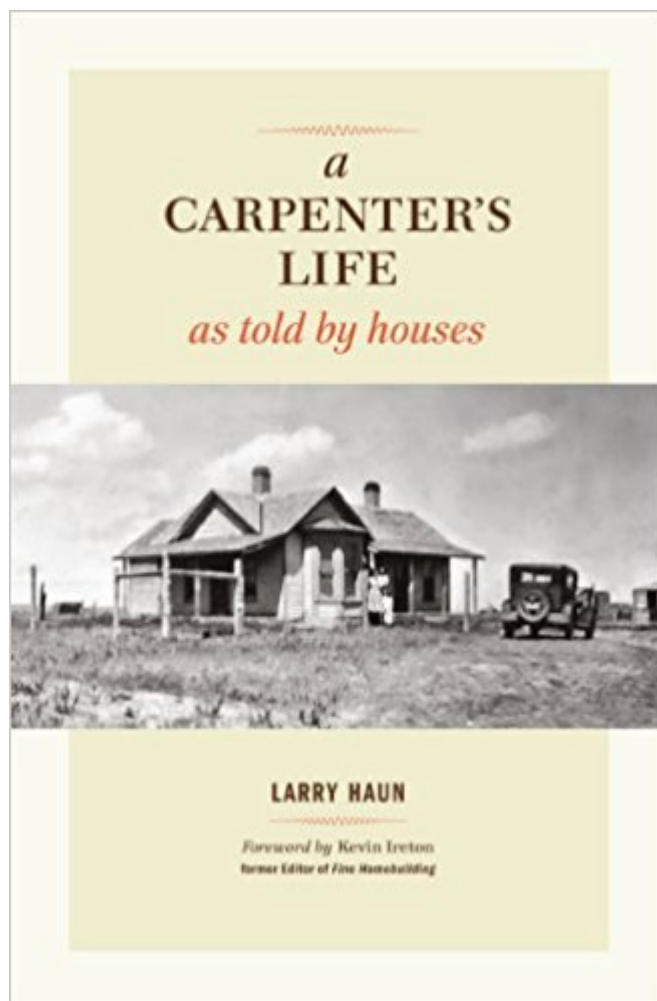


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# A Carpenter's Life As Told By Houses



## Synopsis

Larry Haun is as much a historian and philosopher as he is a 60-year veteran carpenter. Larry's memoir would be equally at home on the bookshelves of home building and architecture enthusiasts as anyone on a spiritual journey. Brian Pontolilo, Editor, Fine Homebuilding Magazine The unforgettable memoir of a legendary builder. You don't have to be a carpenter to appreciate this fascinating book that Publishers Weekly calls, "a first person timeline of 20th century American residential architecture" combining two literary styles: the memoir and the how-to book. A moving story of that place we call home. An early advocate for building lean and green and an avid blogger, Larry Haun tells his unique story in terms of twelve homes he built over the last 100 years. These are homes he knows intimately, drawing the reader in with detailed descriptions and thoughtful observations. "Just like any good carpenter, Haun brings his own artistic flourishes to the job of storytelling. But where Haun's true personality comes across is when he describes the construction process for the many houses he has lived in and built from his parent's 1,000-sq. ft. wood-frame house and the adobe and cob structures of the Southwest to the mid-century pre-fabricated and tract houses, and the more recent Habitat for Humanity homes he has donated his time to help erect. Publishers Weekly, 6/13/2011 A delight to read. A great gift. This engaging memoir will appeal to anyone who appreciates a well-told story. A Carpenter's Life As Told in Houses explores our love of home and feelings so deeply rooted that they go far beyond wood and plaster and shingles. Share the author's deep connection to the natural world, his yearning for simplicity, and respect for humanity and see why he believes that less is more.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"If the best writers draw from their own experience, Larry Haun is as much a historian and philosopher as he is a 60-year veteran carpenter. Larry's memoir would be equally at home on the bookshelves of home building and architecture enthusiasts as anyone on a spiritual journey." -Brian Pontolilo, Managing Editor, "Fine Homebuilding Magazine" If you are lucky in your life, you are fortunate to encounter people who are passionate about their lives. Joseph Campbell is quoted as saying; "People always say what we are looking for is a meaning for life...I don't think that's what we're looking for. I think what we're looking for is the experience of being alive." Larry Haun is very alive, and has shared with me his passion for building, his passion for community, and his passion to serve. All of us at Habitat have been blessed by Larry's energy, enthusiasm and commitment to his trade. Bert Green, Executive Director, Habitat for Humanity of Charlotte (The New York Times)

Larry Haun began his building career on the Nebraska prairie, where at 17 he helped to build his first house. In 1950, he began framing in Albuquerque, N.M., and in 1951, he joined his older brother in a Los Angeles building boom that brought about rapid change in tools, materials, and building methods. Later, seeing a need for passing on production-framing techniques, Haun began teaching two nights a week at a community college--and stayed there for 20 years. He retired to Coos Bay, Ore., where he built houses for Habitat for Humanity, wheelchair ramps for poor people, and backpacked in the High Sierras, the Rockies, and the Andes. He is the author of "Habitat For Humanity: How to Build a House, Homebuilding Basics: Carpentry, The Very Efficient Carpenter, " and three companion videos on how to frame a house. Larry also kept a blog, A Carpenter's View: <http://www.finehomebuilding.com/blog/a-carpenters-view>, where he wrote until a couple of weeks before his death at age 80 in October, 2011.

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 there 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. Sadly, that cancer finally took Haun's life right around the time this book was published. And the frequent feelings of wonder and regret that he expresses here in such everyday and humble language suggests that he knew he was nearing the end of his life. Whether he did or not, *A CARPENTER'S LIFE* serves as a simple and eloquent eulogy to a creative and constructive life lived fully and well. I'm passing this book along to a builder friend of mine who shares many of the same qualities of humility, thoughtfulness and generosity that Larry Haun exhibited, right down to donating countless hours to Habitat for Humanity. This is a fine book. I will recommend it highly. - Tim Bazzett, author of the memoir *BOOKLOVER*

"*A Carpenter's Life*" is a first-person account of both an evolution of dwellings told with intimate nuances that could only come from someone who lived through the times described and, most importantly, a witnessing of the loss of connection to the basic pulse of life that the speed and rush of modern times, with all its gadgetry and novelty, has so efficiently removed from our experience. And in the telling of the stories, there is healing. Larry's style of writing is basic, simple, and direct--it is not only a pleasure to read but it also connects powerfully with an earthy wisdom that feels welcoming to the soul. The stories contain in them the comforting voice of sanity that is too often missing in the world today, and they are potent. They have the potential to not only change how we see our world, but also how we might live in the world. This book is good medicine and a welcomed input into the stream of our busy lives. I cannot recommend it highly enough. - Steve W, Portland, OR

I started showing Larry's YouTube videos several years ago in my Insurance Property class. Every student of mine was truly amazed at the craftsmanship of Larry building skills. This book is about the amazing life he had.

I'm the type of person that I have to see something to be able to replicate it, I'm not too good with reading something and understanding it. Mr. Haun has a way with words that, I don't have any problem understanding the message he is trying to convey. Look up his videos on YouTube and you will understand what I mean.

Great story so far. A must for any carpenter home builder who likes some history. Wish I could have met the man.

Bought this for myself but before I got going good my wife, who considers our 100 year old house her hobby, thumbed through then began reading and now she can't put it down. Luckily with the pace she's keeping up I shouldn't have to wait too long for my turn!

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