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REVIEWS

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Cassedy, Ellen. *We Are Here: Memories of the Lithuanian Holocaust*.
Lincoln: University of
Nebraska Press,

2012. 273 pp. \$19.95. (9780803230125).

This book describes a journey the author took to uncover her heritage as the descendant of Lithuanian Jews, some of whom were Holocaust survivors. Most of the book is set in Vilnius, where the author participated in the Yiddish summer program at Vilnius University. She also visited other towns in Lithuania in search of answers about her ancestors and about the attitude of Lithuanians toward their Holocaust history, a history that includes the reality that about 90% of the pre-war Jewish population was massacred not by Germans, but by Lithuanians carrying out German orders. She talked to numerous Lithuanians, Jewish and Gentile, trying to gauge whether present-day Lithuania is ready to come to grips with its past. During her Lithuanian sojourn, she also researched a disturbing fact she learned before her departure—her beloved great-uncle was a ghetto policeman. The book is filled with questions about these difficult matters, and none of them are answered or resolved neatly. Many of these issues have been covered before in personal examinations of the Holocaust.

What distinguishes this work is the quality of the writing. Though it is a well-researched and very up-to-date presentation about Lithuania, it never feels dense or academic. It remains fresh and breezy despite its serious subject matter, with vivid descriptions of the beauty of Lithuania's towns and countryside, and of her Yiddish teachers and fellow students. Though there is no bibliography, the author mentions her sources in a note at the end.

Recommended for Holocaust and genealogy collections.

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