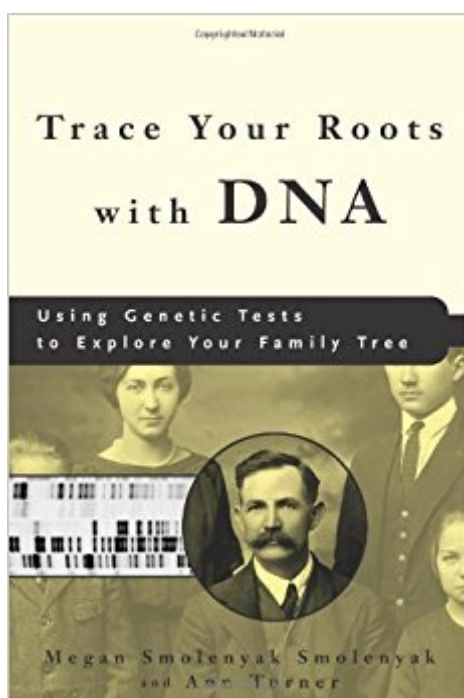


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Trace Your Roots With DNA: Using Genetic Tests To Explore Your Family Tree



Synopsis

Written by two of the country's top genealogists, *Trace Your Roots with DNA* is the first book to explain how new and groundbreaking genetic testing can help you research your ancestry. According to American Demographics, 113 million Americans have begun to trace their roots, making genealogy the second most popular hobby in the country (after gardening). Enthusiasts clamor for new information from dozens of subscription-based websites, email newsletters, and magazines devoted to the subject. For these eager roots-seekers looking to take their searches to the next level, DNA testing is the answer. After a brief introduction to genealogy and genetics fundamentals, the authors explain the types of available testing, what kind of information the tests can provide, how to interpret the results, and how the tests work (it doesn't involve digging up your dead relatives). It's inexpensive, easy to do, and the results are accurate: It's as simple as swabbing the inside of your cheek and popping a sample in the mail. Family lore has it that a branch of our family emigrated to Argentina and now I've found some people there with our name. Can testing tell us whether we're from the same family? My mother was adopted and doesn't know her ethnicity. Are there any tests available to help her learn about her heritage? I just discovered someone else with my highly unusual surname. How can we find out if we have a common ancestor? These are just a few of the types of genealogical scenarios readers can pursue. The authors reveal exactly what is possible-and what is not possible-with genetic testing. They include case studies of both famous historical mysteries and examples of ordinary folks whose exploration of genetic genealogy has enabled them to trace their roots.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Genetic typing is the newest tool for amateur genealogists, and it's enthusiastically espoused by the experienced authors of this useful guidebook (Smolenyak is the lead researcher for PBS's *Ancestors* and the author of *In Search of Our Past Ancestors*; Turner contributes to the GENEALOGY-DNA mailing list). How does it work? By tracing one's "DNA heirlooms," the two forms of DNA that are passed on in a family from generation to generation. These "heirlooms" include genetic markers on the Y chromosome, passed on by fathers, and mitochondrial DNA, passed on by mothers. If it sounds hard to understand and do, the authors reassuringly offer clear explanations of the science and how to use it. DNA typing can tell you if you're related to someone with the same surname, pinpoint a certain ancestor and verify your other research. But, as the authors warn, it could also prove your previous assumptions wrong or uncover unwanted information, such as that a family member was adopted. If you have been researching your family's history and have unanswered questions, this enlightening book may offer some answers; at the very least, it will walk you through the benefits and drawbacks of DNA testing. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Megan Smolenyak has been an avid genealogist for more than three decades and is an expert at family history research. The lead researcher for the PBS *Ancestors* series, she is a contributing editor for *Heritage Quest* and the author of *Honoring Our Ancestors*, *In Search of Our Ancestors*, and *They Came to America*. She currently resides in Williamsburg, VA. Ann Turner was hooked on genealogy when she learned that her parents' ancestors had arrived in the United States on the same ship yet went their separate ways until her parents met 300 years later. She works at home, writing computer software and composing messages for the popular Genealogy-DNA mailing list. She currently resides in Menlo Park, California.

This is a good beginners book because a lot of time and space is spent telling you how to do basic genealogy. In fact more than a third, nearly a half of the book is a basic genealogy how to. This was a big disappointment to me because the title did not say "trace your roots", it said "trace your roots with dna", so this is what I expected to read about. When the author does talk about dna tests, she focuses on the male surname test and the female equivalent tracing back the maternal line. Little is

mentioned about the specifics of most popular "family finder" tests, about finding the relatives on the area of the tree in between the maternal and paternal lines or how to use these results in your genealogy research. While the information in the book is good, it wasn't what I wanted.

I had heard of this book a few years before I decided to buy it, but when I discovered it was published in 2004, I mistakenly assumed some of the information would be outdated. Even now, near the end of 2010, it is not dated. The author does her best to make it understandable for the reader. That's not to say it is written for a total novice, but it doesn't require a Ph.D. either. It is loaded with ways DNA testing can be utilized in a family history.

As a DNA-surname research group administrator, I tend to buy every book, VHS, or DVD I can find regarding the use of DNA research in support of traditional genealogy. Of the 12-15 books I have purchased so far, Megan Smolenyak's touchstone reference work continues to be the one I reach for when I have a question myself. Easily read and understood, this book makes complex concepts readily accessible with clear illustrations, definitions, real-world examples, and authoritative references when needed. I am not naturally science-minded, but as a good researcher, I want to be able to use every tool in the box. This is my go-to book for that purpose. Buy as many DNA books and tapes as you want, but your DNA library will not be complete without this classic introduction to the concepts involved in genetic genealogy. I highly recommend it! CHT in Virginia

Excellent book explaining the workings of the DNA without getting too technical and how it can be used to determine your paternal and maternal heritage. Recommend this book to anyone interested in tracing their family roots through DNA analysis. Many useful links to DNA companies that can help you trace your roots. I have used two such DNA companies with great results and accuracy.

It really wasn't what I was looking for, but had a lot of good information that can be used for that purpose. A lot of the web sites are no longer available. Needs to be updated.

great information about DNA and how to use it to trace your family

Excellent source of information for the beginner.

Very detailed and she tries to help you understand a complicated science. It is broken down pretty

good, but I was looking for more on autosomal DNA.

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