Alternate names: Dotnuva [Lith], Dotnovo [Rus], Datnów [Pol], Dotnavos, Dotnava. Датново.
55°21' N, 23°54' E
,
5 miles NNW of Kėdainiai (Keidan), in Kaunas district.. 1900 Jewish population: 233. This small town with a 2003 population of 775 in central Lithuania is the geographical center of Lithuania at the village of Ruoščiai, a few kilometers away.

Yidishe Shtet, shtethlekh un dorfishe yishuvim in Lite: biz 1918: historish-biografishe skitses (New York, 1991).

Letters from Dotnuva.

Datnove was a rural town in the Keidan district in the middle of Lithuania, 11 km. from the district capital of Keidan on the banks of the small river, the Dotnuvele. Municipal rights were granted to Datnove in 1637 along with permission to hold market days twice annually. During the period of Russian rule (1795-1915) these lands were given to Graf Kroytz. In an administrative capacity, Datnove belonged to the district of Vilna and after 1843 to the district of Kovno.The railroad from Libau to Romania in the mid-19th century, a station was built next to Dotnuva that encouraged town growth. In 1895 and 1911, large fires occurred. An agricultural school began and enlarged after WWI during Lithuanian independence (1918-1940) Jews from various parts of Lithuania studied there. The Jewish community dates from the first half of the 18th century when the Jewish cemetery also served Keidan and towns in the surrounding area like Montevidova and Berzinski. In the cemetery was a wooden headstone marking the grave of the Vilna Gaon. More likely, the Vilna Gaon visited as a young man on Shavuot. The rabbi's house was in the synagogue courtyard with the Beit Midrash and a "shtibl" for travelers to stay. Nearly all children went to traditional "kheder". The community was known for being traditional. Most Jews engaged in commerce and tanning with some artisans and farmers. The local market day was Tuesday. 120 Jewish families were sent to the interior of Russia during WWI, but only a few returned after the war. Many emigrated to South Africa and America. At the beginning of Lithuanian independence (1921), about 50 Jewish families still lived in Dotnuva. The 1931 census shows businesses owned by Jews including two grain mills, a produce warehouse, fuel dealerships, mixed retail stores, a leather tannery, and a felt factory. In 1937 eight Jewish handworkers in the town included four tailors, a carpenter, a shoemaker, a barber, and a butcher. No Jewish school in town meant children went in institutions in the Keidan area. [March 2009]

Cemetery information . [September 2010]

MASS GRAVE: On June 25, 1941, three days after the German army invaded the USSR, German soldiers reached Dotnuva. While control of the town remained in Lithuanian nationalists' hands, Jews were attacked and forced into hard labor. In August, the Jews were driven from their homes (taking nothing with them) and imprisoned in a monastery next to the village of Kruk.On September 2 (10 Elul) all the Jews were killed along with the other Jews from the district and buried in a mass grave. Fiver years following the war, the survivors from these villages erected a monument over the grave. The Hebrew inscription says "Here Lie the Victims of Fascism," and in Lithuanian, "Those Killed by the German Occupiers."   [March 2009]

MASS GRAVE: Near the village of **Pestinukai**, 1.5 km from **Krakes** at 55°24' N 23°44' E ; 101; pic. # 110-111
US Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad

I am considering a cemetery "clean up" similar to projects I did in Vilkaviskis and Kalvarija. I have contacted Maceva and Lo Tishkach. If anyone has information [size, gravestones, state of gravestones, local contacts, etc.], please contact Ralph Salinger , Kfar Ruppin, Israel [Mar 2013]