

ADOPTION AND GENEALOGY

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My Interpretation of the Topic

- This lecture was created to help people who were adopted through a state adoption system find information on their birth families.
- This would mean where there was a legal procedure, a file created, a new birth certificate issued, and the records sealed by law.
- Informal adoption, or those a century ago before records were created and sealed at the state level, can still be helped by the techniques I cover in Part 2-DNA.

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS?

- Health information?
- Contact or meet your birth family members?
- Learn the circumstances of your birth, adoption?
- Learn information on your origins? Ethnicity?
- Make sure you have a budget for your project, as there are costs involved, in whichever route you take or both routes. Plus there could be research fees.

Where do you start? (Traditionally)

- **Records** your adopted family may have. Don't assume. Ask. What can you find at home? Check for any papers, especially in a safe deposit box. Open anything that turns up. Don't assume you already know what it contains (as one case study did).
- If adopted parents are deceased, **ask living relatives** what if anything they know. Or recall?
- **All prior information must be shared** with your consultant, research advisor, or counselor.
- **Don't be put off** by what people recall, even your adopted parents. In the end, DNA can verify a lot.

TWO PATHS TO FINDING BIRTH PARENTS INFORMATION

- I. Work through the adoption agency in the state where you were adopted.
- II. Do DNA testing for genealogy purposes.

or best scenario-----do BOTH.

**NOTE: if you dabbled with this years ago, START OVER.
It's Different Now.**

PART 1:

THE ADOPTION BUREAU

ADOPTION RECORDS-STATUS

- SEALED IN MOST STATES, IN GEORGIA SINCE around 1941.
- DIFFERS FROM STATE TO STATE.
- MAY HAVE A SITE TO GO TO TO LEARN WHEN SEALED.
- **ONLY MATTERS FOR THE STATE YOU WERE ADOPTED IN.**

Adoption Agency in State Adopted In

- You must call/write/use the website of the state adoption agency in the state where you were adopted. ***Now most are by website only.***
- There are several options if adopted in Georgia:
 - a. Hire a researcher via the site to find and contact your birth family and see if they are willing to be contacted? Or to meet? There is a fee involved.
 - b. Obtain the non-identifying information that the birth mother filed when you were placed for adoption. ***This is a MUST to obtain.***
 - c. Check other services they offer. You can register in case your birth family is looking for you.

LAWS DIFFER PER STATE TO ACCESS

- Some states are allowing an adopted person to obtain a copy of their original birth certificate with their birth parents names, if given, thereon. (Georgia does not-so far.)
- No counseling comes with that in most cases.
- Then what do you do?
- Check with the adoption agency in the state where you were adopted.
- I know from case study LS that he got his original certificate from New Jersey in 2017. Then it was up to him to research the names of the birth parents.

New Jersey Law effective 2017

www.nj.gov/health/vital/adoption

Access to Original Birth Certificate for Adult Adoptees

Beginning January 2017, authorized individuals may obtain an uncertified copy of an adoptee's original birth certificate without obtaining a Superior Court Order. The application and instructions below are to be used to make that request. Applications and payment can be submitted prior to January 2017, however, no records will be released until the law's effective date of January 2017.

Application for an uncertified copy of an adopted person's original birth certificate [\[REDACTED\]](#)

[Instructions](#)



Case Study LS

Obtained his original Birth certificate this way. Then he had to figure out What to do.








He contacted me and we Were able to locate facts On his birth father, but Mostly due to the unusual Name, locality.

GEORGIA ADOPTION REUNION REGISTRY

[Georgia Adoption Reunion Registry](https://www.ga-adoptionreunion.com)

<https://www.ga-adoptionreunion.com>

Note the Options Offered here.

 <p><u>Adopted Person</u></p> <p>I had an adoption finalized in the state of Georgia.</p>	 <p><u>Adoptive Parents</u></p> <p>I adopted a child, which was finalized in the state of Georgia.</p>
 <p><u>Birth Parent</u></p> <p>I placed my child for adoption in the state of Georgia.</p>	 <p><u>Sibling</u></p> <p>I was separated from my sibling in the state of Georgia.</p>
 <p><u>Relative Of Deceased</u></p> <p>I'm a relative of deceased birth parents.</p>	 <p><u>Child Of Deceased</u></p> <p>I'm a child of an deceased adopted person.</p>
 <p><u>Caseworker</u></p> <p>I'm a caseworker requesting a registration or affidavit.</p>	

Private group that Contracts with the State of Georgia.

Once there, you click Down to you get to this Page, and make a selection



A Division of Families First



REUNION RESOURCES

SUPPORT GROUP

TESTIMONIALS

ASK A QUESTION

START A
SEARCH

START A SEARCH

I'm an adopted person.

Step 1 of 3 – Non-Identifying Information

0%

I have received my non-identifying information for my adoption record. *(Required)*

☐ Yes

☐ No

NEXT

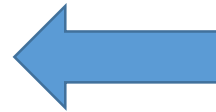
I'm an adopted person.

Step 2 of 3 - Search Type

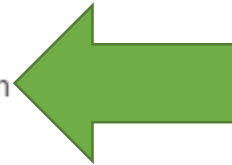
33%

Select all that apply *(Required)*

- ☐ I want to register or update my previous registration.
- ☐ I want to request a search.
- ☐ Someone has searched for me.
- ☐ I want support group information
- ☐ I want to request only my non-identifying information



SEARCH



Non-identifying info

PREVIOUS

NEXT

The NEXT STEP
For Each of these
Is to REGISTER
your
Name and info.

If you Request a Search (in GA)

- In GA, fee is \$300.
- No refund, but they do offer financial support.
- They estimate it could take between 1 to 6 months.
- Then if they locate your birth parent, or next of kin, they would get back with you.
- They give you the results, if the birth family member wants to be in touch, that is arranged.
- If not, contact is declined.
- Their success rate is 90 to 95 %.

- You can register, be put on a list, about whether you want contact or not with your birth family, in case they are looking for you.
- Vice Versa, they could also get on said list.
- One option is whether or not you or they want contact.

COUNSELING/SUPPORT GROUP

- One of options, above, is to be put in touch with a

Support Group.

- You need to have someone on your team advising you as you go through the steps.
- Your research advisor may not be in a position to counsel.
- That is why a support group, or minister, etc. is important.

- TV shows often reflect some of the outcomes.
- Birth family could not want to be in touch.
- Birth family may come on too strong and want more than you want to be involved.
- Your expectations could be too high.

PART 2:

DNA

DNA FOR GENEALOGY PURPOSES

- DNA DOES NOT LIE.
- In the 10 case studies I have assisted with, every person using DNA has found at least one birth parent, sibling, or close family member for at least one side of their family.
- If you really are serious in finding your birth family connections, you need your DNA in all of the major DNA sites:
 - Ancestry.com (largest database)
 - FamilyTreeDNA.com
 - MyHeritage DNA
 - 23andMe
- **and use GEDmatch**

DNA TESTING SITES NUMBERS/EXAMPLES

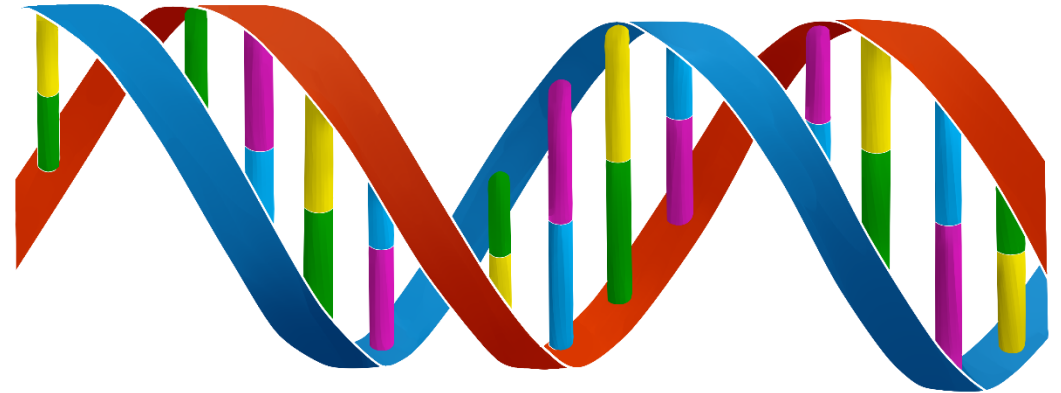
NAME	ANCESTRY	FTDNA	MyHeritage	23andMe	DOB
Ken Thomas	65,000	8,742	13,000	1500	1946
L B Thomas	112,000	10,412		n/a	1922
CCH	95,000	10,343	n/a	n/a	1936
THH *	68,000	n/a	n/a	1500	1963
MWS *	87,000	11,772	15,739	1500	1968
EDM	63,000	8,500	20,000	1500	1957

* = adopted person.

23andMe
Limits matches
To 1500.

USING DNA TO FIND BIRTH FAMILY

- Depending on how you wish to approach your search, you might find DNA testing to be a quicker route to locating information.
- It can at least verify information that you might get, or fill in an unknown, like birth father information not listed or inaccurate in the non-identifying information.
- ***Everyone I have helped has found at least one birth family.***



DNA TESTING IS NOT FREE:

DISCOUNTS
ON
HOLIDAYS



March 1, 2022 prices

PLACES TO TEST

- **FAMILY TREE DNA**

Y-37 Markers: \$ 119

Mitochondrial \$ 159

Family Finder

(Autosomal) \$ 79

plus about \$10 mailing each

Can **transfer** Ancestry.com Test to
FTDNA for \$ 19

- **ANCESTRY.COM DNA**

Autosomal test: \$ 99



- **23andMe**



Autosomal test: \$ 99

And Health Analysis reports for
higher fee.



- MyHeritage DNA is \$ 89 autosomal only.



DNA TEST RESULTS CAN PROVIDE

IF MALE

- TAKE the Y-DNA test only offered at FamilyTreeDna.com.
- That will match you with other men who have tested that could/should link you to men in the same paternal line.
- Could lead to those who might have information on the birth father. (Case Study DH.)

Everyone else, men and women

- Take the Autosomal test offered at all four DNA sites above.
- You will get a lot of matches but a genealogist or other expert will have to help you interpret the closest matches and what they mean. How close kin?
- Closest matches at the top.

DNA ETHNICITY MATCHES

- The next slide shows you what my current Ethnicity Profile looks like at Ancestry.com.
- It gives you percentages, and they are often adjusting these as they refine the database, the *reference population*.
- Not a fixed percentage.
- If someone has more unusual roots it may help.

Case Study DH

Born in 1943 in Georgia, but it was known from his Y-DNA matches that his birth father was in Washington State for business, and his roots were known.

DH's ethnicity profile showed he had Eastern European roots, which proved right as his birth mother's mother was from Russia.

ANCESTRY DNA ETHNIC ESTIMATE FOR KEN THOMAS

Under
DNA STORY



Ethnicity Estimate

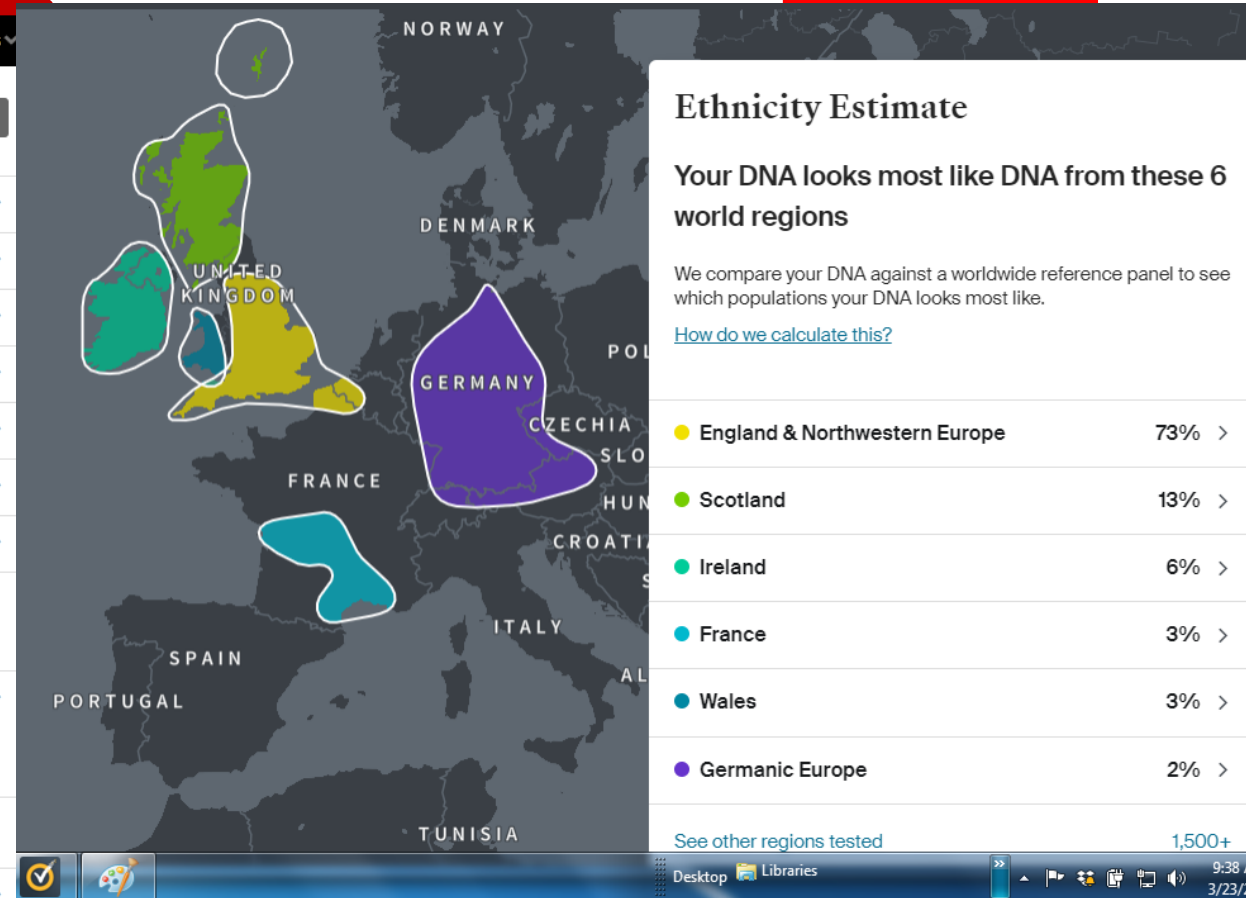
England & Northwestern Europe	40%
Scotland	32%
Ireland	8%
Wales	8%
Sweden	6%
France	3%
Germanic Europe	3%

Additional Communities

- Southern States Settlers**
From your regions: England & Northwestern Europe; Scotland
17 Possible Ancestor Stories Found
- Carolina Border Settlers**
- Central North Carolina, Southeast Missouri & Southern Illinois Settlers**
From your regions: England & Northwestern Europe; Scotland
9 Possible Ancestor Stories Found
- Carolina Piedmont Settlers**



March 2021



March 2022

Note reevaluation of my Ethnic percentages in one year. Clearly a fluid situation.

MATCHES ARE ARRANGED WITH CLOSEST MATCH AT THE TOP
ONLY SHOWS THOSE WHO HAVE TESTED AT THIS DNA SITE.

Family Finder - Matches

Most Common Surnames: 88 Smith 58 Jones 55 Johnson



Search name or ancestral surnames



Advanced Search

Chromosome Browser In Common With Not In Common With Reset Filter

1-30 of 6990 << < > >> Page 1 / 233 Go




All (6990)

Paternal (688)

Maternal (2685)

Both (17)

Calculating Family Matching

	Name	Match Date	Relationship Range	Shared cM	Longest Block	X-Match	Linked Relationship	Ancestral Surnames
<input type="checkbox"/>	 Louise Brooks Thomas	01/28/2011	Mother/ Daughter	3,384	267	X-Match	Mother	Bond (SC) / Barbee (NC/VA) / Brooks (GA/VA) / Carter (VA/NC) / DuBose
<input type="checkbox"/>	 Melissa Thomas	03/11/2011	Full Sister	2,574	181	X-Match	Sister	Almond (NC) / Buchanan (MD/NC) / Bond (SC) / Barbee (NC) / Brooks
<input type="checkbox"/>	 Mr. Summie Major Thomas III	10/10/2011	1st Cousin, Half Brother, Grandfather/ Grandmother, Uncle/ Nephew	912	75		1st Cousin	Almond (NC) / Bridges (NC) / Cook (NC) / Christenberry (NC) / Hovle (NC) /

Study the use of
Each of features
Marked here.

You add
names to
your profile.

You add photo.

Relationship only after you
Add family tree and link the match.

Help

SCENARIOS AT BIRTH

- Birth mother was unwed, in no position to raise a child. Too young.
- Birth mother moved away to have the baby, state of birth may not be state of residence of the birth parents. (Case Study MLH.)
- Birth parents could have married later. (R)
- Birth mother married someone else, had to put child up for adoption. (DMS, DH)
- Birth parents claim they have never met each other. DNA says otherwise. Who to believe? DNA! (MWS)
- Foundling stories, like in old days, man brings home baby for his wife, said it was found, he adopted. Turns out he was the birth father. (Burke)
- Birth mother was married, had child with another man, gave up the child, then married again, had a rocky road with marriages, children. (SG, THH)
- If student, had to drop out of school, leave town, cover up, etc. Child out of wedlock was NOT acceptable until very recently. Remember the times. (BT)

My 10 Case Studies, 2014-2022

NAME	Year Born	Orig. Birth Certif	Adoption Bureau/Nonl denInfo	DNA
CB	1930 NJ/NY	NO	NO	Yes Contact Yes
DMS	1943 GA	NO	Yes-Searched, met	NO Met
DH	1943 GA	NO	NO	Yes Met
SG	1943 AL	YES	Yes, just to get b. c.	NO Met
BT	1961 GA	NO	Yes, contact, & NII	Yes Contact Yes
LS	1962 NJ	YES	Yes, just to get b. c.	NO
MLH	1967 GA	NO	Yes, searched, etc. found kin	Yes Contact Yes
MWS	1968 GA	NO	Yes, got NII.	Yes Contact Yes
THH	1963 GA	NO	Pending	Yes Contact Yes
NK	1972 SC	NO	Not adopted, clinic	Yes Pending

VARIABLES PER CASE

- STATE ADOPTED IN –STATUS OF ACCESS, PROCEDURES, INFORMATION THEY WILL PROVIDE.
- YEAR/ERA IN WHICH ADOPTED, ARE RECORDS SEALED?
- AGE OF BIRTH PARENTS, STATUS, WEALTHY OR POOR? HOW WAS ADOPTION HANDLED?
- ARE THE BIRTH PARENTS FROM THE USA OR FROM OVERSEAS?
- DNA TESTING VOLUME.

CASE STUDIES-Part One

Got their **original birth certificate** and found one parent/family

- **SG-b.** 1943-got original, we found her birth mother's story and she met half sister, aunt. Never learned about father. Did not yet do DNA.
- **LS-b.** 1962-got original, located info on birth father quickly. Has not yet done DNA.

Went thru **state adoption agency, had search done:**

- **DMS-b.** 1943-paid fee, search produced his birth mother, agreed to contact, met her. Got full details about his birth. She died a month later.
- **MLH-b.** 1967-paid fee, search produced info on birth. Via DNA has met kin. Conceived in another state, adopted in GA.

CASE STUDIES-Part Two

Got Non-Identifying information

from the state agency (GA)
and then did DNA.

- **BT**, b. 1961. Via DNA located close relatives of both birth parents and her genealogy. No direct contact with birth parents happened, **although both living.**
- **MWS**, b. 1968. Via DNA has found info on both birth parents, both still living, birth mother now in touch. Non-Identifying was totally wrong for Birth Father. **Both living.**

Other results via DNA, etc.

- **DH**, b. 1943. Established a relationship with cousins related to his birth father, and now get together. DNA produced links to birth mother line.
- **MWS**, b. 1968. Found two other half-brothers via birth father via DNA. Birth father had done DNA, perfect match.
- **THH**, b. 1971. DNA match with half-sister brought info on birth mother. DNA matches have produced info on birth father, but no family contact due to small no.

TV SHOWS-DO THEY HELP?

LONG LOST FAMILY

This show has professional researchers, who were themselves adopted, work on cases.

They then try to establish a meeting between the adoptee and the birth family.

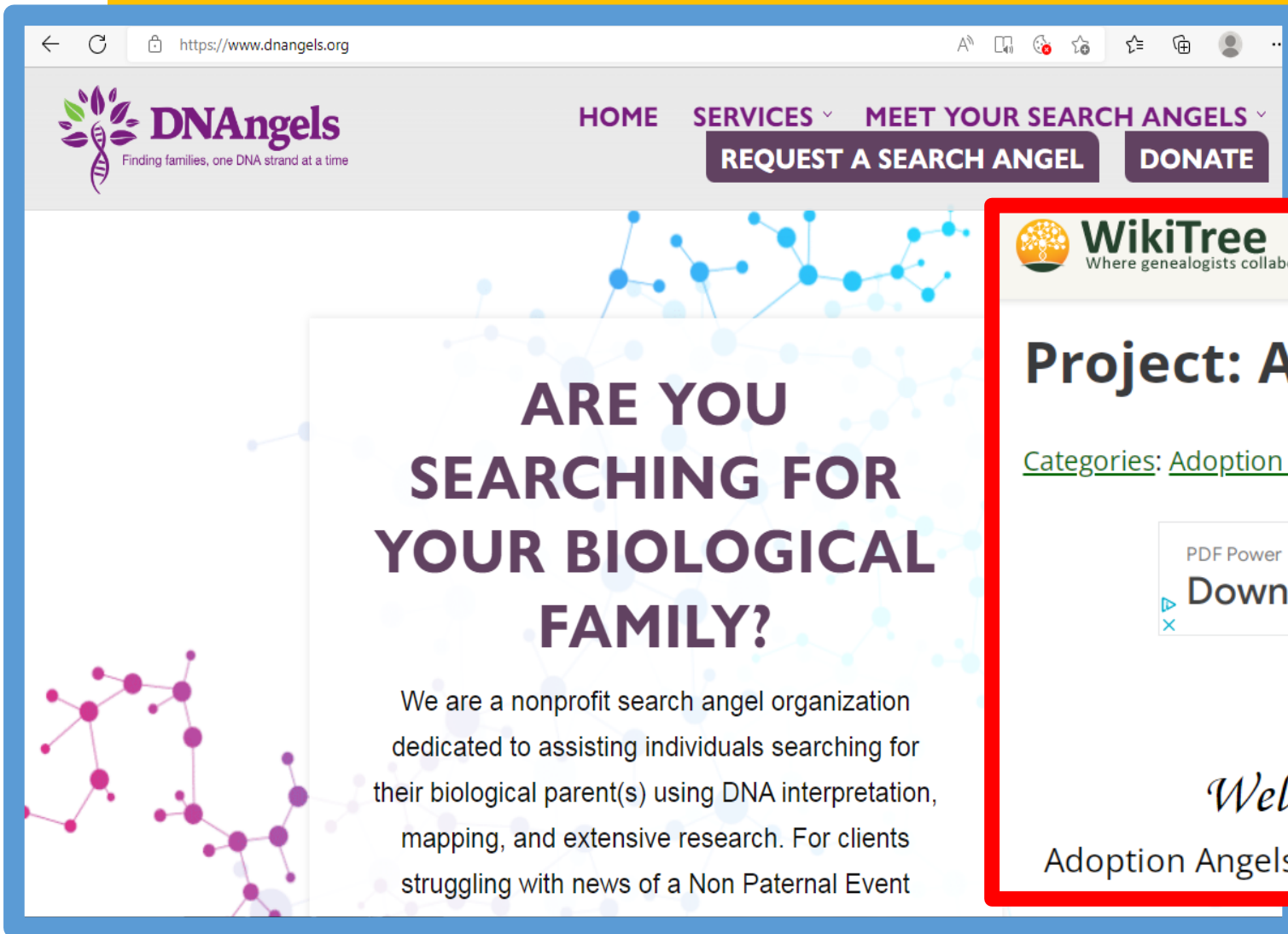
Sometimes they work out, sometimes they do not.



Many Adoptees not familiar with Research

- NEED HELP WITH INTERPRETING WHAT THEY LEARN.
 - NEED HELP WITH DNA RESULTS.
 - YOU CAN EITHER GO WITH A LOCAL GENEALOGIST, SOMEONE YOU KNOW.
 - OR GROUPS LIKE THOSE ON THE NEXT SLIDE.
- IF YOU ARE THE ADOPTEE OR THE ONE ASSISTING WITH THE RESEARCH:
 - INSIST ON A REPORT, 1-2-3 STEPS ON HOW THE CONCLUSIONS WERE REACHED.
 - ESPECIALLY IF YOU ARE PAYING SOMEONE.

GROUPS THAT CAN HELP



The screenshot shows the DNAngels website with a blue border. The header includes the DNAngels logo, navigation links (HOME, SERVICES, MEET YOUR SEARCH ANGELS), and buttons for 'REQUEST A SEARCH ANGEL' and 'DONATE'. The main content area features a large heading 'ARE YOU SEARCHING FOR YOUR BIOLOGICAL FAMILY?' and a paragraph describing the organization's mission.

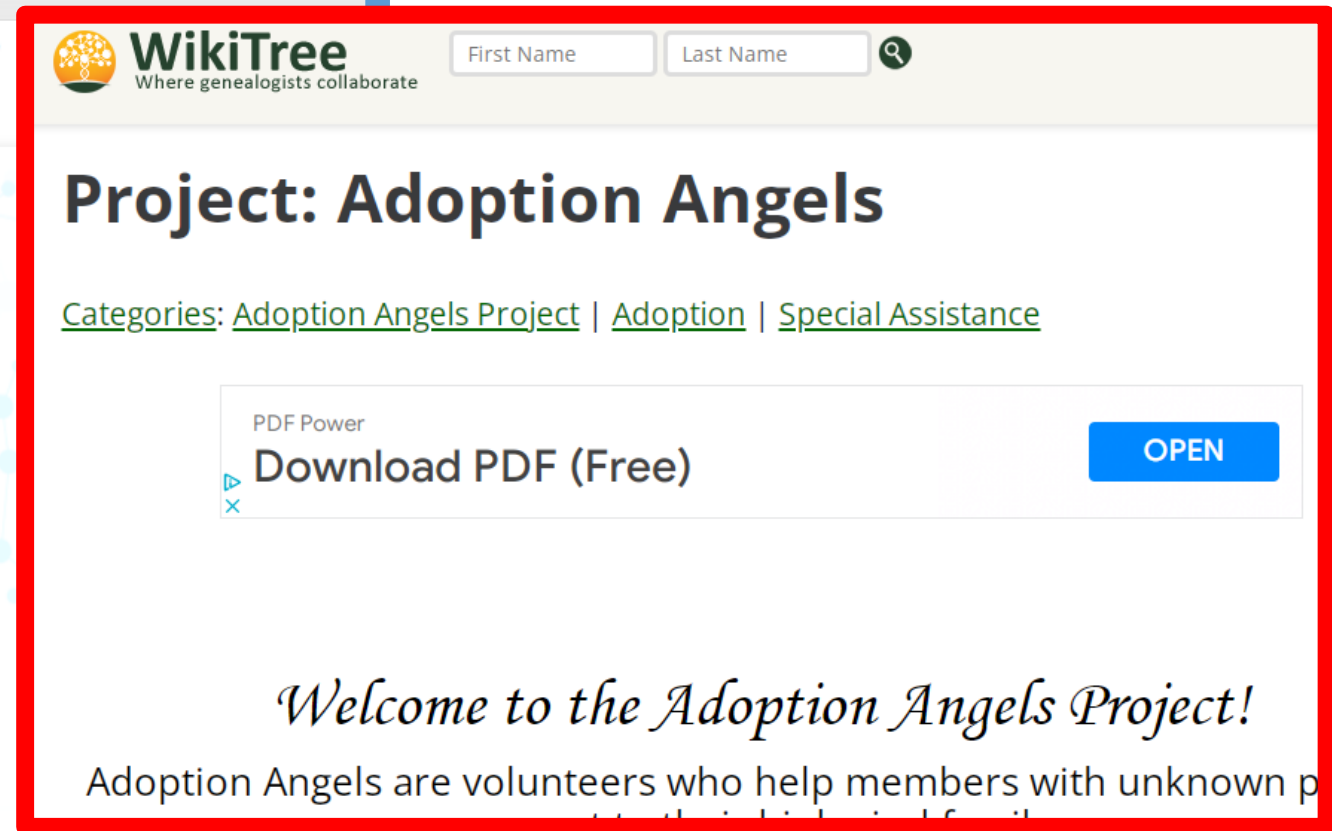
DNAngels
Finding families, one DNA strand at a time

HOME SERVICES MEET YOUR SEARCH ANGELS

REQUEST A SEARCH ANGEL DONATE

ARE YOU SEARCHING FOR YOUR BIOLOGICAL FAMILY?

We are a nonprofit search angel organization dedicated to assisting individuals searching for their biological parent(s) using DNA interpretation, mapping, and extensive research. For clients struggling with news of a Non Paternal Event



The screenshot shows the WikiTree page for the 'Project: Adoption Angels' with a red border. It includes the WikiTree logo, search filters for 'First Name' and 'Last Name', and a list of categories. A PDF download button is visible, and the page concludes with a welcome message and a description of the project.

WikiTree
Where genealogists collaborate

First Name Last Name

Project: Adoption Angels

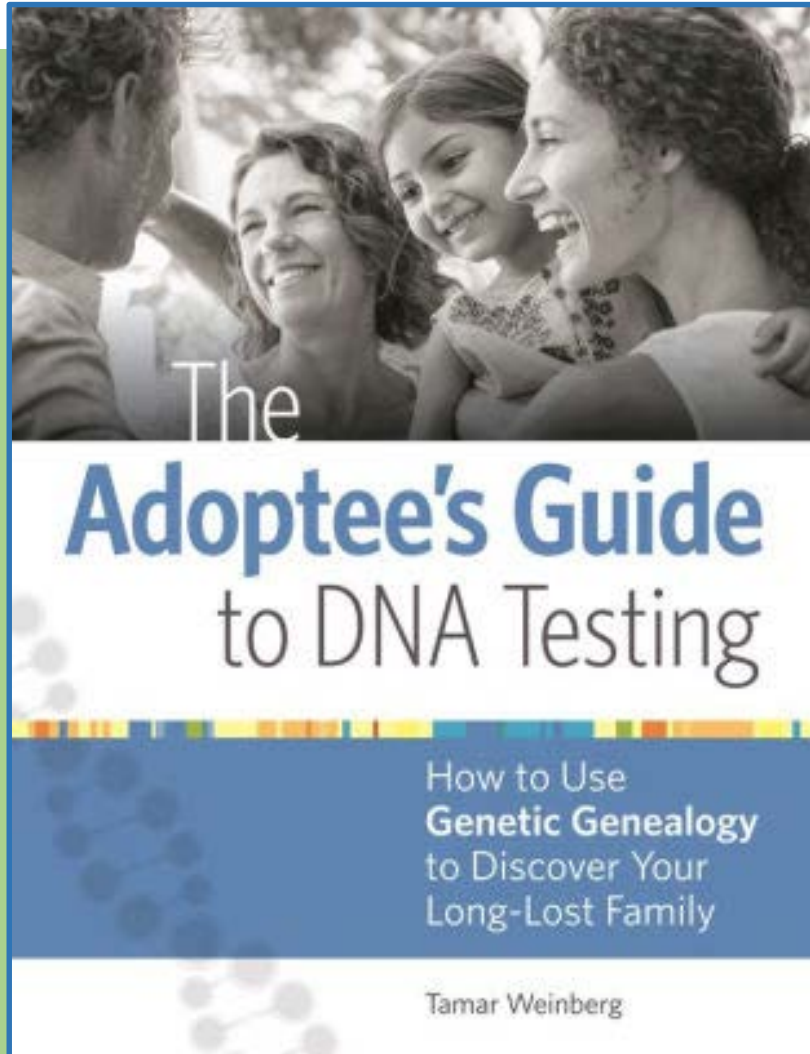
Categories: [Adoption Angels Project](#) | [Adoption](#) | [Special Assistance](#)

PDF Power
Download PDF (Free) OPEN

Welcome to the Adoption Angels Project!

Adoption Angels are volunteers who help members with unknown p

New Book for Adoptees: 2018



From FamilyTreeMagazine.com
Details in Handout.
Cost: \$29.99
Often discounts.
Also at Barnes and Noble, other
Places online.

REMEMBER

- IF ADOPTED, YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO KNOW BIRTH INFORMATION, and especially health history.
- BUT YOU DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT TO DISRUPT THE LIVES OF OTHERS.
- MANY MAY NOT KNOW OF YOUR EXISTENCE.
- YOU SHOULD FOLLOW ANY RULES, INSTRUCTIONS ESTABLISHED BY WHOMEVER IS HELPING YOU. DON'T MAKE CONTACT WITHOUT THEIR GUIDANCE, OR PERHAPS THEIR CONTACTING FIRST.
- REMEMBER: YOU ONLY HAVE ONE CHANCE TO MAKE A FIRST IMPRESSION.

ONE ADOPTEE'S TESTIMONIAL

- It has meant a lot to me to get some answers, even though sometimes I wonder about (the reaction of his birth parents)
- It has been nice to see pictures of my family. Always knowing that I was adopted I have always wondered who I may look like. I'm not sure I would have gotten that from going through an agency. It's not a lie when I say that growing up as an only child I did always wish for brothers and sisters. I do wish that I could form some type of relationship with the [half] brothers I have found, but circumstances and distance prevent that, for now.
- One final thing, is that I'm very thankful for the contacts I have made through the websites with family and the stories I have learned. I have yet to actually meet my mother or my father and that's ok. I didn't go into this looking to replace the ones I had. I think that has made a difference for me compared to others.
 - One must be prepared for what they find, or the relationships they don't.