, educational, cultural, touristic and economical. It would be a great gift for Lithuania, and a big contribution to the knowledge and understanding of the whole of Eastern European intercultural relations.

Darijus Rimkus, Chairman, Rumsiskes Community Organization

Besides its interesting and tragic history, the town of Rumsiskes is known mostly because it is home to one of the largest ethnographic open-air museums in Europe. The idea to establish an additional museum of the Rumsiskes town, which would be a realistic "live" reconstruction of the town including *all* of its ancestral residents, is great. It would give people a deeper understanding about the mode of life of their ancestors.

Yossef Levy, Israeli Ambassador to Lithuania

Lithuania used to be a huge and vibrant center of Jewish life, creation and thought, a vast green country, scattered with Jewish shtetls among Lithuanian towns, Jewish urban centers, yeshivas, and market places. I believe it would be a wonderful and thrilling human experience to walk through the time machine and to see how this lost world of Christian-Jewish cohabitation in Lithuania looked until the destruction. The Rumšiskės project could demonstrate this cohabitation and multiculturalism in the most wonderful way.

Notes/Sources

¹Pinkas Hakehillot Lita (Dov Levin & Josef Rozin, editors) article (Nechama Kaufman, author) discussing Rumsiskes' early history and its part of the Holocaust, pp. 633-639, in Hebrew, pages [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#), with [English translation](#), (Hebrew version courtesy of Rabbi Ben-Zion Saydman, English translation courtesy of Aba Gefen):

Rumshishok or Rumsiskes or Rumsiskiai (Rumshishok in Yiddish), a village in Kovno district:

“The first victims in Rumshishok were the pharmacist of the village Yirmeyahu Rubinstein, a well-known personality in the village and beloved by all, his wife and their three children. They were shot to death at the outset of the pogrom after hard torture. At the same time, were also shot and killed the carpenter Motl and his son; they were both active Communists in the days of the Soviet rule. Among the first victims were also Matz and a Jewish woman Zila Grinblat, who stood up heroically in front of the murderers after her husband was taken to Pravenishok, and she warned them that a day will come and they will pay for their deeds. She was shot dead on the threshold of her house.”

²The subject of an acclaimed NOVA/PBS documentary:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/military/Holocaust-escape-tunnel.html>

³Visitors To The Auschwitz Site:

http://70.auschwitz.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=82&Itemid=173&lang=en

U.S. Holocaust Museum, Performance and Accountability Report:

<https://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/20151116-par-fy15.pdf>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colonial_Williamsburg