The One Man Crew: The Creating and Sustaining of a Master Folk Artist

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THE ONE MAN CREW: THE CREATING AND SUSTAINING
OF A MASTER FOLK ARTIST

By

Heidi Jean Williams

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
of
MASTER OF SCIENCE
in
American Studies
(Folklore)

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ABSTRACT

The One Man Crew: The Creating and Sustaining
of a Master Folk Artist

by

Heidi Jean Williams, Master of Science
Utah State University, 2014

Major Professor: Dr. Lisa Gabbert
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This thesis explores what creates and sustains a master folk artist by looking at an individual master of carpentry: Jerry Saville. By allowing the voice of the carpenter to tell his story, the author discovers that drive, dedication, desire, purpose, and life experience/opportunity put this carpenter on the path to becoming a master. Through apprenticeship with a master of carpentry, Jerry learned to be a framer and thus entered status of journeyman. Jerry reached the status of master through dedicating tens of thousands of hours of practice. Practice, lots and lots of practice, makes perfect. The community of family and friends that surrounded Jerry gave him purpose and opportunity to grow as a carpenter by providing him with support and job opportunities. Desire, drive, dedication, life experience/opportunity, purpose, and a community of support combine together within this folk artist’s life to create and sustain his status of master.
PUBLIC ABSTRACT

The One Man Crew: The Creating and Sustaining
of a Master Folk Artist

Heidi Jean Williams

Folk art is the art of everyday life. Framing homes can be artistic when done with a degree of exemplary expertise. Jerry Saville is a master folk artist because of his special skills and techniques exhibited in his trade of carpentry. This research provides a glimpse into a carpenter’s life to discover what creates and sustains a master carpenter. Through desire, drive, dedication (time/practice), life experience/opportunity (apprenticeship), purpose, and a community of support, Jerry Saville became a master folk artist.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I would like to thank Dr. Gabbert for this wonderful opportunity to research my family’s legacy in my father’s occupation. The project began in her class on folk art, continued throughout her occupational folklore course, and will finish in her hands as a thesis. I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. Steve Siporin and Dr. Jennifer Eastman Attebery, for their support and encouragement. It’s an intense process and I thank them for their willingness to be a part of it.

I give special thanks to my family for allowing me to interview each of them numerous times for this project. A grand thank you goes to my dad for it is his words that fill the majority of the pages of this thesis. He was patient and encouraging from the start to the finish. Indeed it was a special project for our family; each member really added to the content of this work. I could not have done it without them.

I especially want to thank my loving husband for his endless encouragement, support, and patience as I worked my way through the last two years. He was there for me every step of the way.

And ultimately, I want to praise God for allowing me to do this.

Heidi Jean Williams
Jerry’s breath froze in the air with every exhale of his tired body. His feet hurt from the constant incline of the roof. His fingers already poked through his winter work gloves he barely bought last week. Jerry, who is a framer, grabbed the sheet of plywood from the corner of the roof where his son hoisted it overhead from the ground. Careful not to let the wind catch its edge, Jerry swung the large piece of wood vertical to the roof and up into its slot next to the others. Holding the sheet in place, he positioned the staple gun from his belt to his hand and rapidly stapled the plywood secure on the trusses. Years and years of repeating this action meant he controlled the gun with excellence and expertise, flawlessly stapling directly down the spine of the truss.¹

Framers are carpenters and Jerry works whether in crazy wind, pouring rain, blizzard snow, blazing hot sun, or a mixture of all kinds of weather. He works to support his family, to put food on the table, and to pay the bills. There are no alternatives for keeping food on the table, at least none that he feels comfortable doing. Something about keeping his family sheltered, fed, and happy motivates Jerry to wake up in the morning. His family provides him a wealth of love and appreciation for the many hours of exhausting work.

Finding the extraordinary in the ordinary drew me to study folklore. I chose to write my master’s thesis on the life and work experiences of a carpenter named Jerry

¹ Plywood is a manufactured sheet of wood created from gluing together little pieces of wood together. To sheet a house is to cover the frame with plywood. Trusses make the frame of the roof (APA 2013).
Saville because I found extraordinary skills, talents, and techniques in his “ordinary” craft. I found artist elements in the way he built homes. Jerry is a fifty-eight-year-old carpenter/framer from Idaho Falls, Idaho. He is my father and he has worked as a carpenter for nearly all of his life and continues to work as a framer every day. People call Jerry the One Man Crew because he framed entire homes by himself. He manipulated nails and boards to replace helping hands.

The work of Henry Glassie and Michael Owen Jones inspired me to recognize the connections between folk art and my dad’s work. I remember exactly when the epiphany happened: I was sitting in a course on material culture discussing the qualifications of a folk artist. I remember looking up into the corner of the small conference room pondering the work my dad did as a carpenter and comparing it with the work Chester Cornet did as a chair maker (Jones 1989), and like a light bulb in my brain it clicked: my dad was a folk artist.

Folk art is complicated to define (Ames 1977: 13, Lipman et al. 1990: 10). Each object and artist must be examined closely in order to be defined as folk art. A producer is folk because of the use of traditional techniques learned orally and by imitation (Jones 1980: 351). Did the artist learn from oral tradition or watching, mimicking, trial and error, or through formal education? Does the creation represent aesthetic perceptions, expression, and appreciation of the crafting community’s constructions (Toelken 1996:

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2 Throughout my research, I refer to Jerry as both a carpenter and a framer. A carpenter is someone who works with and repairs wooden objects and structures; while a framer is someone who frames the structure of a building. Jerry calls himself both of these terms interchangeably, so therefore I do also. Framing is specifically his current occupation, but a framer is technically a carpenter. I also refer to Jerry as my dad as well as by his legal name to remind my readers that he is simultaneously both.

3 One Man Crew: outside observers could not see the community of support Jerry received from his family and friends. Using this nickname expresses the skill Jerry exhibited as a builder who worked virtually alone. The word “virtually” is important to note because Jerry did have help from time to time.
Franz Boas explains folk art as follows: “When the technical treatment has attained a certain standard of excellence, when the control of the process involved is such that certain typical forms are produced, we call the process art, and however simple the forms may be, they may be judged from the point of view of formal perfection” (1955: 10).

There is an element of excellence within Boas’ concept of art. For example, anybody can stack firewood in the garage, but it’s the folk artist whose woodpile catches the eye of a bystander—every piece of wood cut symmetrical to the other, each one lying strategically on the next, creating a perfectly stacked pile of firewood whose designer becomes a folk artist. The designer takes pride in his/her woodpile knowing others will look at it as an external expression of care and love for one’s family and household (Toelken 1996: 264-265). Garbage cans placed on the curb with absolute neatness can be considered folk art—or, at least the emergence of the aesthetic impulse in everyday life (Jones 1987). When an everyday task is done or object created with such perfection and skill that it stands out above the ordinary, it becomes folk art, and the creator becomes a folk artist.

Jerry builds houses to a degree of perfection noticeable to other professional carpenters as well as clients. Other carpenters often comment about the technical qualities Jerry skillfully pilots to create square frames from which to build the rest of the homes. Jerry is often hired to fix other carpenters’ mistakes. Several years ago, a well-established and experienced general contractor hired Jerry to frame one of his houses. After Jerry finished the job, the general contractor went around the inner walls of the house with an

---

4 General contractors are hired by the client to be in charge of supervising the entire process of building a home—including hiring, organizing, and coordinating sub-contractors for the whole project.
eight foot long 2X4 and checked the straightness of the walls. Holding the plank horizontally in his hands, the man pushed the edge of the 2X4 against the vertical boards that made the wall. If there was any rocking or unevenness of the board then the wall was not straight. The man checked the entire house and there was not a single uneven wall. With puzzlement he told Jerry, “This is the squarest house I have ever seen in my whole life.” Jerry is not just an ordinary framer. He is an artist in his trade, because of the level of excellence in which he performs his craft (Toelken 1996: 219).

I use the term “folk art” and “folk artist” because Jerry’s excellence in craft makes him a folk artist and his work art. His building is artistic, inspired by practical use and aesthetics, as well as oral tradition learned through apprenticeship. His homes are works of art, excellent examples of material culture and vernacular architecture, not merely examples. This thesis is founded on study of folk art, material culture, and occupational folklore. I find it necessary to define Jerry as a folk artist, an apprentice, then a master of carpentry; his work as both material culture (folk craft), folk art, and vernacular architecture—because it is each of these simultaneously.

This thesis is framed by the following research question: What creates and sustains a master framer? The answer, which has to do with learning, teaching, identity, and community, is explored in the following three chapters. This question is important because in folklore studies there are no in-depth studies of a framer, and few on apprenticeships or the family of a folk artist. This thesis provides information about an individual folk artist’s path to the status of master. It is organized in three chapters that answer how a master framer is created and sustained.
The first chapter records the life of an apprentice who becomes a journeyman by working on his own, and who finally reaches the status of master by completing his first masterpiece, illustrating the experiences of one carpenter in becoming a master craftsman. The second chapter describes Jerry’s master-apprenticeship relationship with his son Phillip. This chapter shows how teaching refines the artistry and techniques of the master. The third chapter describes the master’s community of support. This chapter explores how Jerry’s success is influenced by the people around him, specifically his family, and how his family’s identity is defined by his occupation.

“American folk art can be found in many forms” (Schaffner 1991: 7). Jerry’s frame work is one of these forms. While there are many ways to define folk art, I chose to focus on Franz Boas’ teaching that art is the judgment of the perfection of technical form and that all art has aesthetic value (1955). Aesthetic means “a complex or system comprising a well-developed philosophy and verbalized principles regarding form, its excellence and appreciation” or “a philosophy of form and a set of verbalized principles” (Jones 1987:169). “When the nerves are thrilled, when the senses seek their own pleasure, action is aesthetic. Then it has met the first requirement of art” (Glassie 1989: 63). Art inspires an aesthetic response. The houses Jerry builds cause an aesthetic response in other carpenters, the home owner, and himself. The aesthetic elements of the homes that Jerry builds are “based on practical function” (Toelken 1996: 226), on personal taste in beauty, and economic needs of each family. Families and employers recognize these aesthetic qualities in practicality, function, and artistic appeal in the homes he builds.
Folk art is the “uncommon art of the common people” (Rumford 1980: 13). There is beauty in the everyday materials that we use, from getting dressed to doing the laundry. If the process makes the product stand out as a form reaching for perfection, it can be called art. Folk art is considered the everyday artistic elements of life (Boas 1955; Duffy 1995; Glassie 1989, 1999; Griffith 2000; Jones 1989, 1987; Toelken 1996; Magliocco 2001; Rumford 1980; Vlach 1990). Barre Toelken wrote, “What makes folk art different from fine art is precisely that it is based on the aesthetic perception, expression, and appreciation of the community constructions of everyday life” (Toelken 1996: 226).

These everyday artistic elements of life are found in the framing of homes by Jerry Saville, because they are simple middle class homes. “Folk architecture, sometimes called ‘vernacular architecture’ (that which is common or native in a given area) …and especially folk housing, is the most basic of traditional material culture” (Brunvand 1998: 524). The homes Jerry builds are vernacular/common architecture of the region of Idaho Falls, Idaho (single level with a basement). These housing plans incorporate the idea of public space being separated from private space: a great room-living room-dining room-kitchen component that is public and shared space versus bedrooms/bathrooms arranged together as a more private space. This type of living space is commonly used and enjoyed.

Warren Roberts summarizes the study of folk architecture as “a major understanding of such subjects as cultural differences, the relationship between the individual and society, the diffusion of culture, the persistence of cultural traits, and the adaptation of culture to new environments or the lack of it” (Roberts 1972: 283). Many folklorists examine houses as material artifacts, focusing on how vernacular architecture
can be used to understand and analyze history (Deetz 1996; Attebery 1991; Glassie 1975, 1989, 2000; Vlach 1991). Jennifer Attebery’s *Building Idaho: An Architectural History*, reinforces the grandeur of knowledge that buildings hold. Architecture reflects a people and their culture and identifies aspects of the time period.

As an example, Henry Glassie illustrated that the transformation of house types in Virginia reflected social and familial change (1975). On the inside of the front cover of *Vernacular Architecture* Glassie writes, “Architecture divides space, making it habitable, meaningful, human. Vernacular architecture, brought to thought, helps us shape a better history. It aids in our efforts to build well, to protect our heritage, and to live decently upon the earth” (2000). In the study of vernacular architecture, however, there is mostly a focus on the buildings themselves and rarely on the individuals who built them. With the exception of Marjory Hunt and her study of stone carvers, I have yet to find a folklorist who focused on individual craftsmen of buildings, let alone vernacular homes. John Michael Vlach addresses the issue in a more general sense in his book *By the Work Their Hands*: “Because the relatively new field of American material culture research is essentially ‘artifact-driven,’ scholarly attention is focused more on things at least initially, than people. Consequently much more is written about objects than their makers” (1991:107). In Vlach’s article “Folk Craftsman,” he further expresses the need to study craftsmen to gain even greater insight (1983: 304). I wish to fill this void by focusing on Jerry as a specific example of an individual craftsman who builds houses in southeast Idaho.

Notice that I call Jerry a craftsman and an artist. What defines a craft as a folk craft, as Warren E. Roberts explains in his article “Material Culture: Folk Crafts” in
Folklore and Folklife is: it must be traditional, the craft cannot be high class, often “one man creates and designs the finished product,” and the craft “requires a greater degree of training and skill than does the occupation” (1972: 234-235). The homes that Jerry builds follow each of these requirements. Roberts even writes that a house carpenter represents a craftsman and a craft working with wood (1972: 242). Simon J. Bronner quotes the definition of craft in his book, Explaining Traditions: Folk Behavior in Modern Culture as “the transference of craft from the Teutonic root for “strength” or “force” to “skill, art, skilled occupation…” (2011: 138). The homes Jerry builds are examples of occupational craft and he is a craftsman. But he is more than a craftsman because the degree in which he builds homes—he must also be considered a folk artist.

A master folk artist is defined as a craftsman who has command over his/her trade because of a lifetime of performance. A master artist has a skillful command over the techniques of his/her craft. Glassie describes a folk artist as having excellence in a craft (1999, 1989: 42). Similarly, Jones teaches that being a folk artist is more than doing a craft or trade; acquiring expertise and having extended knowledge in the craft or trade and being recognized as great by other craftsmen of the same trade (Jones 1989). A Bangladesh potter’s kalshi (basic water jar) molded out of the very dirt on which the potter sits is a form of folk art (Glassie 1999). A chair maker designing magnificent chairs in response to his own aesthetic desires and psychological needs is considered a folk artist (Jones 1989). The women of Gee’s Bend, Alabama take old clothes and recycle them by making quilts for their families to keep warm at night. Their quilts are beautiful and functional forms of art (Schepers-Hughes 2004). Just like these folk artists, my dad
uses his hands, skills, and knowledge to create noticeable works of art. For this reason, I choose to call Jerry an artist, as well as a craftsman.

Studies of occupation also informs this thesis. Archie Green developed the field of occupational folklore. Green’s folklore career started from his own work experiences as a road builder, firefighter, shipyard laborer, and other labor positions. Green wrote eight books on occupational folklore and received a grant that started the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, which houses the largest folklore archive in the United States. Green passionately encouraged folklorists and especially workers themselves to collect occupational lore. He served as a devoted advocate for the everyday worker.

Following Green’s passion, occupational folklore has been studied in many work environments from commercial fishing, bartending, and train porters to chair-makers (Bell 1976; Jones 1968; Poggie and Gersuny 1972; Santino 1983). The range of lore found in all occupations is worthy of study because of the insight it provides into the lives of people. My studies taught me the importance of recording folklore: folklore reflects the lives of people. Such records are scarce when it comes to individual framers, however, and thus the importance of my research. My thesis brings an example of a master carpenter/framer folk artist to the study of folklore. It takes a closer look at an individual master and how he became such and is sustained as such.

Folklorists give voices to the people who often don’t have a chance to be heard; folklorists record histories and lives—all of which deserve to be remembered. To record the experiences of my father is to record the voice of a master carpenter; a voice and life that otherwise would be forgotten in time. By writing Jerry’s story, I provide insight into
the making and sustaining of a master carpenter, through the teaching of an apprentice, and the support of the master artist’s family. My purpose for this study is to provide records that can be used for further academic study and to record a valuable life story.

The following thesis on the life of Jerry Saville supports how occupation, technical skill, architecture, and folk art is learned orally and through imitation or performance maintained without formal instruction. Jerry Saville became a master framer through apprenticeship with a master framer and continued learning by teaching an apprentice of his own. Without his family, Jerry would not be the master framer that he is.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION:

A CARPENTER’S DAUGHTER
The sun beat down on my tired body as I sprawled out across the piled stack of plywood. My body ached from lifting and carrying sheets of plywood around the house. My dad wanted me to lay out sheets of plywood around the border of the house to make it easier for him and Keith to sheet the outside walls. A sheet of plywood weighs about twenty-five pounds and is four feet wide by eight feet long. Finally, at age twenty-two, I could carry one of these things by lifting one end up and wedging myself underneath so I could carry it on my back. After a few struggling walks around the house fighting with the giant sheet of plywood threatening to fly away with the wind, I was pooped.

I lay there thinking how does dad do this day after day all day long? I quit. Meanwhile, my fifty-seven-year-old father kept running the saw and nail gun. I didn’t even know what he was working on at the time; all I knew was that I didn’t want to be caught lying on the pile of plywood. But I was sick of the dirt, the wind, and the sun. I wanted a nap.

“Heidi!” my dad’s voice traveled like a blow horn.

I jumped up so fast that I had to pause and gather myself with my hands on my knees. As my surroundings became focused again I yelled back, “Yea!”

“Bring me the skill saw!”

“K!” I ran around the side of the house searching for the orange cord that would lead me to the hand saw.

“Over here!” My dad yelled and I finally recognized where he was and where I was supposed to be. He was up on the ladder around the front of the house sheeting the wall around the door. I didn’t ask why he needed it or why he couldn’t jump down and grab it himself. I just grabbed the saw lying in the rocky dirt and lifted it high into the air
so he could grab it. He snatched it out of my hands, and seconds later he was sawing the slightest piece of plywood off the corner of the sheet, making a square, perfect fit with the door frame. Holding onto the cord, he lowered the saw to the ground and called for the staple gun. I grabbed the staple gun and held it high above my head so he could grab the tool. “CLACK CLACK CLACK CLACK,” he stapled the edge of the plywood to the frame of the house as he walked down the ladder. He reached over about two feet in from the edge of the plywood and stapled a perfectly straight line back up the sheet of wood as he stepped up the ladder.

“Here, hand me up another,” he called to me as I stared, watching him move like lightning up and down and around the ladder, stapling the two boards together without a single miss. There was no doubt he could have been faster at lifting up another piece of plywood, but I think he was okay with a little moment of rest while he waited for me to struggle with the next sheet of plywood. He hung his staple gun to the ladder by hooking the handle over the step, took off his hat, and wiped his forehead.

When I finally held the sheet of plywood upright, he grabbed it from me and lifted it up next to the house, resting it on the two nails. Hammering two nails into the base of the foundation was a trick he showed me for sheeting the exterior walls. The nails created a shelf for the sheet of plywood to rest on while he stapled it to the frame. Without the nails, the process would be a nightmare with only one set of hands, but having the nails actually make it possible to sheet the exterior walls with only one person. Before my dad started sheeting, he would hammer a few nails along the base of the foundation about two feet apart. This little trick made sheeting the exterior walls faster, easier, and straighter, by making the base of the plywood always follow a square line with the foundation.
seemed like a simple and obvious trick after he told me about it, but I don’t think I would have thought of it myself. I stood there watching him for a while, amazed by his accuracy.

“Will you get me some water?” He asked without a pause in the “CLACK CLACK CLACK.”

“Yup!” I started searching the ground for a discarded water bottle. Within seconds, I located an old Gatorade bottle, snatched it up, and jogged to the truck. I was in the habit of running everywhere because if I didn’t my dad would yell, “Hurry! Run!” and so that’s what I did. He was always fast; he was known for it by the people he worked for too. Despite being a One Man Crew, my dad was the fastest builder around.

I rinsed the bottle out a few times, swirling the leftover color clean from the plastic and filled it up with fresh ice water from the blue water cooler sitting in the doorway of the tool trailer. I drank about half of it and then filled it up again, tightened the lid, and ran back to where my dad was still working away. I handed the water to him. He hung the staple gun on the ladder and drank non-stop until the water was gone, twisted the lid back on, and tossed it to the ground. After handing my dad another sheet of plywood, I went back to carrying the plywood pile piece-by-piece around the house. Watching my dad work inspired me to not lie back down on the wood pile but rather work quicker and harder without so much complaining.

It wasn’t too long before my dad said that there were enough sheets around the house for now and started me on the next task. He wanted me to take a pile of 2X4s and slide them into the basement. This was a job I had done since I was little. It reminded me of a time my dad taught me a very important lesson about “stacking wood.”
When I was little, my dad would “hire” me to work for him. I dragged 2X4s from one side of the house to the other, gathered up little pieces of scrap wood and threw them into a pile or into the trash trailer, fetched tools from his truck when he yelled for me, attempted to help him lift walls and hold it while he nailed it down, or swept out the houses after rain or snow. But usually I just played in the dirt hills when my mom brought lunch to him and the boys.

One time when I was actually working, however, my dad asked me to throw some 2X4s in the basement. It literally meant to grab a wooden plank, slide it over the metal window well frame, and push it flying onto the cement basement floor with a crash and then repeat that process until the entire pile was in a jumbled mess in the basement. I wore a pair of my dad’s old work gloves, equipped with holes and dried glue, so I wouldn’t complain as much about slivers.

I thought moving the pile into the basement was pointless; I thought my dad just gave me these kinds of jobs to keep me busy and out of the way. He told me that when I placed all the planks in the basement to then stack them up neatly. So after I had the 2X4s sticking every which way out of the window well and scattered about the cement floor I jumped down from another window well into the basement to finish the job.

I pulled the planks that were sticking outside the window frame down into the basement and moved them into a messy pile in the middle of the floor. I tossed the boards that had slid across the basement onto the pile. Then I sat on the cement and pushed the wood with my legs, kicking them into a more uniform section. I tossed, kicked, and pushed planks until the messy pile looked satisfactory to a thirteen-year-old girl.
I reported to my dad that the job was completed, and that it was time for the next task. He asked if I had stacked the wood neatly, and I told him it was indeed “piled in the basement.” He went to check. Needless to say, he was not okay with my messy gathering of wood in the middle of the floor.

“What am I supposed to do with this? How am I supposed to grab these? This doesn’t help me at all.” He grabbed several 2X4s in his hands and slid them across the floor. Then he grabbed a few more, and a few more, until the messy pile started to look like the pile of wood that had been outside in the dirt: perfectly uniform, one plank on top of another side-by-side, row after row. He worked so fast I didn’t know what to do. I just sat and watched how it was supposed to be done.

Finally he stood up for a brief moment and said, “See. Now when I need the boards I can just grab a few.” He grabbed three planks in one hand. Using the bottom boards as levels, he pushed down, making the back ends of the boards lift up, and lifted the boards in one fluid motion tossing them across the basement floor to the other side of the room.

“A little work now makes the work easier later.” Before I knew it, he lifted himself out of the window well and headed back to work. I sat there for a moment looking at the new perfectly stacked pile next to my mess.

“Well,” I told myself, “I guess that makes sense.” I started stacking up the rest of my messy pile next to my dad’s, following his pattern.

After I stacked the wood in a perfect pile just like my dad showed me when I was little, he asked me to “lay the basement out,” which meant placing the 2X4s next to the pressure-treated 2X4s in order to make the basement walls. I finally understood why he
told me to stack the wood. It really did make the work easier. Because the wood was perfectly stacked in the middle of the floor, it did not get in the way of the walls and I was able to grab planks and navigate them more easily. All that time stacking wood was worth it in the end. It wasn’t busy work that my dad was giving me. It was real work to make the job easier for him. It all finally connected in my twenty-two-year-old mind. My dad was truly a master of carpentry.

Jerry is no ordinary laborer; he is a master of carpentry, an artist in his trade. He is also my father. In *A Celebration of American Family Folklore*, Zeitlin, Kotkin, and Baker gathered that the most productive family folklore interviews are those that take place in a natural context, because folklore happens naturally (1977). I experienced just that—I had easy access to interviews, observations, participatory observations, photographs, and family stories. Moreover, this research was gathered and analyzed through my eyes as the carpenter’s daughter. Laura R. Marcus and Marianne T. Marcus suggest the best place to collect occupational folklore is from a familiar one, so my familiarity with the carpenter’s workplace and carpenter himself also aids my research. There were many benefits from researching my father. In Marcus and Marcus’ chapter titled, “Occupational Folklore” found in *The Emergence of Folklore in Everyday Life*, they write, “The more you know about the particular work environment, the better prepared you will be to perceive folkloric processes and collect fieldwork data (1990: 121-122). Even though my identity as a researcher is affected by the pride I hold for my dad, the research found within this thesis will be beneficial to future research and to understanding the path to the status of master within material culture, folk art, and occupational folklore.
Many ethnographic researchers have written on the subject of identity and the effects the researcher’s “self” has on the process and product of ethnography (DeWalt and DeWalt 2002; Georges and Jones 1980; Joseph 1996). The list of factors affecting the researcher’s identity is practically endless, but includes characteristics such as race, class, education, sex, sexuality, age, religion, ethnicity, and personality. In my case, it’s my personal relationship to the individual I am studying.

This father-daughter relationship inspired me to write my dad’s story—not tear it apart or critically analyze the intimate details of his life like Michael Owen Jones did with his folk art master Chester Cornet (Jones 1989). Nor did I research gender, class, or the building process. My desire was to portray the experience of becoming and sustaining of a folk art master. I wanted to provide an example of the journey of becoming a folk master. The master just happens to be my dad.
CHAPTER 2

LIFE EXPERIENCE

ESTABLISHES JERRY’S APPRENTICESHIP
Jerry Saville: One Example

In this section, I explore how talent, possessed from a very young age, helped Jerry reach his status of master. This does not mean every master must have a natural talent for the craft he/she learns; some scholars, in fact, would argue that “…experts are made, not born” (Ericsson, Prietula, and Cokely 2007) and that is true for many superior performers. Jerry Saville, however, did have an aptitude for building, as evidenced by the way he built forts when he was little, the ease at which he built the baseboard without any training, his ability to fix other carpenter’s mistakes, and make people’s ideas become reality. Because this is a case study of one particular folk master, ability is a part of Jerry’s story. It was his ability to build and think like a carpenter that put him on the path to becoming a master builder. However, it was his desire for expertise and love of the craft that made it possible for him to learn and practice the art of carpentry. Without desire, dedication, drive, and appropriate life experience/opportunity, all the talent in the world wouldn’t establish someone as a master. In this case then, talent is but one piece of a larger picture. In “The Making of an Expert” of the Harvard Business Review, authors K. Andrews Ericsson, Michael J. Prietula, and Edward T. Cokely discuss the qualities that make a master. They write: “The journey to truly superior performance is neither for the faint of heart nor for the impatient. The development of genuine expertise requires struggle, sacrifice, and honest, often painful self-assessment” (2007: NP). They claim that 10,000 hours of practice must be obtained in order to be considered a master. Jerry Saville has indeed reached that quantity of practice and his road to mastery has been a journey of hard work and dedication.
My dad’s hands are calloused to the bone. During the winter, his arms and head are still darker than the rest of his body, permanently tan from years and years of working in the sun. Even being fifty-seven years old, he still works all day, and puts in over forty hours a week all year long (well over 10,000 hours of experience.practice). Working hard is what he does; building homes is how he does it.

When my dad came home from work, I gave him a hug as soon as he walked through the door. He smelled like sawdust, layers of sweat, and dirt. He would take off his overalls or sweaters and find his way to the couch, where the remote control would be waiting for him. His callused tanned hands wrapped around the remote, body exhausted from working a non-stop laboring day building houses. He sank into the couch flipping through channels searching for nothing in particular. Channel surfing took his mind off the hours of lifting, moving, bending, hammering, sawing, and nailing in below-freezing temperatures, fighting through the snowy air, numb fingers, and frozen tools.

I sat down and took my dad’s hand, rotating it in my own. I could see all the calluses and scars protruding thick and solid across his palm and knuckles. My family always joked that dad’s hands were tougher than any pair of work gloves ever made. But it was true, he’d worn out countless pairs of “indestructible” work gloves throughout his lifetime and yet his hands never wore out. Being the hard-working man that he is, they never will. They were made for this job.

Jerry Saville is no ordinary framer. He does not just build the structure someone pays him to build; he builds a perfect representation of what the family he is building for desires in their new home. James Krenov, a master cabinetmaker, writing to fellow cabinetmakers, expressed the attitude of a craftsman:
It is what we do with what we know that matters, finally: not only the results but also the doing itself. After all, that is what we are left with, after the piece is done and has found an owner and we are back working again. What some of us find is an enjoyment we can’t weigh against money, recognition, or artistic aura. By whatever term others call it, it is the feeling of doing something we want to do—and doing it well, by measures both honest and sensitive (1979: 6).

In the above quotation, Krenov expresses the personal belonging and attachment a craftsman has with the act of creating something. A craftsman should want to build with honesty and sensitivity. A craftsman should enjoy the process of building, as well as having a well-built product. When one of Jerry’s clients has an idea, Jerry figures out how to make it work. He enjoys creating people’s visions for their homes. Jerry is sensitive to the people’s dreams and works hard to do the job correctly. He loves the process of building, as well as the end product. He spends time with the client so he can build their home well. Jerry’s wife Kathy Saville said:

When other carpenters wouldn’t be able

to make someone’s idea buildable,

Jerry does.\(^5\)

One time,

this ex-military guy wanted a bomb shelter in his basement.

Your dad added it into the plan

and then made it so they could enter it in through

\(^5\) I use poetic transcription to record the voices of the people I interviewed in order to capture the fluidity of their natural speech. Ethnopoetics focuses on stylistic and poetic artistry of verbal language written with physical words (Finnegan 1992). Henry Glassie uses this technique in his book *Irish Folk History: Texts from the North* (1982). Glassie’s pupil, Karen Duffy, uses less dramatic poetic transcription in her thesis *The Work of Virgil Boruff, Indiana Limestone Craftsman* (1995), as does Sam Schrager in his ethnography *The Trial Lawyer’s Art* (1999). I signify natural pauses which happen in the spoken language with each indentation. My goal with using ethnopoetics is to establish a rhythm to the people’s voices. I also use it to make the people’s words stand out against my own. This research is about letting the voice of the master tell his story with commentary from a folklorist.
a secret passage way through their storage room.

Kathy also mentioned:

He does not just build it without thinking about it either.

When someone wants to build a room a little bit bigger,
Jerry does the calculations to make sure a queen size box spring
will fit through the hallway and bedroom.
Or that the cost of something
like having a slide attached to the kid’s room
will not cost more than the house itself.

Another great example of Jerry creating the house the way the clients envision it is when he connected a separate building to the client’s home. Originally the buildings were to remain separate, but the home-owner decided to connect the buildings after all. It would have been fairly simple to just add a rectangular hallway from the house to the other building, but the owner wanted an arched, round tunnel-type hallway. Despite the extra work and complicated details Jerry built a structure connecting the buildings, all because his client had an idea in his head about how he wanted their house to look. Not many framers could build what Jerry did without the engineering or design of a professional architect, and even then most experienced carpenters could not build such a complicated structure (especially without charging extra). Kathy told me:

It’s amazing how Jerry can take a client’s idea
that another carpenter couldn’t figure out
or sometimes even tell them that their idea can’t possibly be done
and accomplish it with absolute perfection
while still being economically efficient.
Jerry’s mind is simply a mind of a builder.

Jerry is a folk artist who has command over the skills in his craft/occupation. Marjorie Hunt studied several stone carving artists in her essay, “Delight in Skill: The Stone Carvers’ Art.” The stone carvers express the incredible skill it takes to be a stone carver. Vincent Palumbo explained, “You don’t teach anybody to carve.” He continued explaining how “you develop your own technique” and win competitions with the other apprentices in order to become a carver (2011: 55). Becoming a master of a craft is not just memorizing the motions to get the job done, but rather developing greatness from desire, drive, and dedication. When I asked Jerry if he had “always liked to build things” he said:

Yup, I always liked to build things.

Even as a little kid I built forts with my friends.
We would build three level forts and underground forts.
We always had the best forts in the neighborhood.

We found supplies at the junk yard down the street.

One time we found a bunch of plastic
panels and made a winter fort.

The panels made it so that the sun would come in
and warm the whole thing up.

But when it came to summer
it got too hot so we built an underground fort.
We dug a trench about ten feet deep.

It's a wonder none of us died down there.

Well heck maybe one of us did and we just buried him up.

We put plywood over the top and

put dirt all over it to conceal it.

You could walk right over it and

not know it was there.

One time we built a club house three levels deep.

We got the wood from construction sites and the dump.

Plus the Holiday Inn Hotel was being built across the

interstate so we had plenty of left out materials.

We had to say the pledge allegiance to the star

and only the leaders could go to

the furthest level in the back.

All of the podunk neighborhood kids

had to stay in the front.

Oh, we had a zoo fort once.

We caught snakes, black widows, and scorpions and kept

them in our fort.

Jerry used the materials he found and built structures by imitating the design of familiar homes. Even as a young boy Jerry built folk architecture. The thought of a young boy being capable of building forts, let alone three-story forts was hard for me to comprehend. I could not go out in my backyard and build a decent one-story fort and definitely not a safe three-story fort. But when I said this and asked Jerry, “How did you even build three-level forts? There is no way I could have ever built a three-level fort, in what, third grade?” All he said was:
Well you put a floor in
and then walls
and then a floor
and then walls.

During this particular interview, Jerry’s wife (my mom) was sitting with us. My mom and I made brief skeptical eye contact when she chimed in:

He says that like everyone should know how to do that.

At that moment it dawned on me how skilled my dad was with building things. When I asked him if his forts were safe, he replied:

Well, we knew to make everything even
so the wood would fit together.
We just kept everything square.\textsuperscript{6}

Just commonsense really.

“Commonsense” is a word Jerry uses several times to describe his ability to understand building so well he thinks everyone should understand it in the same way he

\textsuperscript{6} In \textit{American Folk Masters: The National Heritage Fellows} exploring master folk artists’ lives, Steve Siporin wrote: “Different occupations manifest and emphasize artistry in different ways” (1992: 72). Carpenters take pride in “square” building techniques. Keeping a building square is necessary for safety; everything must line up on a perfect angle for it to hold and maintain well. Building a square frame is considered an art form.
does. To him, making everything square makes so much sense that it would be silly not to do so. However, other builders do not exhibit the same ability to square-up angles and maintain straight lines, have an eye for square angles and straight walls, or a dedication to the time and effort it takes to make a nearly perfect square frame—let alone normal people with little experience in the matter.

In Thunder Rides a Black Horse, Claire R. Farrer describes her experience trying to learn to read the stars from an Apache elder named Bernard Second. Bernard tried to teach Farrer to tell time by looking at the constellations. Learning and remembering the sky was hard for Farrer. Bernard, however, had read the stars his whole life; Bernard explained, similarly to Jerry, how he knew the things he did, “You just know” (2011: 92). To Bernard, reading stars was “commonsense” just like Jerry being able to build.

Because of this understanding of building at such a young age, I assumed Jerry had always wanted to be a carpenter. I asked him, and his reply surprised me:

Uh, no-
In fact, I remember the day that I thought it would be fun to be a carpenter.
One summer day, I saw Greg Kelly with his shirt off, fixing a fence at those condos we were building at the time.
He was wearing his carpenter belt and I thought... I could do that.
It probably wasn’t two months later that they offered me the job.

Robert McCarl taught that occupational folklore focuses on an “individual’s passage through a respective career, as well as the various skills and techniques which must be informally learned and performed by a worker in any job” (1986: 71). The
The following story tells about the official start of Jerry’s individual passage into carpentry, when he received his first job as an apprentice and really started working toward his 10,000 hours of practice and experience:

Dell Athens was my history teacher at Idaho Falls High School.

He was the “read the book, do the questions at the end of the chapter” type teacher (he was the baseball coach).

I worked for him laying sod and shoveling snow in the winter.

That was my senior year in the early seventies.

We’d take out the grass for gardens and helped the builders build down at the condominiums.

We’d clean out the units for them and helped the carpenters and cement layers.

I helped a guy named “Jock” a POW in WWII build one of the fountains in the front area of the condominiums.

It was a round fountain.

Oh Jock had a foul mouth!

I worked there at Three Fountains (the condominiums) for a couple years.

When I first started working for them we would go for an hour lunch and we would go over to “Shakeys”
-all you could eat pizza and chicken and watch old movies.

So when we got back we would just lay down too full to work.

One time instead of laying down I fixed the wheel barrow wheel and Dell came out while I was fixing it and got mad at everyone else for laying around.

Everyone got mad at me, “Jerry stop working so hard you are getting us into trouble.”

The year I graduated [high school], I remember sitting there with Greg Kelly building a fence with his carpenter’s belt on and I thought, “I could do that. I could be a carpenter.” Because at the time I wasn’t sure what I wanted to do with my life.

The three sub-contractors⁷, from the Three Fountains job contracted out these apartment complexes but they got behind schedule, so then Dell told us (the landscape workers) to go help them.

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⁷ Subcontractors are hired to do a section of the larger project.
So I went over there
and was helping them
when a guy came up to me
and asked if I could put the base board\textsuperscript{8}
around the wall- cut it and nail it.
I did.
And when I got to the stairwell
I looked at it and figured it out.
Bill Johnson (one of the owners) came over and looked at my work
and said “Wow how did you do that?”
So I showed him.
Then they offered me a job
and told me that they would pay me more money
than what I was making.
So I went and talked to Dell
and Dell said they were going
to be out of business soon
and I didn’t want to work for them.
But Dell said, “Well if you want to be a carpenter
then I will get you on with the Grobergs.”
So he did.
They raised my wages and told me something I will never forget,
“We need someone who can do things
without being told.”

\textsuperscript{8} Baseboard is the finish work around the bottom of the walls.
This passage shows how Jerry’s talent of working with wood was discovered. The story of how Jerry taught the proclaimed carpenter about how to build the base board along the staircase’s tricky corners shows his skillful ability to manipulate wood and solve building puzzles. It was this ability, along with Jerry’s work ethic, that landed him his position in an apprenticeship and thus laid the foundation in his journey to becoming a master folk artist.

**Apprenticeship Shapes the Master**

*In this section, I explore Jerry’s experience as an apprentice. Jerry’s abilities were shaped by learning directly from another master of the trade. Jerry learned by watching, mimicking, and verbal instruction. Through this apprenticeship Jerry received a foundational knowledge of the art of building. The other events in his life led him to continue building this knowledge and skill into sharpened expertise.*

Jerry was hired as an apprentice carpenter because Dale Athens saw his potential and guided him into work with longtime friend Joe Groberg. Jerry worked for Joe Groberg during the time when the pneumatic nail gun was first being introduced to construction. Jerry recalled:

> I had only used hammers for a year or two
> Before we started buying compressors and stuff.
All these old timers said, “This will never work” all the hoses and crap.
> I had bought a trailer
> and was living out in Mobile Home Estates.⁹

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⁹ Mobile Home Estates is an old well known mobile home community in Idaho Falls.
I was perfa-taping for Boise Cascade\(^{10}\)
and putting those pre-made homes together.

I built grandpa’s trusses for his house\(^{11}\)
And I tore the old barn down
and used it for the roof of the cinder block building.\(^{12}\)

I commented, “So you caught on pretty fast on how to build.” Jerry continued:

Well it’s just commonsense.

I just knew how to use a backhoe.
I don’t remember anyone ever teaching me.
I just knew how to use it.

We learned as we went.

Again Jerry uses the word, “commonsense,” this time referring to building in general and using heavy equipment. It seems from these interviews that Jerry believes everyone should be able to perfa-tape, build trusses, assemble pre-made homes, and drive a backhoe. It is interesting because from an outsider’s perspective this idea of these activities being “commonsense” seems extremely unlikely. But in the eyes of a master who has been working and practicing these activities for thousands of hours, these

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\(^{10}\) Perfa-taping, according to Jerry, is part of the sheet-rocking process of building a house when all the wall joints and nail holes of the sheetrock are “mudded and spattered.”

\(^{11}\) A truss, according to Jerry, is the material used in the framing of the roof [a framework which structure supports a roof or bridge].

\(^{12}\) My grandpa had a cinderblock building where he bred rabbits for a little extra cash.
activities seem like easy and simple everyday life skills. Jerry continued explaining his journey as a carpenter:

Burt would get a job, usually family\textsuperscript{13}

Sheet-rocking.

I don’t like sheet-rocking.

Burt went out on his own and started framing.

I helped him a few times down there in Shelley but mostly I worked for the Grogbergs and Dell Athen still.

Whoever had work really.

I remember going home and just feeling really weird.

Like life wasn’t going anywhere.

Like it was a dead end.

I couldn’t see much of a future.

Anyway,

I worked for the Grobergs for three years or so.

The following experience explains a life altering event in Jerry’s path of becoming a master. Suzie Jones, one of the six authors who wrote *The Artists Behind the Work* (a collection on four folk artists’ life histories), made a unique connection between the four artists’ lives (and I find it an interesting connection to Jerry’s life as a folk artist as well). Her introduction reads:

As you read the four life histories, you will discover other connections and parallels in the lives of the artists. Family and kinship ties are one, and the sad but common theme of the death of children and close family members is another. Each of these

\textsuperscript{13} Burt is Jerry’s old friend.
artists has had to deal with the circumstances of cultural suppression, and their own lives and artwork must be viewed in light of this. (Fienup-Riordan et al. 1986, 10)

Jerry’s little sister Kay was killed by a hit-and-run drunk driver while she and her friend were walking home along the side of the road. This was a life changing moment for Jerry and deserves to be recognized as such. This experience influenced the rest of his life and thus, his experience becoming an apprentice, journeyman, master, and artist. He briefly recalled the day that his whole life changed:

Kay had went to BYU for summer school.14

One day she came home to visit.

[pause]

I felt really weird.

[pause]

I woke up in a stupor [he received a phone call while he was sleeping].

I woke my friend up and drove to my parents’ house [He told his roommate that he needed to go home, something had happened, but he did not know what, yet].

[He arrived home].

All my sister’s luggage was in the living room.

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14 Kay is Jerry’s little sister. She was nineteen at the time and Jerry was twenty-three.
"We lost Kay." [Jerry’s sister-in-law dropped the news with little explanation. Jerry went to the hospital, wrecked his car on the way, and in utter shock, he lifted his car out of the ditch and kept going to where the rest of his family was].

Well, my whole life changed.

It made me realize how short life was.

At the time when Kay was killed, I was only going to church like once a month.

I wasn’t doing the right thing\(^{15}\).

I started dating one of Kay’s friends, Chris.

We went to conference one time\(^{16}\)

and she said, “You thinking about going on a mission?”\(^{17}\)

I thought about school,

But I wasn’t any good at school.

I think three times\(^{18}\) I told the bishop\(^{19}\) that I wouldn’t say yes

and I wouldn’t say no [to a mission].

\(^{15}\) Jerry explained in a later interview on what “doing the right thing” meant to him, he said “In my eyes, I just wasn’t doing the right thing. All I was doing was thinking about myself. I wasn’t living the gospel or going to church. I was running around, not being home or caring about my family. I didn’t care about anybody but me.” To Jerry doing the right thing was being a good member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

\(^{16}\) Jerry is referring to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints General Conference. General Conference is a church wide meeting held in Salt Lake and broadcast around the world twice a year.

\(^{17}\) A mission is a two-year dedication of teaching LDS doctrines away from home by worthy (righteousness through works determined by church hierarchy), age-appropriate LDS members.

\(^{18}\) Three is a number often associated with religious significance.

\(^{19}\) Bishop is the title of an LDS church leader in charge of a select area of the LDS church.
I was planning my future being a carpenter and
Then I was thinking,
Is this really what I want to do?
I remember sitting outside the front door,
And I thought in my head, “Should I serve a mission?”
It seemed like I had a vision saying, “Yes you should go on a mission.”
So I asked Chris if she’d be willing to wait for two years.20
She said, “Yes, oh yes!”
So I went to Karen’s and said, “I am going on a mission.”21
She was like, “Really? Great!”
I went home and told my parents
Grandpa said, “You know you don’t have to go on a mission,
you could go into the military.”
And I said, “No! I want to serve my Heavenly Father,
I am going on a mission.”
I told my Bishop
and click, click, click
It was the end of October when I decided to go and I left in February.

I sold my trailer, my skis, car, everything but my guns.
In 1979-1980 the economy really sank.
Energy conservation.
No Christmas lights across the country.

When I left on my mission,

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20 Chris was the girl Jerry was dating at the time. “Waiting” for a missionary is a common practice in the LDS community. Going on a mission is so important to young LDS women that “waiting” two years is an honor.
21 Karen is Jerry’s older sister.
The ward gave me like two thousand bucks! Grobergs told me I would have a job until I left and I would have one when I got back. They helped me out a lot.

It is vital to understand the change that happened in Jerry when his sister was killed. At the time, most young LDS men left on their missions at age nineteen. Jerry was twenty-two. This was a life altering event that threw Jerry on the path that he still travels. It was because of this change in his life that Jerry became motivated to be married, make a living, and raise a family (cf. chapter four). When Jerry returned from his mission two years later, he made a goal to be married in six months and date a hundred girls. Jerry said:

When I got home from my mission, I didn’t even want to kill squirrels.23

May 30th I met your mom. It was at a young adult escort dance.24

It was in Idaho Falls.

There was a much bigger selection [of girls] at the stake in Idaho Falls,25 because I was living in Goshen at the time.26

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22 A ward is a select area of community designated to go to church at a specified time under the leadership of a specified bishop.
23 This comment illustrates his spiritual high from being on his LDS mission.
24 LDS church activity for single young adults (getting married in the LDS church is very important).
25 Stake is a selection of wards and is under the direction of a stake president (bishop over a whole stake/several wards).
26 Goshen is a small town outside of Idaho Falls, near Shelley.
They drew names out of a hat and paired couples up on blind dates.

Your mom wasn’t sure if she wanted to go
because the guy she wanted to go with hadn’t called back,
but she decided to go.

We dated every day from that night on.

I was building the condominiums on 9th street,
So your mom would make me lunch and bring it to me.

One time she asked what I wanted,
So I told her “filet mignon”
I didn’t even know what it was.

A big steak is what I got.

She put a poster in my car, “You’re so sweet” on it.

One Monday night I went to her softball game.

I had on my cowboy hat driving my Plymouth.
She was in the dugout,
She stood up and sat right back down.
So I figured she didn’t want to see me so I went to my car.
But I couldn’t leave without saying hi to her.

Apparently her friend had said,
“You can’t let him see you in those fat pants!”
Her friend went to get her different pants [Jerry laughed].

Twenty-one days later, we were engaged.

Three months later, married.
On September 4, 1981 Jerry Saville and Kathy Fullmer were married. Jerry was working for Joe Groberg, but then in November Joe’s business went under and Jerry was laid off. He recalls this time:

That Sunday, sometime around Christmas, we finally received my last paycheck.

We went to church,\(^\text{27}\) paid our tithing.

And when we got home, Gary Bolander called

asking if I could work for him for a few weeks.

This event was the beginning of Jerry’s apprenticeship with Gary Bolander. The financial hardships at the beginning of Jerry and Kathy’s marriage would set the stage for all the odd jobs Jerry would do for the rest of his life. Jerry said he would work for Gary one week, Burt the next, and then pick up his own work on the side.

Jerry learned all of his skills, beginning as a child, through oral instruction, imitation, and trial and error. Jerry mentioned in an interview that he will look at people’s closets to get an idea of what to build. He was also taught through oral tradition via his past master-apprentice positions with Gary and Joe. Charles G. Zug wrote about potters working as apprentices in his article “Entering Tradition: Kim Ellington, Catawba Valley Potter.” Zug captures how a master teaches by showing and the apprenticeship learns by watching and copying. One potter explains, “He isn’t going to teach you anything, but if you watch you’re going to learn something” (2011: 36). Jerry had a lot to say about his apprenticeship with Gary:

\(^{27}\) Jerry is speaking again of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
Gary taught me everything I know about building well.

He required everything to be square and done right.

He taught me that just five minutes

of work

to make it a little straighter

right now

will save hours of work

for people down the road.

He taught me a lot of mechanics

and the basics of how to lay out

and frame up a house.

He taught me how to square a foundation,

lay a wall out,

and basically he taught me

how to do it myself.

The first time I worked with Gary
he called me up and asked me if I could help

him for a week or two.

But he liked the way I worked with him

so he kept me on for a few more weeks.

Because I could do things without having to be told,

Joe Groberg taught me that.

I would just see what to do and do it.

So then Gary said that he wanted me to help

and stay on until the whole house was finished.

After that job, I went my way and did some other job.

But it wasn’t too long until I was back working with Gary.
He had another kid working for him,
but after I started working for him—
he didn’t really like the other kid anymore.
I eventually worked with Gary whenever he had work.

I started working with him when he was about 53 or 55.
He stopped working around 65
because he got hurt
when he fell off the scaffolding.
After he retired,
he worked as a handyman
then he painted for Marel Black
until he was about 70.
He still lives in the same house down in Blackfoot.
I saw him about three years ago.

Gary really taught me patience
and how to take a little bit of extra time
to make things right.

He taught me about framing altogether.

Gary passed down the key component of Jerry’s skill to build with the knowledge of squaring up a house properly, that is, a quality of perfection and function. Henry Glassie captured a very similar example of a folk artist focused on quality in his book, *The Potter’s Art*. Ahmet Şahin, a master potter known as “tek adam—the one man in the past who was dedication to quality,” created art that was “the greatest of all” (1999: 63).
Şahin was a master artist who, like Gary, passed his skill and knowledge to those he apprenticed until his body refused him the pleasure of work.

As the master carpenter, Gary required Jerry to do things right by building everything as straight as possible. He focused on quality and taught Jerry do to the same. Jerry was able to become a journeyman after several years of being Gary’s apprentice because Gary taught Jerry how to build correctly on his own—a required factor in moving from apprentice to journeyman. Jerry said that he became a journeyman when he went out on his own. He said he would go from house to house looking for work. Jerry moved on to the next stage as a journeyman because he was no longer working under or for a master—he started doing his own work.

In *The Craftsman in America*, G. Malcolm Watkins writes that a journeyman “establishes his skill by completing an apprenticeship” (1995: 13) and that is just what Jerry did. During the colonial times, the apprenticeship usually lasted seven years with the promise of learning more than the craft (reading, writing, calculating weights and measures, keeping accounts) from the master. In return, the apprentice promised to keep out of trouble (including not marrying or gambling) and always “obey all his master’s lawful commands gladly.” (Anderson 1975: 13). While Jerry was not held to the same standards and rules of a traditional apprenticeship, he was still taught the art of framing by a master carpenter and eventually moved to the status of journeyman after a period of time.
On His Own

In this section, Jerry describes his time as a journeyman. His need to support his family demanded that he work hard to earn a living. This motivation propelled him into his status of journeyman. The Oxford English Dictionary defines journeyman as “A trained worker who is employed by someone else” (2010). When Jerry went on his own, he became an independent contractor and his skills were further sharpened through experience.

Gary eventually grew too old to work in construction and had to retire. Jerry chose to start his own business, Saville Construction, and work by himself. He figured he could earn more money that way, and he did. The economic advantage was enormous because of his ability to build by himself. He wanted to support his young family the best he could. He didn’t want to “make it big,” just simply live a comfortable life and take care of his wife and future children. This decision to work alone eventually earned him his title of the One Man Crew. Some clients even call him “Superman.” Being the One Man Crew undoubtedly sets him apart from other builders. Jerry said:

Burt would always ask, “How do you do that by yourself?”

Even Gary always had someone working with him.

Remember that’s how I got my first job with him

The guy that used to work with him took a job in Texas.

Jerry could frame a house just as fast as a four man crew (normal size for a framing crew). He used creative techniques in lieu of another set of hands, such as using nails and boards to hold things in place while he cut, nailed, or stapled. Although
sometimes his wife and children helped him lift walls, move boards, and clean job sites (chapter three). Jerry is capable of doing every step in building a house from digging the hole in the ground and pouring the concrete to stretching the carpet and painting (he leaves plumbing and electrical for certified workers, but he could do that if he so desired).

Barre Toelken notes that folk artists spend many years, a lifetime perhaps, trying to learn and perfect their work (1996: 219). Jerry has done just that. He is constantly creating new and improved ways of doing things. Stone carver Vincent Palumbo was quoted by Marjorie Hunt on the subject of lifelong learning and improving one’s work, saying, “You learn from your mistakes, all those things you accumulate in your mind and you keep with you, so the next time, you remember, and you change technique, you change how to work” (Hufford 1987: 78-79). Becoming a master artist is an ongoing process of learning. Jerry said:

It’s a constant learning thing.

A lot of times
it is learning through trial and error.
There is not anything like experience to make things work.

Gary Bolander always said, “My house, my way.”

But then I would say,

“Hey let’s do this way. It will probably be a little faster.”

And he would have to be open minded enough in order to say,

“Okay. I guess that can work.”

So really you have to be willing to learn.
There are as many ways to be a carpenter as there are carpenters.

But some ways are just better than others.

For example,

Burt [an old friend] worked with a guy on only one house
And then he went on his own!

So Burt would have to hire me to go do things for him
because he didn’t know how.

He would say, “Well you do this better than I do.”

Gary even said that I was a better carpenter
than Burt would ever be.

I just take the time to learn how to do it right
and actually
do it right.

Heck, I learned stuff on this last house.

We were doing arches on the window.

So I went and took a pattern of another arched window.

But the windows kept getting bigger
and then smaller
and then bigger,

so I had to keep adjusting the size.

But see,

the true way to make an arch is to get a string
and use an anchor point
and then make the arch.

I made it look fine with the pattern,
but it may have needed to be a more unified arch.

But then this guy
taught me how he used his tape measure.
He put the tape head where the little hole was...

I used this before but never to make an arch.

and pulled the tape
and rotated it around
marking the arch for the window.
It made a perfect arch.
And where the string is a little more pliable
and sometimes makes not very symmetrical lines
the tape measure is stiffer.

Commonsense.

So I used the tape measure and it looks really, really good.
It was a lot better than I did before.

Here Jerry uses the word, “commonsense” again, this time in reference to learning. When someone has a better way of doing something, listen and apply. I personally think Jerry was dumbfounded by the fact that he did not think of using a tape measurer himself. Its stiffness is significantly better than the string and thus, it is commonsense that someone would use it. Jerry would consider applying the best idea,
“commonsense.” Because he does not let his pride get in the way of learning, he grows and improves himself as a carpenter constantly.

Through this interview, Jerry expresses the importance of spending a lifetime learning his trade. Although he is considered an expert at what he does, he is constantly learning how to improve, which demonstrates his desire to perfect his work as a carpenter. A master craftsman is not a worker going through the motions; a master craftsman is someone who is in constant search for excellence. According to Mary Hufford, Marjorie Hunt, and Steven Zeitlin, authors of *The Grand Generation: Memory, Mastery, Legacy*, mastery is not “simply a function of years of practice” but rather mastery “depends on individual talent and on the pride and commitment that one has for his or her tradition.” The authors continue with a quote from master stove carver Roger Morigi: “It’s not just the years, it’s the man!” (Hufford, Hunt, and Zeitlin 1987: 82). Jerry Saville is such a man. He is committed to learning the correct and/or improved way of framing. Jerry said:

I guess you can say
that most of the things I learn is
just commonsense.

I try to think ahead-
I know the plumber will need to get his stuff in there
and so I plan for it.

So then I don’t have to cut out something
that ended up being in the way of the electrician.

Things like that is just commonsense.

It makes it all better for everybody.
Keep everything square
-if the foundation is right then the rest of it is pretty good.

Commonsense is just helping the guy who comes behind me.
The siding guys and cabinet guys always
love to come in after me.
They have told me
that they would much rather come behind me
than other contractors.
Same with me,
if the foundation is already square
then I don’t have to make it
as square.
I learned that just by working as a carpenter.
Every week I would have something new to say
about learning things.

“Commonsense” appears several more times in the previous interview. Here Jerry uses it in reference to making everything square during the building process. He expects other sub-contractors to do their part in building a home well. His job as the framer is to make everything square so that each contractor who comes after him will be able to do their own part well. It is particularly interesting because this “commonsense” makes Jerry stand out as a master framer. Not every carpenter has learned how to accomplish the “squareness” that Jerry does despite Jerry’s claim that it is, in fact, commonsense. What he characterizes as “commonsense” throughout the interviews then, are really indicators of his mastery.
This interview also shows that learning is part of a journeyman’s life. An apprentice will never move on if he/she is not willing to learn and experiment. The same can be said about a journeyman. In order for a journeyman to move into master status the craftsman must work alone. Moving from assistant to journeyman, the craftsman begins to look for work and thus, work on his/her own. Malcolm Watkins in, *The Craftsman in America*, writes that a journeyman might “settle down in one shop with the possibility of becoming a master someday” or perhaps the craftsman “might prefer to remain an employee all his life” (1975: 13). Jerry Saville decided to set up shop by starting his own business as an independent contractor/framer.

Jerry built his business through references from past clients and working for private and general contractors. Jerry’s experience as a carpenter grew with every home he built. After working as an independent contractor for several years, Jerry became a general contractor and upgraded his own business by helping clients with the entire process of building a home. Jerry started hiring independent contractors.

It was not until Jerry started building homes for his own family that he felt as though he reached master carpenter level. Jerry created his “masterpiece” by building his first home for his wife and children. Jerry and his wife Kathy would both agree that this was his rite of passage into the status of master, because Jerry had built the entire home by himself. Jerry was able to build his “masterpiece” in an outstanding time of six months. Instead of living it in for long, Jerry sold the first home for a significant profit and started on the next home for his family (slightly bigger and improved). He has continued this business of building and selling his family homes every two to six years.
Another sign that defines Jerry as a master framer is his ability to build even into his older age. Most craftsmen who last that long in their occupation have acquired the skills necessary to survive through hard times, maintain through good times, and learn to adapt to changing times. Jerry Saville said:

> Just today a guy asked me how old I was.
> He couldn’t believe I was fifty-eight.

Knowing Jerry’s age and witnessing the way he climbs roofs and lifts boards would make anyone question his sanity. He works hard because he has to in order to support his family. Framing homes is what he knows how to do and what he knows how to do right. He is known for building with the absolute square perfection of the homes he builds. In order to reach the status of master, Jerry had to work with a master carpenter, experience the workforce on his own, and finally establish himself as a professional home builder by building his own home by his own hands. With over 50,000 hours of experience (at least forty hours a week for over thirty years), reaching the status of master seems reasonable. Jerry Saville’s experience and path of life led him to building and framing. Life experience and motivation are two elements in Jerry’s life that led to his mastery of carpentry. If Jerry’s sister had not shown him the value of life and family then he might still be working for other people as a laborer. If Jerry had not had the desire to support his family he might not have gone on his own. If he had not desired to build a house for his family, he might not have reached the status of master. All of these elements made Jerry a master framer and thus provide one example of a carpenter’s journey to the status of master.
CHAPTER 3:

STATUS OF MASTER
The Master’s Apprentice

In this section, I explore how teaching helps maintain a craftsman’s status of master. By having an apprentice, Jerry manifests his authority as master through passing down his knowledge of the trade to his son Phillip. Through this experience of teaching an apprentice, Jerry’s level of mastery is maintained and heightened by teaching his meticulous building knowledge to an apprentice. In addition, the assistance of an apprentice sustains Jerry’s fifty-eight year old body physically and mentally, allowing him to continue working as a framer. Jerry teaches Phillip through non-verbal example, and verbal instruction, making Phillip fix his own mistakes.

Phillip started working with Jerry every day after school when he was around fifteen. This apprenticeship within a family is definitely not unusual. American Folk Masters: The National Heritage Fellows, a collection of folk masters by Steve Siporin contains many examples of traditional artists learning artistic skill through family tradition. There were many folk artists who were taught the art form (storytelling, music, dancing, craft, etc.) through apprenticeship with family members. Even Benjamin Franklin was in an apprenticeship with his older brother at age twelve (although he was often beaten) eventually working for his brother’s newspaper (Franklin 1996: 15).

Luckily for Phillip, Jerry is not “passionate” over disputes enough to physically abuse his apprentice. Marion Oettinger, Jr., author of Folk Treasures of Mexico provides further support of learning craft through family, noting that “folk art skills are passed down from mother to daughter, father to son” (1990: 197).

People observing the work of the two men still consider Phillip and Jerry as the One Man Crew. Phillip and Jerry are almost one and the same, Phillip being “a chip off
the old block,” as Jerry would say. During an interview about working with his son Jerry expanded on his connection with Phillip:

Phillip and I work like we’re one person. We work so well together that we know each other’s movements. We know what the other one will need before the other even needs it.

We get each other stuff without saying it. We move together working through a house knowing the next step without having to take the time to chitchat.

When I asked my mom how she thought Phillip and Jerry communicated she said:

Telepathically.

She laughed and continued:

Almost. They have worked together enough that they just know where each other is going, what they need to do, and where they need to be next.

Phillip and Jerry have a special bond which makes working together in and of itself artistic. Jerry commented:
In fact, one time Larry Reed’s boy was just sitting there watching us work one day while we did his remodel. Larry came and told me that his boy told him that, “One of you just hand it to the other before they even ask for it or need it yet.” He said, “you just work like you’re one.” And it’s true.

I couldn’t do this without Phillip. Not anymore. Phillip does so much. He really has become a true carpenter.

It takes a certain individual to become an apprentice (Hass 1947; Hunt 2011; Lancy 1980). An apprentice will exhibit certain qualities and skills needed for the occupation or craft. California’s Traditional Folk Arts Program defines an apprentice as “An individual who has previously demonstrated a commitment to, and a talent for, the traditional folk art form he or she wishes to study” (“California Arts Council’s Traditional Folk Arts Program: Master-Apprenticeship Grant Guidelines and Application.” 1987-88). Phillip expressed a desire to learn and to work, unlike his brother Joel. Both brothers had an equal chance at learning to become a carpenter, but only Phillip made it to status of apprentice. There were a number of reasons for this. Importantly, Phillip enjoys physical labor. He is 6’ 4” and enjoys working hard through all types of weather and pain. Phillip liked it from the very beginning. During an

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28 Larry Reed is an old client of Jerry’s.
interview, I asked our mom why she thought Phillip was the one who became dad’s apprentice and not Joel. She said:

Joel had no desire.
Phillip looked at his life and went,
“Okay what can I do?
I can do this.”

When I asked Phillip why he wanted to be a carpenter he said:

It ain’t the money that’s for sure.
Nah, I enjoy it.
I am going to be worn out like dad but,
I like getting to go back [to a finished house] and say,
“Yeah I built that.”

Phillip’s life is shaped by his apprenticeship with his dad. Phillip finds satisfaction in his work. He is good at it. Similar to Jerry, Phillip’s penchant for building and working hard played an important role in becoming an apprentice. Again, this does not mean that every craftsman has a talent in the start of his/her apprenticeship. Along with having desire for learning the craft, a person must have a master craftsman who wants to teach and pass down a lifetime of knowledge. In Phillip’s case, it was easy to find someone to teach him the trade. His father was very eager to teach him. I asked Phillip if he remembered when he officially started working with our dad. He said:
I always worked for dad.

I would go after school every day.

Dad would call me when he needed me.

I remember when he fell off the roof,

He called me and I left school early to go take him to the doctor.

"Why didn’t he call mom?" I asked.

I don’t know. Maybe she was working.

More than just a “chip off the old block,” Phillip has become Jerry’s business partner and friend. Phillip provides an irreplaceable Jerry Jr. at the worksite. Jerry is invested in Phillip’s learning because he wants to give his son the ability to make a living and be a respectable man. As his apprentice and son, Jerry is able to teach Phillip his brand of carpentry to keep his name—and ultimately Saville Construction’s exceptional reputation—going. Long after Jerry is gone, his skills and techniques will live on in his son. They share a particularly unique and special relationship because they are father and son. I observed Phillip working by himself one day. I asked him if he liked working by himself; his reply illustrates their special relationship at the jobsite. Phillip replied:

No, I hate working by myself.

If you weren’t here,

I would have left to the store,

or sat in the truck,

or took off to get lunch.
Phillip without his dad was like a hammer without a nail—there was a lot of potential but the situation lacked purpose. Together they make a team, a team still nicknamed the One Man Crew, which speaks a lot about their relationship working together. They move as one. They learn from and listen to each other. Jerry said:

Like even right now for these Rockwell Houses,
the other crews have 5-6 guys.
And we are putting these houses up just as fast as they are.

But we don’t sit there and talk
-we put our noses to the grind stones
    and get to work.
Every time I look over at the other houses
    all the guys are just jabbering.
You don’t get any work done
    when you just sit around and talk.

That’s what’s great about Phillip and I,
we don’t sit around and waste time.

We get to work and get the job done.

Phillip said something very similar during a different interview:

We don’t stop and talk.
That’s how we work.
Not only does Jerry teach Phillip how to be a fast, efficient worker, and how to make a living, but he also wants to teach his son ethical business practices. Jerry believes in a fair price for his work and in being honest in all his dealings. Jerry said:

It’s not just about building;
It’s about being a good person.

Susan Pesti-Strobel, a former instructor at Utah State University, told me a story of her master blacksmith grandfather in Eastern Europe. Susan recalled a lesson about respect that her grandfather taught his new apprentices. Her grandfather would ask the young boy to go fetch him a drink of water. When the boy entered the house and asked his wife for a water mug, his wife knew the mug to give the boy. The mug was hard to hold with one hand so the boy would either carry it with two hands or hang his thumb over the rim and grip the handle securely. If the boy stuck his thumb over the rim, he’d get slapped upside the head. If the boy carried it with two hands, he understood respect for the master. The master blacksmith taught his students the value of respect and being a good person along with teaching the knowledge of the trade.

Jerry teaches Phillip to respect the contractors who come after the framing stage in building a house by teaching Phillip to square everything up correctly. Jerry teaches Phillip to think about the stages that follow, to think ahead about what people will need when and where and how the frame of the home could benefit them and help the process go smoothly. Jerry also teaches Phillip to honor and respect the homeowner, by example. When a homeowner wants something done, if it is affordable and possible Jerry does whatever is in his power to make it happen, even if it means more work for him in the
end. Jerry respects the artistic beauty in building a home for a family and he passes his love for building homes (not just houses) down to his son. Jerry teaches Phillip the value of an honest bid—never overcharge or try to cut corners to gain a few bucks. Jerry is very particular about being honest in all his dealings.

Jerry taught his son the value of service through example by asking Phillip to help him with projects without pay for other people. Both Phillip and Jerry build things for family and friends constantly. Jerry teaches Phillip not to cut corners or take short cuts in building. Jerry expressed on several occasions how many times he has to make Phillip redo a project because he wants to make sure Phillip knows the right way. Jerry says that a good carpenter is not free from making mistakes, he just knows how to fix them. James Krenov, a master cabinetmaker, agrees. He writes, “A good cabinetmaker can repair his own mistakes” (1997: 56). The same can be said for framers, and that is how Jerry teaches Phillip—by making him fix any mistake he makes. Jerry is constantly teaching Phillip how to be patient with building and how to be understanding of clients. Just as with the blacksmith master, teaching respect and honor are a necessity behind craftsmanship apprenticeship.

Learning respect and patience is displayed through Jerry’s example of helping others. Providing carpentry work for their family and friends plays a significant part in both of the carpenters’ lives. A person’s occupation is often displayed in the other aspects of his/her life. Service to family and friends, just as in Jerry’s life, plays a role of identity in Phillip’s life. Phillip said:

\[\text{Just a few weeks ago,}\]
\[\text{I built my friends some dog houses.}\]
They paid two hundred bucks for um.

Or I built my shed.

And my neighbor’s shed.

And SkyLynn’s playhouse.

I made Jess book shelves. 29

My friends will ask me stuff

or make me do stuff for them

because I just know how to do things.

Building things for their family and friends for little or no pay is a common reality for these two carpenters. The people around them know they have a talent for building and fixing things and act wisely to use it. The two men are very kind and generous in their gift for carpentry. Phillip learned this value from watching his father and from participating for free in numerous projects assisting his father in service for family and friends. Their family is particularly blessed by their numerous skills around the house. Phillip’s wife expressed her appreciation with her husband’s talent:

He built our shower!

I didn’t have to have some stranger come in our house.

Which you know how I am,

I don’t like strange men especially not in my house!

Phillip just fixes the things that break.

I don’t have to pay someone to do it.

Or if our dogs poop in Sky’s room,

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29 Jessica is Phillip’s wife. They have been together for seven years and married for two. They have two little girls SkyLynn (4) and River (1).
he just gets carpet from a remodel
and fixes it.

But you know a carpenter’s house is always the last one to be finished.
Like the baseboard around our living room is only halfway done.

But we do have the luxury of just having to buy the materials,
Or Phillip will use old materials or left over stuff.

If we want to add onto our house,
We could.
Or he built the barn from left over materials.
He built everything.
He’s like Tim the Tool Man Taylor\(^30\)!
He is always up doing stuff.

7:00 in the morning he will be up doing yard work or something!
But that being said,
I have nails and wrenches all over my yard.

He can make us a little quick cash by making dog houses.

But really,
The best part about his work is that
we can just be in our house and not have to talk to people.
And till the end of time,
we’re always going to need carpenters.
There are not too many jobs that NEED humans anymore these days.

\(^30\) A television series called *Home Improvement* which ran from 1991-1999 and stared Tim Allen who played a television home improvement show host nicknamed “Tim the Toolman Taylor.”
Jessica touches on several issues of being a carpenter’s wife in her interview. She mentions her appreciation for her husband’s handy nature, but recognizes the hardships of hard labor. Phillip has continued to recognize and talk about the hard aspects of building more than Jerry did. During several interviews with Phillip he started listing dangerous or hard experiences. In *People Studying People*, authors Robert A. Georges and Michael Owen Jones write that fieldwork experiences do not always go the way the folklorist plans (1980). Sometimes the information we seek is not the information the individuals being interviewed want to give. Unlike Jerry, Phillip did not expand on his thoughts. Jerry was very good at talking for hours and giving expanding details to really paint a picture of his full length stories. Phillip, on the other hand, briefly mentioned an experience and moved on. Much of what he wanted to talk about was the hardships of being a carpenter. Phillip’s view of the building industry is largely affected by the fact that he tried to start earning a real income to support his family during a time of economic hardships. Phillip and his wife Jessica bought their trailer home on two acres of land in 2008 just before the housing bubble burst. Jerry said that if I would have interviewed him when he first started out with his new family he would have focused on the hardships also. Jerry used to walk from house to house looking for work. These elements in the workplace shape the worker, which is illustrated in the following collection of Phillip’s memories. During an interview eating lunch at a local ma and pa’s pub and grill in Idaho Falls, Phillip reflected on his hard times and dangerous experiences being a carpenter:

One time,

I shot myself in the knee with a nail gun.
Went right through my trousers and
pinned my coveralls and everything to my leg.

Or one time,

The skill saw cut all the way through my covers and skin-tight thermals.
But didn’t cut my leg!
Aw I was sick to my stomach.

Another time, I was hooking the chain to the trusses
so the boom truck could lift them onto the roof.
And my thumb got caught!
It started lifting up and oh man!
Ever since, I swear my one thumb is longer than the other.

Oh, I got metal in my eye.
That was bad.

I never wear my wedding ring,
because the little rubies and diamonds falls out.
And I don’t want to lose my finger or hand or something.

Working construction has dangerous consequences. There are everyday physical dangers, along with the wear and tear on the worker’s body. People are consistently in awe to see Jerry working so hard at age fifty-eight, but it is because he has his son, his apprentice/journeyman working with him that he is able to continue. Phillip sustains Jerry in his status of master because Jerry teaches him the ways of a good carpenter, and Phillip is able to perform the majority of the physical labor. Jerry relies on his son’s strong, young body and ability to practice what he has taught him. Phillip also challenges his dad’s way of doing things in such a way that Jerry’s skills are constantly being
sharpened. While observing the One Man Crew, I asked how Phillip learns. Jerry answered:

Watching, viewing, seeing me work hard,
so he works hard.
And he teaches me things too once in a while.

Phillip replied:

Dad likes to do things the hard way!
Let’s do it like this.

Jerry said:

Yeah, Phillip has a lot of good ideas.
And we do them!
I am not too old or stuck in my ways to not listen
to a better way of doing things.
Gary Bolander though, he would never try something new.\(^{31}\)
He would tell me, ‘No you are going to do my way!’

The two men learn together to improve the art of building. Phillip’s ability to see things in new, simpler ways helps Jerry learn to become a better framer and Jerry’s plethora of knowledge and experience helps Phillip learn to become a good framer. In an

\(^{31}\) Gary Bolander was the master carpenter who taught Jerry how to build.
apprentice relationship like this, both parties are benefiting from learning and teaching moments. A folk art master is continually learning.

This master-apprentice relationship displays impeccable communication and physical fluidity. As I continued to observe the One Man Crew work I witnessed their teamwork: Jerry asked Phillip to hand him the nail gun. Phillip went to go get the nail gun and picked up two boards on his way. Meanwhile, they were both calling out numbers and Phillip was cutting boards. After he cut them, Phillip threw the plywood pieces up on the roof to his dad. When the piece was too large to throw, Phillip held the sheet of plywood above his head and climbed up the ladder to the roof and handed the large sheet of wood to Jerry without slowing down the momentum. I asked Jerry if working with his son was different than working with someone else.

I definitely get madder at him than someone else.

And he gets paid more than someone else too!

Phillip called out:

Whatever! You don’t pay me enough!

Naw, I guess that’s true.

You wouldn’t buy someone else breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Jerry called down to Phillip asking him about the next board to be cut:

Describe it or give ya length?
Phillip called back:

Well that means I have to get up there and saw it.
You’ll have to cut it from up there.

Jerry retorted searching in his carpenter’s belt for his utility knife:

Oh what a weenie.
Okay, hand up the saw.

And he stole my knife so I can’t sharpen my pencil!

Phillip hollered:

No I didn’t!
He’s always blaming me for stuff like that.
He just can’t remember what he did with it.

The way they interact working together displays a very close relationship because of how comfortably they can speak their minds to one another. They work intimately together calling out numbers, cutting boards, and moving to the next project with practiced fluidity. Without Phillip, I do not know where Jerry would be. After finding his utility knife, sharpening his pencil, and marking off the board for Phillip to cut, Jerry continued answering the question I had asked earlier about working with his son, without missing a beat:
One problem Phillip has with working with me is he becomes more and more like me.

Even the yard full of junk from work!

The three of us laughed at the truthfulness of the statement. When our family moved from house to house, our family commonly said that we just pick up all of our trash and move it down the road. Occupational identities can be seen in the home as well as the workplace. Often times, individuals bring home their work and exhibit their occupation in all aspects of their lives. Jerry continued:

We get along better because working with someone who thinks alike is nicer.

There are a lot of things that Phillip and I have in common:

Building dog houses for friends,
Building sheds for neighbors,
Wood boxes for people,
Wood boxes for firewood.

Phillip chimed in:

My barn.

I learned a lot from my mistakes there!

Jerry added:

Yeah, I built a barn at the blue house that blew over.\textsuperscript{32}

\textsuperscript{32} The “blue house” refers to Jerry and Kathy’s first home together.
Phillip shouted:

Don't say that!

I told Jess’s dad that he could store his Harley in there for the winter but, he was like, “I think not!”

Phillip and Jerry had a good laugh at that too. The father and son carpenter duo undergo similar life experiences because they share the same occupation, talents, and similar personalities. Jerry continued talking about the dynamics of working with his son one evening during a Saville family dinner:

Phillip will get so mad at me when I accidently hurt him.

Okay this week was bad, I hurt him quite a few times.

I hit his hurt foot trying to get snow off his boot.

He rolled on the ground crying for a bit.

Then I accidently hit him in the eye with the air hose.

What the heck are you doing putting your face right next to the hose?

What was the other thing I did recently?

Oh! He fell off the ladder!

I had set up the ladder on the cement floor which was covered with snow.

And Phillip came by on the scaffolding and WHOOSH the ladder went out!

And pulled the scaffolding out from under him, he jumped and grabbed the trusses!

But then he,

I can’t remember what he did.
But I just remember he did something not too long ago.
And he said, ‘Oh whoops sorry. Man I would’ve been pissed at you, if you would have done that to me.’
No kidding.
He would’ve too!

The following experience continues to express the two men’s personalities blending in life and in work. One day while I was observing the One Man Crew, Phillip was cleaning out the truck and suddenly he yelled:

Hey Dad? Did you take that bag of nuts out of the car?

Dad looked down at me from the roof:

He uses them to shoot chickens when he goes hunting.

Phillip said:

Yeah! They fly so perfect and straight! They kill.

Dad replied:

See I don’t know where he learned that, but I would do the same thing.

You won’t ever find a rock that will shoot as straight as they do!\(^3\)

\(^3\) The nuts Phillip is referring to are small but heavy nuts about \(\frac{3}{4}\) of an inch wide and made of steel that tighten washers on screws to hold building materials tightly together.
Or as far.

Shoot them clear across the canyon!

This interview shows a glimpse into the relationship of a father working with his son. They have a chance to express all of their frustrations and grow closer as father and son but also as friends and business partners. Because of this intimate relationship, Phillip has continued working with Jerry throughout his adulthood despite his ability to go on his own and become a journeyman. Jerry needs Phillip in order to sustain his position as master carpenter. Phillip knows all the elements of building, but he continues to work with his dad.

The fact that they are father and son establishes an idiomatic occupational kinship to work together for success. But not every aspect of the relationship is easy. When I asked Jerry what the hardest thing was about teaching an apprentice, he said:

Letting him do it on his own,

instead of just doing it myself.

But the easiest thing about working with Phillip is

He is a hard worker!

He knows this is what he wants to do with the rest of his life.

He has a desire to support his family,

So he wants to learn!

When I asked Kathy the same question, she said:

Jerry has a vested interest in his [Phillip’s] success.
Because he wants to see Phillip succeed
and make sure he can support his family.

Jerry continued:

It’s easier to learn right the first time.

Hard to re-train someone.

Always better to learn the right way first!

Learn it right the first time and it’s a lot easier.

Phillip has worked for me for a long time
so he learned the ways I like to do things.

Passing on the way Jerry likes to do things illustrates the defining nature of
teaching a master’s knowledge to an apprentice. Jerry builds in the same manner that his
master carpenter taught him, and Phillip will build in the way Jerry does. Although just as
Jerry has learned, improved, improvises, and adds to his own knowledge and
understanding of carpentry—so will Phillip learn, improve, improvise, and add to his
knowledge as he grows in his own experiences as a carpenter. The breadth of the master’s
knowledge and skill is maintained through the passing of knowledge to apprentices.

Passing on the knowledge can also improve the master’s own skills and understanding of
the craft. Communicating or demonstrating a skill forces the master to examine every
minuscule detail of an action or building concept. When a master has to teach, the master
has to grow even more as a craftsman.

One day as I watched Phillip and Jerry work, I asked Phillip if he remembered
when he first started putting walls together. Phillip said:
When I was two.

Nah, just kidding, when I was a freshman.

Jerry chimed in:

Nah, he started putting walls together last month!

Phillip just laughed at this comment. Jerry’s teasing of Phillip about not being able to put walls together shows just how much of a rite of passage it is to build walls as an apprentice framer. The apprentice moves from small projects of moving boards and cleaning job sites to the skillful, knowledgeable, and important task of building a wall. The apprentice’s first true building experience is building a wall. Phillip’s comment that he started building walls at the age of two shows his confidence in his ability to build. Jerry’s teasing nature also shows confidence in Phillip’s skill because I do not think the same comment could be made to Phillip’s brother Joel and have the same laughing effect. Again, Phillip and Jerry’s conversations and interactions prove that a good apprenticeship affects the master builder. Jerry could not function as a master framer without his son aiding him by his side.

Between answering my questions, Phillip and Jerry continued to call out numbers, cut boards, and staple sheets of plywood to the roof. After a moment of calling out numbers, it appeared that Phillip did not have anything to do. Without waiting a moment, Phillip walked over to the trailer to clean and organize it. While he was at it he cleaned out the truck and moved boards out of his cutting area. Phillip was constantly on the
move even though he was never told to be. The act of doing without being told was
something Jerry told me his master carpenter taught him as an apprentice. Jerry passed
this skill, among many others, down to Phillip who will undoubtable pass it down to
whomever he apprentices someday. The passing of knowledge is just another way the
master is sustained in teaching an apprentice. The master’s skills will live on through
his/her apprentices even long after he/she is gone.
CHAPTER 4:

FAMILY SUSTAINS THE MASTER
Occupational Identity

In this section, I explore a third area which helps create and sustain a master, which is the master’s family. Jerry works as a carpenter to support his family. His family gives him the desire to continue working through the pain of hard labor. His family gives him purpose. Jerry’s occupation also reflects the identity of his family. Jerry’s family supports Jerry’s being a carpenter by helping him build in times of need. Jerry would not be physically able to build without his son’s help. The help of his family in his early career sustained his journey as the One Man Crew. Jerry said he felt as though he had reached the status of master when he built his family’s first home. All the homes he built for his family helped maintain his status of master through learning and improving his skills for building custom homes.

An individual’s occupation affects both their personal identity and the identity of the individual’s family (if they have one). Personal identity is defined within the parameters of this research using *The Oxford English Dictionary*, which defines identity as, “Who or what a person or thing is; a distinct impression of a single person or thing presented to or perceived by others; a set of characteristics or a description that distinguishes a person or thing from others” (OED 2010). Jerry is a carpenter. I define family identity as the distinguishing character or personality of a family and how they see themselves as a whole. Jerry’s family’s identity is shaped by his occupation.

Roger D. Abrahams wrote an essay entirely on the word *identity*, which was included in an anthology edited by Burt Feintuch titled *Eight Words for the Study of Expressive Culture*. Abrahams explains:

For many psychiatrists and sociologists, as well as folklorists, one’s identity emerges from the stories one tells on oneself or one’s community. The sum of these
stories constitutes the life-history of the individual or the group. Each incident, each report of past experience, is transformed as an emblem of both the uniqueness of the individual and a badge of group membership. (2003: 201)

Through the gathering of stories, testimonies, and memories from the Saville family, I draw the family’s identity into discussion around the influences of my father’s occupation. A Celebration of American Family Folklore expands on the concept of family lore as Steven J. Zeitlin at el. writes:

For an individual family, folklore is its creative expression of a common past. As raw experiences are transformed into family stories, expressions, and photos, they are codified in forms which can be easily recalled, retold, and enjoyed. Their drama and beauty are heightened, and the family’s past becomes accessible as it is reshaped according to its needs and desires. (1982: 2)

The lore, including the life history of a family, characterizes the family’s identity. Lives: An Anthropological Approach to Biography mentions the importance of careers and identity. Langness and Frank write, “Although the concept of ‘career’ has been systematically explored by social scientists and others from at least the 1930s to the present, the use of life histories for this purpose has not been extensive.” I agree with Langness and Frank that a family’s life history of “stories, photographs, and customs” (1982: 3) reflect parents’ occupations and should be explored. Occupation helps create the foundation for family life and experiences.

The choice of occupation shapes individuals at a very young age with the frequently asked question, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” Even in adulthood, the common foundational question for getting to know someone new is: “What do you do for a living?” The answers to these frequently asked questions reveal the person’s personality and life experiences. Occupation describes what type of work the
person is willing to do, what talents he/she might have, and/or what socioeconomic status the person holds in society.

A person’s choice in occupation unfortunately affects socioeconomic status. When someone responds to the commonly asked question with, “waste management at Fairview Elementary,” instantly stereotypes and assumptions are placed on the person because of his/her occupation. These stereotypes may include low income, dirty hands, or lack of intelligence. On the other hand, when someone responds “I’m a stockbroker on Wall Street,” a different set of stereotypes and assumptions emerges, such as presumptions of wealth, intelligence, or arrogance. Those two examples are extreme opposites, but the idea is the same: the way people perceive others is often affected by occupation.

Occupation therefore affects people’s identity in many ways. Many people may believe, “I am not my work,” yet work still takes up a third or more of daily life. Occupation is a part of life and thus a part of personal identity. Mike Rose writes about the effect of occupation on his own mother’s identity as a highly experienced waitress in *The Mind at Work: Valuing the Intelligence of the American Worker*. Rose writes, “One of the truest things I know about my mother and her work in the restaurant is how central that work was to her sense of self and engagement with the world” (2004: 3). Rose continues, “Her story serves as a reminder that work is both grounded on and shapes personal history, and thus reveals motives, desires, values, and one’s sense of who one is. A working life is rich in meaning” (2004: xxix). People’s identity is shaped by their occupation.
Rose also discovered that not only does one’s occupation affect his/her personal identity but it also affects his/her family as well. When Rose reflected on watching his mom work in the restaurant, he remembered feeling special because he knew the restaurant’s lingo. As a young boy he knew the secret language being spoken between the cooks and waitresses because of his mom.

Consider another example: if a family medical practitioner’s son comes down with a fever, his father/mother who is a doctor will inspect him and call in an antibiotic, more than likely without ever stepping foot into an office. The same can be said about a carpenter making a tree house for his family. The talents acquired in one’s career are transferable to the other aspects of his/her life.

People’s lives often revolve around the work they do. They can share their talents from their workplace with their family members, friends, and neighbors. It seems a pretty common observation from a student’s point of view, but surprisingly there has been little collection on family folklore reflecting occupation. In 1978 Robert H. Byington wrote, “Increasingly, occupational folklore and folklife are being collected, annotated and studied, but more is needed: more data and more analysis” (2). It is the same thirty-five years later. More collection needs to be done in order to preserve, record, and analyze occupations and the effects of occupation on folklife. This thesis, in part, helps with the collection and analysis of occupational folklife in both examining the journey of an apprentice moving to journeyman and finally to master and the effects that occupation has on identity of the individual and his family.

Jerry’s ability to build started as a young boy and grew into something much more than a hobby or job. Jerry became a carpenter - inside and out. It is who he is now. He is
known by his neighbors, friends, and families for being good at fixing and building things. When someone needs something, they come to Jerry. On the subject, he said:

Oh yeah!

In fact, the very first week your mom and I moved into the Blue House\textsuperscript{34} the bishop asked me to cut down this old lady’s cottonwood.

So I climbed up in the tree and started hacking away branches.

I brought the whole tree down.

Jerry’s church\textsuperscript{35} leaders ask him to build ramps, stairways, reinforce floors, remodeled hallways for wheelchairs, put in wider doors, install higher toilets, and remodel bathrooms for the elderly in the ward. He recalled many projects for his church:

I built fence ladders for Fish and Game for the Clantain boys’ Eagle projects.

I installed benches for a school one time,

I can’t remember who I did that with...

Oh and merit construction badges for the scouting activities,

I would take them around the houses and show them all the stages of building

and I’ve done a lot of mutual nights\textsuperscript{36} showing the kids how
to build things and crafts and such,

helped some guys build a handcart one time,

I helped Lisa Stible make a shadow box for her boy’s merit badges.

Cut wooden decals and craft stuff

\textsuperscript{34} The Blue House is a nickname given to the Saville family’s first home (see more in chapter three).

\textsuperscript{35} Again, Jerry is speaking of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

\textsuperscript{36} Mutual is a weekly activity for teenagers of the LDS church.
People call on Jerry for his skills constantly. In fact, a lot of Jerry’s general contracting jobs come from family and friends. He has built nine homes within just two miles of his own. His neighbors call him when basements flood or stuff breaks. His friends ask for his help with projects and often ask for his advice on anything in the realms of building. He does not leave his work at the job site; it follows him wherever he goes because it’s a part of who he is.

Today at church, I had three different people ask me how to do stuff. Contractors will even call me and ask me how to do stuff. Like Ashbocker, he became a contractor and he called me and asked how to do stairs. People ask me lots of different things. So I guess being a carpenter allows me to give advice to people.

Providing service for people makes Jerry feel good about the work he does. He said that being a carpenter allows him to help people, whether that’s giving advice or building things for the simple price of materials. Even then, Jerry will often use left-over materials he collects from past jobs and stores in his backyard to help people with the cost. This makes Jerry feel accomplished. Helping people is part of who he is.

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37 Relief Society is the name of the LDS women organization.
38 Enrichment nights are weekly activities, usually craft/home improvement focused, for LDS women.
Homes for the Master’s Family

In this section, I explore the Saville family’s identity and each house that Jerry built for his family. Although there could be many works of art that push a journeyman to status of master—in Jerry’s experience, having his family living in a home he built made him feel as though he was finally a master carpenter. His family lives in his creations, which brings purpose to Jerry’s occupation. David Pye writes on the nature and art of workmanship explaining what matters most in workmanship: a craftsman must have his heart in the job (1968: 79). There are many people who work on construction crews building houses, but few ever reach master status. The heart of Jerry’s work can be seen in the homes he builds for his family.

The following section will be designed after Sam Schrager’s The Trail Lawyer’s Art and Timothy Tangherlini’s Talking Trauma in which both authors allow the voices of the people they are researching tell their own stories. The following memories were collected during interviews with each family member. These family members include Jerry’s five children: Emily (31), Joel (29), Phillip (27), me (24), and Brook (21), and Joel’s wife, Jessica; Phillip’s wife, Jessica; and Heidi’s husband, Keith, as well as Jerry’s wife, Kathy Fullmer, whom he married thirty-three years ago in September.

Jerry built and/or remodeled six different houses for his family to live in. Michael Owen Jones wrote, “L.A. Add-ons and Re-dos: Renovation in Folk Art and Architectural Design,” an article that has been re-published several times for its brilliant insight on the artistic experience of building one’s own place to live. Jones (1980) states several purposes for people to re-model the space they inhabit. These include “response to changing physical needs,” (p. 331) “advantage of an attractive financial situation,” (p.
“maintaining a sense of authority and degree of control over oneself, one’s life, one’s possessions,” (p. 333) “attaining intellectual and sensory goals,” (p. 334) “actualizing self through symbolic statements,” (p. 335) and finally, remolding provides “a social experience the basis for interaction and communication” (p. 336). Each of these principles can be seen in the alteration Jerry does in each home he builds for his family. He is constantly changing the lay-out to better fit his family’s needs, to make more money, to feel accomplished, to establish himself as a builder and ultimately a master of carpentry, and to come together as a family under a roof built by his hands. Jones’ first and second purposes are most easily identifiable in Jerry’s experience of adding-on and re-modeling homes.

Indeed the “advantage of an attractive financial situation” (Jones 1980: 331) is a part of Jerry’s living in, buying, and selling houses. This being said, his family has continuously lived in a home built by the father’s hands. The first purpose, “response to changing physical needs” (Jones 1980: 331) is also established greatly in that Jerry builds and re-models homes to fit his family by altering the design to satisfy his family’s likes, dislikes, and growth. His family has a say in the design of their home, and they also participate in building it. Brook spoke on this:

> We’re in this house.
> It’s not just a house,
> It’s protection.
> It’s somewhere of safety and love.
> I remember being afraid when I was little
> and either you or mom told me,
> don’t be scared because dad built this house.
There are no monsters in this house because dad built it.

In an interview with my brother Joel about how our dad being a carpenter has affected him, he also mentioned (unprompted) about what it means to live in a home built by his father:

I mean he built all the houses we grew up in.

Provided a roof, but he built it with his own two hands!

I mean he would get mad for bustin a hole in the wall,

like me and Brad Foster wrestling

and threw him through the

wall in the pink house,

or the penny war,

or Emily’s ping pong paddle,

Phillip’s room covered in punches,

Dad had to work, but he could fix it. Fix a damaged house.

I still feel an overwhelming pride in my dad’s skills and abilities. He is an extremely respected man for his honest hard work. And knowing this about our dad certainly shapes who we are as individuals. Brook said:

People ask “oh are you Jerry’s daughter?”

I say “yes.”

And they say, “That’s a good man right there.”

Everyone who knows dad always respects him and say that he is an honest and good man.
Our family watches how hard our dad works for us; we see how much he loves us. With each passing year our dad has a harder and harder time doing the work that he does. Jerry admits his stress about getting older:

The older I get, I don’t have the physical ability
to keep going
and that’s stressful.
[pause]

I’m not quite sure what to do about that.

Along with stress come benefits of having a self-employed father. For example, our dad never worked on Christmas or Thanksgiving, unfailingly took time off eventually for camping trips in the summer, and never missed an important event. However, working construction maintains very unpredictable pay schedules. There were no bimonthly paychecks in our family. Our mom had to plan ahead on everything. If our dad didn’t have work for a few weeks or a few months, then we knew money was tight. Phillip’s wife Jessica expanded on the stress of being married to a construction worker in an interview. I asked her how has Phillip being a carpenter affected their family and she said:

Stress.
I see him aging and hurting.

He has a sprained ankle right now and he is really hurting.
Health-wise it is very stressful.

We limit our activities.
I mean, I buy him a dirt bike and he can’t ride it because if he gets hurt
- there goes our whole income!
Or we would love to go snowboarding but speeding down a
snowy hill at sixty miles an hour -I don’t think so!

Jessica is very aware of the toll that working so hard for so long has had on our
dad and already has had on her husband. She sees the work already eating away at her
husband:

Well you know he whines like a boob if he’s awake at ten.
He has to be in bed by 8:30p.m., or he’s so tired.
You can take all the vitamins you want
but no vitamin is going to keep your body up with that kind of work.

Although there are many negatives that come with being a self-employed
construction worker, it has its perks too. Jessica said that for almost every negative aspect
about the job there is a positive:

There are lots of negatives to the job
but all the negatives are worth it
because you could put all those negatives into positive.

He gets to make up his own hours
which is really nice,
he can just leave and go to Sky’s
Jerry’s occupation helps him support his family financially and allows him the flexibility of being self-employed to spend time with them. His occupational skills and talents provide his family with a home made especially for them. There is significance in the physical building of the homes and in the way each home is specifically built with his family needs and wants in mind. Joel said:

Every house has had something special for us.

The way Jerry builds his family’s homes shapes the way they live in them. It makes them homes no one wants to leave. His children Emily, Joel (his family: Jessica, Hailey, and James), and Brook all live under our parents’ roof along with grandpa and grandma. When my husband and I go to visit we still have our own room. He makes it easy to change things around to make the area the best and most comfortable living space possible. In the following part of this section, I take a closer look at each home Jerry built for his family. Each home was custom built to fit the Saville family’s needs. With each home, Jerry made alterations to better serve his family’s desire in a home. This shows Jerry’s skills as a carpenter, but more importantly, it shows how his skill affects his family’s life. Jerry’s occupation affects his family both mentally and physically.
Specific Changes

In the following section, I explore the specific changes made in each home Jerry built and/or re-modeled for his family. Jones’ purposes for re-molding and adding-on to one’s own space are demonstrated here—examples of financial benefits and space-alterations for physical needs (Jones 1980: 331). Jerry takes pride in the homes he has built for his family. He feels accomplished and honored by his work similar to the folk in Jones’ article (1980: 325-363).

The “Blue” House

Jerry’s family likes to call the first home Kathy and Jerry lived in the “Blue House” because the siding is, well, blue. They bought the house for a fraction of any comparable house on the market today. They paid $36,000 for a 1,080 square foot home sitting on an acre of land, with five bedrooms and two bathrooms. When Jerry and Kathy purchased the home they looked forward to making it their own and they did right from the start.

Kathy told me about how Jerry altered the first home they purchased to better fit their needs and improve the space they had:
Your dad took one look at the staircase and said,

“Why don’t we take this wall out and switch
around the stairs so we go down this way?”

I was like, “Sure”

and before I knew it, he was demolishing the wall.

He tore down the wall that closed the staircase off
and the stairs then added an oak banister
and reversed the direction of the stairs
which really opened up both the upstairs living room
and the downstairs living room.

He built onto the master bedroom to make it bigger and the bathroom too.

There was an unfinished bedroom downstairs
which he finished
and added a fireplace
for the downstairs living room as well.

On the back of the house your dad added a beautiful cedar hot tub room
and a red wood deck with a wraparound bench.

After a day of working like my dad works, he likes to sit in a hot tub to relax his muscles. My family really enjoyed spending time playing and chatting in the hot tub. As kids, we would dare each other to run out into the snow, roll around, and jump back into the hot tub. My brother Joel and I have spent countless hours talking late into the night under the stars discussing our views on the world. My love for culture came from our hot tub conversations.
All the neighborhood kids played at our house because of the awesome playhouse my dad made in the backyard equipped with a slide, a trapdoor, a rope, and swings.

Everything my dad added to or changed about a house increased its resale value. Because my dad was a builder, my parents wanted to try the “build and sell thing” to make money. When they sold the blue house they profited about $20,000 after taxes and remodeling costs. The build and sell concept comes from my dad being able to build a house for less than it’s worth on the market. My parents plan selling every house they build within two to five years.

The “Stoddard” House

The “Stoddard House” was the first house my parents built. We lived in camping trailers and tents while my dad built this house. My parents picked this layout for the economic and resale value. Keeping a house under 2,000 square feet with three bedrooms upstairs, three downstairs, and three and one half bathroom (master bathroom, upstairs bathroom, downstairs bathroom, and a wash room near the garage entrance) on ten acres
is a great way to ensure resale in south east Idaho. My dad built all of our houses far from the road (about seventy yards) so our front yard is large and kids can play without being by traffic (not that there was much traffic where we lived out in the country). This house sat on a large plot of thirty acres of land.

My parents chose not to finish the basement in order to save money. I remember the unfinished basement about this house the most, because a cement floor and four little kids with rollerblades made for a great time. My older siblings made jumps and drew roads with sidewalk chalk. We never complained about sharing rooms upstairs because of this entertaining alternative.

The “Campbell” House

Jerry changed the side facing garage to a front facing garage in the next house to change the appearance of the neighboring Stoddard house. He squared off the front room instead of having a bay window. My mom chose not to decorate with shutters. The roof was altered to make the house appear different as well. Changing features like this, my

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39 Building a house in this manner is practical for large families who enjoy the country, farming, and animals. The layout of the house gives the most space for the best price. This style of home is the vernacular architecture of the area.
dad said, really makes houses look less “cookie-cutter” even though on the inside they
are virtually the same.

This house had many of windows facing the backyard. My dad wanted to “watch
the thunderstorms” and my mom said the view was spectacular across farm fields up to
the Tetons in the far distance. She told me, “One time a lady who was selling blinds came
over to sell us some blinds, but when she saw our view she said we didn’t need blinds
because no one could look into the house and it was just a really jaw-dropping view of
the country” (personal interview with Kathy Saville 2013). Brook and I enjoyed dancing
to our Anastasia soundtrack in the upstairs living room when it was dark outside because
we could watch our reflection in all the big windows as though we were in a dance
studio.

Originally, the kitchen didn’t have any windows, and the sink faced the living
room. My mom hated it. My mom told me, “One day your dad called me from BMC
West [the lumber yard] and said there was a box window that someone had returned there
for super cheap. He said it would be cool to put it in the kitchen and so I said sure. Then a
few minutes later it seemed he was home asking me to hold a string and just like that he
was knocking out the wall and we had the window in that day.” The flower window/box
window was similar to a bay window but it had glass for all the sides and instead of a
place to sit, there were shelves to place plants on. All the windows created a greenhouse
effect for the plants. My mom loved it. She literally grew flowers in her kitchen.

In the Stoddard house there had been only two rooms for the children: one for the
girls and one for the boys. But the Campbell house had a finished basement, so the three
older kids had their own rooms downstairs. Brook and I were upstairs next to mom and dad’s room. We each our own rooms but Brook frequently slept with me in mine.

The deck on the back of the house was built around the nicest hot tub we have ever owned. Hot tubs are really great for resale and for my dad after a long day of work. The shingles were cheaper this time. Instead of the shack shingles like the Stoddard house, my dad saved money and put on regular asphalt shingles. My dad put a secret gun cabinet in the wall in my parents’ bedroom. Jerry loves hunting, so having a secret gun cabinet is one of his favorite things to add to his homes. My dad built the living room and kitchen to be more open than the Stoddard house. “Open” is definitely my family’s style. The more open the living room and kitchen area the better.

The “Pink House”

My family calls this home the Pink House because it literally looks pink. The color of the stucco was an accident. My mom was trying to go for “off-white with peach undertones” but on a large scale it was definitely pink. I asked my mom if my dad felt mad about the color and she said they both were just like, “What the crap? Oops.” She
didn’t mean to make the house pink but she couldn’t do anything about it when it was up and done.

This is my favorite house. It is bigger and even more open than the others. My dad wanted to be able to see the living room television from the kitchen table. Jerry added a much bigger bar-like counter with swivel chairs around one side. And my mom made sure the sink faced a window looking outside. During the summer my little sister and I were in charge of cleaning the house while my mom was at work. Mopping the kitchen floor was a blast. We would take the kitchen sink’s faucet spray hose and squirt water all over the tile floor. Then we would get bath towels and slide around “mopping” the floor. We would get a running start from the living room and slip ‘n slide the length of the kitchen.

My mom designed the laundry room in attempt to be more organized. She had my dad build each family member lockers to put our coats and shoes in. She also had a folding table next to the washer and dryer, which we had never had before. Her plan was to fold the laundry right after it was washed.

Perhaps this house has been my favorite because it seemed as if it was made for Brook and me. Our bedroom was originally supposed to be two rooms, but we decided we wanted to share a big room instead of having our own littler ones. We each still had our own closet, but we made one side of the room (Brook’s room) into the “living room” with all types of plastic, blow-up furniture, while my side had the bed. Several years later we decided we were sick of living in the same room so dad built a wall in the middle where it would have been originally. However, it was only a three-quarter wall built with a shelf on the top of the wall for our porcelain dolls so we could still be together.
The downstairs bathroom was my favorite part of all. It was a Brady Bunch bathroom connecting Brook’s and my room and our older sister Emily’s room. We had a large vanity and mirror so we could all do our hair at the same time.

Jerry also built Brook and me a playroom under the stairs. We kept all of our toys and the Barbie house dad built in there. Dad built a playhouse in the backyard and a sand volleyball court. There was a game room next to the living room with a ping-pong table and the computer. It was simply a great set-up for children.

My mom said she wanted to make the Pink house “more classy.” So they used the shack shingles again and went with trendier details, for example, using stucco instead of siding. The deck had a built-in barbecue grill for my mom (she loves to barbecue even in the winter) and a place to put a hot tub.

With each home Jerry built for our family, the house became more and more specific to the needs of the family.

“Home”

Jerry built this house because his parents, Don and Donna, aged to the point where they needed someone to care for them. Instead of putting them into a nursing
home, my dad built them an apartment in the house. Don and Donna have their own living room, bedroom, bathroom, laundry room, and kitchen. This makes it possible for my grandpa and grandma to feel as if they are living on their own. My grandpa is in a hoover round chair, so my dad built him a ramp on his own little deck out back. Jerry built a flower box so he could grow a little garden like he used to when he had his own house. Grandpa also likes to sit out on the deck in the evenings to get away from watching television for a change. My dad took off all the doors in their apartment so my grandpa’s chair would go in and out easier. There are also handles and railings around the entire apartment, making it easier for them to walk around.

Not only is this house home to my grandparents and parents, but my older sister had to move back home because of economic hardships, my younger sister moved back home after college hardships, and my older brother with his wife, two-year-old, and three-month-old moved in, also due to economic hardships. So this house has been adapted in many ways.

When my older sister Emily (age 30) moved back in, my dad made the garage into a photography studio so she could pursue her desire to be a photographer and make a little extra money. He built her a pulley system for the backdrops, added carpet, and painted. My dad built shelves all around the window in her new room for more space for all her books and belongings.

Right before this house was built, my brother Joel returned from his LDS mission. The basement was originally supposed to be a large family room, but Joel wanted a big room if he was going to stay with my parents. So my dad built him a very large room downstairs. Instead of making two small rooms and a large room for me, he
built a very small room for guests (Phillip’s room), a large room for Joel, and a big room for me, with a decent size living room. The size of the room ended up being extremely helpful when Joel eventually married Jessica and took over the downstairs. His little girl sleeps in the “guest/Phillip’s room.” Joel and his young family live quite comfortably in the basement.

Joel’s room was designed with extraordinary detail. The wall behind the clothes in Joel’s walk-in closet pushes open into an astonishing hidden room for his guns. On the far side of his room my dad built him a table for his ammunition re-loading material. Now they serve as closet space and shelving for his wife and babies. A fireplace was installed for the babies because the basement naturally stays cooler.

Brook’s room was also made special for her. Her ceiling is vaulted. While my dad was building he noticed the possibility of making her ceiling vaulted. The ceiling are so high it makes Brook’s room seem twice as big, which she really enjoys. And Brook was allowed to paint her room (unheard of because white paint dependably sells better because people feel as though they can add their own personal touch easily).

I have been very spoiled too; my dad built my closet under the stairs, so it’s larger than normal. There are plenty of shelves, hanger rods, and space to store all of my belongings even though I am not living there. At the time when the house was built I owned a red-tail boa constrictor and a red iguana. My dad built me a cage in the corner of the room—six foot tall, four feet wide, and three feet deep for my snake. My iguana’s spot was on top of the cage, since he was free roaming. These special additions to our individual rooms really make them special to us.
The laundry room did not have the lockers or the folding table this time around. The half bathroom by the garage was altered to include just a toilet, washer, and dryer. But the toilet was eventually removed to make room for a second refrigerator to help with the increase in house occupants. The garage was changed from Emily’s studio into a great room because our family needed more space when everyone was home. The living room next to the kitchen was just too small. My mom routinely says that if she could redo the house she would make the kitchen and living room at least three feet wider. It’s incredible to me how a house can change so much based on what a family needs. As a master carpenter, Jerry is capable of providing so much more than money for his family.

These examples show how a master is affected by the community that surrounds him. If it were not for building his family’s wellbeing, Jerry might not have the drive to continue working hard labor. By building homes for his family, Jerry is truly free to explore his abilities and use his talents and own creativity as a builder. This experience provides Jerry with learning moments and pride in his abilities. There is an obligation to support, and the best way he can do that is by using his building talent. Without his family, he would not have built himself a home—which he says established himself as a master builder. Jerry was able to make the most money by working by himself. Without this experience, Jerry wouldn’t have honed his skills to the expert quality they are now because he wouldn’t have had to figure out how to do every step of putting a house together by himself. He had to think in innovative ways. He had to figure out tricks to lift walls and align trusses by himself. These skills helped establish Jerry as a master in his trade.

See Appendix 2 for a draft of the Saville family’s current home.
Lessons of a Carpenter Father

In this section, I include several interviews with Jerry’s children and explore how the master carpenter affects his family’s identity. A master’s personal life and family identity mirrors his occupational identity. For example, Jerry’s personal identity is based on the foundation of his trade; carpentry is not something he leaves in the office—it’s who he is. People know him as a carpenter. Steve Siporin expressed the importance of occupational identity on the individual when he wrote: “For many Americans, in fact, occupational identity provides a sense of self more fundamental than ethnicity” (1992: 72). Indeed Jerry’s whole world is shaped by the work he does—even Jerry’s family is known for being raised with a carpenter father and husband. For example, many of Jerry’s children are capable of doing carpentry work and their skills resemble Jerry’s impeccable problem solving abilities. Jerry’s wife exhibits extensive knowledge of the logistics of building a home. The Saville family is built with a foundation of carpentry.

Jerry taught his children many things because of who he is and what he does for a living. We watched our dad work every day of our lives. To see him sick is very rare because he refuses to lie down with a sickness. He will say, “You just got to get up and keep moving and you’ll feel better.” That phrase really sums up Jerry’s personality.

Each of Jerry’s children talked about how they’ve learned hard work. Joel talked about how our dad has taught him how to work hard. Brook talked about our dad teaching her to work until the job is done. Phillip said he learned to work from our dad. I know dad taught me that doing a job right the first time is always better than having to re-do it. Emily, too, said hard work is a characteristic she attributes to dad. Dad taught us
how to work by giving us an example of what a hard worker looks like. We watched how a master works inside and outside the home.

Brook told me during an interview about a conversation she and our mom were discussing earlier:

He works so hard for his family.

His family is what makes him wake up each morning

and push through another day of work.

Without us,

he wouldn’t have much of a reason to work so hard.

He chooses to provide us with a beautiful home and amazing food.

He does so, because he loves us

and wants us to be the happiest we can be.

A famous word our dad constantly says is: Think! Joel expands on this:

Dad taught us problem solving skills.

See it and put it together,

Like figuring out a puzzle,

Playing Tetras.

But dad would tell us to go figure it out-

and he’d come make sure it was right.

Dad expects us to figure it out.

Brook also spoke about the improvisation skills her father taught her:
Ingenuity everywhere!

Dad got us to figure out the simple way to accomplish a task.

For example, in high school I remember working on a project and my friends were like, “just ask Brook for the simple way out.”

My siblings express this confidently because we have endless stories of our dad figuring problems out. We call our dad’s skill of making things work “Jerry Rigging.”

The Christmas tree in Jerry’s house is held up by two wires on the ceiling. It keeps the tree straight and from falling on anyone. One Christmas, dad wired two trees together to make a fuller looking tree. My Christmas star on top of my tree is held on by twist ties. The heater in Jerry’s truck is turned on by twisting two live wires from an old electrical cord rigged up to the truck’s heater core. Brook mentioned how creative dad is when we are camping. He will make a latrine out of a tarp and a five gallon bucket with the bottom cut out and an old toilet seat screwed onto it. He hardly ever sees something as broken or useless; he just finds something else to do with it or fixes it.

Having our dad capable of making or fixing anything really pays off when we want something. My siblings and I came up with a list of some of the things Dad built for us:

- Bookshelves, Mom’s entertainment centers (several over the years),
- Emily’s room full of shelves, Heidi’s canopy, the girl’s Barbie house,
- dog houses, play houses, sheds, motorcycle track, volleyball court,
- snake cages, rocking horse, swords, hot tub room, ponds, play houses,
- stair cases, ramps for grandma and grandpa.

\[40 \text{ A play on the famous, widespread phrase.}\]
Dad also provided the skills, tools and material to make some school projects. He made Joel a maze for an experiment with mice for a science project. He built a professional display case for my bug collection (that he also helped me collect) and it was so beautiful and professional that it was on display in the high school for years. In third grade, my school held an invention fair. Most of the other students just drew a picture of their idea for an invention on a poster board, but I actually made my idea come to life. Okay, well, my dad made my invention come to life! I wanted something to hold my book up while I read in bed so my arms wouldn’t get tired. My dad made me a stand with Plexiglas so the book would be suspended on a see-through shelf over my pillow.

The talents and knowledge we’ve received from our dad being a carpenter does not end with innovation. Phillip became his apprentice and will someday take over the family business for our dad. Emily received her bachelor’s degree in interior design and sometimes works for our dad drafting blueprints. Brook and Emily are both extremely creative and make home-made Christmas presents. Joel also still knows a lot about building—enough to build his daughter a Barbie castle (not a house, a castle) for Christmas. Joel commented on these abilities:

I am capable of building something.

I have confidence.

Realistically I wouldn’t be afraid of going and building a house.

I could pull it off because I have watched it a lot.

Emily also commented on her carpentry skills:
Well I can tell you one thing,

As a kid I said, “I am never going to need to know this stuff!”

I hated working with dad

because I thought I would never need to use it.

I went into interior design, even though I don’t do it now,

I knew a lot, a lot of the stuff!

Some girls in the program didn’t even know what a 2X4 was.

Or like, I knew how thick a wall should be

or how much space needed to be in certain areas.

I knew the building section of a house and that really helped me a lot.

Each of us recognizes our knowledge of the process of building homes. Joel and his wife Jessica began looking to buy a house. Joel wants to have enough land to eventually build his own home on a separate lot. He wants to build a home that is easy to add on to. Therefore, as his family grows or as their income grows he will be able to add on rooms and/or make rooms bigger to fit his family’s needs.

Jerry’s family see things differently. During an interview with Joel’s wife Jessica, I asked her how she thinks we are unique because of our dad being a carpenter and she said:

You see something and know it can be changed or fixed. Like it was crazy amazing when the garage turned into a living room in a day!

It was like, hmm let’s make this a living room

And wala it was!
Most families have to wait a year to get the money to do something like that but your dad just did it!

Joel and I talked about this very idea in an interview too. Because we have seen our dad fix things and change things and learned from him, when we see something that needs to be altered; we see a way to make it work. Our father continues to leave his legacy of knowledge in each of us kids.

**Saville Family Construction**

*This section continues to explain how Jerry’s family helped create and sustain his status of master by providing him with purpose. When he needed help working by himself, his family came to assist him: cleaning job sites, lifting walls, moving lumber, etc. In this, the master’s family sustained the original One Man Crew making the One Man Crew not so “one man.” The One Man Crew was actually a community/family of support of helpers. The community that surrounds the folk artist is often overlooked by folklore research, or, at least it hasn’t been focused on as much as the artist themselves. This community of support is explored in the section.*

After Gary Bolander grew too old to work, Jerry went on his own, building homes by himself. In order to accomplish this daunting task, he would call on his wife and kids to help him lift the walls, which were far too big to lift alone. Many folk artists actually include their family in the craft they do. Alindato, a mask-making folk master, also involved his whole family in his craft business (Siporin 1992: 70). Jerry recalls:

*I made it a family affair.*
I would build all the walls
    They would be laying everywhere
    Sometimes I even sheeted them before we’d lift them
    Then I would call your mom, Bill, grandpa, whoever
    And have your mom bring lunch or donuts or a treat and pops
    And in about a half an hour we’d have all the walls stood and braced
    And we’d have a lunch, picnic, eat donuts and pop.

I remember at a very young age playing on dirt hills, eating Subway sandwiches in unfinished garages, peeing in window wells, and helping lift walls with all my might.

Jerry continues:

I’d have you kids come over
    and clean up
    and pick up wood.

I remember numerous times when I would be carrying a white, five-gallon bucket around building sites, picking up scraps of wood in the bucket, filling it full of wood pieces or dumping it in a pile or in my dad’s orange and rust trash trailer that looked like the bed of an old truck on two wheels. I preferred picking up little pieces of wood rather than moving 2X4s. When it came to lifting walls however, we were all included. Even the littlest strength helped in the end. When I asked my oldest brother Joel what he remembers about lifting walls with dad he recalled:

It would happen very often- dad would call to have us come over.
    When we were little we would get the wall up to about our waists...
Dad would kick the sawhorse under the wall

and then we would get the wall up over our heads

and he would hold the wall up with one hand

and grab the 2X4 nailed into the top

and hoist the wall the rest of the way

by using the 2X4 to push it into place.

Since we could walk, we were put to work picking up wood scraps, cleaning the job site, and moving 2X4 piles. During an interview with Brook, she recalled a precious memory:

I remember the whole family lifting up a wall and everyone being like,

“Brook! Brook! Get over here we need you!”

so I ran over there

and everyone lifted the wall like it was

because of my strength that

lifted it. I mean I was so little.

Brook remembered many experiences playing on dirt hills with me and taking lunch and/or a treat to dad. It’s not just a single memory or even a single individual child remembering. All of us remember. Brook continued:

I remember getting wood and putting it in piles

and moving one pile of wood and throwing it in the basement

and gathering up wood and getting the glue

and making bird houses!
I liked to pick up all the scrap copper and wires left by the electricians. I made weird Picasso-like sculptures. Being creative with random building materials and scrap wood happened quite often, Jerry said:

You kids always play with the scrap wood
Make things, blocks, and stuff
Mom made Christmas presents with scrap blocks one year
    Painted “Merry Christmas” on them and gave them to neighbors
    That was cute.
We made the little sleigh and reindeer with scrap wood.
    We had those on the roof for so many years.

Jerry’s talents as a master carpenter shape his family. Jerry even burns scrap wood in his wood burning fireplace to keep his family warm during the winter. Joel remembered something else specially made from scrap wood by our dad:

Dad would bring me home swords from work.
    Phillip and I would play with them.
    I bloodied Phil’s nose with the first one.
And in high school I started making weapons.
    Remember all my swords and double headed ax and spike ball and mallet?

Our whole family comes together to help dad build our homes. We worked constantly when our dad was building our own homes. Jerry said:
The first house I built [for our family]

I did everything

I poured the cement walls, framed it, painted it

   Everything but the electric and plumbing

   But we did everything!

You guys would be around and clean up

   and do stuff all the time

   because we were living in those two trailers and tents

We put that house up fast

   because those trailers and tents weren’t the best.

The Saville family’s life revolved around our father’s work. Jerry’s identity as a master carpenter is reflected greatly in his family. During one of the last interviews for this project with Jerry, he concluded:

   Our family really has lived around me being a builder and carpenter.

Jerry’s family identity is shaped by Jerry being a master builder. From lessons of hard work to the home they live in, his family is affected by his occupational choices. Jerry is exceptional in large part because his family gives him motivation and support.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION:

A MASTER EXAMPLE
There are beautiful skills found in the common, everyday work of people. Jerry Saville is just one example of a carpenter who creates works of art through his occupational skills. I recognize how difficult it is for the world to see the beauty of hard work. The study of folklore gives recognition to the immense skills of everyday life. Whether by highlighting women who skillfully hang clothes on wires stretching across apartment buildings (Cantow 1981) or documenting iron workers who climb high on steel frames towering over the city putting together massive buildings (Hass 1974), the study of folklore explores the lives and skills of talented individuals who are often overlooked academically and socially.

In the preface to *Folklore: In All of Us, In All We Do*, editor Kenneth L. Untiedt expresses how folklore provides insight into people’s lives that otherwise might be lost (2006: vii). This thesis provides insight into one carpenter’s life and explains the process of becoming a master builder. Jerry Saville became a master builder because of his desire and dedication to building and thinking like a carpenter. He was capable of being a master in his trade because of the support of his family.

This thesis provides a closer look at what creates and sustains a master carpenter. In this particular case, Jerry became an apprentice due to his desire, drive, dedication, and ability to build. Jerry acquired a desire to provide for his family through life experiences. He became a carpenter; a master carpenter is who he is. His occupation is also reflected in his family. These elements teach us that a master is more than a person with a unique set of skills and an eye for perfection—a master’s life is molded by the craft.

Bolander quickly took Jerry on as an unofficial apprentice and Jerry quickly moved up the ladder of occupational stages because of his drive and desire to build. Jerry
makes his clients’ ideas for their home come to life when other contractors/carpenters cannot. Providing his family’s economical needs sustained him in becoming a master folk artist and continue to sustain him in his status of master. His occupation affects his personal identity and the identity of his family.

Building his first house for his family to live in by himself made Jerry feel as though he had reached master status. Through many years, and tens of thousands of hours of working, learning, and improving, Jerry became a master. Jerry has never met another carpenter who frames houses by himself. Jerry is the only One Man Crew (albeit a One Man Crew who depends on the support and help of his family) which makes him stand out above the other carpenters.

Through this examination, we learn that a master folk artist is established through drive, desire, dedication, and life experience/opportunity. Outside support and personal purpose sustain the status of master. We learn that this master’s craft is reflected in every aspect of his life—his world revolves around it. We discover that thousands and thousands of hours of practice and experience create a master.

The chart below displays the qualities that help create and sustain a master folk artist. Each element supports and influences the others. Drive, desire, and dedication are all interconnected in that desire gives one drive and dedication. This drive, desire, and dedication are influenced by the artist’s love for the craft and also by the purpose in working provided by the community of support. Jerry’s community of support helped provide for him purpose in working hard and supported him as “backstage” helpers for the One Man Crew. The community of support and life experiences provide the artist with opportunities to learn. Life experiences placed Jerry in the appropriate time and
place to receive an apprenticeship with a master carpenter. His life experiences also gave him love for the craft, desire, dedication, and drive to become the best he could be. While the community of support gave Jerry the opportunity to learn and grow as a carpenter, particularly in building his masterpiece in the first home for his family. These were the main qualities found throughout my research with Jerry Saville.
If with pleasure you are viewing
Any work a man is doing
If you like him or you love him
Tell him now,
Don’t withhold your approbation
With the parson’s fine oration
When he lies with snowy lilies
O’re his brow.
For no matter how you shout it—
He won’t care a thing about it
He won’t know how many
Teardrops you have shed.
If you think some praise is due him,
Now’s the time to slip it to him,
For he cannot read his tombstone
When he’s dead.

Lem Ward

--A Master Decoy Carver

American Folk Masters: The National Heritage Fellows by Steve Siporin (1992)
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APPENDICES
APPENDIX 1:

LANGUAGE OF FRAMING

ACCORDING TO JERRY
The following list of carpenter words and definitions are literally Jerry's own words taken word-for-word during multiple telephone interviews.

“A” Frame: “It is what it says it is. A roof that looks like an A. Any roof angle more than 45 degrees. A roof structure with two sides that come down to the ground that is considers the roof and the walls as one.

A Modified “A” Frame: A house under the A frame. Two parts to it- the square and then the A frame.


Addition: Additional living space added to a living structure.

Appraisal: The approximate cost of building a structure.

Bearing Wall/Load Barring Wall: A load point carrying the structure.

Bay Window: A window area with three sides.

Bow Window: A window with multiple sides.

Blueprint: The diagram worksheet of the structure.

Bid: The cost price for erecting structure.

Bracing: The act of holding walls in correct form until they are permanently constructed by sheer walls.

Braced Wall Panel: A wall that is blocked together from the top of the wall down to a load barring structure. Does not have plywood on it –it only contains blocks.

Blocks: A brace wall panel.

Carpenter’s Belt: A tool bag worn around the waist to carry personal hand tools used frequently by the carpenter.
Cement Nails: Nails made of harden steel to hold material driving into concrete.

OSC: A type of plywood made from laminating thin pieces of wood together into a large panel.

Chalk Line: A string line inside a box filled with chalk that when laid out tightly can be snapped to leave a straight line on surface.

Channels: An area where one wall connects to another.

Crawl Space: A three to four foot non-living space underneath the floor of a living space.

Air Compressor: An electrical or mechanical device with air tanks and motors to produce volumes of compressed air P.S.I (pounds per square inch) used to propel nails into the structure (wood, steel, cement) using means of pneumatic air guns.

Cantilever: A building area extended out past the load bearing structures. Max distance of three feet- anything further the structure loses too much strength.

Crown: The natural rising side of a board on the convex area of an upright/vertical plank. The crown is the outward direction of the board. Crowns more than half an inch are thrown away.

Camber: The natural rising side of beam or a flat laying/horizontal material.

Dimensional Lumber: Solid material cut with a saw mill out of trees.

Non-Dimensional Lumber: Manufactured wood material put together with glue made from pieces of the tree/wood/lumber material glued together.

Floor Joist/TGI/BCI/Truss Joist: The material used in the framing part of the floor before the floor is layered with wafer wood/CDX/plywood.

Footings: Usually concrete or rock base that the foundation walls rest upon.

French Roof: French hip where the roof comes down on all sides.
Dutch Hip: A roof where the peak of the gable is cut off.

Gable Roof: A roof where two sides or more have a pitched roof on it up to a point. The pitch of the roof would be an angled roof anywhere from a one-one pitch to a twelve-twelve pitch (more than that it becomes an “A” frame).

Generator: Fuel-driven device used to create electricity by a motor when no other form of electricity is available.

Girder: A truss that is used to carry and hold up other trusses by use of a hanger device.

Headers: Structured material used in walls to stand over opening to carry load bearing area above.

Hip Roof: A roof where all sides of the roof slope down to the outside walls.

Hoses: There are lots of different types of hoses: to carry water for water settling and to carry air to pneumatic air guns.

Island: Counter area in dining or kitchen area separate from the outside walls.

Jig Saw: A small electrical saw with a vertical blade used to cut out circular cuts. Joist Hanger:

Metal “U” shaped device nailed and accrued to load bearing structures to hold up bearing material.

Level: A tool with a bubble device used for making things level [measuring whatever part of a wall to make sure it is level].

Lumber: Wood prepared [into dimensions] for human use and building.
Mono Truss: A truss that is bobbed off that the other trusses come over and meet- it goes over half way and then the other trusses run into it where roof changes directions.

Measuring Tape: A [retractable] measuring device used day in and day out by carpenters.

Nail Gun/Pneumatic Nail Guys: Guns used to drive nails, staples, etc., using compressed air.

Perfataping: Part of the sheet rocking of the house where the wall joints of sheetrock.

Pencil: A carpenter pencil is a thick flat pencil anywhere from one to ten inches long with cheap lead in it that breaks all the time. We [carpenters] are constantly sharpening our pencils.

Planning and Zoning: A government organization that regulates building codes and requirements.

Pressure Treated: Wood material treated with chemicals to prevent decay.

Ranch Style: A single level dwelling.

Remodel: Changes made to a house by home-owner in an existing structure.

Ring Shank: A nail with rings notched into the side of the nails to help it hook into wood to hold stronger/tighter, so when it is driven in it can’t come back out very easy.

Roof Joist/Rafter/Truss: The material used in the framing of the roof (the step before it’s sheeted).

Saw Dust: fine particles of wood made by a saw in the cutting of the wood. Saw Horse: A four legged wooden “A” frame stool used to hold up or stack material to cut/saw.

Sawzall: [brand name used as a generic name for reciprocating saw]: An electrical saw with a straight blade used for cutting multiple directions- saws all circumferences and angles.
Scaffolding: Material used to elevate a walking area around the work place.

Scrap Wood: Used up wood that may be needed for blocking, bracing, firewood, etc.

Sheet Rocking: Hanging sheet rock material on the inside walls of the dwelling.

Skill Saw: Electrical [circular] saw used in cutting lumber for construction.

Slab on Grade: Building a dwelling on a slab of cement on solid ground used for foundation footing.

Split Level: A dwelling where when entered you go up or down to the living area.

Sheer Wall: A wall supported by plywood and anchored from the top of the wall down to the permanent foundation or bearing wall.

Sheer Wall Panel: [Panel of] solid plywood from bottom to top [of the wall].

A Square: A tool used in construction to make square straight multiple degree angles.

Stud: Me. Number two definition: Lumber cut to exact length to construct a wall. There can be eight foot, nine foot, or twelve foot studs.
Staple Gun: Pneumatic device used to shoot or drive in staples of different lengths and grades.

Teeko Nails/Nailer: A nail used to anchor to joist hangers/mechanical plates to the load bearing structure.

Twisted Board: A board that is not straight, not usable in framing.

Work Trailer: A trailer or mobile work shop used to carry and protect tools.

Waster Trailer: A trailer used to carry away waste material to the dump.

Wood Trailer: A flatbed trailer used to carry large amounts of wood.
APPENDIX 2:

A Draft of “Home”
APPENDIX 3:

PICTURES OF A MASTER FOLK ARTIST

AND HIS APPRENTICE AT WORK
Figure 1. Jerry Saville, a master carpenter hard at work sheeting around the trusses on a home in Idaho Falls, Idaho.

Figure 2. Sheeting the exterior walls.
Figure 3. Phillip Saville, a master’s apprentice cutting a 2X4 to build the interior walls of a home.
Figure 4. The boom truck lifting trusses for Jerry and Phillip to arrange and nail in place to form the roof.

Figure 5. Phillip measuring the correct distance to lay a truss appropriately.
Figure 6. Jerry Saville posing on top of a house he built. His work trailer is also shown.

Figure 7. Construction is extremely labor intensive; carrying large objects is part of the everyday life of a framer.
Figure 8. Jerry Saville walking across a roof, stapling plywood onto the trusses.

Figure 9. Phillip Saville holding a nail gun, ready to get to work.
Figure 10. Jerry reaches across the building to nail the board into place. It takes a lot of strength to hold a nail gun like that and expert ability to place the nail where it ought to go.
Figure 11. Jerry Saville “Working on Garage” with his wife Kathy and little daughter Emily in 1983. This photo captures a simple, yet beautiful, moment of familial support.
Figure 12. This photo of Jerry was taken either late 80’s or early 90’s. Jerry’s wrist has a metal plate instead of bone from years and years of using a hammer.
Figure 13. Saville Family from left to right: Keith, Heidi, Hailey, Joel, Brook, Kathy, Jessica, Jerry, Jessica, SkyLynn, Phillip, and Emily.

Figure 14. Phillip’s family: Jessica, Phillip, SkyLynn, and River.