

## **Identity, Search, and Reunion Resources**

### ***US ADOPTEE GROUPS ON THE WEB***

<http://www.van-online.org>

The Vietnamese Adoptee Network (VAN), a non-profit, volunteer organization, connects adoptees and all those connected to adoption in Vietnam. Van-online provides occasional reunions and tours. Its web site has an excellent resource list and pertinent discussion forums.

<http://www.filipino-adoptees-network.org>

The Filipino Adoptees Network (F.A.N.) is a global organization dedicated to supporting, educating and promoting cultural awareness on adoption issues and preserving Filipino heritage.

<http://www.aaawashington.org>

Asian Adult Adoptees of Washington offers monthly, social dinners, teen mentorship, education for the community, and scholarships for adoption camps and Inji University Korean Immersion Program.

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

Texas Asian Adult Adoptees is “for Asian adult adoptees ages 21 and up in the Dallas-Ft. Worth and surrounding areas. It is our mission to connect with other adult Asian adoptees and to educate current adoptive families through sharing our experiences about growing up in a transracial home. We have monthly events that include dinners and happy hours.”

<http://www.alsoknownas.org>

Probably the first international adoptee organization to form in the US, Also Known As, gave voice to the thousands whose lives bridge nations, cultures, and races as a result of adoption. Located primarily in New York City, Also Known As offers an email announcement list, youth and teen mentorship programs, local social events, and occasional regional mini gatherings across the country.

<http://www.akconnection.com/main/index.asp>

Adopted Korean Connection provides educational, cultural, and social events that help to create and sustain a supportive network of Korean adoptees. Located primarily in Minnesota. Also offers an email listserv. Excellent list of organizations that offer educational opportunities in Korea.

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

Association of Korean Adoptees, San Francisco, holds regular meetings every 8 weeks where members can interact and network. The group is constantly changing and growing and has about 75 members.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/AKASoCal/>

Association of Korean adoptees, Southern California, is an announcement list and forum for Korean adoptees in Southern California and their friends on the net.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bkadoptee/>

Email list for Korean adoptees from Boston and the surrounding areas

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

The mission of KAAN, the Korean American Adoptive Family Adoptee Network, is to network groups and individuals related to Korean adoptions. The network facilitates dialogue, promotes resource sharing, and disseminates information. KAAN works closely with its members, the Korean American community, and the Korean government to promote awareness of Korean adoption issues and develop programs that will benefit both the adoption and Korean communities.

### ***RESOURCES ABOUT IDENTITY, SEARCH, AND REUNION, CREATED BY ADOPTEES***

Borshay Liem, Deann, First Person Plural, produced in association with the Independent Television Service with funds provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. <http://www.pbs.org/pov/pov2000/firstpersonplural/index.html>

Deann Borshay was among thousands of South Korean orphans sent to the U.S. in the 1960s to be adopted and raised by American families. First Person Plural is a personal documentary that chronicles her struggle to set right a case of mistaken identity and unravel the mysteries surrounding her adoption. To buy, see the Center for Asian American Media, home videos, <http://www.asianamericanmedia.org/>

Clement, Thomas Park, The Unforgotten War: Dust of the Streets, Truepeny Publishing, Bloomfield, IN,

A mixed race orphan during the Korean war, Clement describes his harrowing experiences on the streets of Seoul and in an orphanage as well as what it was like trying to find his place in his new American family and in his new culture. Probably the first autobiography to be published by a Korean adoptee.

Cox, Susan, editor, Voices from Another Place, Yeong and Yeong Book Company, St. Paul, MN, 1999. ISBN 0-9638472-4-4, 139 pages.

“Moving collection of personal stories, poetry, illustrations, photography, and other forms of art from 47 Korean adoptees...The authors describe a variety of struggles trying to adapt, fit in, and be accepted in their adopted cultures.”  
(Reviewed by John Aeby, Editor, Holt Magazine)

Robinson, Katy, A Single Square Picture, Berkeley Trade Paperback, August, 2002. ISBN 0-425-18496-X.

“Korean adoptee [and journalist,] Katy Robinson, shares the story of searching for and getting to know her birth family. Robinson, who was not adopted through Holt, starts with the moment she left her birth mother and grandmother in a Korean airport in 1977 and doesn’t end until she has spent a year in Korea living out the dream of finding her birth family...one of the most narratively complete and emotionally whole books in the search genre...” (Reviewed by Laura Lucas, Assistant Editor, Holt Magazine)

Saffian, Sarah, Ithaka: A Daughter’s Memoir of Being Found, Basic Books, New York, NY, 1998.

Sara Saffian, a domestic adoptee, eloquently describes her experience of being found by her intact birth family. She examines each of the complex emotions that are evoked in her by the reunion—from the initial phone contact to her first meeting with her birth family three years later. [www.saffian.com](http://www.saffian.com)

Soll, Joe, Adoption Healing, Gateway Press, Inc. Baltimore, MD, 2000

A domestic adoptee and social worker, Joe Soll has created a gentle self-help workbook to help adoptees, birth parents, and adoptive parents learn to deal with the loss that is part of the adoption process.

Trenka, Jane Jeong, The Language of Blood: A Memoir, Borealis Books, St. Paul, MN, 2003

A Korean adoptee who was raised in rural Minnesota in a conservative German Lutheran family, Jane Trenka traces her life from early childhood through college, where she is stalked, to her reunion with her birth family and her birth mother’s death. A courageous and moving writer, Ms. Trenka, not a Holt adoptee, addresses her adoptive parents’ silence about her Koreanness, its exoticization by her stalker, the complications in her relationships with her birth family and her adoptive family, and her own coming to terms with her identity. [www.languageofblood.com](http://www.languageofblood.com)

Wilkinson and Fox, editors, After the Morning Calm: Reflections of Korean Adoptees. Sunrise Ventures Publishing, 2000.

A collection of personal stories and poems by Korean adoptees, ranging in age from 18 to 66. The contributors discuss issues, such as coming to terms with one’s identity, being accepted and succeeding in the larger community, and giving back. This book includes an extensive list of adoption organizations, support groups, and other books and newsletters. The authors may be contacted by email.

Struggle for Identity: Issues in Transracial Adoption

A 20 minute video, featuring adopted adults from diverse backgrounds, available from PhotoSynthesis Productions, 418 N. Tioga St., Ithaca, NY

14850. Telephone: (607) 272-4242. The video was produced by the New York State Citizen's Coalition for Children.

***BOOKS ABOUT RELINQUISHMENT, SEARCH, AND REUNION, WRITTEN BY BIRTH PARENTS***

Dorow, Sarah, editor, *I Wish for You a Beautiful Life*. Yeong and Yeong Book Company, St. Paul, MN, 1999. ISBN 0-9638472-3-6, 135 pages.

Korean birth mothers poignantly describe the reasons for their relinquishment of their children. "The book contains the intimate, private letters of 24 birth mothers to their children. The letters are as individual and varied as the women themselves...The book has much to tell about the complex and difficult realities facing women with unplanned pregnancies in other countries and cultures. It also demystifies birth mothers and makes them real...for international adoptees it is a long awaited gift." (Reviewed by Susan Cox, Vice President, Public Policy and External Affairs)

Gediman, Judith, and Brown, Linda, *Birth Bond: Reunions Between Birthparents & Adoptees: What Happens After...*, New Horizon Press, Far Hills, NJ, 1991. ISBN 0-88282-072-9, 285 pages.

Though illustrated only with domestic adoptions and reunions, the authors, a businesswoman and a birthmother, identify useful patterns to understand, such as the impact of readiness, mutuality, geography, and time, the dynamics of the first meeting, and post reunion themes. They conclude that "There's no such thing as a perfect reunion [and] There's no such thing as an easy post-reunion."

***OTHER HIGHLY RECOMMENDED RESOURCES ABOUT IDENTITY, SEARCH, AND REUNION***

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

The Mavin Foundation is the nation's leading organization that celebrates and advocates for mixed race people and families. Their projects explore the experiences of mixed heritage people, transracial adoptees, interracial relationships and multiracial families. Their nine projects include an adoptee empowerment project, a print magazine, a bone marrow project, an education project, and more.

Blau, Eric, *Stories of Adoption: Loss and Reunion*. New Sage, 1992. ISBN# 0-939165-17-1

Thirty-three personal stories with photographs.

Brodzinsky, Schechter, and Henig, *Being Adopted: The Lifelong Search for Self*. New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, 1992. ISBN 0-385-41426-9, 193 pages.

Written by a developmental psychologist, a psychiatrist, and a medical writer, this book describes the experience of adoption as it changes during the life span.

One hundred “ordinary” adoptees offer their experiences for inclusion in this book. We read about adoption from birth to late adulthood through their eyes.

Koenig, Mary Ann, and Berg, Niki, Sacred Connections, Stories of Adoption, Running Press, 2001. ISBN 0-7624-0801, 128 pages.

“Less about adoption and more about searching...the overwhelming majority of the stories deal with adoptees or birth parents wanting to know each other...[The book] presents a thoroughly positive image when it comes to searching. Nearly every story ends on a high clear dominant chord like the final amen of a triumphant hymn...Missing are the stories where the search doesn't reveal answers or ends without resolution.” (Reviewed by John Aeby)

McBride, James, The Color of Water: A Black Man's Tribute to his White Mother, Riverhead Books, New York, NY, 1996. ISBN 1-57322-578-9

James McBride searches for the past that has been completely cut off from his mother. In the powerful recounting of his search McBride struggles with identity and racial issues.

McColm, Michelle, Adoption Reunions: A Book for Adoptees, Birthparents and Adoptive Families. LPC InBook, 1993. ISBN# 0-929005-41-4

A book for adopted people, birth parents, and adoptive parents on all phases of getting to know each other after the separation process. Anecdotal in style, the author values the process of search and reunion and explores the complexities of developing relationships after extended family members reunite.

Schooler, Jayne, Searching for a Past: The Adopted Adult's Unique Process of Finding Identity. Colorado Springs, Pinon Press, 1995.

Jayne Schooler tells us many search stories and describes what the search process feels like at various stages. She raises significant questions to consider during the search process.