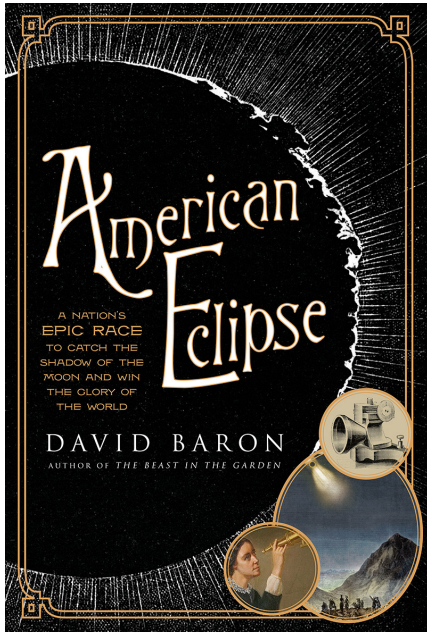


May 2024



Reading Guide

American Eclipse: A Nation's Epic Race to Catch the Shadow of the Moon and Win the Glory of the World (2017)

by David Baron

1. Where were you for the solar eclipse that crossed America in April 2024? Did you witness it as a total eclipse? What are your memories?
2. The America of 1878 was very different from the America of 2024, yet aspects of the culture from then still resonate today. What aspects of our culture seen in the story in *American Eclipse* seem most changed? What parts seem familiar?
3. David Baron tells the story of many Americans, some famous and some forgotten today. Whose story did you find most interesting, and why?
4. What did you learn about the practice of science in the nineteenth century from this book?
5. What does David Baron do well in this book? What do you wish he had done differently or better?
6. What questions do you have after reading this book? What do you want to learn more about?
7. Would you recommend this book to others? Who do you think is the ideal reader for this book?



Author Biography

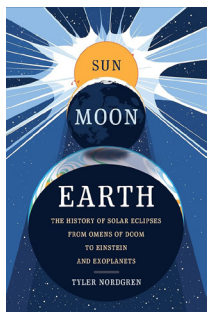
David Baron is an author, journalist, broadcaster, and public speaker whose TED Talk about eclipse chasing has been viewed more than two million times. *American Eclipse* won the American Institute of Physics Science Writing Award and was shortlisted for the PEN/E.O. Wilson Literary Science Writing Award. A former science correspondent for NPR, Baron has also written for the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Daily Beast*, *Scientific American*, and other publications. An affiliate of the University of Colorado's Center for Environmental Journalism, he lives in Boulder.

Bayou Bend/Rienzi Book Club

Join us for the next Bayou Bend/Rienzi Book Club featuring *Before Mrs. Beeton: Elizabeth Raffald, England's Most Influential Housekeeper* by Neil Buttery, July 10, 2024, at 1:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. on Zoom.

Related Books (descriptions courtesy of Amazon.com):

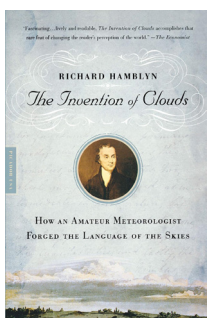
For a broader look at the history of solar eclipses:



Sun Moon Earth: The History of Solar Eclipses from Omens of Doom to Einstein and Exoplanets by Tyler Nordgren (2016)

Astronomer Tyler Nordgren illustrates how this most seemingly unnatural of natural phenomena was transformed from a fearsome omen to a tourist attraction. From the astrologers of ancient China and Babylon to the high priests of the Maya, *Sun Moon Earth* takes us around the world to show how different cultures interpreted these dramatic events. Greek philosophers discovered eclipses' cause and used them to measure their world and the cosmos beyond. Victorian-era scientists mounted eclipse expeditions during the age of globe-spanning empires. And modern-day physicists continue to use eclipses to confirm Einstein's theory of relativity.

For a look at the origins of American meteorology:

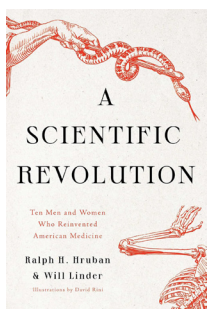


The Invention of Clouds: How an Amateur Meteorologist Forged the Language of the Skies by Richard Hamblyn (2002)

The early years of the nineteenth century saw an intriguing yet little-known scientific advance catapult a shy young Quaker to the dizzy heights of fame. *The Invention of Clouds* tells the extraordinary story of an amateur meteorologist, Luke Howard, and his groundbreaking work to define what had hitherto been random and unknowable structures—clouds. In December 1802, Luke Howard delivered a lecture that was to be a defining point in natural history and meteorology. He named the clouds, classifying them in terms that remain familiar to this day: cirrus, stratus, cumulus, and nimbus. This new and precise nomenclature sparked worldwide interest and captured the imaginations of some of the century's greatest figures in the fields of art, literature, and science.

Legitimized by the elevation of this new classification and nomenclature, meteorology fast became a respectable science.

For a history of American medical science discoveries:



A Scientific Revolution: Ten Men and Women Who Reinvented American Medicine by Ralph H. Hruban and Will Linder (2022)

In the last 150 years, medical science has mapped the human genome, deployed robotic tools to perform delicate surgeries, and developed effective vaccines against a host of deadly pathogens. But this transformation could not have happened without the game-changing vision, talent, and dedication of a small cadre of individuals who were willing to commit body and soul to the advancement of medical science, education, and treatment.

Education programs at Bayou Bend receive generous funding from Houston Junior Woman's Club; Sharon G. Dies; Mary Lynn and Steve Marks; Susan Vaughan Foundation; Ralph H. and Ruth J. McCullough Foundation; Denise Monteleone; Ms. Bobbie Nau; William A. and Madeline Welder Smith Foundation; and additional generous donors.

These education programs also receive income from funds provided by the Carol and Les Ballard Endowment; the Judy and Charles Tate Endowment; the James William Glanville and Nancy Hart Glanville Endowment; the Barbara Graham Williams Endowment; and the Bayou Bend Bonnie A. Campbell Education Programs Endowment.

Education programs at Rienzi receive generous funding from the Sterling-Turner Foundation; Alkek and Williams Foundation; Carroll Sterling and Harris Masterson III Endowment; and the Caroline Wiess Law Endowment for Rienzi.

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