

OBJECT MINGA DE TIRA DE CASA en CHILOE



community of a town gathers to do volunteer work. Building schools, community centers, helping at Harvest, or, like shown in this document, transporting a house from one site to another.

SITE / LOCATION

Quetalmahue, locates in the north-eastern coast of Chiloé, near Ancud, the second most important city in the island.

The land, less scattered in this region than in the south of the island, is directly connected to the more open sea of the Reloncavi.



FACTS

Climate:	Rainy during the whole year, mild temperatures
Building date:	approx. 30 years
Dimensions:	10m x 5m
Number of Stories:	1, often reconditioned to 2 stories, according to the need
Typology:	One-Family House
Materials:	Wooden structure, Lerche as outer surface, Stone foundations
Special Feature:	Complete house transported as the family moves out

INTRODUCTION

The communities settled in Chiloé, long time isolated from the rest of the Chilean economy and society circle, has developed a unique culture and traditions, as a result of a mixture of mythos and pragmatism, in order to solve even the most simple problems. One of these traditions is the Minga, in which the whole

way crossing the center of the island, has seen an improvement in the access to drinking water, sewage net, and electricity in most of the towns and villages, but a relatively high percentage of the rural communities remains isolated. Drinking water out of the little polluted creeks, toilettes digged into the earth, and car-batteries charged once a week in the next town in order to light radios every evening (used as communication sources among the people) are a common practice.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Social and economic structure are well linked in the island. The families constitute the basic economic cell in areas of most difficult access. Every member of the family plays a role in the "business" of taking care of crops and animals in order to sell and trade them for what they need and cannot produce.

The families are mostly small, due to strong migration, specially from the younger looking for more possibilities through studying at schools in Castro, Ancud, or even Puerto Montt, in the mainland.

A level of alcoholism among the men, makes the women of Chiloé a very strong person, a Matriarchy in several cases.



a family group in front of their home in Quemchi

INFRASTRUCTURE



The area, since the 1980's well connected to the continent through regular ferry trips crossing the Chacabuco strait, and through a well kept high-

THE OBJECT TO BE MOVED

The house, according to whether at the shore or in the countryside, allows the different activities needed. A extension of the roof is the terrace when fishing nets are to be repaired, or algies sorted, or when a sheep is to be eaten and its skin prepared to be sold,

CONSTRUCTION

A standard wooden framework is used as constructive system. A fast growing pine-tree brought has been the alternative to native wood such as oak, cypress, or lenga.

FOUNDATIONS



The structure of the house is in itself completed as this wooden framework, and it is only placed upon a system of „pilotis“ burried in the ground, or, as seen in the drawing, as long pilars when at the shore. At their lower ends, huge stones avoid the sinking of the construction and the direct contact to the soil.

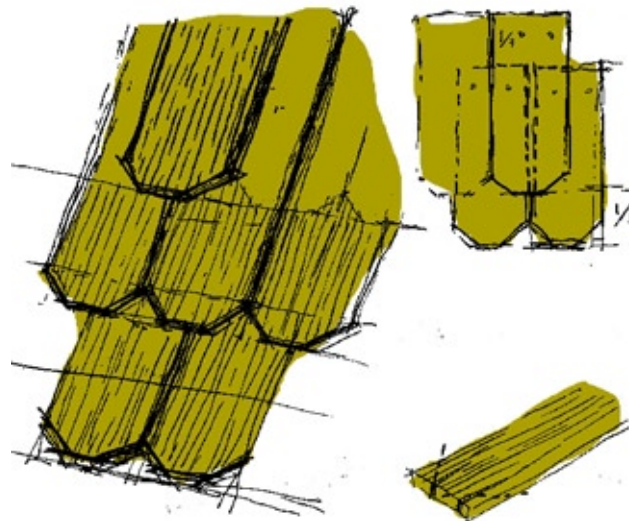
WALLS

The outer „skin“ of the house is traditionally constructed as a shingle-like pattern, using Alerce wood as material, a kind of Lerche or Cypress native to the zone, appropriate to the rainy weather of the island

and easily cut into thin tiles. Nowadays, and with the prohibition to extract native wood out of the forest, cheaper materials as zinc plates or even tin replace the more suitable Alerce.



The form of the shingle, edges cut in 45° angle, avoid the opening of the tile in the direction of the wood fibers due changes of humidity.



The inner side of the walls, traditionally cover also with a wooden „tinglado“, are covered with plates of Eternit, junctions sealed as possible to avoid air and heat loss. A better system insulation foam is to be found in more expensive versions of this house.

OPENINGS



The european influence is clear in details as windows and doors, simple but efective wood works marking the openings in the structural frame.



ROOF



All possible variations of a similar roof system, according to the new expansion need of the families. Normally a family starts with a 1 floor house, and after a while, rebuilds the house to extend itself backwards of as a 2 floor. The roofs are mostly a clear witness of this phenomem of selfconstruction.



ENCLOSURE



The house, in certain parts of the island, specially in the most isolated regions, is the living area, and the working area. A small crop is kept next to the house, fenced in order to avoid the animals to step on it or simply eat the vegetables.



It is common to find the toilettes, a well constructed „tank of stones“ burried at the end of this smaller

section of the site.

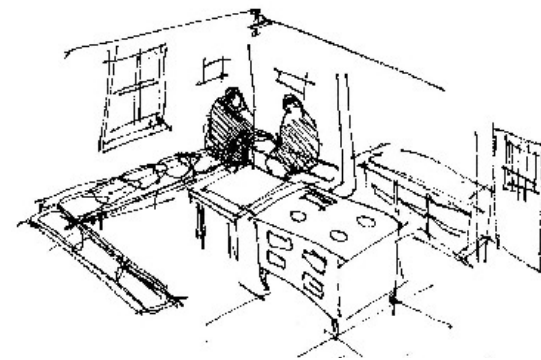
The rest of the land is usually left for sheeps and cows to walk around and feed themselves.

INNER BUILT ELEMENTS / FURNITURE



The main space in the house, and many times the only one, is a sort of living room where the families, cook and eat, work when it rains, talk in the evening, and sometimes even sleep. It is sometimes to be seen, that bedrooms are used as storage space, specially when children are gone to study. This reminiscent space of the Ruka, or Native house of the Mapuche and huilliche people.

The fire has been replaced by a german type of oven, used as cooking and heating device, and gives a very warm atmosphere to the room. This oven is to be seen in almost every home in Chiloé, as it is sign of this chilote warmth.



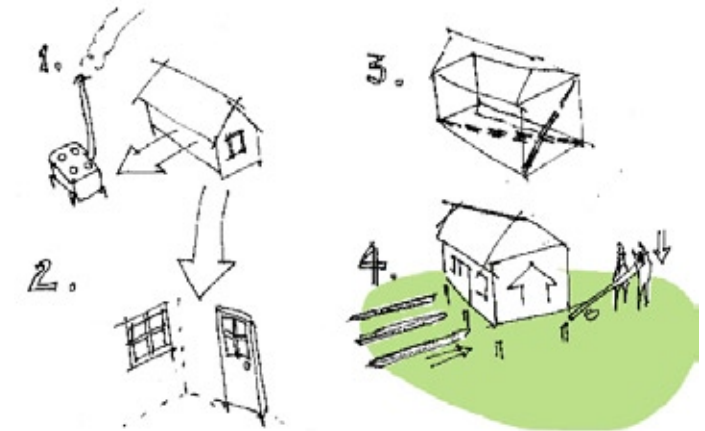
SPECIAL FEATURES: THE MINGA

The decision to move from one place to another, even in a far away country like Chile are the same as in Europe: better conditions of life (real or ideal) on the other side of the island, soil being overexploited, and in many cases, as the people work for landowners, better work offers.

The family has the possibility to require the help from its community, as they do they need to harvest. The decision to move out with their house is today not only a family decision, but from the whole community, partly due to organizational matters, but most of all because a Minga to Move a House represents today a touristic enterprise, which attracts, for at least a whole weekend, people from all over the country.

In a Meeting, the Community decides who will help and with what. The most experienced will bring each the „Yuntas“, a pair of Bulls or Oaxes, others will come to help pulling, lifting, or, most important, cooking, singing and dancing.

The Family, whose home will be moved, are to pay the help with food, wine, chicha (a kind of cidre), and Curanto, a typical chilote dish.



MINGA: basic sequence to start pulling the house

Cocoon-Contextual Construction

The Minga starts with a traditional ceremony to bless the house into its way to the new emplacement, followed by preparing the house to resist the whole trip in one piece to its end destination.

Taking out all furniture, and the heaviest device, the oven, to then deassembling doors and windows.

The whole structure will be reinforced with wood set diagonally at corners, walls, floors and ceiling, to avoid the house from collapsing.



Reinforcement of the structure and Lifting off the house from its old foundations

The house is lifted from its old foundations, and dragged onto a set of carved trunks, which will help the house slide as being pulled by the oxes.



A „yunta“ is a pair of Bulls or Oxes, tied up together, and directed by its owner.

Everything is then ready to leave its site. The Yuntas are brought by their owners, to be tied up to the sliding base. The most experienced Yuntas will be set at the front, and will guide and coordinate the whole process of pulling the house to the shore.

Loud voices, counting 1,2,3 for pulling at the same time in the right direction.



Schematic view: Positioning of Yuntas, and rolling trunks under the house

Arrayan tree trunks, selected for being straight and tough, are set on the ground, every 2-3 meters in order to help the house rolling.

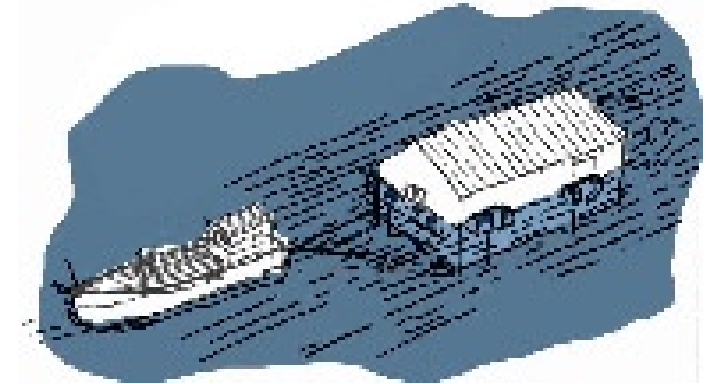


The whole way to the shore can take up to one day's work, and so the first working day is separated into 2 parts. A big lunch is already prepared for the volunteers. Also visitors can come and join the group, paying for a dish of curanto, a preparation of shellfish, fish, chicken, potatoes, and milkao, cooked in a whole filled with hot stones and covered with nalka leaves.



After eating and drinking, and having rested enough, the group of volunteers gets back to work until the house is set up to be pulled, this time by a boat which will take the house across the water, to the new site chosen by the family.

Barrels are tied up all around the house to avoid the construction sinking too much, in order to pull it more efficiently through the canal. A fishing boat does the last pulling from the shore into the water.



This time, the way takes about three hours to complete, in which the group, as if it were a procession, follows in small boats until they reach the next shore.



As the group arrives, another celebration strats, to welcome the house. Here they will eat and drink, sing and dance the Chilote Waltz.



The last big effort, bringing the house onto the shore, to be set at last on its definitive foundations.



The furniture will be slowly brought down by the family, and they will be ready to move in to their new home.



ACCEPTANCE

The Chilote Architecture is very well acknowledged for its warmth and climate suitable characteristics. Nonetheless, is the shortage of its main material, native wood, the reason for the introduction of newer systems of construction such as steel framework, bricks or even concrete. This way of building is also accepted as long as the outer layer of the houses are covered with wood, mimic of the old techniques.

PROBLEMS / CHANCES

The Minga, as volunteer work, is a commonly practiced way to get things done. Volunteer work is a chance to get the communities working together for a common objective, and as the author sees it, that is the reason why they attract so many participants. The minga to move a house from place to place is though, nowadays, a touristical event, and seldom justified by a good reason, leaving as one of the last justified Minga to move a construction, the transport of an old Church near Quemchi to avoid its demolition.

The Minga de tira de casa will remain as a nice memorie, and as a reference for modern Mobility. So much effort to achieve what today technology simplifies.



SCHEDULE OF AN ACTUAL MINGA

EL PROGRAMA

Miércoles 19 de Enero, 2005
 10:30 hrs. Preparación de bueyes
 11:00 hrs. Ceremonia de despedida de la casa con sonatas folclóricas chilotas
 11:30 hrs. Comienzo de la Minga de Tiradura
 13:30 hrs. Almuerzo - comidas típicas
 15:30 hrs. 2ª Etapa de la Minga de Tiradura
 18:00 hrs. Finalización, por el día, de las actividades
 Jueves 20 de Enero
 10:30 hrs. Preparación de bueyes
 11:00 hrs. 3ª Etapa de la Minga de Tiradura
 13:30 hrs. Almuerzo - comidas típicas
 15:30 hrs. 4ª Etapa de la Minga de Tiradura
 18:00 hrs. Finalización, por el día, de las actividades
 Viernes 21 de Enero
 10:30 hrs. Preparación de bueyes
 11:00 hrs. 5ª Etapa de la Minga de Tiradura
 13:30 hrs. Almuerzo - comidas típicas
 15:30 hrs. Ultimo tramo de la Minga de Tiradura
 17:30 hrs. Fiesta de Bienvenida de la casa de la Ballena con danzas y diversas expresiones culturales
 20:00 hrs. Finalización de las actividades y despedida de esta maravillosa fiesta cultural.

LITERATURE

<http://library.thinkquest.org/25816/indexchiloe.html#in>
 Crónicas de Chiloé. Mario Uribe Velásquez
 Vargas Cariola, Juan Eduardo and Urbina Burgos, Rodolfo. La vida en Chiloé en los tiempos del fogón, 1900-1940. Historia (Santiago), ago. 2003, vol.36, p.474-477. ISSN 0717-7194.

PICTURES

„Minga de Tira de Casa in Quetalmahue“, near Ancud. By Ricardo Abarca, chilean photographer.
http://www.lasegunda.com/_portada/abarca_fotos/index.asp