

that we don't grasp the fact that a particular test may only provide insight into one branch of our pedigree, or that another test may only reflect our heritage back a few generations, we are curious to learn what can be learned" (p. 100).

Smolenyak and Turner point out many Internet references that can be useful in the search for one's roots: "You might also want to peruse the project listings such as those provided at www.dnalist.net" (p. 131). Later in the book they talk about adding your newly gained information to existing databases for family trees: "Luckily for us, some of them (Web sites)—www.ysearch.org and www.ybase.org, in particular—are two-way streets. Not only can you search the data; you can add to it" (p. 207). I checked out a number of these Web sites, including www.rootsweb.com and www.ancestry.com. These were very interesting and allowed one to enter data and get information about possible ancestors. [Ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com) does require that you register to get information.

The authors provide extensive references at the back of the book for both Web sites and testing companies. This could be very useful to a person searching for his or her ancestors.

All in all, this book is very useful for information about the subject for which it was written. If a student were researching his/her family tree for a class project, this book would be wonderful to use as a resource. The reading level is not too difficult, even for high school freshman Biology students. It does not have enough information to use as a teaching tool for the subjects of DNA and genetics. Other than writing a report of some type, I cannot see a great deal of use for this book at the college level. The reading level is very simple for a college student, especially a graduate student. This book is a wonderful and interesting read but I feel that it has limited usefulness in the classroom.



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ECOLOGY

Land of Ghosts: The Braided Lives of People and the Forest in Far Western Amazonia. By David G. Campbell. 2005. Houghton Mifflin Company (ISBN 0-395-71284-X). 260 pp. Hardcover. \$25.00.

David Campbell condenses a series of multiple years of scientific excursions into a single journey up the Amazon, that makes for an enchanting odyssey and an excellent read. His vivid descriptions capture the reader as he weaves together tales of traveling upriver into the depths of "Far Western Amazonia" in order to gather more data on his biodiversity study. Campbell quickly immerses the reader with his observations during the long journey up the Amazon to a forest plot where he has been measuring and cataloguing all of the plant species growing within a ten meter by two kilometer long quadrant near an almost-abandoned remote rubber-tappers village. The purpose of his study is to inventory all of the species found in the two hectare plot (a daunting task) and also to attempt to make sense of the biodiversity of the Amazon before it is too late.

The magic of Campbell's writing is in his ability to sweep you into the forest with his detailed and intriguing descriptions of plants and animals he encounters on his journey. Campbell meticulously studies the landscape, offering fascinating tidbits of information on insects, and other organisms that he encounters along the way. "Dona Cabocla taught me to listen to the bees because they reveal the most important lesson of survival in this forest" (p. 122).

He simultaneously highlights aspects of the history and culture in Brazil's Amazon basin, offering such details as the history of the discovery of rubber and its subsequent "smuggled" voyage through Kew Gardens to plantations in Southeast Asia that have left Brazil's rubber-boom in shambles. Also, Campbell quickly introduces a motley cast of characters who are barely eking out their existence in the Amazon. He highlights the struggles of

these refugees who have been moved in by Brazil's government to get them out of the impoverished Southeast. They become rubber tappers or slash-and-burn agriculturalists—all of whom seem somewhat lost after a boom that has seen better days.

The intrigue of the forest holds true throughout the book as well as the complexity of so many people's lives as they intertwine with the land. This relationship between humans and the environment is explored in this passage: "After a while the top minnows find me and, tentatively at first, begin to nibble away the seed ticks embedded in my skin. They learn quickly that I am a grateful host; I am being groomed by a swarm of fish, by a thousand sharp, blessed little teeth" (p. 124).

Campbell also finds space to theorize about the origins of the Amazon's great biodiversity, suggesting such theories as the gap theory, and adding the weather's vast role in shaping the ever-changing, species-rich basin.

Land of Ghosts can be used in the classroom as an approachable resource for university or high school students interested in fieldwork, environmental issues, or biodiversity. It most certainly could be a fantastic link in an interdisciplinary setting with his references to human-environment interactions. Campbell frequently uses Portuguese words to teach us about local phenomena, discussing their scientific importance along the way. "We were struck by a friagem, a persistent, unsettling cold wind that stilled even the chorus of insects" (p. 120).

Land of Ghosts is emphatically a great read and is enjoyable from cover to cover. The author, while instrumental in his descriptions of Amazonia, has also left me hungry for more information on Brazil. In the end, he has likely achieved his goal of inspiring us to become more invested in this important yet dwindling resource.



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