

Davis Genealogy Book Club
Recommended reading - August 15, 2024

August 15 @ 12:30 pm

DGC Book Club - Mas Masumoto, *David Secret Harvests: A Hidden Story of Separation and the Resilience of a Family Farm*. **Nonfiction**.

This is the seventh selected book for the DGC Book Club.

Suggested books

Copeland, Libby. *The Lost Family: How DNA testing is upending who we are*. **Nonfiction**. 2020
A look at the rise of home genetic testing and the seismic shock it has had on individual lives. You swab your cheek or spit not a vial, then send it away to a lab. You get a report that might tell you where your ancestors came from or if you carry certain genetic risks. Or the report could reveal a long-buried secret and upend your entire sense of identity. Copeland explores the culture of genealogy buffs, the science of DNA, the business of companies like Ancestry and 23 and Me, all while tracing the story of one woman, her unusual results, and a relentless methodical drive for answers that becomes a thoroughly modern genetic detective story.

Recommended by Suzanne Peterson

Goodwin, Nathan Dylan. *The Forensic Genealogist Series. The Orange Lilies, The American Ground, The Spyglass File, The Missing Man, The Suffragette's Secret, The Wicked Trade, The Asylum, The Sterling Affair, The Foundlings, The Deserter's Tale*. **Fiction**

Recommended by Michael Bowling and Nancy Asmundson

Griffeth, Bill. *The Stranger in my Genes: A Memoir*. **Nonfiction**. 2016

Written by CNBC anchor and author, a longtime genealogy buff. His discovery of his DNA test results shakes his feeling of identity. Recommended by Mary Dobosz

Griffeth, Bill *Stranger No More: A sequel to The Stranger in my Genes*. **Nonfiction**. 2022

Recommended by Mary Dobosz

Hill, Richard. *Finding Family: My search for roots and the secrets in my DNA*. **Nonfiction**. 2012

Recommended by Mary Dobosz

Humes, Edward. *The Forever Witness: How DNA and Genealogy Solved a Cold Case Double Murder*. **Nonfiction**. 2022

After 30 years, Detective Jim Scharf arrested a teenage couple's murderer-and exposed a looming battle between the pursuit of justice and the right to privacy. When Tanya Van Cuylenborg and Jay Cook were murdered during a trip to Seattle in the 1980s, detectives had few leads. The murder weapon was missing. No one witnessed any suspicious activity. And there was only a single handprint on the outside of the young couple's van. The detectives assumed Tanya and Jay were victims of a serial killer-but without any leads, the case seemed forever doomed. In deep-freeze, long-term storage, biological evidence from the crime scenes sat waiting. Meanwhile, California resident CeCe Moore began her lifetime fascination with genetic genealogy. As DNA testing companies rapidly grew in popularity, she discovered another use for the technology: solving crimes. When Detective Jim Scharf decided to send the cold case's decades-old DNA to Parabon NanoLabs, he hoped he would bring closure to the Van Cuylenborg and Cook families. He didn't know that he and Moore would make history. Anyone can submit a saliva sample to learn about their ancestry. But what happens after the results of these tests are uploaded to the internet? As lawyers, policymakers, and police officers fight over questions of consent and privacy, the implications of Scharf's case become ever clearer. Approximately 250,000 murders in the United States remain unsolved today. We have the tools to catch many of these killers-but what is the cost?" Recommended by Lisa Henderson

Jerkis, Morgan. *Wandering in Strange Lands, A Daughter of the Great Migration Reclaims her Roots*. **Nonfiction**. 2022

Between 1916 and 1970, six million black Americans left their rural homes in the South for jobs in cities in the North, West, and Midwest in a movement known as The Great Migration. But while this event transformed the complexion of America and provided black people with new economic opportunities, it also disconnected them from their roots, their land, and their sense of identity, argues Morgan Jerkins. In this fascinating and deeply personal exploration, she recreates her ancestors' journeys across America, following the migratory routes they took from Georgia to Louisiana, Oklahoma and California. Recommended by Suzanne Peterson

Jones, M.K. *Maze Investigation Series* (6 titles) *The Curiosity Club of St. Foy* series. (2 titles so far). **Fiction** M. K. Jones is a family history researcher, genealogist and author of the "Maze Investigations" series and "The Curiosity Club of St. Foy" Recommended by Michael Bowling

Mason, Daniel. *North Woods: A Novel Fiction*. 2023. It begins with a pair of young lovers in colonial New England escaping wrathful judgment in their Puritan village. They flee into the wilds of western Massachusetts, chased by “solemn men ... with arquebuses cocked in their elbows.” This is Hawthorne given an injection of breathless Edenic bliss: “Mica dusted her heels like silver. Damselflies upon her neck. Flying squirrels in the trees above them, and in the silty sand the great tracks of cats.” The lovers successfully abscond, yet “North Woods” is not about them. It is about the foundation stone they lay at the chapter’s close, and the yellow house that comes to occupy the spot.

The rest of this impossible-to-summarize novel introduces us to inhabitants of that house over the ensuing three-plus centuries. One of them is Charles Osgood, a Revolution-era Loyalist and autodidact whose memoirs, subtitled “Reminiscences of an Apple-Man,” chart his lifelong “pomomania” — an obsession with apples that leads him to farm a luscious variety he christens Osgood’s Wonder.

“North Woods” is a hodgepodge narrative, brazenly disjointed in time, perspective and form. Letters, poems and song lyrics, diary entries, medical case notes, real-estate listings, vintage botanical illustrations, pages of an almanac, modern-day nature photographs, a true-crime detective story, an address to a historical society: Mason stuffs all this (and more!) into his bulging scrapbook of a novel. That “North Woods” proves captivating despite its piecemeal structure is testament to Mason’s powers as a writer, his stylish and supple narrative voice. Recommended by Suzanne Peterson

Parthasarathy, Raghuveer. *So Simple a Beginning: How Four Physical Principles Shape Our Living World*. **Nonfiction**. 2022. A biophysicist reveals the hidden unity behind nature’s breathtaking complexity - The form and function of a sprinting cheetah are quite unlike those of a rooted tree. A human being is very different from a bacterium or a zebra. The living world is a realm of dazzling variety, yet a shared set of physical principles shapes the forms and behaviors of every creature in it. *So Simple a Beginning* shows how the emerging new science of biophysics is transforming our understanding of life on Earth and enabling potentially lifesaving but controversial technologies such as gene editing, artificial organ growth, and ecosystem engineering. Recommended by Cyndi Young

Spaulding, Dale. *Fortitude: Preserving 400 years of an American family’s faith, patriotism, grit and determination*. **Nonfiction**. 2022. *Fortitude* is an action-packed journey through history via the eyes of a family who lived it. From ancestral roots in England to over four hundred years in America, *Fortitude* brings our predecessors alive as it immerses the reader in the historical context in which they both struggled and thrived. Recommended by Nancy Asmundson (and Lisa Louise Cook)

Shorto, Russell *The Island at the Center of the World: The Epic Story of Dutch Manhattan and the Forgotten Colony That Shaped America* **Nonfiction**. 2005. In a landmark work of history, Russell Shorto presents astonishing information on the founding of our nation and reveals in riveting detail the crucial role of the Dutch in making America what it is today. In the late 1960s, an archivist in the New York State Library made an astounding discovery: 12,000 pages of centuries-old correspondence, court cases, legal contracts, and reports from a forgotten society: the Dutch colony centered on Manhattan, which predated the thirteen "original" American colonies. For the past thirty years scholar Charles Gehring has been translating this trove, which was recently declared a national treasure. Now, Russell Shorto has made use of this vital material to construct a sweeping narrative of Manhattan's founding that gives a startling, fresh perspective on how America began. Recommended by Suzanne Peterson

Shorto, Russell. *Smalltime: a story of my family and the mob*. **Nonfiction**. 2021

A *Kirkus Reviews* Best Nonfiction Book of 2021 [SEP 21] *Smalltime* is a riveting American immigrant story that travels back to Risorgimento Sicily, to the ancient, dusty, hill-town home of Antonino Sciotto, the author's great-grandfather, who leaves his wife and children in grinding poverty for a new life—and wife—in a Pennsylvania mining town. It's a tale of Italian Americans living in squalor and prejudice, and of the rise of Russ, who, like thousands of other young men, created a copy of the American establishment that excluded him. *Smalltime* draws an intimate portrait of a mobster and his wife, sudden riches, and the toll a lawless life takes on one family.

But *Smalltime* is something more. The author enlists his ailing father—Tony, the mobster's son—as his partner in the search for their troubled patriarch. As secrets are revealed and Tony's health deteriorates, the book become an urgent and intimate exploration of three generations of the American immigrant experience. Moving, wryly funny, and richly detailed, *Smalltime* is an irresistible memoir by a masterful writer of historical narrative.

From Nancy Asmundson -suggestions

The best genealogical mystery novels (shepherd.com). Mystery Book Series with Genealogy Theme cozy-mystery.com

Books read by the Davis Genealogy Book Club

Hiding the Past, The Lost Ancestor by Nathan Dylan Goodwin-Fiction

The Pirate's Wife: The Remarkable True Story of Sarah Kidd by Daphne Palmer- Nonfiction
Inheritance: A memoir of genealogy, paternity, and love by Dani Shapiro-Nonfiction

Genealogy: a novel by Mae Wood-Fiction

The Rosie Project: a novel by Samson, Graeme. Fiction.

Mas Masumoto, *David Secret Harvests: A Hidden Story of Separation and the Resilience of a Family Farm*. **Nonfiction**. 2023