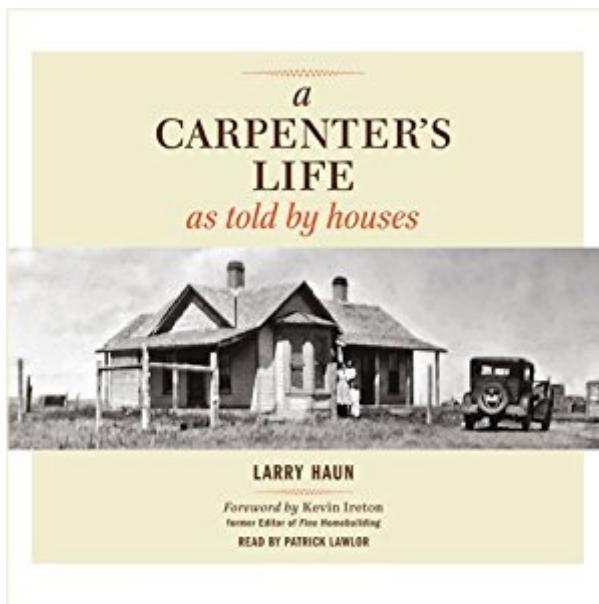


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# A Carpenter's Life As Told By Houses



## Synopsis

From one of Fine Homebuilding's best-loved authors, Larry Haun, comes a unique story that looks at American home building from the perspective of twelve houses he has known intimately. Part memoir, part cultural history, *A Carpenter's Life as Told by Houses* takes the reader house by house over an arc of 100 years. Along with period photos, the author shows us the sod house in Nebraska where his mother was born, the frame house of his childhood, the production houses he built in the San Fernando Valley, and the Habitat for Humanity homes he devotes his time to now. It's an engaging read written by a veteran builder with a thoughtful awareness of what was intrinsic to home building in the past and the many ways it has evolved. Builders and history lovers will appreciate his deep connection to the natural world, yearning for simplicity, respect for humanity, and evocative notion of what we mean by home.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I learned of Larry Haun's *A CARPENTER'S LIFE* from a piece about it in the Grand Rapids Press. While I would not normally read a book written by a contractor/carpenter, I was completely captivated by Larry's memoir of growing up poor on the cold plains of western Nebraska, his early efforts at making things, and then by his long and illustrious career out west building tract homes and raising a family. He turns it into a kind of history of home building from the 1940s forward, interspersed with tantalizing glimpses into his life, chosen profession and his personal brand of philosophy and environmentalism. I was especially interested in the too-short section about his time

in the SeaBees and his tours in Newfoundland and Greenland in the Korean War era. A pacifist at heart, Larry nevertheless enjoyed his noncombatant years with the Navy and being able to use his skills as a carpenter during that time. At the heart of this memoir, however, is Haun's gently introspective musings about how we've despoiled our planet and equally gentle urging that we do better. Here's an example - "We are human beings and we know that we deserve more than we can ever get at a big box store, no matter if we go thee with a super-size shopping cart. They just don't sell what we really need. Happiness can't be bought. It is, as they say, 'an inside job'." Haun is also apologetic for all he didn't know about how he may have contributed to messing up nature, telling of all the toxically treated building materials he quite unknowingly used during his long career as a builder. Indeed, he reckons that his years of handling lumber treated with arsenic and copper preservatives contributed to the cancer he first contracted several years ago.

Larry Haun is an old time carpenter and contractor that has written dozens of articles in various trade magazines through the years and has produced many excellent carpentry videos and books. A big departure from a standard technical or trade instructional manual, Larry lately wrote a book entitled, "A Carpenter's Life". This is not a book about the methods of construction or building, rather it's a book about the lifestyles and habits of the people who live in different types of houses. The book describes the organic process of living in a unique geographical area and how people adapted to using the materials that the land had to offer for their shelter. Larry then goes further and describes much more including the trials and difficulties associated with the different lifestyles; and he discusses the earlier more primitive technology that our ancestors worked with in order to "make a living". Part sociologist, part ethnologist, and part master-builder, Larry Haun rolls these many perspectives seamlessly into a story to tell. By his writing and insights the reader discovers that Larry is a decent, hard working man who sees the world through the ethics of the building trade, that of honest hard work and square dealings. There's no need for myth or tall tales in Larry's writing, there are no Paul Bunyon's or Blue Oxes in the story, just plain-living working folks earning their bread and living in different housing styles depending upon chance, and their time and place in history. Larry weaves these stories into an interesting tapestry that's both educational and entertaining with lots of dry humor and local colloquialisms thrown in.

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