

# LITHUANIA

## Dalė Puodžiukienė

### Two Houses

#### Dwelling House in Aukštaitija Mikalajūnai village, Širvintos district

The building is a characteristic example of a peasant's dwelling house typical of the eastern region of Lithuania, the so-called Aukštaitija (Highland). It was built at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the Mikalajūnai village (Širvintos district), in the central part of the Highland.

Up to the 20<sup>th</sup> century peasants in this region lived in villages which were formed during the King's Land Reform of 1557. The buildings of a farmstead were arranged on both sides of the village street. The dwelling houses and storehouses formed yards, the so-called "good" yards, situated along the street. The outbuildings (barns, drying houses, baths, stables) were behind the "good" yards or on the other side of the street. However, during the land reforms in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the majority of villages were divided into individual farms. Villages of the mentioned type remained mainly in the eastern part of the Highland.

A traditional Highland house (called the *pirkia*) was a one-storey or a double-end log building. It was covered with a saddleback roof and in the western or northern parts of the Highland with a half-hip roof. Up to the 20<sup>th</sup> century such roofs were covered with thatch, later on with chips or small boards. A peasant's family lived at one end of the building which was called the *pirkia* or *gryčia*. The other end, the *seklyčia*, served as a guest room. There was an antechamber and a store in the centre of the building. The one-end dwelling had only a living room (the *pirkia*), an antechamber and a store. In the *pirkia* there was a bread-baking oven made of clay which was placed at the wall between the room and the antechamber. The oven was used for heating and cooking. The guest end was mostly unheated. Until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century the oven had no flue and smoke went out through the hole in the ceiling or through the door. The floor in the antechamber and often in the *pirkia* was a threshing floor; however, in the guest room (the *seklyčia*) there were floorboards. Interior walls of dwelling premises were most often originally exposed. In the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the rooms were divided (planked) by board-walls into smaller dwelling spaces of various functions; the plate stove was attached to a bread-baking oven but the stoves were built in the guest-end. The main façade of the dwelling faced the main street or the "good" yard. In the centre of the main façade there was an entry porch. Entry porches, window ledges and frames, doorways, cornices and gable windows were ornamented. The dwelling houses in the eastern part of the Highland were richly decorated unlike the dwellings in the central part of this region. From the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century the traditional open entry porches were enclosed with glass. Such a type of dwelling house in the Highland villages prevailed until the fifth decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

A dwelling house of Mikalajūnai is built of flat hewn logs and is covered with a saddleback roof. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the roof was covered with thatch, and from the sixth decade with asbocement sheets. The house is rectangular in its

form (15.0 x 7.65 metres) and double-end. In the centre of the house there is an antechamber and a store with a cellar. At one end of the building there is a guest room (the *seklyčia*), and at the other end there is a main living room (the *gryčia*) with a bread-baking oven. This room is divided into two separate premises by a board-wall. After World War II a stove with a heating wall was built in the *seklyčia*. The façades of the building are symmetrical. The main façade faces the street. In the centre there is an open entry porch which was greatly damaged after World War II and recently rebuilt by the dwellers. As the house is located in the central part of the Highland the decoration of the façades is moderate: it has an entry porch, the entrance door sheathed with boards in herring-bone style, panel shutters and profiled window ledges.

At present the building is rented as a summer house.

#### Dwelling House of Žemaitija (Samogitia) Padvariai Farm, Telšiai district

The building is a characteristic example of a peasant's dwelling house typical of the western region of Lithuania, the so-called Žemaitija (Samogitia). It was built in 1904 in an individual farm called Padvariai, Telšiai district, in the central part of the Lowland, where individual farms prevailed before the Soviet collectivisation.

The peasant farmsteads took the natural environment into account. The buildings of the farmstead surrounded some yards. The "good" yard included a dwelling house and a granary. Beside the good yard there were other yards such as a cattle shed yard and a barnyard. In the "good" yard bearing trees (oak-trees, lime-trees, maples) were planted and flower gardens were arranged under the windows.

A traditional Lowland peasant's dwelling house (called the *troba*) was a one-storey log building with a hip or half-hip roof. Before the 20<sup>th</sup> century the rafter type roofs were covered with thatch, later on with chips or small boards. The *troba* was most often double-end and had up to 14 premises. At one end there was a main room for the family (called the *šeimyninė*), a guest room (called the "good *troba*"), a kitchen and small bedrooms (called *alkierius*) for guests and owners. At the other end there were some rooms for the aged mother (called the *priešinė* and the *trobikė*) and some stores: a larder for milk, a larder for meat and pantries. In the centre of the dwelling there were two antechambers: the main antechamber (called the *sienius*) facing the "good" yard, and the back antechamber facing the outbuilding yard. Between them there was a chimney-kitchen (called the *virenė*) with an open fireplace and a bread-baking oven. The chimney-kitchen narrowing gradually upwards and ending in a funnel above the summit was made of kiln or unbaked bricks. A family room, a guest room and a kitchen were heated by stoves with heating "walls". The stores and the bedrooms at the ends of the building were not heated. The floor in the rooms and the main antechamber was a board floor, yet the back antechamber,



the chimney-kitchen, the kitchen, the stores, sometimes even the living room had a threshing floor. The walls of the rooms were often plastered, whereas the walls of other premises were often originally exposed. The long façades of the building were asymmetrical, one end of the house being more developed. The log walls often had vertical panelling. The *troba* usually had little decoration. The doors were most often panelled with various ornaments of boards nailed in different directions. Sometimes an open entry porch was attached to the main façade. In the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the porches were enclosed with glass.

Such a type of peasant houses dominated in the Lowland up to the fifth decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The *troba* in the Padvariai farm is situated on the rugged terrain on the bank of the river. The initial structure of the farmstead is fragmentary. Only a fragment of an original shed has survived.

The dwelling is rectangular in its form (18.29 x 8.57 metres), a double-end log house with a half-hip roof. At the beginning of

the 20<sup>th</sup> century the cover was thatch, from 1938 onwards chips were used, in the eighth decade it was newly covered with asbestos sheets. In the centre there are antechambers and a chimney-kitchen; at the east-end there is a kitchen, a family room (the *šeimyninė*), a guest room (the "good" *troba*) and a small bedroom (the *alkierius*); at the west-end there are two rooms, a bedroom (the *alkierius*) and three stores. At first a bread-baking oven stood in one of the western rooms with its mouth in a chimney-kitchen. After World War II the oven was built in a chimney-kitchen. The main south façade is asymmetric. The open entry porch of the main façade has not survived. An entry porch in the north façade enclosed with glass was attached to the back antechamber door after World War II. The house is only slightly decorated; it has window ledges and profiled rafter ends. The flat hewn log walls are panelled with boards and battens.

At present a farmer's family resides in the building.

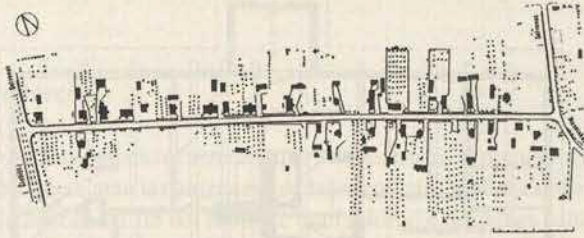


Dwelling House in Aukštaitija Mikalajūnai village

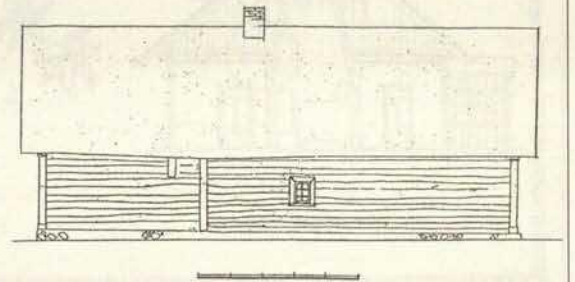
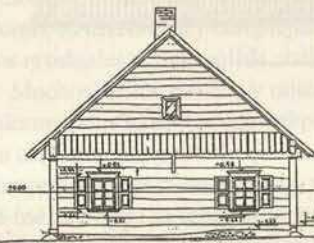
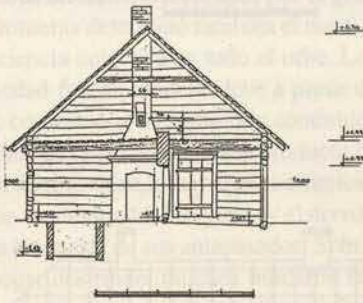
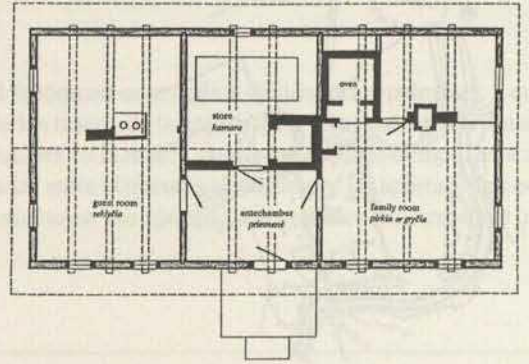


Dwelling House of Žemaitija (Samogitia) Padvariai Farm

Dwelling house of Aukštaitija (Highland)  
 Mikalajūnai village  
 Švenčionys district  
 Lithuania

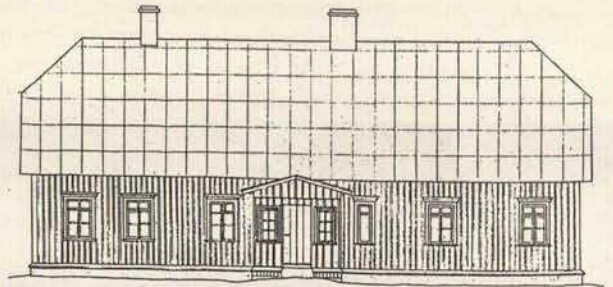
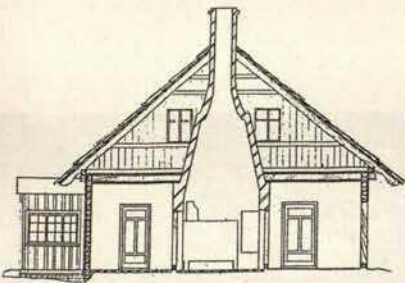
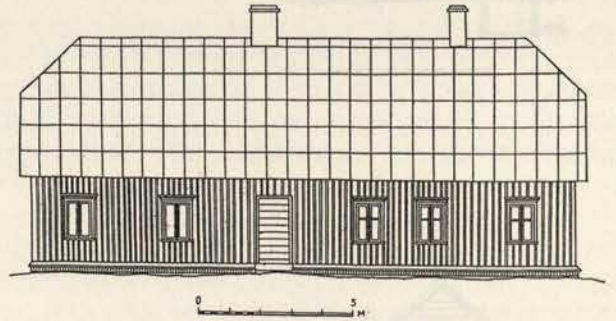
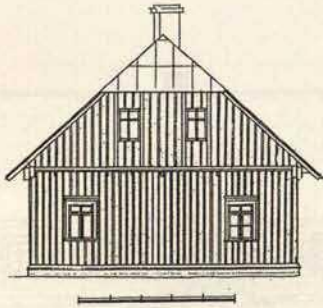
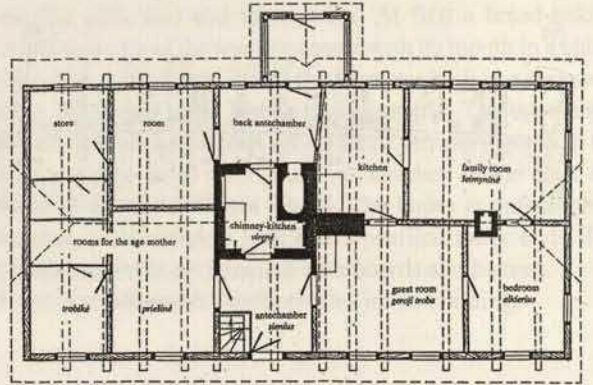
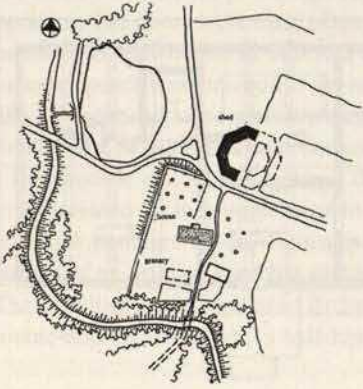


Mikalajūnai village



Drawings of the Dwelling House in Aukštaitija Mikalajūnai village





Drawings of the Dwelling House of Zemaitija (Samogitia) Padvariai Farm