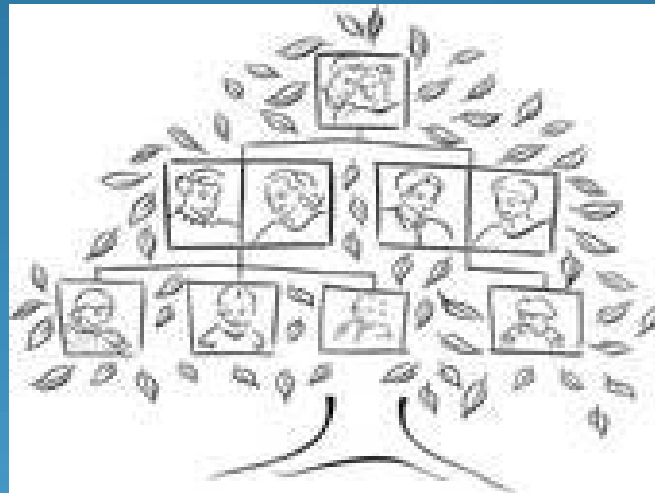


Family Tree Finders presents:



How to launch the Search for your Biological Parents
in the state of North Carolina

Where do you start?

- Gather all of the information you have about your adoption.
- You should have what is called your “Non-Identifying Information”. This information comes from the agency that handled your adoption. If the information you have did not come straight from the adoption agency, contact them and tell them you want to obtain your non-identifying information.
- If the information you have was not given to you in the last 5 years, contact the agency and ask them for your non-identifying information.

What if I don't know who handled my adoption?

- You will need to contact:

NC DHHS
Adoption Indexing
2411 MSC
Raleigh, NC 27699-2411



In letter format, tell them that you are trying to ascertain information about your adoption. Give them your name, date of birth, and adoptive parents' names. Send a copy of your drivers license to prove your identity. Include your phone number should they have any questions.

Did you know that your current birth certificate does not necessarily provide the real location of your birth?

- Your birth certificate has been amended. The location of your birth is determined by where your adoptive parents lived at the time of your adoption; not the place you were actually born.



What do I do if my non-id seems “bare bones”?

- Prepare to make an appointment, either in person or on the phone, with someone from the agency to discuss your non-id.
- Have questions ready for your post-adoption social worker.
- Keep in mind that it’s good to take someone along if you can. (A second set of ears if you will.)

Some examples of questions that you may get answered if the info was not on your non-id:

- Was my birth mother a resident in a maternity home?
- (This will help you because there were only three maternity homes in NC counties- Durham, Buncombe and Mecklenburg)
- Did my birth mother reside in the same county that I was born in?
- Was my birth mother from a rural county?
- Did my birth mother play sports in high school/college? If so, which ones? (There is a yearbook picture somewhere!)

Questions continued:

- Was my birth mother from a county that bordered another state?
- Was my birth mother from a county with a city in it?
- Has my birth mother been in contact with the agency since my adoption? If so, when?
- If you do not have information about key family members such as ages, gender, occupations, grade in school, ask about this as well.
- (Gear your questions based on your non-id.)

ANALYZE YOUR NON-ID

- Make notes of ages of key family members: birth parents, birth grandparents, siblings of birth parents
- Take note of occupations of key family members
- Identify ages/conditions of those who are deceased
- Also consider hobbies and interests



If you were born 1968 to the present, you can locate your place of birth by using NC Vital Statistics records.

- Access this information by going to:
- <http://www.irss.unc.edu/odum/jsp/home.jsp>
- Click on Data Archive Services
- Click on North Carolina Vital Statistics
- Choose the topic Births (not Births and Deaths)
- Select your year of birth
- Download the information
- Make sure you download the proper Exhibit Information to code out county information

If you were born prior to 1968, then you will have to use the clues in your non-id to determine your starting point.



There are 100 counties in North Carolina.

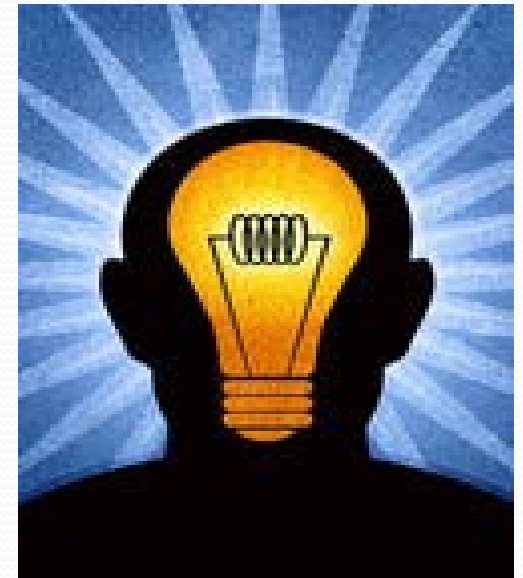
Understanding NC Adoption Law


- In 1945, NC made a law to seal the original birth certificate and adoption file of those that were adopted.
- A birth is recorded in two locations of the county that it occurred. In the birth index and as a birth certificate.
- A birth record is not “sealed” until the finalization of the adoption. In the 1940’s and 1950’s, finalization generally occurred 3 to 6 months after the birth. During the 1960’s and later, a finalization occurred 12 to 18 months (possibly longer).
- There are special circumstances in which adoptions can take much longer (i.e. unsigned relinquishment papers, no original birth certificate on file)


Now you're ready to search!

- The North Carolina Birth Index List is where you want to begin. This is available by subscribing to Ancestry.com or by going to the county Register of Deeds office.
- Please refer to your handout as to what the North Carolina Birth Index looks like.
- Please also refer to the Public Records Laws handout.
- Keep in mind that if your search begins in Wake, Durham, Forsyth or Mecklenburg counties, this information is not available on Ancestry.com

Looking at the birth index pages that you have been given, do you notice anything important?



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- Chances are that you see items that have been blacked out, whited out, typed over with XXXX, or marked through with pen or pencil.
 - You may luck up and find an entry that simply says “Sent to Raleigh” by it.
 - Pay close attention to how these birth are listed; by month and day; alphabetical or perhaps both.
 - Narrow down where you fit in alphabetically. You may be able to locate exactly where you fit in depending on how the county indexes their births.

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- Revert back to your non-id to help you put all of the clues together.
 - For example, you can look for your birth mother's information by looking at all of the female children born during her year of birth; then researching each one's siblings gender and ages and parents ages and occupations. All of this information is on an original birth certificate.
 - You can also look up a deceased relative. For example, a grandfather that died at a certain age of a certain ailment or disease.

Resources

- At the library, you may find City Directories, Census Records and Yearbooks that will help you.
- At the Register of Deeds office, you can use Birth, Death, and Marriage records in your search. Chances are, you may use them all to determine who your biological family is.
- At the Special Proceedings office, you will find the Divorce records. These can come in handy as well.

- Remember that looking for the **NEEDLE IN THE HAYSTACK** requires the process of elimination.
- The process of elimination requires time and patience.
- For every person you can eliminate, you will be that much closer to finding who you are searching for.

