

The Family Tree Guide to DNA Testing and Genetic Genealogy

Lisa A. Alzo reviews an ideal resource by Blaine T. Bettinger

I have been a genealogist for 27 years. My research experience includes obtaining original documents, viewing microfilmed records, and navigating online resources. However, when it comes to using DNA as a genealogy research tool, I am not ashamed to say I am a novice. One of my research goals is to educate myself in this area. With so many books, courses, and Quick Reference Guides on the market, I find it difficult to decide which ones would be the best for me to read. But, I believe I have found the ideal resource: *The Family Tree Guide to DNA Testing and Genetic Genealogy* by Blaine T. Bettinger.

The 12 chapters are divided into three Parts: Part I: Getting Started (Genetic Genealogy Basics), Common Misconceptions, Ethics and Genetic Genealogy); Part II: Selecting a Test (Mitochondrial-DNA, Y-Chromosomal, Autosomal DNA, X-Chromosomal), and Part III: Analyzing and Applying Test Results (Third-Party Autosomal DNA Tools, Ethnicity Estimates, Analyzing Complex Questions with DNA, Genetic Testing for Adoptees, The Future of Genetic Genealogy). The book also includes a very helpful Glossary, and Appendices consisting of Comparison Guides, Research Forms and More Resources, Colorful diagrams and expert definitions that explain key DNA terms and concepts such

as haplogroups and DNA inheritance patterns are also included. There are also detailed guides to each of the major kinds of DNA tests and which tests can solve which family mysteries, with case studies showing how each can be useful. The information about third-party tools you can use to more thoroughly analyze your test results once you've received them is especially useful. At the end of each chapter, you will find a list of core concepts you need to know.

In his introduction, the author, Blaine T. Bettinger, shares how he became "hooked" on genealogy as a child and how he took his first DNA test as a graduate student, continuing to explore testing and results interpretation, and revealing how he (like many genealogists) has worked to solve family history mysteries. Bettinger states from the outset that *The Family Tree Guide to DNA Testing and Genetic Genealogy* is intended for many different audiences — from beginners to dabblers (like me) to more advanced genealogists looking to analyze and interpret their test results. In addition, Bettinger confronts the major myths and misconceptions about DNA testing, including: Genetic Genealogy is just for fun; "I'm a woman, I can't test", DNA testing will provide a family tree, and many more. Bettinger's easy-to-follow,

conversational style makes for a pleasant read of a complex subject, and he clearly and succinctly covers all the questions most genealogists have about DNA testing, including the most commonly expressed concerns about Health and Privacy.

In summary, *The Family Tree Guide to DNA Testing and Genetic Genealogy* is comprehensive and helpful for all family history researchers, no matter their level of DNA knowledge. I am confident that this book will join the ranks of those "must read" titles for any genealogist's bookshelf. ☞☞

DISCLOSURE

Family Tree Books is the publisher of my book *The Family Tree Polish, Czech and Slovak Genealogy Guide*, but this has not influenced my review in any way.

Published by Family Tree Books,
an imprint of F+W Media, Inc.,
Cincinnati, Ohio; 240 pages
ISBN 10: 1-4403-4532-5
ISBN 13: 978-1-4403-4532-6



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