

Recommended Resources

A curated list offered as a starting point for adult adoptees & birth family.

Books

An Adoptee Lexicon

Karen Pickell, 2018

A glossary of adoption terminology from the viewpoint of an adult adoptee which intersperses personal commentary and snippets from her own experience with history and statistics pertaining to child development and the adoption industry.

The Adoption Mystique: A Hard Hitting Exposé of The Powerful Negative Social Stigma That Permeates Child Adoption In The United States

Joanne Wolf Small, 2007

"The Adoption Mystique exposes, documents and confronts the effects of negative social stigma on adoption institutions, practices, adopted persons, adoptive and birthparents. It is a timely counterpoint to the misinformation and prejudices that created and maintain the myths of adoption."

The Adoptee Survival Guide: Adoptees Share Their Wisdom and Tools 1st Edition

Lynn Grubb, 2015 

"Thirty adoptee authors provide support, encouragement and understanding to other adoptees in facing the complexities of being adopted, embarking on search and reunion, fighting for equal access to identifying information, navigating complex family relationships with the latest technology, and surviving it with a sense of humor."

Adoption Nation

Adam Pertman, 2000

"With compassion for adopted individuals and adoptive and birth parents alike, Adam Pertman explores the history and human impact of adoption, explodes the corrosive myths surrounding it, and tells compelling stories about its participants as they grapple with issues relating to race, identity, equality, discrimination, personal history, and connections with all their families."

The Adoption Reunion Survival Guide

Julie Jarrell Bailey and Lynn N. Giddens, M.A., 2001 

A manual for preparing for search, reunion and beyond. Manual for searching is dated, but the discussion surrounding adoption reunion is timeless.

American Baby: A Mother, A Child, and the Shadow History of Adoption

Gabrielle Glaser, 2021

The shocking truth about postwar adoption in America, told through the bittersweet story of one teenager, the son she was forced to relinquish, and their search to find each other

Birthbond: Reunions Between Birthparents and Adoptees, What Happens After

Judith S. Gediman and Linda P. Brown, 1991 

Essential reading for anyone involved in an adoption reunion. Helps the reader understand the emotions involved in the post-reunion experience.

Birthfathers and Their Adoption Experiences

Gary Clapton, 2002

"Discussing different notions of fatherhood, such as biological paternity, social fatherhood, sperm donorship and the 'father figure', this informative book – the first on birth fathers in adoption – brings new light to issues such as the decision to give up a child for adoption, the child's desire to find his or her birth parents, and the facilitation of contact in later life."

 Available for purchase through Adoption Network Cleveland

 Available in the Adoption Network Cleveland lending library

Birthright: the Guide to Search and Reunion

Jean Strauss, 1994 

Acclaimed documentary filmmaker shares her own search story along with dozens of others. Also packed with important reference sources.

Black Anthology: Adult Adoptees Claim Their Space (The AN-YA Project)

Susan Harris O'Connor MSW (Editor), Diane Rene Christian (Editor), Mei-Mei Akwai Ellerman PhD (Editor), 2016

"This anthology allows for the opportunity to see the rich diversity of a people; the uniqueness within the individual stories. Inside this book, you will read the depth of struggle, and the pure grace, dignity and accomplishments achieved, sometimes connected to the privileges afforded us while in the midst of insurmountable odds."

The Child Catchers: Rescue, Trafficking, and the New Gospel of Adoption

Kathryn Joyce, 2013

Examines how "adoption has become entangled in the conservative Christian agenda as a reflection of pro-life initiatives, explaining how child and family well-being has become a lesser priority in a market increasingly driven by profit and religious ideology."

The Girls Who Went Away

Ann Fessler, 2006

Birthmothers share their stories in their own words. A searing and important glimpse of a long overlooked social history, bringing to the page the lifelong emotions common to many birthmothers.

In Their Own Voices: Transracial Adoptees Tell Their Stories

Rita J. Simon and Rhonda M. Roorda, 2000

A collection of interviews with black and biracial young adults who were adopted by white parents.

It's Not About You: Understanding Adoptee Search, Reunion and Open Adoption

Brooke Randolph LMHC, 2016

It's Not About You is an adoptee-focused anthology project intended to comfort those who fear the desire for information and connection is any kind of judgement on themselves. Our purpose is also to confront those who try to make it about themselves, missing the opportunity to support and connect with the adoptee who needs this information.

Journeys After Adoption: Understanding Lifelong Issues

Jayne Schooler and Betsie Norris, Founder of Adoption Network Cleveland, 2002  

Drawing on the experiences of dozens of triad members, the authors offer insight into the concerns, issues, joys and pain experienced by those whose lives are framed by adoption.

Lost and Found: The Adoption Experience

Betty Jean Lifton, 1979  

An excellent book about the issues of growing up in a closed adoption.

Lost Daughters: Writing Adoption From a Place of Empowerment and Peace (Paperback)

Amanda H.L. Transue-Woolston (Author), Julie Stromberg (Editor), Karen Pickell (Editor), Jennifer Anastasi (Editor), 2014

"Lost Daughters is written and edited entirely by adopted women, several of whom balance multiple roles in adoption and foster care along with being adopted. The Lost Daughters mission is to bring readers the perspectives and narratives of adopted women, and to highlight their strength, resiliency, and wisdom."

Outsiders Within: Writing on Transracial Adoption Paperback

Jane Jeong Trenka (Editor), Julia Chinyere Oparah (Editor), Sun Yung Shin (Editor), 2006 

"Moving beyond personal narrative, these

transracially adopted writers from around the world tackle difficult questions about how to survive the racist and ethnocentric worlds they inhabit, what connects the countries relinquishing their children to the countries importing them, why poor families of color have their children removed rather than supported—about who, ultimately, they are. In their inquiry, they unseat conventional understandings of adoption politics, ultimately reframing the controversy as a debate that encompasses human rights, peace, and reproductive justice.”

The Primal Wound

Nancy Newton Verrier, 1993 

A revolutionary book which examines the effect of early separation on the adoptee.

Seven Core Issues in Adoption and Permanency

Sharon Kaplan Roszia & Allison Davis Maxon, 2019

A comprehensive guide to promoting understanding and healing in adoption, foster care, kinship families and third-party reproduction.

Shattered Bonds: The Color of Child Welfare

Dorothy Roberts, 2003 

Illustrates the disproportionate representation of black children in the U.S. foster care system and its effects on black communities and the country.

Memoirs

Finding Fish

Antwone Fisher, 2001

The true story of man who, as a child, endured near-constant verbal and physical abuse in foster care, yet, becomes a sought after poet and screenwriter in Hollywood.

Growing Up Black in White

Kevin D. Hofmann, 2010

A memoir of how a biracial adoptee grew to create his own identity after being adopted by a white minister and his family during the tumultuous 1960s

in Detroit.

The Language of Blood

Jane Jeong Trenka, 2003

“An adoptee’s search for identity takes her on a journey from Minnesota to Korea and back as she seeks to resolve the dualities that have long defined her life: Korean-born, American-raised, never fully belonging to either.”

Like Family: Growing Up in Other People’s Houses, a Memoir

Paula McClain, 2003

This powerful and haunting memoir details the years Paula and her two sisters spent as foster children after being abandoned by both parents in California in the early 1970s.

Lost and Found: A Memoir of Mothers

Kate St. Vincent Vogl, 2009

Touching, true story of an adoptee who is found by her birthmother when she least expected it.

Surrendered Child: A Birthmother’s Journey

Karen Salyer McElmurray, 2004

“With unflinching honesty, McElmurray recounts both the painful surrendering and the surprise rediscovery of her son, juxtaposed with her portrayal of her own mother, who could not provide the love she needed. The dramatic result is a story of birthright lost and found and an exploration of the meaning of motherhood itself.”

DNA

The Family Guide to DNA and Genetic Genealogy

Blaine T. Bettinger, Revised 2019

A one-stop resource guide to better understand genetic genealogy. What DNA tests are available, with up-to-date pros and cons of the major testing companies and advice on choosing the right test to meet your needs. Understand ethnicity estimates & haplogroup designations, navigate suggested

cousin matches and use third-party tools to analyze data.

Inheritance: A Memoir of Genealogy, Paternity and Love

Dani Shapiro, 2019

Memoir about identity, paternity and family secrets—a real-time exploration of the staggering discovery made through DNA about her father and that she was donor conceived, and her struggle to piece together the hidden story of her own life.

Other Online Resources

Adoption Network Cleveland Adult Adoptee and Birthparent Programs

General Discussion Meetings are support and discussion opportunities for all adult adoptees, birthparents, adoptive parents, siblings, and anyone interested in the lifelong journey of adoption.

<https://bit.ly/generalmtgs>

Search Assistance Program Adoption Network Cleveland successfully helps adult adoptees, birthparents, siblings and extended families find one another. We have over 31 years of experience providing individualized support and guidance during the search and beyond.

<https://bit.ly/ANCSearch>

Birthparent Resources

Concerned United Birthparents (CUB)

The only national organization focused on birthparents; their experiences, healing and wisdom. CUB serves all those touched by adoption and all who are concerned about adoption issues, with a focus on birthparents.

<https://www.cubirthparents.org/index.php>

On Your Feet Foundation

Recognized as a leader in comprehensive post-placement support for birthparents, a demographic that has historically been under-served within the adoption community.

<https://onyourfeetfoundation.org/>

Out of the Shadows

Every adoption begins with one woman, her child and a decision. That woman is redefined in this film. Her misunderstood grief and bravery are brought Out of the Shadows. The women in this film embody a new story of the birthmom. One that outshines the past with its beauty, freedom and dignity.

<https://vimeo.com/238308068>

Pact Informational Resources for Birth Parents

Provides links to blogs, book recommendations, and information on navigating open adoption.

<https://www.pactadopt.org/birth/resources.html>

Adult Adoptee Resources

The Adoptee Film Channel

A selection of short films by Jean Strauss focusing on the adoptees which help many understand the issues adoptees face.

<https://vimeo.com/channels/adopteefilmchannel>

DNA information and Resources for Misattributed Parentage, Assisted Reproduction

The International Society of Genetic Genealogy discussion of using DNA to search for birth family. Using DNA to break through adoption roadblocks.

https://isogg.org/wiki/Utilizing_DNA_testing_to_break_through_adoption_roadblocks

Donor Sibling Registry

Assists individuals conceived as a result of sperm, egg or embryo donation who are seeking to make mutually desired contact with others with whom they share genetic ties.

<https://www.donorsiblingregistry.com/>

The Genetic Genealogist (Blaine Bettinger)

“The Genetic Genealogist examines the intersection of traditional genealogical techniques and modern genetic research. The blog also explores the latest news and developments in the related field of

personal genomics.”

<https://thegeneticgenealogist.com/>

Late Discovery

Adoption information and resources for adoptees who learned of their adoption later in life.

<https://www.latediscoveryadoptees.com/>

Lost Daughters

An independent collaborative writing project edited and authored exclusively by adult women who were adopted as children.

<http://www.thelostdaughters.com/>

NPE Fellowship

A non-profit organization whose mission is to raise awareness by providing community and education to those affected by an NPE discovery.

<https://npefellowship.org/>

Watershed DNA

Watershed DNA provides genetic counseling consultation on ancestry testing, genetic genealogy and health.

<https://www.watersheddna.com/>

International Adoption

Adoptee Rights Campaign

A diverse group of intercountry adoptees and allies striving to educate, organize and advocate for adoptee rights. These include access to critical adoption, immigration, and other vital identity documentation.

<https://adopteerightscampaign.org/>

Fraud and Corruption in International Adoption

A collection of the Schuster Institute’s releases on intercountry adoption, as well as many of the source documents, independent research, government materials, and other resources.

<http://www.brandeis.edu/investigate/adoption/>

Korean American Adoptee Network

KAAN is an volunteer organization whose mission is to improve the lives of Korean-born adoptees by connecting the community and providing opportunities for dialogue, education, and support.

<https://www.wearekaan.org/> 📖⭐

Adoption Competent Therapists

Adoption Network may be able to make a referral for an adoption competent therapist in Ohio. Please contact Traci Onders - contact information below.

10 questions to Ask When Seeking an Adoption Competent Therapist

<http://secretsonsanddaughters.org/2014/02/21/adoption-therapist-leslie-pate-mackinnon-lcsw/>

Adoptee – Therapist Directory

Directory of licensed U.S. mental health professionals who identify as adoptees and work with adoptees/ families in a variety of settings.

<https://www.growbeyondwords.com/adoptee-therapist-directory/>

Screening Questions When Seeking an Adoption Competent Therapist

<https://www.growbeyondwords.com/screening-questions-when-seeking-an-adoption-competent-therapist/>

Other

International Soundex Reunion Registry

The International Soundex Reunion Registry is a non-profit, tax exempt, charitable organization founded in 1975 by Emma May Vilardi. ISRR is a mutual consent reunion registry for persons desiring a reunion with next-of-kin.

<http://www.isrr.org/>

Podcasts

Adoptee Next Door

Angela Tucker is one of America's most recognizable voices in transracial adoption (she's black, her parents are white), and the subject of the documentary "Closure." She goes beyond her experience, inviting adoptees from all backgrounds in an effort to uplift these rarely heard perspectives and shift societal perceptions about adoption.

<https://www.angelatucker.com/podcast>

Adoptees On

A gathering of incredible adopted people willing to share their intimately personal stories with you about the impact adoption has had on our lives. Listen in and you will discover that you are not alone on this journey.

<http://www.adopteeson.com>

Adoption: The Long View

From babyhood to school age, through the teenage years and ultimately adulthood, Adoption: The Long View explores all aspects of the adoption journey with a variety of articulate and thought-provoking guests.

<https://www.adopting.com/adoption-podcasts/adoption-the-long-view>

Birth Moms Real Talk

A podcast where D Yvonne Rivers, a Birth Mom interviews other Birth Moms of their journey and "Hot Topics" of the realities of adoption, reunion, and healing.

<https://birthmomsrealtalk.com>

Birth Mothers Amplified

Birth Mothers Amplified is co-hosted by friends and fellow birth mothers Muthoni and Emma. Most weeks they are joined by one or more birth mother guests to talk about adoption topics. Birth Mothers

Amplified thrives on empowering the women who make adoptions possible and allowing birth parents to speak their truths and share their stories authentically.

<https://support.adoption.org/birth-mothers-amplified>

Black to the Beginning: The Black Adoption Podcast

Friends Dr. Samantha Coleman and Sandra Washington both discovered as adults they were adopted. Each quickly learned that Black adoption is common, but taboo to speak about in private or publicly. Black to the Beginning: The Black Adoption Podcast amplifies the adoption conversation by placing the stories of #BlackAndAdopted adults and #TheBlackFamily at the center.

<https://open.spotify.com/show/6552wLTLZ2qAsMT14NUids>

Born In June, Raised In April

Nationally recognized thought leader, April Dinwoodie, hosts a personal journey while exploring her adoption experience. We follow her as she examines her efforts to find love, identity, family, and connection. Each month April will candidly interview, discuss, and unravel, all matters surrounding adoption.

<https://aprildinwoodie.com/the-podcast>

A Family in China

More than 100,000 children have been adopted out of orphanages in China to Western countries. Most grow up not knowing who their birth parents were. This show explores the search for Chinese birth families by adoptees and adoptive families, featuring interviews with experienced guests and research on missing child services in China. Discontinued but archive of past episodes is available.

<https://afamilyinchina.libsyn.com>

Twisted Sisterhood

A podcast for birth moms, by birth moms. Ashley Mitchell and Kelsey Vander Vliet Ranyard have a decade between their adoption placements. They address raw and real emotions and experiences, and have other birth mom guests on the show to join in on the conversation. *(This podcast link is to Spotify, however episodes from the Twisted Sister podcast are available on multiple platforms.)*

<https://open.spotify.com/show/1dyD2E1Utpnn-keka4nAdHp>

Who Am I Really?

Stories of adoption and attempts at reunion as told by the adoptees themselves.

<https://www.whoamireallypodcast.com/episodes/>



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Advocate • Educate • Support