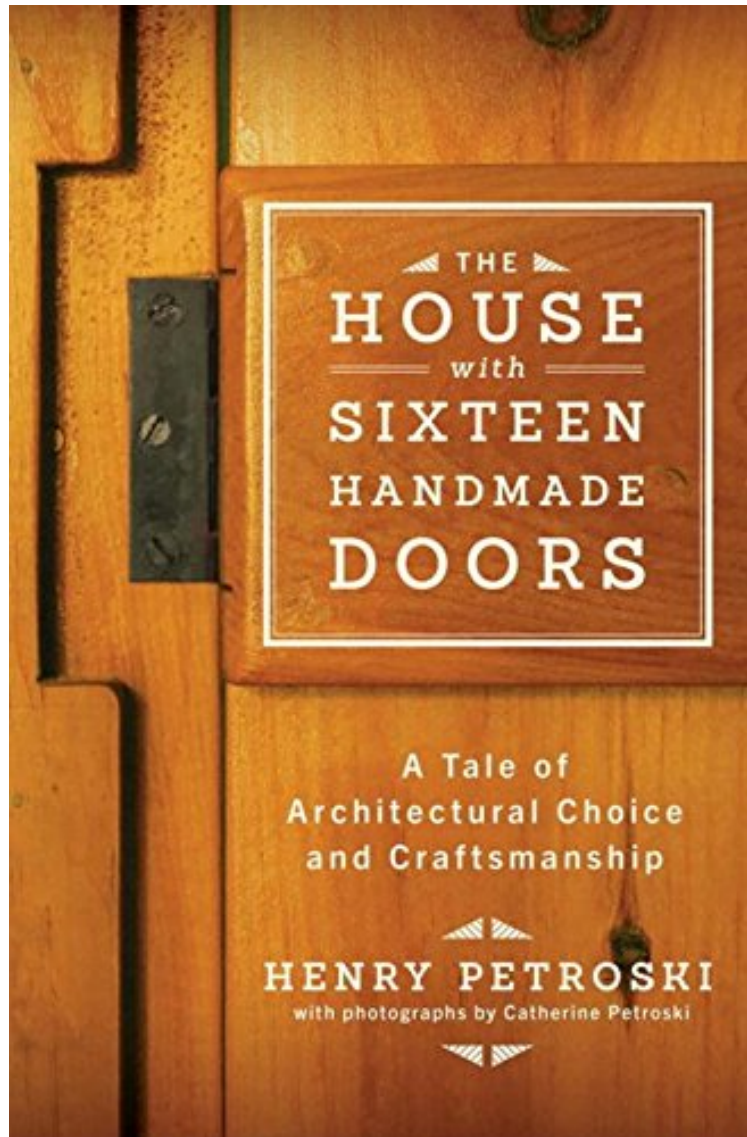


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The House with Sixteen Handmade Doors: A Tale of Architectural Choice and Craftsmanship

Henry Petroski

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Henry Petroski : The House with Sixteen Handmade Doors: A Tale of Architectural Choice and Craftsmanship before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The House with Sixteen Handmade Doors: A Tale of Architectural Choice and Craftsmanship:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Good writing, but bland and not terribly interestingBy Timothy J. BazzettiI loved engineer Henry Petroski's memoir, Paperboy: Confessions of a Future Engineer. And I also loved the

late Larry Haun's *A Carpenter's Life as Told by Houses*, so I thought I'd probably like Petroski's *THE HOUSE WITH SIXTEEN HANDMADE DOORS*, all about a summer home he and his wife bought in Coastal Maine. Unfortunately I didn't. I didn't actively dislike the book, because Petroski is a very good writer and a very likeable guy. And I did read over a hundred pages of his new book before finally deciding it wasn't going to get any better. I'll concede that he did plenty of homework about the 1950s house - who built it, lots about the family that the builder came from, plenty about the local history of Arrowsic Island and its natives. More than plenty about the simple but meticulous craftsmanship and the tools and skills that went into the house's construction and the economy of materials. And some interesting anecdotes about the neighbors. And Petroski's wife, Catherine, adds lots of black and white photos to 'show' what he's describing. But in the end it was just a little too bland for my taste, and read more than a little like a "What I Did on My Summer Vacation" written by a respected engineer-author. I suspect that Petroski is one of those guys who has a hard time turning off his brain and just relaxing - which is kinda what I always figured having a summer home was for - and so he bumped around his summer house all season with flashlights and a notepad and pencil and tape measure, seeking out the secrets of the mode of construction of his new knotty pine-clad acquisition. Sorry, Henry, but I ended up doing a lot of skimming the last third or so of the book. It simply did not arouse my interest. But then I am a decidedly UNhandy sort of guy, so maybe it would appeal to a real carpenter and handyman. I'll pass it along to a friend of mine who might understand and appreciate it better. - Tim Bazzett, author of the memoir, *BOOKLOVER* 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A little tedious and too involved in minutiae at points. By Sue H. A little tedious and too involved in minutiae at points, but overall a good, interesting read. Taking on discovering the history of the house and the family who built it without destroying any of its construction was definitely a challenge which made for an engaging mystery. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Not just about his house, but a little about ... By Edmond M Koury Not just about his house, but a little about Maine and its people. Petroski is an interesting writer about interesting writer for the layman about engineering.

An architectural whodunit that unlocks the secrets of a hand-built home. When Henry Petroski and his wife Catherine bought a charming but modest six-decades-old island retreat in coastal Maine, Petroski couldn't help but admire its unusual construction. An eminent expert on engineering, history, and design, he began wondering about the places origins and evolution: Who built it, and how? What needs, materials, technologies, historical developments, and laws shaped it? How had it fared through the years with its various inhabitants? Sleuthing around dimly lit closets, knotty-pine wall panels, and even a secret passage but never removing so much as a nail Petroski zooms in on the details but also steps back to examine the structure in the context of its time and place. Catherine Petroski's beautiful photographs capture the clues and the atmosphere. A vibrant cast of neighbors and past residents most notably the house's masterful creator, an engineer-turned-folk architect become key characters in the story. As the mystery unfolds, revealing an extraordinary house and its environs, this ode to loving design will leave readers enchanted and inspired. 80 photographs

From Booklist Since penning his first book on design failures in 1985, prolific author and civil engineer Petroski has also written at length about design successes, including such previously unheralded implements as paper clips, pencils, and toothpicks. In his latest work, Petroski picks a much more personal topic on which to focus his manufacturing expertise, his own second home on a riverbank in coastal Maine. When Petroski and his wife, Catherine, bought the cabin-like retreat several years ago, he had little idea it would be filled with enough design quirks to provoke him into a full-scale investigation of its construction history. Along with knotty pine walls and oddly built closets, the house features its own secret passage. Petroski's research included surveying the buildings unusual environs and interviewing former owners and surviving relatives of its eccentric builder. Though this fascinating history of a house includes painstaking attention to woodcrafting techniques that may excite professional and amateur architects and carpenters a bit more than general readers, the book is replete with Petroski's usual fascinating details and elegant prose. --Carl Hays Petroski's prose will make satisfying reading for architects and carpenters of the professional, amateur, and armchair varieties. "A narrative tour-de-force. --David Esterly" A very close examination of a house's anatomy, garnished with far-ranging asides on how things get made intriguing. --Peter Whoriskey" About the Author Henry Petroski is the Aleksandar S. Vesic Professor of Civil Engineering and a professor of history at Duke University. He is the author of seventeen previous books on engineering and design, including the classics *To Engineer Is Human* and *The Pencil*. Catherine Petroski is a photographer and the author of fiction and nonfiction books, including *A Brides Passage*. She and Henry live in Durham, North Carolina, and Arrowsic, Maine.