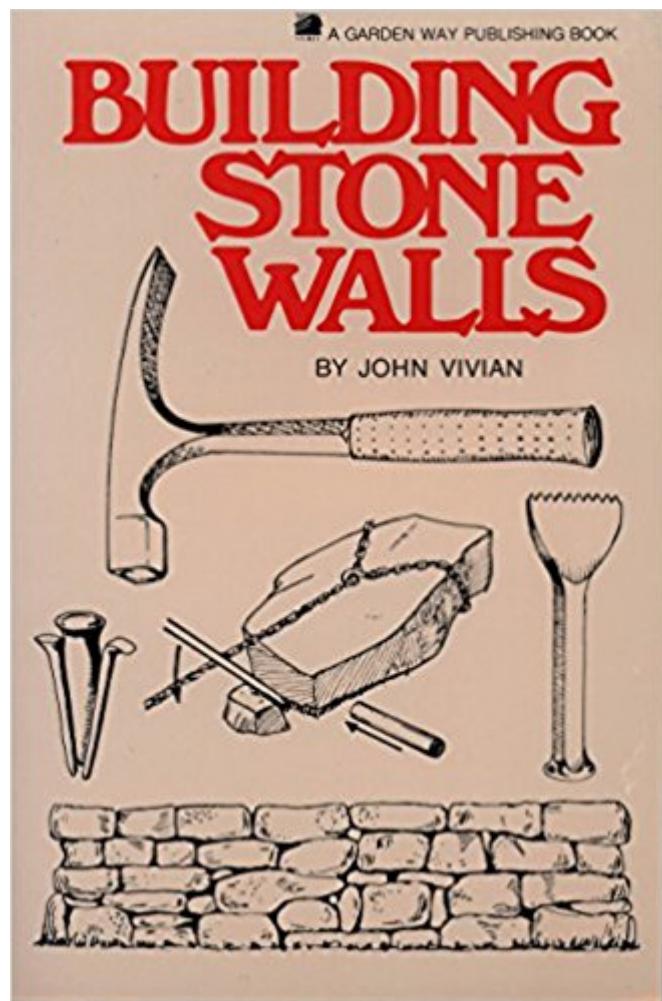


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# Building Stone Walls



## **Synopsis**

Rustic and charming or stately and proud, a well-built stone wall can add personality and beauty to your property. John Vivian's lively approach and step-by-step instructions encourage you to transform a pile of rocks into an enduring landscape feature with gates, retaining walls, or stiles to suit your needs. Whatever unique challenges come with your site • poor drainage, sloping ground, or low-quality rubble material • Vivian offers innovative designs and reproducible methods to help you build a beautiful, long-lasting wall.Â

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Well, here it is: Basic tools, basic techniques, illustrations and photographs, and all the planning and safety instructions you will need to build a variety of stone walls. This is a book that can help you beautify your back yard with the grace and texture of natural stone, or launch you on a career of reconstructing the Inca Empire or building a second Great Wall of China if you get carried away. Up to you...

A beautiful stone wall ... yours with just a rock pile, a few tools and this book!Â Building Stone Walls tells you all you need to know to build your own sturdy walls. Carefully detailed, clear drawings show the techniques to follow -- and how to avoid problems.Â Learn here about:- wall foundations- basic "one-over-two" method- chinking "in" or "out"- height-to-width formula- using

lower-quality stone- building retaining walls- building in gates, fences, and stiles- moving stone, boulders. Excellent example photos show good and poor walls, while the author's lively text tells you how to build, step by step. Slopes, drainage problems, using rubble -- these challenges and more are thoroughly covered.

This is not a technical how-to manual in any regard. If a complete guide to sourcing, moving and stacking stone into a wall or foundation is what you are seeking, immediately look elsewhere. This is a 100 page article glazing the very surface of the subject. Very little technical information is included or expanded upon, not enough to make it a single reference. The type gutters are very deep, leaving a somewhat thin column of text in the center of the page, supposedly in an effort to add to the page count. If you are completely new to the subject, this book gives an excellent overview, but you cannot rely on it for the myriad aspects you will encounter while building.

Let's get the book's only saving grace out of the way: The only thing I can surmise is that it should have been titled, "How to Build Stone Fences". Much of the information is only usable for a dry stacked stone wall that is under 3-4 feet tall where failure is acceptable. The book is wholly unsuitable for ANY other type of stone structure. If you want to build a stone wall fence and failure is acceptable, this book is o-k. I purchased the book to build structure walls, retaining walls etc. It is unsuitable for that. The topics that are covered are broad in scale but there is no depth to any of them. For example, the author covers "quarrying" in a page or two, "selecting stone" in a page or two and "mortar" in a page. Unusually wide margins, blank spaces and pointless pictures fill the book and turn it from a 10 page article into a 100 page 'book'. For example, "Maintenance" is 3/4 of a page of text that has been stretched into two pages and features a picture of a gopher entering a live animal trap next to a stone wall. That's it. It does not cover the various types of mortars... at all. It simply says to buy, "ready mix" and use it. Why? From the back of the book, "John Vivian, a veteran practitioner of many country crafts, is also author of "A Manual on Practical Homesteading." "The author is not a 'mason'! The author is not a stoneworker! He's a 'homesteader'! You are not purchasing a manual on how to properly do anything with stone, what you're purchasing is a book that devotes 10 of its 100 pages to, "The Story of a Wall", which is apparently a conversation between two individuals that built a dry stacked stone wall. Because it does not adequately cover the various topics necessary in the construction of stone walls, it cannot be used to safely construct a stone wall. Therefore, it fails

I bought three books on stone masonry and found this to be the better of them. They all had their good points but I liked this one. The only issue was the statement within the book that the field stone I have on my property makes poor walls. The author is correct, but I have to work with what I have. Given this, he did explain how to use the material I have at hand so the book did provide the info I needed.

This book is packed with good information and I used most of it to help me build 170 tons of dry stack walls. I would recommend reading the book and avoiding stone wall building. In Texas in July and August it is like being in hell. The walls will be there long after I'm gone.

This is an older book with hand drawn illustrations, but it is excellent with the suggestions by the author. I learned a lot from what he had to say. He obviously spent a lot of time dry-stacking walls and spoke from personal experience. I really like this book. It will be most helpful to me when I dry-stack a wall at my place.

See the photo on the cover where the stone is being moved into place with a chain? Don't expect any details about tricks like that. I skimmed through this book the other night on the couch in less than half an hour and didn't really get much out of it. I'm sure I'll go back for another pass and for a couple of topics but it's a really short book with old, low res photos. For me, tips on moving and placing heavy rock and shaping them to fit is what I was hoping for.

Genius. No wasted words.

It was a good read for me, a total beginner. I would have liked more illustrations, perhaps because I didn't understand some very basic concepts, but the illustrations that were included were artistically drawn and very helpful!

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