The Jewish Cemetery in Papile:

In 1941, the Nazi's invaded Lithuania, the Soviets departed and an interim government led by a Nazi sympathizer; Juozas Ambrazevicius-Brazaitis took control. All rational controls were lifted from society, and the Lithuanian masses were encouraged to murder, slaughter, maim, rape, destroy and massacre their Jewish neighbors and friends, and many did.

Papile, being a small village in the north of the country, had a miniscule Jewish Community. The men of Papile were taken for immediate murder, while the women were locked up in a building for two weeks. During that time, they were raped, beaten, tortured and starved. Simple Jewish village people were brought down to the lowest depths of hell that their Lithuanian neighbors could construct, while their neighbors divided the proceeds of the loot they had stolen from their victims. After two weeks of horror, these Jewish women and children were taken to the Zagare Ghetto, where they were finally slaughtered, and thus ended 700 years of continual Jewish life in Papile.

Perhaps only some neighbors participated in the slaughters and rapes, perhaps only a few more shared their loot, but the rest stood by in silence as people they knew and lived amongst were irrevocably destroyed.

The Jewish cemetery was then desecrated, headstones used to shore up the hillsides in a storm, or used for construction material because perhaps the homes stolen from the now murdered Jews needs building extensions for their new Lithuanian inhabitants?

In 1957 an ethnic Lithuanian, Adomavicius Steponas moved to Papile. He had had Jewish friends in prior years, and he saw the state of the cemetery and felt shame. Nobody else had cared for the cemetery, not a single stone was standing but he knew it was sacred ground. Mr. Steponas leveled the ground, he searched in adjoining areas, and managed to retrieve four headstones which he returned to the cemetery. There were other stones in the vicinity, Steponas was unsure if these were gravestones as he was unable to read the writing on the stones, so he left those where they lay.

Years passed, Mr. Steponas planted trees to memorialize the murdered Jews of his adopted village, then adding more and more trees to honor those around him. The highest honors he could accord to another human was planting a tree for them within the Jewish cemetery. 75% of the land of the cemetery had been expropriated by the Soviets and now have homes built upon that land, Mr. Steponas lives in one of those homes. Every day he looks out of his home towards the cemetery, remembering the Jews, that lived in that village, and he has raised his children with reverence for their lost Jews.

One day while playing in the vicinity, his children found two human skulls, those of small children. Steponas reverentially buried those human remains next to one unidentified gravestone, nameless Jewish children slaughtered in an orgy of murder because of other peoples hate.

For 55 years, Mr. Steponas has maintained and respected the Jewish cemetery of Papile, without compensation, without even moral support from the State. To honor his sacrifices and

dedication, I had a park bench installed in the cemetery, dedicated to his honor, and planted trees in Israel to honor him, the way he has honored our ancestors.

http://vilnews.com/?p=10761
http://www.flickr.com/photos/12861843@N08/sets/72157615248004403/
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tu2EhqnFKl0
http://www.iajgs.org/cemetery/lithuania/papile.html

Stepono Adomavičiaus garbei už žydų tautos atminties saugojimą Papilėje
על עזרתו בשימור הזכר היהודי ב סטיבן אדומי׳ץ   בכבוד והוקרה למר פפילה
In Honor of Steponas Adomavičius for preserving Jewish memory in Papile

CHILDREN'S FOREST IN ISRAEL   TREES FOR ISRAEL

A CIRCLE OF FIVE TREES
HAS BEEN PLANTED
IN HONOR OF
ADOMAVICIUS STEPONAS
IN GRATITUDE &
APPRECIATION FOR
PRESERVING JEWISH MEMORY
IN PAPILE, LITHUANIA
BY
GRANTAS ARTURAS GOCHIN

יער הילדים