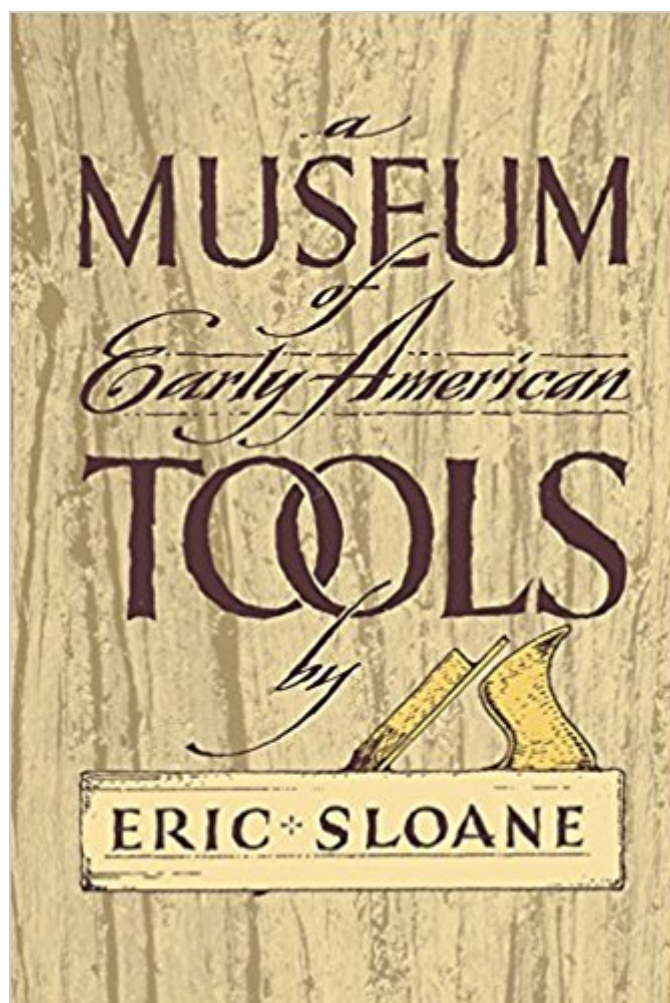


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# A Museum Of Early American Tools (Americana)



## Synopsis

This absorbing and profusely illustrated book describes in detail scores of early American tools and the wooden and metal artifacts made with them. Informally and expressively written, the text covers building tools and methods; farm and kitchen implements; and the tools of carriers, wheelwrights, coopers, blacksmiths, coachmakers, loggers, tanners, and many other craftsmen of the pre-industrial age. Scores of pen-and-ink sketches by the author accurately depict "special tools for every job," among them a hollowing gouge, hay fork, cornering chisel, apple butter paddle, boring auger, mortising chisel, a holding dog, hauling sledge, winnowing tray, reaping hooks, splitting wedge, felling axe, propping saw horse, and other traditional implements. Sure to be prized by cultural historians, this volume will delight woodcrafters interested in making their own tools and thrill general readers with its store of Americana.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book is dedicated to the pioneer Americans who made their tools, a symbol of sincerity, integrity, and excellence. Mass production made their tools obsolete, along with early individualism, said the author. There was a special tool for every job (pp.vi-vii). In Early America a museum referred to a library of collected facts (p.xi). Shovels were made of wood to prevent harm to grain and apples (p.xii). A house built of posts and beams used wooden pins which don't rust and loosen like nails. Sloane says that studying the tools used by pioneer Americans reveals their conscience

and personality. Things were built to be honest and long-lasting, not to make the most money. There are 48 short chapters and an Index. These drawings are very interesting."The Romance of Tools" says a tool was an extension of a man's hand. Some gave pet names to a tool then (p.3), some do today. The Civil War period marked a new era in tool design because of mass-production (p.5). Axe handles became curved, not straight; their end had a "Fawn foot", "Scroll knob", or "Swell knob" (p.7). Early American tools had a traditional design with subtle differences and decorative touches that identify the region of origin (p.6). An ax was the most important tool for early Americans: clear the land of trees, cut fuel, build a house or furniture. Early axes were poll-less; the poll added weight for chopping. There were more than 50 patterns of Axe heads (p.12). The Broad Axe was used to hew round logs into square beams (p.14). Early American roofs were thatched, shingling hatchets were unknown. The claw hammer hasn't changed much since Roman times (p.22). Square-cut nails had greater holding power than round nails. Log-house notches were often made with only an ax (pp.24-25).

This book or publication has been around for quite a long time now. I have a copy in front of me as I write this review with a publication date of 1964. There have been quite a number of reprints since that date. There is a reason for this and that reason is Eric Sloane, the author and illustrator. Anyone familiar with Sloane is aware of his unique drawing style and down to earth descriptions of not only tools, but of early American building and craftsmanship. He, Eric Sloane is simply one of the best! In this 168 page book the author has introduced us to a very large number of tools which were used in the past in this country. Tools made of wood and tools made of iron/metal. From cutting, to drilling, to shaving to crushing to measuring to forging to animal care to domestic to various trades...they are all here. These tools actually tell the history of our country and these tools are much more important as a history lesson than for something some yuppie paid too much for and hangs on his or her wall...you know, that "Country Look." No, these tools built a nation. There is nothing wrong in collecting them as it is a great way to preserve our history, but they mean so much more if you know what they are, what they were used for and what impact they may have had on a family or craftsman. They kept families alive, housed, fed and relatively comfortable. They should be held in respect. The first thing the reader will note is just how ingenious people are. If they have or had a task to perform, they were able to figure out a way to do it more efficiently and more effectively. The second thing the reader will note is that by simply looking at some of these tools used by our forefathers, we do not have a clue as to what their use was.

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