



# Deep Ancestry: Inside The Genographic Project

By Spencer Wells

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Travel backward through time from today's scattered billions to the handful of early humans who lived in Africa 60,000 years ago and are ancestors to us all.

In *Deep Ancestry*, scientist and National Geographic explorer Spencer Wells shows how tiny genetic changes add up over time into a fascinating story. Using scores of real-life examples, helpful analogies, and detailed diagrams and illustrations, he explains exactly how each and every individual's DNA contributes another piece to the jigsaw puzzle of human history. The book takes readers inside the Genographic Project—the landmark study now assembling the world's largest collection of DNA samples and employing the latest in testing technology and computer analysis to examine hundreds of thousand of genetic profiles from all over the globe—and invites us all to take part.

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## **Editorial Review**

From Publishers Weekly

In this concise and well-written work, Wells (*The Journey of Man*) provides an accessible introduction to genetic anthropology, the study of human history using genetic evidence. Wells is the director of the Genographic Project, which collects DNA samples from a wide array of world populations to better understand human history over the last 200,000 years. Wells does a fantastic job distilling both genetics and genetic anthropology into straightforward topics, presenting sophisticated material accessibly without oversimplification. He gives the reader the basic concepts (Y chromosomes, mtDNA, haplogroups, genetic markers) and then proceeds to step through genographic research from its 19th-century origins to the present day. In so doing, he takes the reader back to the 170,000-year-old female genetic ancestor of every person alive today: the so-called African Eve. It is a remarkable journey that will appeal to readers of all backgrounds interested in exploring the science and research behind human evolution, although those with more experience in the sciences may find some of the material elementary.

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From [Booklist](#)

The study of human prehistory has been revolutionized by genetic evidence. Here a leading researcher in genetic anthropology surveys the specialty. He warns that its promise could go unrealized because contemporary mobility is reshuffling the human genome, obscuring the DNA details by which experts can trace the geographic ancestry of contemporary ethnic groups. To rescue genetic information, Wells heads National Geographic Society's Genographic Project, which collects and analyzes DNA from volunteers to create a database of the human genome as it was before the Industrial Revolution. He relays the personal stories and ethnic lineage of five such volunteers while explaining both the DNA markers and the logic by which he and his colleagues can reliably place and date a person's ancestry. Even at this early stage, genomic discoveries about ancient migrations are astounding, and the potential of the NGS project to continue them is apparent from the open questions Wells poses in his epilogue. An informative and exciting picture of science in the making. *Gilbert Taylor*

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Review

"In this concise and well-written work, Wells (*The Journey of Man*) provides an accessible introduction to genetic anthropology, the study of human history using genetic evidence. It is a remarkable journey that will appeal to readers of all backgrounds interested in exploring the science and research behind human evolution." —*Publishers Weekly*

"Wells ends the book with an invitation to take part in the project... This is a rare chance to not only learn about ourselves, but to contribute in a worldwide scientific experiment." —*Bookpage*

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#### **Christopher Bohner:**

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