BOOK LIST: RELINQUISHMENT, ADOPTION, SEARCH, REUNION

General Books

Blau, Eric. STORIES OF ADOPTION: Loss And Reunion New Sage Press,1993. A photographer who is also a physician interviews adoptees, birthparents (including three birthfathers and adoptive parents, letting them tell their stories without interpretation.

Lifton, Betty Jean. LOST & FOUND: The Adoption Experience. Perennial Library,1988 (first ed.1979)Based on an adoptee's talks with other adoptees but includes conversations with birthparents and adoptive parents as well, making this a good all-around starter book.

Sorosky, Arthur, et al THE ADOPTION TRIANGLE: Sealed or Open Records, How They Affect Adoptees, Birth Parents, and Adoptive Parents. Anchor Books,1984. Based on one thousand interviews of adoptees, adoptive parents, birthparents.

Wadia-Ells, Susan, editor. THE ADOPTION READER: Birth Mothers, Adoptive Mothers & Adopted Daughters Tell Their Stories. Seal Press,1995. Thirty women, including well-known writers and adoption activists, write eloquently about a wide range of adoption experiences, including international adoption.

Pavao, Joyce Maguire THE FAMILY OF ADOPTION 1999 Beacon Press
Pavao describes the grief processes, dilemmas, and potentials for healing of birth mothers and adoptive parents. A strong advocate for adopted children, she discusses the difference between secrecy and privacy--a crucial distinction in adoption. Pavao clearly identifies and demonstrates predictable, understandable developmental stages and challenges for every adoptee and elucidates patterns that adoptive parents may witness as their children grow.

Russell, Marlou, Ph.D. ADOPTION WISDOM: A Guide to the Issues and Feelings of Adoption 1996 Broken Branch Productions. Insight and understanding of adoptees, birth parents and adoptive parents. A book for anyone who wants to know more about the realities of adoption. Marlou Russell is an adoptee in reunion with many relatives from both sides of her birth family.

Birthparents

Denton, Kathy and Cummings, Teresa. THE SEARCH OF A LIFETIME, 2000. My search for the daughter I gave up for adoption, adoption issues revealed, the fight for open records, volunteerism, and how I found my daughter. My sister and co-author, Teresa Cummings also wrote a fictional political fable called Spynet which is interwoven throughout the book. Spynet tells the story of a girl searching for her family in invisible towns. 1stbooks Library, www.1stbooks.com. Available in an ebook, paperback coming soon!

Jones, Merry Bloch. BIRTHMOTHERS: Women Who Have Relinquished Babies for Adoption Tell Their Stories. Chicago Review Press, 1993. Seventy women share their experiences of giving birth and placing a child for adoption, raising subsequent children, searching and being found.

Mason, Mary Martin OUT OF THE SHADOWS: Birthfathers' Stories Published by Oj Howard Pub 1995 Stories from and about birthfathers compiled by an adoptee/adoptive mother.

Schaefer, Carol. THE OTHER MOTHER: A Woman's Love for the Child She Gave Up for Adoption. Soho Press Inc.,1991. A Bay Area woman tells her experience of pregnancy in a Midwest home for "unwed mothers," her relinquishment of her son, her years of loss, her search and reunion. This popular book was made into an acclaimed television movie starring Francis Fischer.

Growing Up Adopted

Lifton, Betty Jean. JOURNEY OF THE ADOPTED SELF: A Quest for Wholeness; Basic Books, 1994 Lifton addresses the myths surrounding adoption. This book delves into the psychological effects of adoption and is highly recommended for adopted people comfortable with the idea of search and reunion.

Lifton, Betty Jean TWICE BORN: Memoirs of an Adopted Daughter, McGraw-Hill, reissued 1998 Calling Twice Born both an autobiography and psychological journey into the past, Lifton takes the reader with her as she describes the loneliness and isolation of an adopted child cut off from the knowledge of her heritage. She explores the ambivalence and guilt that she feels toward her adoptive parents when she awakens as an adult to her need to ask: Who am I?

Paton, Jean THE ADOPTED BREAK SILENCE, Orphan Voyage 1954 This is a seminal book on adoption written by the mother of the modern adoptee-rights movement, Jean Paton.

David M. Brodzinsky, Marshall D. Schechter, Robin Marantz Henig BEING ADOPTED: The Lifelong Search for Self, 1993

Anderson, Robert, M.D. SECOND CHOICE: Growing Up Adopted. Badger- Hill,1993. A black market adoptee who is also a psychiatrist tells his story

Eldridge, Sherrie TWENTY THINGS ADOPTED KIDS WITH THEIR ADOPTIVE PARENTS KNEW – In an attempt to inform adoptive parents of the unique issues adoptees face, Eldgridge discusses adoptee anger, mourning, and shame and adoption acknowledgment while using case studies to illustrate how parents can better relate to their adopted child.

How to Search

Searches proceed differently in different states, even in different cities. With the advent of' the Internet and other electronic aids, the search scene has changed rapidly. The best thing to do is to read books on searching and then contact a search or support group. For an idea of the process, look in your library or bookstore at recently published books.

Askin, Jayne & Davis, Molly SEARCH: A Handbook for Adoptees and Birthparents, 3rd Edition; Oryx Press; Drawing from personal experience as well as from extensive research, Jayne Askin presents creative ways to overcome obstacles and attack problems that occur during the search process. Extensive Internet search & resource section.

BLUE BOOK. The Parent Connection, Box 230643, Encinitas, CA 92023-0643 ($16.50). Lists search groups and professional searchers throughout the country and internationally.

Strauss, Jean A. S. BIRTHRIGHT: The Guide to Search and Reunion for Adoptees, Birthparents, and Adoptive Parents. Penguin Press,1994. Part one tells how to search; part two deals with the effects of reunion on all members of the adoption triad.

Reunion-What Might Happen

Gediman, Judith St Brown, Linda P. BIRTH BOND: Reunions Between Birthparents & Adoptees, What Happens After New Horizons Press,1989. The authors interviewed thirty birthmothers in lasting reunions, along with adoptees, other members (the birthfamily, adoptive parents, to discover the impact of reunion on all involved.

McColm, Michelle. ADOPTION REUNIONS: A Book for Adoptees, Birth Parents and Adoptive Families. Second Story Press,1993. An adoptee who has worked with other adoptees and birthparents explores the roots of reunion, the reunion, and how to support the reunion process.

Saffian, Sarah, ITHAKA: a Daughter's Memoir of Being Found, Saffian tells her story of being found by birthparents who had married and had subsequent children not relinquished to adoption. Saffian is initially very reluctant to reconnect with her birthparents and this story tells of her harrowing psychological journey towards accepting a reconnection.

Waldron, Jatt. GIVING AWAY SIMONE, A Memoir Times Books, 1995. The author reunited with her daughter when the girl was eleven years old. Waldrun powerfully describes the struggle of birthmother and child to build a relationship.

Adoption Issues

Barton, Eliza M. CONFESSIONS OF A LOST MOTHER Birthmother Barton tells, through her own and other traumatized birthmothers' "confessions", how the relinquishment of their children adversely affected their personal lives and their attitudes towards adoption.

Moorman, Margaret WAITING TO FORGET, W.W. Norton & Co. 1996 Birthmother Moorman describes how her second pregnancy at age forty led to a confrontation with her decision to give up a child for adoption some twenty-five years earlier, explaining how the past has affected her life and the experience of being a pregnant teenager.

Verrier, Nancy THE PRIMAL WOUND: Understanding the Adopted Child This book postulates the controversial but much-adhered-to theory that adopted people are deeply and permanently impacted from rejection felt in utero and at birth. Author Nancy Verrier, MA, is an adoptive mother and therapist.

Wegar, Katarina ADOPTION, IDENTITY, AND KINSHIP: The Debate over Sealed Birth Records, Yale University Press, 1997 Professor Wegar, an adoptee born in Finland, a country with open records, argues that the American obsession with pathologizing adoption and glorifying biological ties has impeded progress towards equal rights for adopted people.

Kirk, David H. ADOPTIVE KINSHIP: A MODERN INSTITUTION IN NEED OF REFORM
1985 Ben-Simon Publishing A systematic analysis of the continuing controversy concerning the civil rights of adopted persons. Provides in-depth exploration of issues in adoption law and social policy, such as step-parent adoption, incest rules and child welfare activities. While identifying real troubles in adoption, it proposes humane, innovative answers. Difficulties peculiar to adoptive family life stem from well-meant but mistaken laws and administrative practices.

Babb, L. Anne ETHICS IN AMERICAN ADOPTION 1999 Bergin & Garvey
Today in the United States there is a lack of consensus about what constitutes ethical practice in adoption and how to serve the best interests of children who need to be adopted, birth parents, adoptive parents, and adult adoptees. This failure has resulted in a lack of ethical decision-making and inadequate--and sometimes fraudulent--treatment of those seeking adoption-related services. Based on the first research study to specifically study ethics in adoption practice, this book offers an in-depth history of values in adoption, codes and standards of practice affecting adoption and presents a suggested list of ethical standards specific to adoption work.

Pertman, Adam ADOPTION NATION: HOW THE ADOPTION REVOLUTION IS TRANSFORMING AMERICA
2000 Basic Books Pertman brings a reporter's skill and adopting parent's concerns to this comprehensive look at the process of adoption. After years of incremental change, adoption is undergoing a revolution: states are revising laws and agencies are simplifying rules. Pertman also examines the trend toward opening adoption for singles, multiracial families, gays, and the middle aged. Although adoption is still fundamentally private, it is no longer shrouded in the secrecy of the past as more states allow for open adoptions and balance the rights and desires of birth parents, adopting parents, and adopted children. Pertman examines the history of adoption from the foundling homes of the nineteenth century to current trends that are "advancing the ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity that is a hallmark of Twenty First Century America."

Solinger, Rickie BEGGERS AND CHOOSERS: HOW THE POLITICS OF CHOICE SHAPES ADOPTION, ABORTION, AND WELFARE IN THE UNITED STATES 2001 Hill & Wang Pub
The post-*Roe v. Wade* decision to articulate the women's movement's goals in terms of "choice," not "rights," had fateful consequences for women. Pregnancy and childbearing have historically and dramatically separated women by race and class in this country. Solinger explores the shifting qualifications imposed on women as gestators, mothers, and decision makers. She considers the interaction between advocates of "choice" and women who sought but did not always receive feminist support in their reunion with children they had reluctantly surrendered for adoption.

Most of these books are available from bookstores, which will order books they don't have in stock, and libraries can borrow books from other libraries for you.